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Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

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Thornett sacking

Trade unionism at stake!

Legal hitch sets back right's plan, but

WITCH-HUNT IS STILL ON!

Nik Barstow
and Vidya
Anand are
members of
the Labour
Steering
Committee
Against the
Witch-hunt.
They report
on the moves
taken by Lab-
our's right
wing



Foot: the right wing are on the rampage

to 'carry out orders'. The attack on Hornsey could also produce a 'bonus' for the Right — overturning the selection of a left wing prospective parliamentary candidate, Jeremy Corbyn. Jeremy, chair of Hornsey CLP, could be a non-member if Hornsey is closed down — and ineligible to be candidate for Islington North.

The Organisation Sub-committee left the selection of a candidate in Bermondsey 'in the air' — despite a by-election looming. They refused again to say if they would endorse Peter Tatchell.

The delay and confusion the NEC have created gives every opportunity for the much talked-of, but as yet unannounced, 'independent Labour' friends of Bob Mellish to find a candidate and begin a campaign.

As with Hornsey CLP, no-one has suggested that Peter Tatchell has broken any rules of the Labour Party — his face simply does not fit the sort of party John Golding wants to see. Tatchell is being forced to take every hurdle at least twice.

It is similar to the situation faced in the 19th century by the radical Charles Bradlaugh, who was the first declared atheist elected to Parliament. He won three elections in his Northampton constituency — only to get turned away from the House of Commons when he tried to take his seat.

the constitution to decide who can and cannot be a member of their party, and debar Tariq Ali on NEC orders; or the party will be closed down next year.

This move means that the basic rights of local parties are under attack. In Labour's constitution the CLPs are seen as independent local sections of the party, which affiliate to the national party provided that they stick by the nationally determined rules.

No-one has suggested that Hornsey is breaking any section of the constitution — it is simply refusing

constitution.

But the delay doesn't mean the witch-hunt is off. The very opposite is happening — the brutal repression is becoming more blatant.

The real targets of the witch-hunt, the left wing constituency Labour Parties, are now first in the firing line, while the Right decide what approach to take to Militant.

Hornsey Labour Party was given an ultimatum over the Tariq Ali case by the Organisation Sub-committee. Either Hornsey abandons its rights under

Wednesday November 17 TRANSPORT drivers at the BL Cowley Assembly Plant gave solid backing last Monday to their sacked shop steward Alan Thornett. Recognising that the TGWU had given five days' notice of possible strike action at the completion of the discipline procedure, they voted to strike from Monday November 22. At the same time they called on the convenors to call a mass meeting of the plant once they were out, and make it a full-scale strike.

Higher level

Things, however, were already moving at higher levels within the TGWU. District secretary David Buckle went in to the press to announce that a meeting would be held on Thursday of this week, November 18, before the drivers are out.

That mass meeting is now crucial to the defence of Alan Thornett and therefore the unions in the plant.

Already a familiar scenario is in progress. Yesterday management circulated a lying reply to the shop stewards' statement issued on Monday, which had had a very strong impact.

Having seriously distorted the facts of the case and answered none of the main points made in the stewards' statement, they concluded with the usual threat that strike action would not persuade BL to change its mind over the sacking.

There is little doubt that the local media will carry this statement later today as their preparation for tomorrow's mass meeting.

Despite the propaganda war being levelled against them, Cowley workers must draw the line at this sacking.

Alan Thornett was sacked for a minor road traffic offence, allowing his HGV licence to lapse, under conditions where road traffic offences even of a far more serious nature have never been subject to the disciplinary procedure in the past.

BL workers should not be confused by the company allegations, and the trivial nature of the case. BL have seized on a minor mistake to carry out a major strategic move.

This sacking must be seen for what it is: an attempt by the new post-Edwardes management under Sir Austin Bide to establish its authority and demonstrate that hard-line management will continue.

BL workers must say enough is enough. If Thornett is successfully victimised, it will be another major blow against the trade union movement in Cowley, in BL, and elsewhere. If he remains sacked, the atmosphere of fear and intimidation which exists in the BL plants will be intensified.

Like Derek Robinson's victimisation in 1979, it will become another milestone in a long campaign by BL to effectively smash trade unionism in the plants.

INSIDE

FOUR PAGE Industrial Special detailing Edwardes' Reign of Terror and the background to Alan Thornett's victimisation.

Calling all youth!



JOHN HARRIS

YOPS
PAY US A LIVING WAGE
GET ORGANISED
Class Fighter conference — November 20-21, at the Wyvern Centre, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. Starts 10.30 Saturday.

FIGHTING POLICIES FOR STUDENTS

by Jane Ashworth

AFTER six months of deliberations, 'Socialist Students in NOLS' [the National Organisation of Labour Students] has finally got off the ground. At a meeting on Saturday 13th, Labour Club activists discussed the issues on which we felt both main factions in NOLS - Clause 4 and Militant - were weak, and came up with an agreed platform and plans.

We decided to set about changing NOLS policies:

- * Palestine: for a democratic secular state: affiliation to the Labour Committee on Palestine.
- * Ireland: troops out now, affiliate to the Labour Committee on Ireland.
- * Poland: full support for Solidarnosc, recognition of the NZS (student Solidarnosc) as the sole voice of Polish students.

Outgoing

The workshops also felt that the women's work of NOLS should be developed into more outgoing campaigning, and that NOLS comrades on the National Union of Students executive should be accountable to NOLS.

The workshop on NUS agreed that the far left didn't have a coherent set of tactics.

It was generally agreed that indefinite occupations were a recipe for disaster, and that we needed to be pushing for joint action with college trade unions.

Budget

The Labour Party workshop was taken up with a discussion about the possibility of the Young Socialists being closed down. We agreed to ask Labour Clubs and YSs to write to the NOLS national committee demanding that NOLS rejects any offer of money from the Labour Party budget diverted after a shut-down of the YS. We also thought Labour clubs should affiliate to 'Labour Against the Witch-hunt'.

We agreed that Socialist Students in NOLS should hold a couple of meetings at National Union of Students conference, and produce our own briefing document. To keep in touch with each other and involve new clubs we shall be producing a bulletin.

If you want the bulletin, or your Labour Club wants to affiliate to SSIN, send £5 (clubs) £1 (individuals) to: Jane Ashworth, 13 Buxton Road, London N19.



by Andrew Horning

Feminist guide-lines

THE Guardian is running a series this week called 'Organising Women'. Sounds promising?

So what's number one about? In the first of a series this week, looking at the way women in Britain get organised, Hugh Herbert talks to Lady Baden-Powell about the evergreen quality of guiding...

Radical stuff this! "When she came to England to marry [from what was then Rhodesia, don't you know], Lady Patience met B-P's widow, Olave, the World's Chief Guide... 'I thought, well, I ought to do something now I'm married, so perhaps I'll do the organisation the family's connected with, the Guides'."

And we find that the principles of the Girl Guides "have always been about self-reliance and leadership, which for girls is surely feminist enough..."

Nadir hits market

ON Monday November 15 The Times waxed eloquent on the Turkish torture regime and the policies of Deputy Prime Minister Turgut Ozal. According to this top people's paper, Ozal was given "the freedom to run the economy along free market lines".

The day before, the Sunday Times Business News reported on the fortune being reaped by Mr Asil Nadir's Polly Peck company. Apparently the Turkish government gave Mr Asil "a tax holiday, an effective local monopoly, access to cheap energy and labour at an average wage of £1,200 a year" in return for Mr Nadir's setting up a cardboard box factory in the Turkish part of Cyprus.

Grapefruit

"Nadir can land grapefruit and potatoes at London docks for £2.10 a case and sell them wholesale for between £5.50 and £6..."



Quilt boss wilts

P.S.Randi, owner of Randi's quilt factory in Smethwick, has announced that he is sacking all 200 strikers and also the 30 workers who had been scabbing on the official TGWU strike for union recognition.

He has declared his intention to close the factory, in line with his earlier threats.

But a mass picket scheduled for 4pm this Friday, 19th, will go ahead, as the fight escalates into one against closure.

Marks & Perks

A COUPLE of weeks ago, Marks and Spencer shareholders met in a troubled mood. What was all this, they asked, about a few top directors paying low rents for millionaire mansions owned by the company?

Lord Siëff - Mr St Michael himself - confessed

that the rumours were true. The company did subsidise already super-rich directors. But so what, he asked. Marks and Spencers spends millions every year in perks for its executives.

That satisfied most of the shareholders. It seemed fairer explained like that.

"He's only doing his job"

MONDAY'S Morning Star carries a glowing article on Labour Party general secretary Jim Mortimer: "a thoughtful man whose vision rises above today's factional battlefields and reflects a broad understanding of the working class movement... his politics are well-read, and seem to have a solid grounding in Socialist theory which is the property of relatively few in a time of trends, fads and quack Socialism".

Minor problems are waved aside. Mortimer's 10 years on the government arbitration service ACAS, after his time as a Morning Star line trade union official? No comment. The purge of Militant? "He can do nothing else. It's his job". Indeed: "his condemnation [at Labour Party conference] of Militant's opposition [?] to detente was welcomed..."

But let it not be said that the Star is uncritical. To be a functionary for the capitalist state, and then for Labour's witch-hunters, is merely Mortimer's job - but the real flaw is that "His opinions on... the role of a Leninist party... would not be endorsed by all on the left..."

PRESS GANG



NHS dispute opens door to unity

BEHIND the political sound and fury, Northern Ireland over the last few months has also been one of the most militant centres of the NHS workers' pay campaign.

Does the unity of Protestant and Catholic workers in this campaign show the way out of the political impasse in Northern Ireland?

Micky Duffy, a NIPSA shop steward at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, and a supporter of Militant, thinks it does. At the NHS shop stewards' conference in Sheffield on October 30, he spoke to Socialist Organiser.

SO: At the beginning of the dispute a lot of hospitals with JSSCs were disorganised. How did you organise?

MD: The problems were similar to the problems here - for example, inter-union rivalry.

We had to manage to marry unions together by shop stewards taking collective action. If there was a vote, but one of the unions was in major disagreement, rather than split the stewards we wouldn't push the vote.

We tried to find action that would take all unions with it.



Patrick Spilling

The unity achieved has been the perfect answer to all people who claim that the unions in N. Ireland are divided on sectarian lines. The unions organise regardless of religion and regardless of geographical area they are in. As Militant supporters in N. Ireland have always argued, when the working class goes forward it will break all barriers, even the most deeply-rooted sectarian barriers.

SO: How do you see an indefinite strike being organised?

MD: Through shop stewards' committees, in the North. You have to take into account that we will get a better response than other areas.

ards' committees, in the North. You have to take into account that we will get a better response than other areas.

SO: You mention the Health Service Dispute as being unifying for N. Ireland. In the past sectarianism has been a problem in the docks, for example. How do you see those divides being bridged?

MD: Conditions determine how people behave. Loss of living standards is affecting all workers. We have common problems and common struggles.

A crucial factor is not that the class cannot unite, but that this has been limited to the industrial front in N. Ireland - the lack of a political voice.

There is a clear need for the formation of a Labour party in the North.

SO: How would you see this being formed?

MD: Supporters of Militant have been campaigning for years that a conference of labour should be convened in Belfast with reps from every trade union, shop stewards committee, and labour group in the North.

That conference should form a Labour Party and sort out relations with the British Labour Party. It can't be confined to one province.

THE Israeli Cabinet has angrily denied being responsible for allowing a massacre of Princess Anne's character to take place in Beirut this week.

Mr. Begin has told a Commission of Enquiry that he allowed the British press corps into the hotel where the Princess was staying, because they wanted 'to clear up a few misunderstandings surrounding the visit'.

But he has failed to explain how Israeli soldiers came to be on guard outside the hotel for three hours while Fleet Street journalists probed her marriage to Captain Mark Phillips who had stayed home 'to mind the pigs'.

The Princess was discovered weeping and hysterical in the corner of the room and the journalist gone. Later the True Confessions of a Failed Royal Romance was beamed around the world as a syndicated serialised blockbuster.

The row has much more serious implications for the Begin government than last month's massacre of Palestinian refugees by the Israelis.

Mr. Michael Shea, the Royal Family press secretary issued a statement calling on the whole world to condemn the Begin

Government for failing to protect the reputation of the British Princess.

The British Government is calling on President Reagan to cancel this month's shipment of air to ground missiles due for shipment to Israel for 'defensive' purposes. 'The way the Israelis treated her you would think she was an Arab,' said Mrs. Thatcher.

The assassination came at the climax to a world tour by the Princess to see destitute children in countries ravaged by imperialist inspired wars. The trip was ordered by the Thatcher cabinet to inspire a greater determination for self betterment in the children.

In every place the Princess went she tried to instil in the children the understanding that they too could become rich, famous and feted all over the world, if only they would resolve to improve themselves and not to settle for the life of poverty and indolence chosen by their parents.

She organised one legged races in Malawi, and elocution lessons in North Yemen.

But the bulk of the Save the Children finances has been spent on a major new bequest on ethnic minorities. Princess Anne has

endowed a £50 million fund for white children in South Africa who suffer disadvantage through being disapproved of by the vast majority of the population.

In a touching speech in which Princess Anne reminded her hosts that she too had a little white child back home, she said that the emotional upset of being called an oppressor was something that she and her brothers had had to suffer as children and it had produced unattractive personality traits in all of them as adults. The fund will not be used to treat the complex but to provide a few material comforts which will help to make it seem less important.

Tour

However the international significance of her tour has been underplayed by the British press according to Buckingham Palace. Official press releases had compared the Princess to Mother Theresa of Calcutta on a mission of mercy to the children of the world.

But when she was opening a BUPA children's hospital in Swaziland and trying to explain the Save as You Starve health care insurance policy there were harsh words at the subsequent press confer-

Labour's right wing rides out

Socialist
Organiser
EDITORIAL

AS WE go to press, the Guardian reports that pressure is being mounted inside the Labour Party leadership to water down even the hardly inspiring pledge to reduce unemployment to one million in five years.

"A majority of the Shadow Cabinet believes this is an attainable target, but some of Mr Foot's closest advisers are urging him to modify the pledge to a more general commitment..."

If this is happening even on such a pledge — not very dangerous for opportunists, for after all five years gives plenty of room for excuses — imagine the fate of more immediate crunch issues like unilateral nuclear disarmament, incomes policy, and public spending.

The drive by right-wing Labour leaders to shape the next Labour government into the mould of the last one is the other side of the coin of the drive against those who have fought for accountability and left-wing policies, and in the first place against Militant.

The double drive has deep roots: the Labour Establishment is riding out from its redoubts in the trade union bureaucracy, in Westminster, and around Fleet Street, to repel the offensive mounted since 1979 by the Left and the campaign for democracy in the Labour Party.

To think that the Labour Establishment will be

stopped by legal hassles is foolish — rather like thinking that the capitalist Establishment would be deterred by fine points of law from using its claws against a Labour government which took serious measures against their wealth and supremacy.

At its meeting last week, the Organisation Sub-committee was stymied because lawyers said its attempt to expel individuals, without a hearing, under a clause of the Labour Party constitution which deals with outside groups affiliating to the Party, could open them to court action. (This apart from being outrageous on democratic principle, which would hardly worry them.)

But the sub-committee instructed general secretary Jim Mortimer to prepare a new report for the National Executive Committee next week. We don't know what new tack Mortimer will try.

But lawyers are as common as pot bellies and alcoholic flushes among the Labour right wing. In a battle over points of law, the Right will win — sooner or later, with greater or lesser difficulty. It may even be that the legal snag will have the effect of escalating the purge, by persuading the NEC to go straight for proscribing Militant and decreeing the expulsion not only of the so-called Militant 'inner core' but of every Militant seller.

Meanwhile, the witch-hunt seeks other channels, menacing Hornsey Labour Party with dis-

bandment and holding over Bermondsey Labour Party the threat to impose a candidate in place of Peter Tatchell.

There is no legal obstacle whatever to the idea, already mooted by Labour MP Frank Field, of suspending or restricting the Labour Party Young Socialists, in which Militant is influential. 'No false confidence' should be our motto.

Militant's evident support for the notion of taking the Labour Party NEC to court must be criticised. Our objection to using the capitalist courts to decide the affairs of the labour movement is not that it won't sometimes throw a spanner in the right wing's works, but that it is wrong in principle. A socialist labour movement which aspires to replace capitalist rule by working-class rule must develop its own democracy in its own ranks, higher than capitalist democracy and prefiguring the future socialist democracy. It must educate every worker in fierce hostility to and mistrust of capitalist intervention.

The sectarian behaviour of Militant's 'Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-Hunt' — cold-shouldering the 101 CLPs who set up a 'Labour Against the Witch-Hunt' committee last month, and instead inviting them to gather round Militant's rostrum — has also caused problems.

But Militant must be defended with no less vigour. The issue is not whether we agree with Militant's politics, but whether socialists have a right to organise in the labour movement for distinctive views.

Socialist Organiser calls on all readers to give full support to the campaign of 'Labour Against the Witch-Hunt' to win Constituency Labour Parties and affiliated trade unions to non-cooperation with expulsions, up to and including defying disbandment of CLPs; to defend Hornsey, Bermondsey, and the LPYS; to support the LSCAW's regional rallies on November 27; and to urge maximum unity of the two campaigns against the witch-hunt.

And we say: together with the fight on democracy, keep up the fight on policies and the fight to build mass campaigning local Labour Parties linked to the direct class struggle. For the witch-hunt is in essence a political, not a constitutional battle; and it will be decisively defeated only by a resolute left wing fighting boldly for the complete transformation of the Labour Party into a mass socialist party capable of creating a workers' government that will take decisive measures against capitalist power and privilege.

Steering committee warning

THE Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-hunt produced a statement the day after the Labour Party NEC Organisation Sub-committee meeting, warning that the delay did not mean that the witch-hunt had stopped.

The committee agreed to support the fights being

waged by Hornsey and Bermondsey Labour Parties, and to publicise their views.

Though Militant supporters blocked the criticism (proposed by Nik Barstow) of bringing legal action into the labour movement, the statement also stressed that it was the fightback by

Labour Party members which could defeat the right wing.

In preparation for regional conferences to be held on November 27, it was also agreed to continue opposition to the register. The campaign has already urged other groups not to register.

The committee agreed to try to widen the involvement in the conferences — approaching MPs, councillors, and trade union activists and organisations.

Ernie Roberts MP, chair of the Labour Against the Witch-hunt organisation set up by the CLPs' conference on October 30,

has agreed to speak at one rally, and an effort will be made to achieve the greatest cooperation between the two campaigns.

Unfortunately Militant supporters on the Labour Steering Committee Ag-

ainst the Witch-hunt blocked an exchange of delegates, but it was agreed to seek joint involvement in building regional conferences, especially in London.

Nik Barstow/Vidya Anand

LAW appeal

STATEMENT from 'Labour Against the Witch-hunt':

It is now crystal clear that the register of non-affiliated organisations is unworkable. The NEC must now realise that a protracted legal battle in the courts would be very damaging to the interests of the party one year before a general election. We trust that the NEC will now drop its divisive campaign to expel individual members of the party.

We will continue to fight for the principle that every constituency party should have the right to pick a parliamentary candidate of its own choice. Bermondsey must have the right to choose Peter Tatchell if it wishes: and if he is chosen, the NEC should endorse him.

The threat of disband-

ment to Hornsey Constituency Labour Party because of an individual membership of the party is quite wrong. This crucial marginal seat must be won at the general election if we are to have a Labour government. Threats to disband the constituency party can only assist the incumbent Tory MP.

Ernie Roberts, chair of LAW, added: These specific proposals from the organisation committee show the urgent need for the Labour Party to stop the witch-hunt now — before it undermines Labour's chances of beating the Tories. We can assure the NEC that a purge will be opposed by LAW and all those in the party who want to unite to defeat the Tories. *Labour Against the Witch-hunt, 11 Wilderton Rd London N16 (802 1709).

Hands
off
Tatchell

Glasgow left must campaign in Queens Park

DECEMBER 2 is the date set for the by-election in the Queen's Park constituency (Glasgow), caused by the sudden death of the sitting Labour MP, Frank McElhone. Six parties are in the running for the vacant seat.

Rank outsiders in this solid Labour seat are the Tories. Their candidate, Jackson Carlaw, says, 'I stand full square behind Mrs. Thatcher's policies', claiming that, 'now there is evidence that the policies the government embarked upon have every chance of succeeding.'

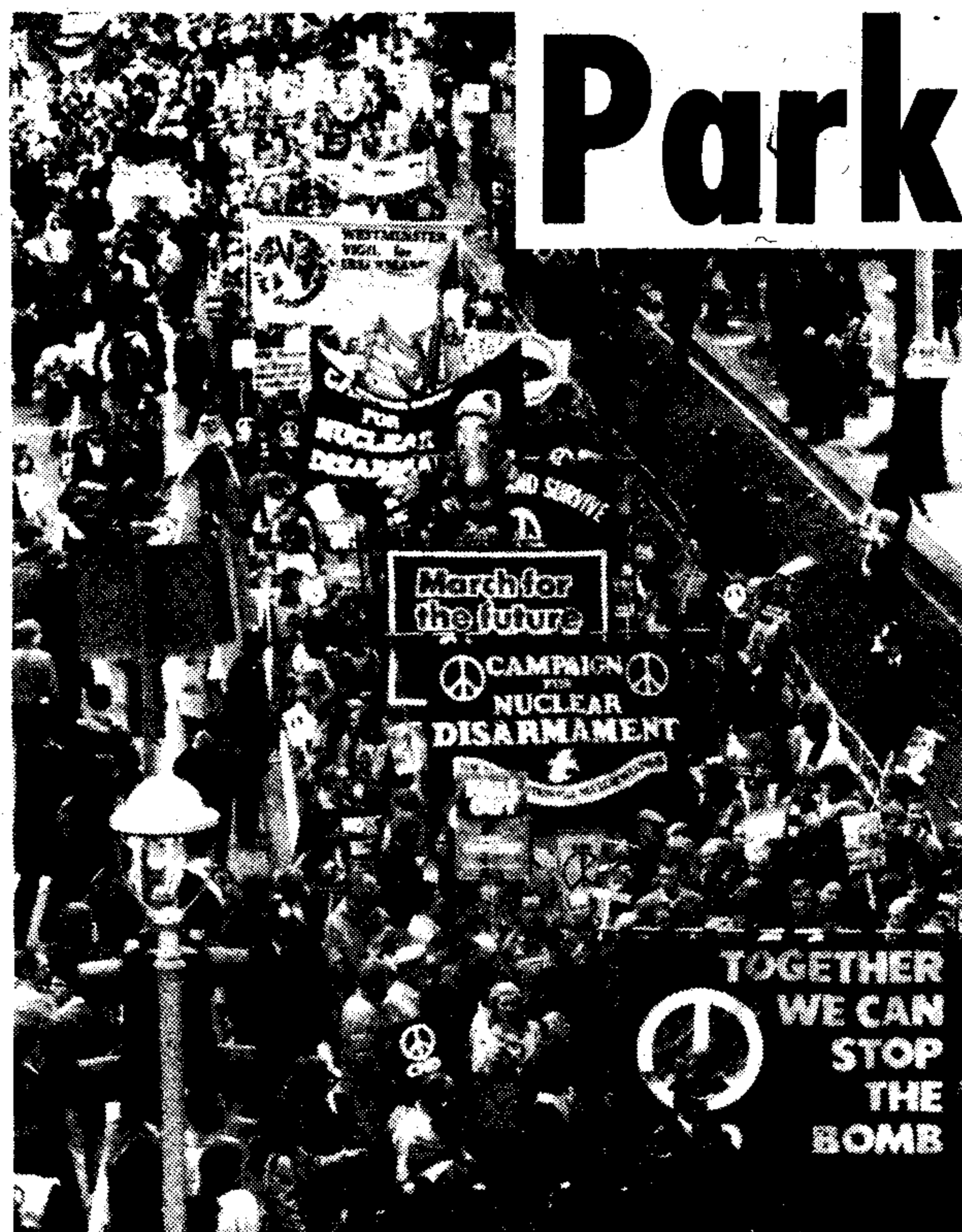
With any luck the Tories should lose their deposit.

With any luck the 'Communist' Party candidate will suffer the same fate. Gorbals used to be the home of a strong Communist Party (CP) branch. But it's a long time since the Spanish Civil War. The CP candidate is John Kaye, a grovelling sycophant of the STUC bureaucracy.

Workers should cast not a single vote for this motley array of political bankrupts, who have sold more workers down the river than Glasgow District Council has built damp houses.

Competing with the Tories and the CP for the bottom of the poll position is the Scottish Republican Socialist Party, a fusion of the Scottish Republican Socialist Clubs, Siol nan Gaidheal (extreme cultural nationalists expelled from the SNP), and splinters from the 79 Group (the recently expelled leftist group in the SNP).

The SRSP has (without



Labour candidate Helen McElhone is a longstanding member of CND. Will she campaign boldly on the issue of the Bomb?

success) asked the SNP not to stand in the by-election so as not to split the Nationalist vote, and Labour not to stand so as not to split the anti-Tory vote.

Competitors for the runners up position in the by-election are the Liberal/SDP Alliance and the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP).

Unfortunately, the biggest problem in the Labour by-election campaign is the fact that Helen McElhone, the late MP's marital partner, won the nomination.

At each stage of the selection process, McEl-

hone defeated her main rival, Gorbals Regional Councillor Jimmy Wray by only a hair's breadth.

Wray is far from alone in feeling bitter at the outcome of the selection process. A number of the constituency members have made no secret of their aversion to the idea of doing any election work because of the person who is standing for Labour.

Though wrong, the attitude is however easily understandable. Little, if anything, of what McElhone said during the selection process could inspire enthusiasm amongst party activists.

But to react to this by abstaining from the by-election campaign is to play into the hands of the Right.

Instead of cutting itself off from the by-election campaign, the left should throw itself into it and make it a campaign which, apart from winning votes, recruits community activists to the Party and mobilises support for campaigns both local (eg the plethora of campaigns in the Gorbals about inadequate housing) and national (eg unemployment, CND).

The local CLP needs to be transformed into a body which supports and allies itself with the local community against the attacks of both the Tory government and the 'Labour' Vichy administration in the City Chambers.

The by-election campaign offers a possibility of starting to achieve such a transformation. If the constituency activists fail to take the opportunity, then they will have only themselves to blame.

Ronnie Clyde

Houses hive-off halted

GLASGOW District Labour Group's attempt to tie off to private 'enterprise' the 759 empty houses in the 'Hutchesontown E' scheme in the Gorbals, continues to run into an ever growing number of problems.

Opposition to the attempted privatisation has now been expressed by bodies such as Glasgow Trades Council, Glasgow District Labour Party, TGWU

Glasgow District Committee, NALGO Glasgow District Branch, the Direct Labour Organisation in Glasgow District Council, the local community groups and councillors in the Gorbals, and a number of Labour Party constituencies and branches throughout Glasgow.

Choice

Another blow to the District Labour Group's little scheme was delivered at the District Labour Party policy-making conference on November 7. A motion was passed opposing the sale of all council land and housing, with specific reference to Hutchesontown 'E', and another, to bring the Group under the control of the District Party and make it directly accountable.

The 'Stop the Sale Campaign' must now exploit to the full the opportunities which have presented themselves. In the Queen's Park by-election campaign the future of Hutchesontown 'E' must be raised on every possible occasion.

Stan Crooke

PETER Tatchell last week said it was completely unconstitutional for the National Agent of the Labour Party to instruct him to stand down as Bermondsey Constituency Labour Party Secretary and to cease all public activities on behalf of the Labour Party.

First the National Executive Committee overturned my democratic selection as the Labour candidate for Bermondsey. Now they want to overturn my democratic selection as constituency party secretary. The National Agent has no right to stop me campaigning for the Labour Party and I shall continue to do so.

Three weeks ago, Bermondsey Labour Party unanimously reiterated its full support for my candidature. It is Bermondsey Party policy that we will not accept an imposed candidate.

Peace

IT appears that NEC representatives will try to persuade Peter Tatchell to stand down and Bermondsey Labour Party to withdraw support from him. Failing that, the NEC may try to impose a different candidate.

Disturbingly, there is talk of some on the Left pressing Tatchell to stand down for the sake of peace, or backing alternative candidates. Such tactics will buy not peace but a witch-hunt strengthened by a victory.

Bermondsey Labour Party has selected Peter Tatchell by due democratic procedure, and that selection should be recognised. If a new selection is imposed, then for once a shortlist of one will be in order.

Lobby the Labour Party National Executive STOP THE PURGE! NO EXPULSIONS! 9am, Wednesday November 24, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.



Available from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 for 60p incl. postage.

International News International News International News

MASS STRIKES CHALLENGE

GANDHI CRACKDOWN

Aly Mir looks at the class struggle in India

LESS than six years after the end of Indira Gandhi's dictatorial 'Emergency' rule, the Indian ruling class is once again attempting to smash the organisations of the working class and make them pay for India's chronic economic crisis.

Just as in the 'Emergency' the fragile liberties of 'the world's greatest democracy' are being swept aside.

The Congress (I) government of Indira Gandhi, faced with a \$25 billion national debt, has negotiated a massive loan from the IMF. To satisfy its international finance backers that it means business, the Congress (I) government has introduced draconian anti-labour legislation.

Whilst the Indian bourgeoisie has had powers to delay and stop certain strike actions ever since independence (with the 1947 Industrial Disputes Act) the new measures greatly increase the powers of the ruling class at both state and national levels.

The National Security Ordinance passed on September 23, 1980 after Indira Gandhi's return to power, allows the state to arrest people without specific charges and to imprison them without trial for a period of up to one year.

Even these powers were increased by the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA), passed at the end of 1981.

This made any strikes in the vaguely defined 'essential services' illegal; and threatened any workers taking industrial action with suspension, dismissal and arrest.

The Act also gave the Government more powers to persecute national minorities and low caste 'Harijans'. Any 'civil disturbances' would be followed by the government suspending all liberties and



establishing rule by emergency decrees.

The Government would be free to search and arrest without warrant in any 'disturbed area'. The occasions when the government could use these powers were left conveniently vague, the only

indication being that the government should be able to carry on 'safeguarding the defence and security of the country'.

To further increase the arsenal of the ruling class following the failure of its 'anti-inflationary economic package', new anti-labour 'Black Bills' have been introduced such as the Industrial Disputes (Amendments) Bill and the Hospitals and other Institutions (Settlements of Disputes) Bill, which have subjected health and education workers to the ESMA measures.

Apart from anti-union legislation the ruling class has introduced legislation denying the right to criticise the government.

As sections of the bourgeois media have been forced to accompany the left press in criticism of widespread Government corruption and police atrocities, the Congress (I) regime acted to stop the production of the Bombay edition of the 'Indian Express', the largest English daily newspaper.

In the Eastern state of Bihar the Chief Minister, Jagannath Mishra, has introduced a Press Bill which outlaws 'scurrilous' and 'objectionable' literature. It will be illegal not only to produce it but to



'convey' it or even read it! Reminiscent of British Colonialism's Indian Press (Emergency) Powers Act of 1931, the Bihar Press Bill is, as the Indian bourgeois weekly paper 'Blitz' commented, 'designed to choke the press and all legitimate criticism of the administration in Bihar.'

If this censorship fails to stop resistance the Bihar administration has promised to 'shoot at sight' on any opposition.

Resistance to all forms of ruling class offensive has been strong in numbers, if weak in political leadership.

Remembering that the bourgeois Janata Government of 1977-1980 was forced to abandon its anti-labour Industrial Relations Bill by mass working class resistance, Indian workers have shown their defiance of the new Con-

gress regime's measures too.

Millions of workers all over India took part in the one day General Strike held on January 18 this year. The Congress regime responded by arresting 25,000 of the strikers and murdered twelve others.

The General Strike started the heroic Bombay textile workers strike. 250,000 of them struck for wage increases, rights for temporary workers, recognition of the union of their choice and against local anti-union legislation.

As solidarity increased throughout the state of Maharashtra a state-wide one day strike was held after three months in defiance of ESMA. The regime responded by arresting over 1,200 of the solidarity strikers.

On May 19, 65,000 Rajasthan state Electricity Board workers struck for

a seven point Charter of Demands. The Rajasthan State government then arrested 2,000 of the workers under ESMA and ordered the police to baton-charge the strikers.

However, the militancy of the workers has been undermined by the bankrupt leadership of the Indian Labour Movement.

The Stalinists in the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions refused to organise for defence of the Rajasthan workers against state attacks and failed to encourage solidarity action, pleading instead for 'negotiations' ('Peoples Democracy', June 13, 1982).

The Stalinist 'Communist Party of India - Marxist' leaders of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) could only repeat the appeal for negotiations even when mass solidarity

action on October 11 in support of the long drawn out Bombay textile strike led to severe state repression.

The police fired on the workers and over 11,000 were arrested and interned in concentration camps called 'open air gaols' (Peoples Democracy, October 17, 1982).

Tea workers

Only a week later 10,000 tea workers in Assam demonstrated for higher wages and better conditions - the biggest such demonstration ever seen in Assam.

At the same time a mass convention of public sector trade unionists in Hyderabad called for a national one-day strike in the public sector for November 8 against the regime's wage-freeze policy. November 8 will also see 700,000 coal miners striking for higher wages.

What is vital is that separate sections of workers are not left to struggle in isolation.

The Anti-ESMA etc. activities must be linked to other strike actions, and against state repression, police violence and censorship.

This means that Indian workers must break free of the Stalinist leadership which so disastrously disarmed them before the last all-out ruling class offensive in 1975.

At that time the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (CPI) betrayed the masses with the slogan 'Strengthen the hands of Mrs. Gandhi,' while the rival CPI (M) lined up with the bourgeois Janata opposition.

WALESA UNDER DUAL PRESSURE

March on Dec 12!

LECH Walesa returned home on Sunday 14th, 36 hours after his release from internment. He said he wanted a couple of days to think about things.

It does seem that he has retreated from his previous principled position that he wouldn't talk to the government without his full committee. He has now declared



Archbishop Glemp: pressure from the Church?

that he wants discussions with Jaruzelski, and he has already had discussions with the Deputy Premier.

It is likely that he is confused after eight months of internment. But most likely he has had pressure put on him by the Church.

The Catholic Church has made an agreement with Jaruzelski that they will not demand the restoration of Solidarity as long as the Pope is allowed to make his trip to Poland next year. Its only concern is that it, the Church, establishes its own place in Polish society.

The Polish bureaucracy has planned a special session of the Sejm (parliament) on December 13, and it looks as though martial law will be lifted on that day, the anniversary of its introduction. Most of the martial law is now part of the 'normal' law.

This move, and the release of Walesa, are designed to give the appearance of stability and to confuse the opposition. The bureaucracy feel confidence because of the reported lack of response to the underground Solidarity's call for strikes on November 10.

It is clear that planned strikes are extremely difficult because the bureaucracy is able to prepare for them. If the reports of lack of response to these calls are right, it does not represent the real feelings of the masses. The regime is very unstable, and the wave of spontaneous strikes straight after the banning of Solidarity shows that the working class is still combative.

The likelihood is that the release of Walesa will backfire on the bureaucracy, and actually strengthen the working class.

NOVEMBER 10 saw demonstrations all over Europe called for by Solidarity in exile. In London 250 people demonstrated outside the Polish embassy on a demonstration called by the Polish Solidarity Campaign.

For PSC this was part of the preparation for the demonstration on December 12, the anniversary of martial law.

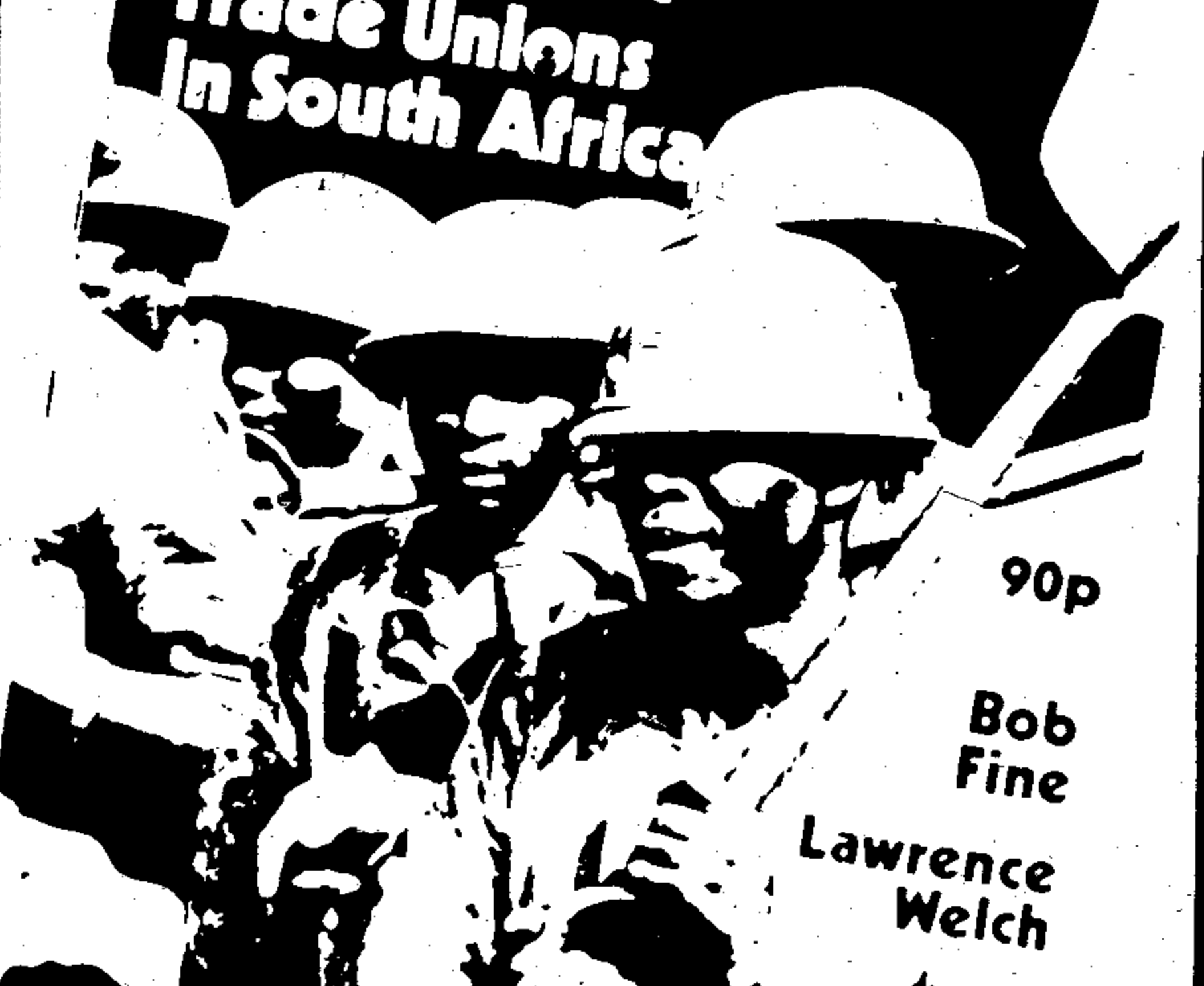
The PSC national committee has now fixed the details and is finalising the speakers, one of whom is Joan Lestor.

All Socialist Organiser supporters should get their union branches and Labour Party bodies to take their banners on this very important demonstration - despite the fact that one of the speakers is Bernard Braine, the Tory MP.

We will march with the labour movement banners, and make it clear that we are opposed to speakers from the capitalist parties.

A QUESTION OF SOLIDARITY

Independent Trade Unions In South Africa



90p

Bob Fine

Lawrence Welch

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

International News International News International News



Fitzgerald - a 'liberal' tailing clericalism



Haughey - his party in tatters

Grim choice for Irish voters

John O'Mahony reports on the 26 Counties election due on November 24

THAT the 26 Counties is to have its third general election is 18 months came as no surprise to anybody in Ireland.

The Fianna Fail government led by Charles J. Haughey had depended on the support of the three Workers' Party (ex Official Sinn Fein) deputies and of 'independent' Dublin TD [MP] Tony Gregory. The latter was openly and publicly bought, to the tune of many millions of pounds of public spending in Gregory's constituency.

Economic

The death of one Fianna Fail deputy, and the incapacitating illness of another, plus the Workers' Party's withdrawal of support for a government intent on a savagely stringent and services-cutting economic policy, brought Haughey's government down.

The choice before the Irish electors is a grim one. Fianna Fail is a bourgeois party, with a somewhat more nationalist stance than the other main bourgeois party, Fine Gael. Both are committed to economic cutback policies to try to get the 26 Counties out of its economic mess. Neither even pretends that it will do anything about mass unemployment.

Haughey is campaigning on the issue of 'trust', and his opponent, Fine Gael leader Garret Fitzgerald, hopes to trap votes with the cry for 'credibility'.

Haughey says he doesn't 'trust' Fitzgerald to take steps to amend opposition to abortion into the Irish constitution. A Fitzgerald government would probably depend on Labour votes, and the Labour Party has criticised the proposal.

Abortion

The Irish SPUC exists in a society where abortion is illegal (i.e. exported to Britain), but it has had immense success with the pre-emptive demand that the constitution be amended so that only a referendum could ever legalise abortion. All the Protestant churches in the 26 Counties have denounced the proposal as 'sectarian', that is, based on Catholic social doctrine — but to no avail.

Haughey has set the necessary machinery in motion. 'Liberal' Fitzgerald responds to Haughey's claim that he cannot be trusted with the promise to bring about the amendment by March next year.

Discipline

Fianna Fail enters the election in a terrible state. It is traditionally a party of professionals. Originating from the defeated Republicans of the civil war — men and women who were, in a completely serious if not in a profoundly social sense, revolutionaries — it has always had a harsh discipline and regimented

quality.

This has been shattered in the last three years, since the forced resignation of Jack Lynch. The ill deputy is Jim Gibbons, who gave evidence against Haughey at his trial in 1970 to allegedly running guns for the Northern Catholics.

Either Haughey lied at the trial, in which he was acquitted, or Gibbons did. Gibbons' severe heart attack may have been brought on by the fact that he was recently assaulted at the Parliament building after a heated leadership-crisis meeting of Fianna Fail.

At least half of Fianna Fail loathes Haughey. If he loses the election, he is done for politically.

Labour

The Labour Party too is in a bad position. Its former leader, Michael O'Leary, has just defected to Fine Gael. Taking the logic of coalition politics seriously, he decided that, given his commitment to a coalition government dominated by Fine Gael, he might as well join the party.

At the Labour Party's recent Galway conference, the coalition policy was defeated only in the sense that the party refused a prior commitment to it. It will fight the election on its own policies, and then negotiate coalition if that is an option. A delegate conference of the Party will decide.

O'Leary's replacement as leader is Dick Spring, who defeated party chairman Michael D. Higgins (candidate of the left and anti-coalition forces) by 12 votes to 2 among the Labour TDs.

Inherited

Spring is a crystallised representative of a certain type of Irish politician. 32 years old, he inherited a safe rural seat from his father 18 months ago, his father having held it for 38 years. People who inherit seats from fathers or husbands are no rarity in Dail Eireann.

Spring is a former Irish rugby international. Of the 14 Labour Party seats, 10

are for rural districts — though over 50% of the 26 Counties population now live in cities and towns — and many are held on a personality rather than a political basis.

Spring supports coalition. However, he has asked Noel Browne to stand for Labour in Haughey's constituency. Browne left Labour some years ago in opposition to coalitionism.

He is an almost legendary figure in Irish politics because 30 years ago, as a minister in the then coalition government, he took on the Catholic Church and the medical establishment by attempting to bring in a free health service for mothers and babies. Browne may accept the invitation.

The Workers' Party will present Labour with a serious challenge in the cities and towns.

It is not yet known if the Provisionals will stand in the election. They did badly in the last election eight months ago, in sharp contrast to their showing in last month's Six Counties election.

The election may affect the fate of the new Six County assembly. Fitzgerald is more favourable to it than Haughey, who dismisses it.

Fitzgerald is favoured by Britain, and the polls suggest that Fine Gael will take seats from Fianna Fail.

LEONID BREZHNEV



The achievements of an 18-years reign:

- Restalinisation of the USSR.
- Invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 to snuff out 'socialism with a human face.'
- Savage anti working class repression in the USSR and Eastern Europe.
- Giving a tremendous boost to the imperialist arms drive by invading Afghanistan in December 1979.
- Threats to invade Poland unless Solidarnosc was destroyed. Martial law was declared in Poland in December 1981, Solidarnosc formally banned in October 1982.
- November 1982: dies — unfortunately in bed.

His successor is Yuri Andropov, aged 68. He presided as USSR ambassador in Budapest over the suppression of the Hungarian workers' revolution and of the Hungarian people in 1956. Was head of the KGB — backbone of the Stalinist police state — for 15 years.

Ritualistically pledges to continue Brezhnev's policies, and is certain whatever changes occur to continue the anti working class and repressive core of Brezhnev's line. Unlikely to get an international relaxation of tensions because the US ruling class needs the tensions to whip into line the American people, who so recently revolted against their ruling class's war in Vietnam.

What was said for others will bear repetition for Brezhnev:

He was a rotten bastard — Hell roast him. Soon may the Russian workers send his successor speeding after him.

LAST WORDS

What were Leonid Brezhnev's as-yet-unreported last words before he died? What final advice did he pass on to his Kremlin comrades, what ultimate insult to the workers of the world, what grim bureaucratic epigram or commonplace remark?

We are running a competition to find out. Let your imagination run free and send us your answers by November 30.

Entry is 50p: the winner will receive a copy of Trotsky's 'Revolution Betrayed'.

Mark your entry 'Brezhnev's Last Words', and send to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 9NS.



Decision time for LCP

THERE has been a great sea-change in people's attitudes towards the Palestinians. Their claim to be seen as a nation with a right to statehood has gradually become widely recognised.

The PLO has become widely accepted as the representative of the Palestinian people and not, as they were presented a few years ago, as a bunch of murdering psychopaths.

The resolutions passed at this year's Labour Party Conference amply illustrate this change.

But the shift has not taken place mainly because

of the existence of a vigorous solidarity movement. It has taken place because of changes in the thinking of European governments, and changes in tactics on the part of the Palestinians, as well as the blatant aggression of the Israeli state.

The Labour Committee on Palestine was founded by a supporter of SO and a supporter of Briefing, seeing the failure of the Labour Movement to respond to the invasion of Lebanon. Given the change in mood, the campaign has the possibility

of mobilising large numbers and broadening and deepening the understanding of imperialism and Zionism within the Labour Movement.

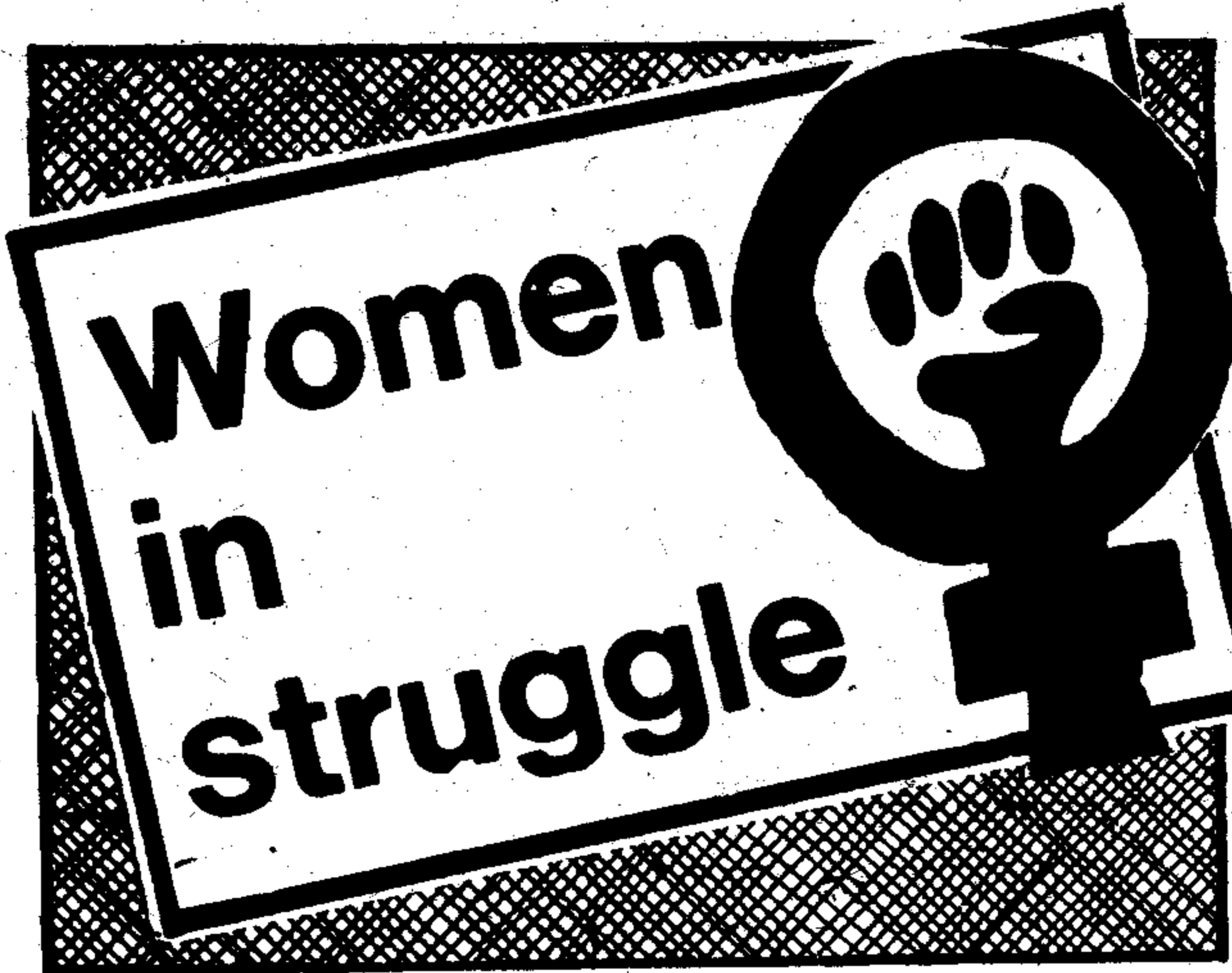
To do that, its Conference this weekend must decide to turn the LCP into a real activist organisation, with local groups able to undertake the steady work of mobilising and explaining. It must outgrow its present role as a source of speakers and occasional initiatives.

The big opportunities that face the LCP should not tempt it to jettison its

stand against Zionism 'in order to get a big alliance'. Without firm opposition to Zionism, LCP will not be able to produce a coherent explanation of the Middle East conflict.

In addition, any conciliatory move towards Zionism will inevitably lead to a convergence with the Zionist forces who advocate a West Bank state for Palestinians, alongside Jewish state in the West of Palestine, as the solution.

Andrew Horn



Closing the rally after the demonstration against deportation of Afia Begum (November 13), a 'Workers Against Racism' speaker dismissed the Labour Party as having done nothing to support the demonstration.

She seemed to have overlooked banners from the Tower Hamlets Labour Party, the YS, and Queen Mary College Labour club, with their contingents forming a third of the march.

Meanwhile, the Trades Council, whose active support ELWAR claimed to have, sent their banner, but nobody to carry it.

Apart from representatives from the Bangladesh Welfare Association, and Afia Begum herself, there were unfortunately few Bangladeshis on the march.

The Labour Party support must be used to help build support from the Trades Council and in the Community, where Labour councillors are already working with Bangladeshi councillors and others to fight the effects of racism.

Local Labour Party activists have continually approached East London Workers Against Racism, proposing to work together.

Squeezing school meals staff

IN COMMON with many local authorities, Humberside County Council is facing a financial crisis.

The council is presently discussing cuts in services and rate increases. Three Labour councillors walked out of a meeting a few weeks ago rather than register a vote for cuts, but the majority of the Labour group is already implementing cuts.

NUPE and GMWU negotiated a reduction in hours from the county council of one hour, from 40 to 39, with no loss of pay — but the county council has demanded that staff work 2½% harder.

Ian Dolphin spoke to Thelma Caselton, a cook at one of Hull's senior high schools and a member of NUPE.

"Each manual worker employed by the county council in schools and social services", said Thelma, "has had their working time cut by 1½ minutes in every hour. Instead of using this to employ extra staff, the council has ordered cleaners and meals staff to work 2½% harder to make sure the same work is done.

"No overtime is to be given, and no extra staff taken on.

"A good example of what this means is the social services drivers. The drivers are supposed to stop work



School meals jobs are threatened by Tory cuts — and councillors who are 'Tories in Labour clothes'

one hour earlier on Fridays — so they have to either work for nothing or leave children collected from special schools by the side of the road.

"Cleaners are being forced to leave some jobs in schools because they don't have time to do them. This creates a possible health hazard.

"NUPE suggested that all the time reduction should be taken on Friday, so that we get a long weekend. But some cooks and caretakers have instructed their staff to take a few minutes each-day. We are not working the 2½% harder that they ask for, but leaving work.

"There have been a lot of threats made by caretakers and cooks — who are also trade union members — ag-

ainst members taking this action. In one school, a cook who conveniently had the Friday off left instructions that no work was to be left until Monday. When I went to see what was happening, the ladies said they had to do the work because Mrs X would be angry when she got back.

"The same thing is being done in many kitchens and schools. Cooks are telling staff that they will lose their jobs. Caretakers are telling cleaners that contract cleaners will be brought in to do their jobs.

"I'm working class, and I'm beginning to think a lot of councillors are Tories in Labour clothes".

Since this interview, some Labour councillors have tried a different meth-

od of implementing cuts. In the first week of the action, the front page of the Hull Daily Mail carried a headline on the 'threat' of food poisoning in school kitchens.

This was the brainchild of one particular right-wing Labour councillor, who issued a statement to the press that if food poisoning was suspected in any school, they would not hesitate to call in private contractors to provide the school meals. This was the first mention of food-poisoning!

All Humberside Labour Party wards and constituency parties should pass resolutions supporting the action of the ancillary staff and condemning the county council Labour group. County Council employees should prepare for any

action necessary in support of workers victimised, or of the ancillaries' action.

Messages of support to: R.Basford (NUPE), c/o NUPE offices, 413 Beverley Rd, Hull; and copy to M.Wheaton, County Hall, Beverley.

P.S. Although it was agreed that the cut in hours was to be with no loss in pay, when kitchen staff opened their pay packets this week they found some differences.

While lower-paid grades received 4p or 5p more, higher grades had had a pay cut. They are no longer receiving the qualification allowance previously negotiated with the county council.

Whether this is by accident or design remains to be seen.

Peace women jailed

AS eleven Greenham Common anti-missiles campaigners were jailed for 14 days apiece last week, Tony Benn pointed out that the wrong people had been put in the dock.

"The people who are bringing the missiles to this country are the ones who should be standing in court. It's an amazing reflection on our society that these women should be taken to court and charged with a breach of the peace".

The charges arose when the women invaded the Berkshire air base on August 27, though the Peace Camp has been sustained since September 1981.

Defence witnesses included historian E.P.Thompson, who said that the decision to site the missiles in Britain had been taken with no reference to the British people and amounted to conspiracy and deceit.

Centre faces axe

THE Hull women's centre was opened in 1979, when a number of women clubbed together to buy 14 Middleton Street on a rental purchase agreement.

They wanted to provide a space for women where they could meet whenever they wanted or to do whatever they wanted, free from the hassle and intimidation of men.

The collective of women using and running the centre since then has changed, and we hope will continue to change as more women use the resources of the centre.

Despite this, a dark cloud hangs over 14 Middleton St. This year we were given notice of a compulsory purchase order on the building and it is likely to be de-

year. At first it seemed that we would only get site value for the house in compensation — about £80. Clearly that would not be enough to set us up somewhere else.

As Hull has a Labour-controlled city council, we decided to mount a campaign to put pressure on them to re-site us in more suitable premises — a good test for the Labour Party's commitment to the women's movement.

Property

However, all that we have heard from them officially is that there is no council property available at the moment and they suggest that we start looking for somewhere to buy privately.

In the meantime we have received support from the women's centre from local trade union branches via the Trades Council, in the form of cash donations and standing orders. Other women's groups and individuals have also been generous.

Grant

We have tried to raise cash from the council through an application for an inner-city grant: but the consultations we had with the grants committee were farcical.

We are now pursuing our case with local councillors, and negotiating compensation for the building at market value. A big effort is being made to build up a publicity campaign.

Meanwhile, some of the houses down the street are boarded up and empty already, and the area is being run down. Unless the centre is re-sited quickly, it will become a place where women won't want to go any more.

The women of the collective feel that they have learned quite a lot from the campaign to save the women's centre. It has convinced us that women's autonomy must be at the forefront of the women's movement. It is only women's struggles that will achieve what women want.

Wendy Leedham (for Hull women's collective)

Build on gains in Labour Party

Angela Britain reports

Women's Committee. In reply to all this, Women's Fightback is organising our second national conference for Labour women.

There will be workshops on women in the Labour Party Young Socialists; Women, Labour and Racism; the setting up of council Women's Committees and how they can be used to help women influence local council budgets; the motions we should prioritise for next year's national women's conference; and how we can organise in women's sections and councils.

A workshop is also being organised on how to take our fight into the unions. The majority of us belong to unions which don't even pay lip-service to women's demands. We must continue our arguments in the unions. The fight cannot continue in the Labour Party alone: we also need to educate union members.

The afternoon theme for the conference will be how to fight for an autonomous Labour women's organisation — with its own identity and the power to run its own campaigns.

Our fight needs to be taken up and supported by every woman in the Labour Party who supports change and democracy. Our work should be supported by every Socialist Organiser supporter who works in the Labour Party or a trade union: it's time more women got involved in our struggle, if ever we are going to reach and contact ordinary women in our local communities.

AS LABOUR women we are slowly winning the fight to democratise the Labour women's organisation, and turn it out towards the women active in their wards and women's sections. It is through the hard work of groups like Women's Fightback that this radical change is beginning to take place.

We have achieved success at women's section and council level — even at some regional conferences, and national women's conference. But now our paths are being blocked.

Over two dozen motions and amendments focusing on four main demands for more power and status for women in the Labour Party were defeated at national conference. Jo Richardson, an ardent campaigner for women in the Labour Party, has been thrown off the NEC and thus lost the chair of the NEC women's committee.

The successful women's sub-committee is also at risk. The NEC now have eight representatives on the National Labour Women's Committee — instead of six. And even the national Labour Women's Conference is under attack: its conference arrangements committee actually has feminists on it, and it may propose changes that will be met by the closure of the whole women's conference by the right-wingers on the National Labour

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 the Labour Party against the Tories, and represent women's interests 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

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The victimisation of 1974

ALAN Thornett, at that time a full-time deputy convenor in the Cowley Assembly Plant, was first victimised by management in April 1974. Following a series of strikes against the arbitrary introduction of work study onto the tracks, management withdrew all recognition from him in any trade union capacity whatever — even as shop steward for his section.

After a strike lasting one month by the transport drivers, despite the pressure of a national witch-hunt by press and TV, his recognition as department shop steward was restored. He remained, however, unrecognised for all other offices.

The strike was used by T&G General Secretary Jack Jones and Region 5 of the TGWU to 'reorganise' the plant trade union structure and successfully install a right wing leadership for 3½ years.

Although remaining unrecognised, Alan Thornett has been elected deputy convenor for the past six years by ballot vote of the membership.



ALAN Thornett, nationally known and witch-hunted in the Tory press as a Trotskyist militant, and for over 20 years a TGWU shop steward in the transport department of BL's Cowley Assembly Plant, was last week sacked by management after a parking offence revealed his HGV licence to be out of date.

This attack on Thornett, a central figure in the trade union movement on the plant, is part of the BL management's relentless war of attrition on trade union rights throughout the corporation. Below we reprint the Cowley shop stewards' response to the management charges: in the next three pages we examine the background to this latest brazen victimisation.

The TGWU has objected to this sacking on the following grounds:

1. Management have failed to give a single other example of disciplinary action of any kind being taken against a driver for breaking road traffic regulations over the last 20 years.

Even extreme cases resulting in lengthy driving bans — obviously for offences far more serious than a lapsed licence — have not led to disciplinary action. In fact drivers have been found alternative driving work inside the plant until the ban has expired. Other drivers found to have lapsed licences were never subject to discipline of any sort.

This means that Alan Thornett is being treated differently to anyone else making it a clear case of victimisation.

2. Management and drivers have a joint legal responsibility to ensure that licences are kept up. How can BL sack someone for something for which they have equal responsibility under law? They have failed to keep any records or maintain any procedures to ensure that licences are up to date. If they had done so, this would not have arisen.

3. If victimisation is to be avoided, the punishment must fit the crime. Alan Thornett was guilty of a minor road traffic offence, given two points on the new penalty scale, and carrying no other penalty (assuming the police prosecute, since they sometimes don't bother with such offences).

He was fully qualified and entitled to an HGV licence, and was able to obtain one as soon as the oversight came to light. What he did was a mistake, but in no way can it be seen as a sacking offence.

4. Management are stressing the four years of the lapse for maximum effect. But he was not driving HGV vehicles during that period, but non-HGV vehicles mostly inside the plant: this made the oversight easier, since he didn't legally need the licence during that period. He was switched back to heavy vehicles just before the parking offence which led to the situation.

5. The sick note (self-certification) allegation is thrown in to sow confusion and suggest corruption. In fact the note was for one day and involved no money from BL or from the state. Alan Thornett was sick, but was driven to the East Midlands Traffic Office in the afternoon to renew his licence. He could not have been in work driving a heavy vehicle.

This is not just a matter of one man's job. It is part of the 'management of fear' from which everyone is suffering in the plant.

If you can get away with sacking a prominent steward of 20 years' standing over a minor mistake, then whose job is safe?

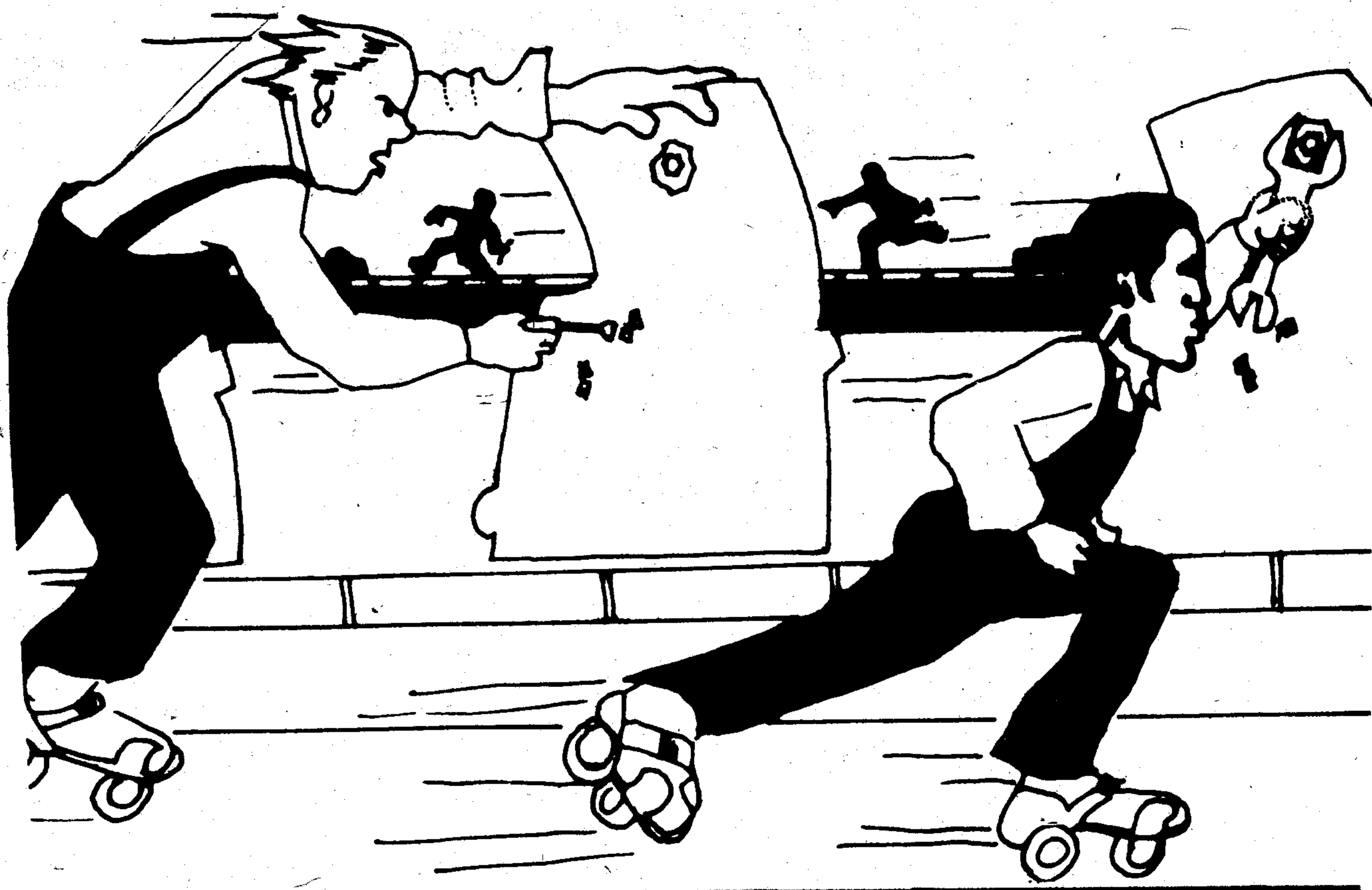
The TGWU has given five days' notice of strike action. After that, if there is a change in the attitude of management, the union will be recommending action on the membership of the whole plant.

Issued by Cowley Assembly Plant TGWU Shop Stewards Subcommittee, 15.11.8

The victimisation of November 1979 of Longbridge convenor and combine committee chair Derek Robinson (left) opened a new era in BL. BL had given notice that any trade unionist who fought or even spoke out against management was in the firing line. The sacking of Alan Thornett is a move to establish a new precedent in this drive against trade union organisation.

EDWARDES' REIC

For five years Michael Edwardes as boss of BL spearheaded the whole ruling class assault in the factories. Now Edwardes has moved on, but the assault continues. Harry Sloan reviews the record.



"Yes, we do have an... work faster or get fired"

MICHAEL Edwardes may now have left BL — but workers on the shop floor have bitter reason to remember his five year reign of destruction and intimidation, which axed at least 82,000 jobs and over a dozen plants, and which has laid waste the powerful combine trade union organisation developed over many years of struggle.

A joint standing ovation from BL convenors and managers welcomed Edwardes the axe man as the 'saviour' of BL in 1977 (and the Morning Star commented that it would have been 'irresponsible' not to approve Edwardes' plan).

Initially brought into the National Enterprise Board by Tony Benn, Edwardes had been appointed by the Wilson/Callaghan government to carry through an all-out onslaught on jobs and working conditions, in the hope of making British capitalism's only major car manufacturer profitable again. But Edwardes arrived at a point where whole sections of convenors and the shop stewards' movement had been softened up to collaborate with management through the so-called 'workers' participation' plan put forward by Lord Ryder in 1976.

A network of plant and national level committees drawn both from management and union 'represent-

atives' had been created to give the illusion that the unions could in some way 'control' the actions of management, and therefore enjoyed some common interest in 'saving the company'.

Sinker

Leading convenors, including Longbridge's Derek Robinson, swallowed the bait hook, line and sinker, and began echoing management talk of the need to act jointly to restore 'viability' — at the expense of the jobs and living standards of workers on the shop floor.

Under these conditions the arrival of Edwardes — a hard-line union-buster who had previously sat out a prolonged strike at Chloride — was seen not as a threat but as an advance by the BL union leadership.

And Edwardes was able initially to make use of these illusions to pilot through, with the acquiescence of Robinson and other

convenors, a number of the changes mapped out under the Ryder plan — in particular the abolition of individual plant bargaining, its replacement with corporate level national pay talks much more in the hands of full-time officials, and the imposition of a rigid five-grade pay structure which would eliminate sectional pay struggles.

In May 1978 Edwardes was able to rely upon combine committee chairman Derek Robinson, a leading Communist Party member, to head off any real fight against the first plant closure — that of the Triumph plant at Speke. It subsequently emerged that the plant had been 'fingered' for closure by a joint 'participation' committee.

But already the growing shop-floor antagonism towards such collaboration — spearheaded by the opposition by the Cowley Assembly Plant shop stewards — meant that 'participation' was of increasingly limited value to management. Its apparatus was gradually

wound up.

The election of Thatcher to office in May 1979 gave a new impetus to the Edwardes offensive, which was already moving forward with the full implementation of corporate bargaining to come that autumn.

Simultaneously with his announcement of a miserable 5% pay offer, linked to 92 pages of strings which embodied a wholesale demolition of existing agreements, Edwardes put forward what he laughably described as his 'survival plan'. The plan called for the closure of 13 BL plants and the axing of some 25,000 jobs in a wholesale rationalisation of the cars division.

To promote his plan, Edwardes summoned the petrified leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to a top-level 'briefing' at which he put the wind up them by offering them what Confed secretary Alex Ferry described as "a look over the precipice".

Edwardes threatened that if the union bureaucrats did not support his scheme for large-scale redundancies, he and the Tory government would pull the financial plug on the whole enterprise and allow BL to collapse — with the probable loss of up to one million jobs in engineering and related industries.

Accepted

For union leaders, who in any event looked upon the problems of British capitalism as 'their' problems — to be solved jointly with the employers — rather than as attacks by the British ruling class upon their shop floor membership which must be resisted, the argument was compelling. Not troubling even to query the figures they were offered by Edwardes, they all, with the exception of the TGWU, accepted his plan.

When Edwardes went further, and announced his intention to impose his scheme by seeking a ballot of the BL workforce, the Confed not only acquiesced — they offered to help! They published expensive adverts in the popular daily papers, calling upon their members to vote 'yes' to 25,000 sackings.

The TGWU opposition amounted in most cases simply to a form of words — TGWU leaflets arguing for a 'no' vote were not issued until after the ballot.

It was in the midst of these pay talks, and after Edwardes and his Confed backers had secured a seven to one ballot vote in favour of the 'survival plan', that the most spectacular victimisation took place.

Derek Robinson, having convened a rare meeting of the Combine Committee — which had become almost defunct during the period of 'participation' — put his name to a pamphlet whose line of opposition to the

'survival plan' echoed the official position of the TGWU.

For this 'crime' Robinson was summarily sacked by Longbridge management. 32,000 BL workers in the Midlands immediately walked out in his defence — only to be met by the treachery of the AUEW leadership.

The day after Robinson's sacking, the AUEW executive met — but refused to make the strike action official, or to call out other BL members in support.

A national conference of BL convenors held the same day failed to make any call for strike action.

A demonstration in Birmingham a week later saw a boycott by AUEW leaders, and no speaker from the union's engineering section on the platform of the final rally, while TGWU leaders made militant speeches in Robinson's defence.

Eventually AUEW officials negotiated a deal which saw Robinson placed in the limbo of full pay while an AUEW 'inquiry' was held, and the strikers were sent back to work.

Throughout these manoeuvres neither Robinson nor any of his 'comrades' from the Communist Party attempted to expose the treachery of the AUEW leaders.

Inquiry

Three months later, in February 1980, with the strike action long subsided, the inquiry pronounced that Robinson had been unfairly dismissed — but at the same time attacked him for 'irresponsibility' as a convenor and alleged breaches of union rules.

These findings were seized upon in a renewed offensive by the company and by the Tory press. The official strike called in his support was put off in the teeth of a media witch-hunt. Eventually, two

weeks later, the strike call was voted down at a mass meeting.

A savage blow had been struck at the BL shop stewards' movement, and the aggressive tactics of the Edwardes regime had given new teeth.

The reign of terror against shop stewards which was to begin, however, did not break the militancy of the shop floor. A February ballot on strike action against the unresolved 5% pay offer and the 92-page document produced a shock two-to-one vote for an all-out stoppage.

But this was not the result union officials — particularly Duffy's AUEW gangsters — had wanted.

In March they piled pressure upon a national meeting of BL convenors to secure a four-to-one vote against an immediate strike call, which could have brought out BL workers alongside the steel strike.

Seizing upon this weakness and the frustration and demoralisation following the ballot and the Robinson victimisation, Edwardes declared his intention to impose the five per cent together with the strings, over the heads of the unions.

Anyone clocking in on April 8 would be regarded as having 'accepted' the offer: anyone failing to do so or 'causing disruption' would be 'subjected to disciplinary action' — in other words, sacked.

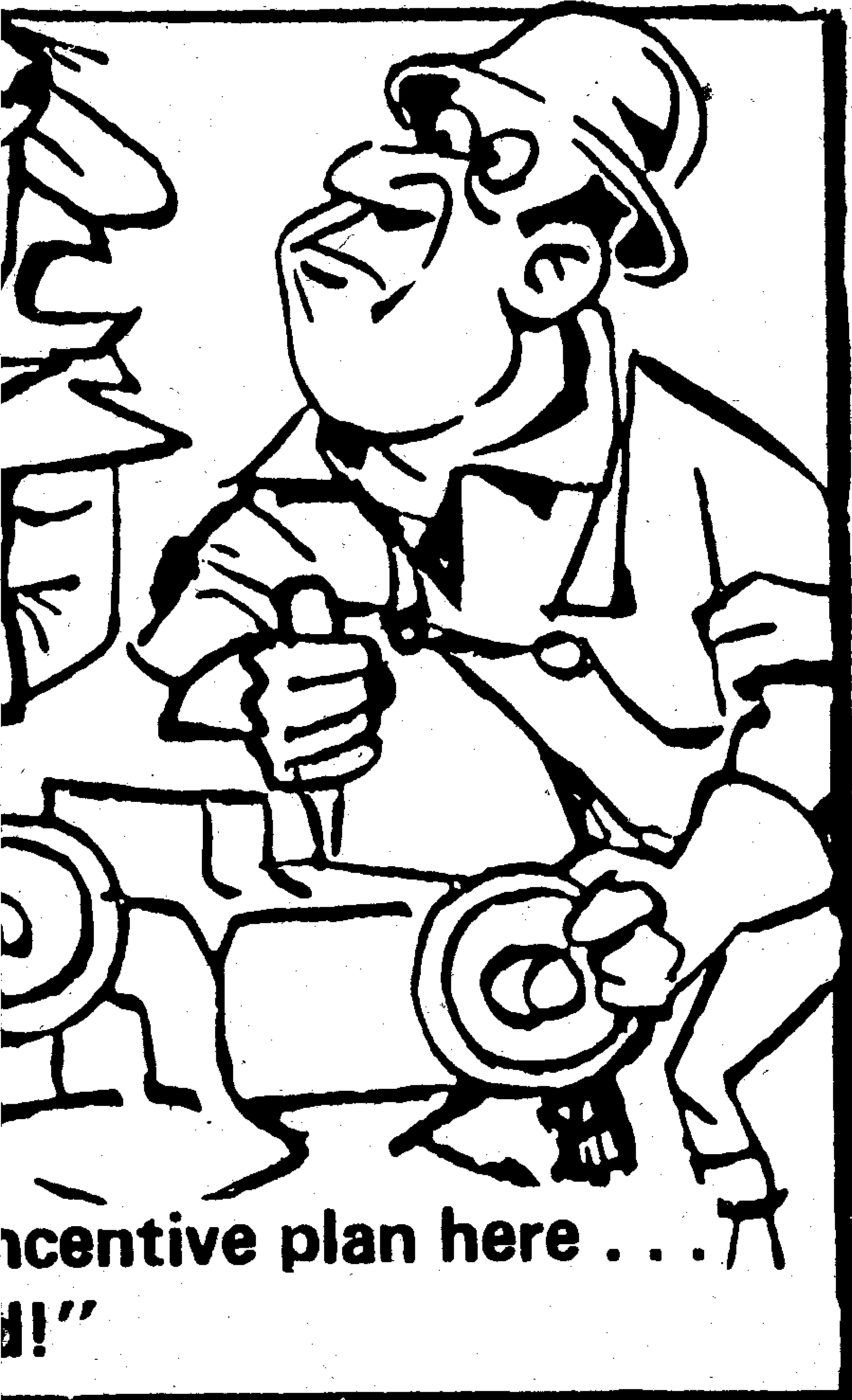
The Joint Negotiating Committee met and decided to defy the threat — calling an all-out strike from April 8. But Terry Duffy denounced the decision, called for separate votes by AUEW members, and then 'assessed' them to be against action.

Faced with this sabotage, other unions offered no lead, with the TGWU simply saying it would support any workers who went on strike.



Cowley — a militant workforce, but a plant chosen by BL for expansion

IN OF TERROR



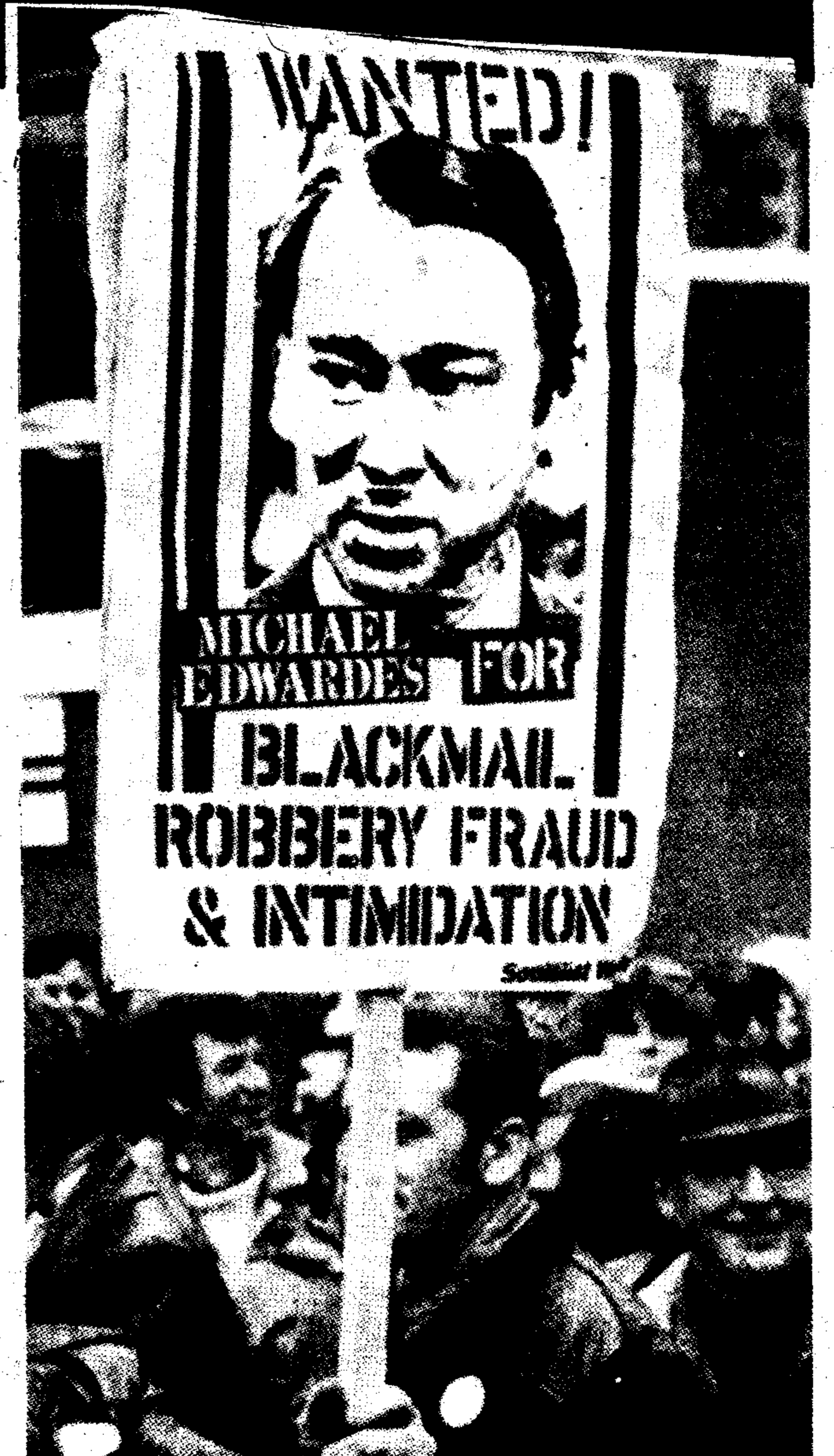
AUEW's Duffy



TGWU's Evans



TGWU official Grenville Hawley leads a Confed march against an Edwardes scheme - but by the time of the march the Confed was already moving for acceptance of the scheme!



Nobody spared

By the end of that week, however, 19,000 car workers in the Midlands were on strike: their action was bringing Moss Evans onto the scene as a strikebreaker on the scale of Duffy. Summoned to a top-level meeting with Edwardes, Evans too was forced to 'over the precipice' - on April 17 obediently signed a document which was a total capitulation to management.

Notice

At the embarrassment of some right wingers, he claimed as a 'victory' the fact that management had agreed to give ten days' notice before making any changes in line with the 2 page document.

In other words, with ten days' notice any agreement to working practice could be unilaterally ended by the company! In August of 1980, Edwardes' decision to withdraw BL from the Engineering Employers' Federation effectively scrapped a series of national agreements affecting minimum rates, premium payments, holidays, and hours of work, opening the door to further attacks.

At the same month a report commissioned by the union and the TGWU leadership on the future of the plant came up with proposals - like Edwardes' plans - would restore 'stability' only at the expense of union members, in particular a no-strike clause. This was yet another signal of the readiness of union officials to take a 'reasonable' line, support management against their own members.

A few months later came another miserable betrayal in wages. Edwardes' offer was voted down by workers decided by a two-one margin for the action. Once again Edwardes turned to union officials as his protectors,

and took them for another walk along his now well-known 'precipice'.

They decided to accept the 6.8% - and then steamrollered acceptance through the National Joint Negotiating Committee and a convenors' conference.

A second round of mass meetings was held - in which the decisive vote turned out to be that of Longbridge, where Robinson's successor Jack Adams argued for acceptance of the offer and proclaimed it carried.

Within a few weeks of this sell-out a new round of victimisation had begun, with the sacking of the 'Longbridge 8' - workers from the Metro track involved in a stoppage of work and demonstration inside the factory.

Once again officials intervened, once again an 'inquiry' was staged - with Adams' support - to defuse a strike which carried over Christmas in the teeth of a witch-hunt; and once again, having done everything possible in advance to kill the struggle stone dead, union leaders went through the ritual of a mass meeting vote - declaring it defeated when in fact the strike call was carried - before burying the victims.

Three months later, Edwardes dropped a new package bombshell: a new package of closures, involving a further 5,000 jobs, and focusing production on the two main areas - Longbridge and Cowley. The implications of this were clear: not only would more jobs be lost, but also the screws would be still further tightened on trade union rights in both plants.

Union officials went through the motions of opposing the sackings - but took no action to oppose even the closure of the modern Rover SD1 plant in Solihull.

By July of 1981 manage-

ment were publicising their plans to crush the shop stewards' movement, including a move to force full-time convenors back on their jobs, and restrict the facilities available to stewards.

A major stage in this offensive was achieved by Edwardes in the now routine 'eleventh hour' sell-out talks which scuttled the 1981 pay review.

With BL workers already organising picketing and passing their strength for an all-out battle with Edwardes, union general secretaries sat down and accepted a 'new' offer which was worse than the original. In exchange for purely marginal concessions on the money offer, union leaders agreed to negotiate a new procedure agreement on disputes and discipline by January 1982; and in addition they agreed to a 'plant audit' - supposedly to iron out anomalies in bonus payments.

The 'new' procedure agreement was in fact a document drafted months earlier.

In its original form, slightly revised in March, it included the introduction of a Joint Works Committee structure to form the final stage of procedure in each plant, and a new JNC consisting almost entirely of full-time officials appointed by the Executive Committees of the 11 unions.

It also planned a new discipline procedure giving plant management the right of summary dismissal in the event of what they defined as 'gross industrial misconduct'; and by making the new disputes procedure a part of each individual's contract of employment it set out to ensure that anyone in

breach of procedure could automatically be sacked.

Instead of rejecting such proposals out of hand, the General Secretaries agreed to a timetable for its rapid negotiation.

Talks went on under a cloud of secrecy, until eventually the text was endorsed unanimously by the full executive of the AUEW, despite the misgivings of AUEW convenors.

It then remained for TGWU official Grenville Hawley to railroad the draconian document through his union structure. To do so he decided to rule that any TGWU plant stewards' committee which failed to reply or which proposed specific amendments rather than rejecting the whole document outright was therefore in favour of it 'in principle'.

By this token - though not a single committee had accepted the document - the only opposition was from the Cowley Assembly Plant, whose convenor Bob Fryer conducted a vain last-ditch struggle in the TGWU to prevent Hawley from simply signing the document.

It is under this new procedure document that Alan Thornett is now being victimised in Cowley.

The 'plant productivity audit' exercise, agreed in the midnight meeting with Edwardes, turned out to be a loose mandate for BL management to do anything they liked on manning levels and productivity.

Together with moves to implement the 92-page 'strings' document from the 1980 pay review - which offered management complete mobility of labour and the breaking

up of seniority agreements - the plant audit placed in Edwardes' hands complete control over manning levels.

The trade union movement in the plants now scarcely retains even any input on the levels of effort demanded on the production lines. The result has been a huge increase in exploitation on the tracks - and a consequent massacre of jobs in the major plants.

1982 has seen ruthless attacks on working conditions, including the axing of rest allowances, the effective outlawing of shop stewards' activity, and yet another wage-cutting pay settlement wear down the confidence and smash the organisation of BL shop floor workers.

Gangster

Edwardes has now moved on to give his attention to the privatisation of the telecommunications industry and the destruction of thousands more jobs in that sector.

By sanctioning the victimisation of Alan Thornett, and risking a stoppage the cost of which could run into millions, his successor Sir Austin Bide has underlined the fact that no new regime is to be established - the gangster tactics used by Edwardes are to continue.

They can only be ended by the kind of action which management and union officials both fear - all out, tenacious strike action to defend each and every threatened shop steward and restore hard won agreements, and lay the basis for further struggles against BL management and their Tory sponsors.

WORKERS over 60 years of age, many of whom have never worked on a production line, are being forced onto jobs which young, fit workers struggle to hold. Sometimes they are switched from day shift to night shift at the same time.

They are told: "That is the job. If you can't hold it, leave".

In the Cowley Assembly Plant, the 'Edwardes Mafia', as they are known to local manager, reached a new level of dehumanisation by attacking the invalids in the plant - the disabled and the blind.

These work in what is known as the 'panel room', where they do light sub-assemblies.

Management have gone into the panel room and pressurised them, particularly those who can walk or see, to go onto production jobs.

Under the 'plant audit' clause negotiated by the national officials and the TUC when they sold out the wage claim last year, hundreds of non-production jobs have been abolished.

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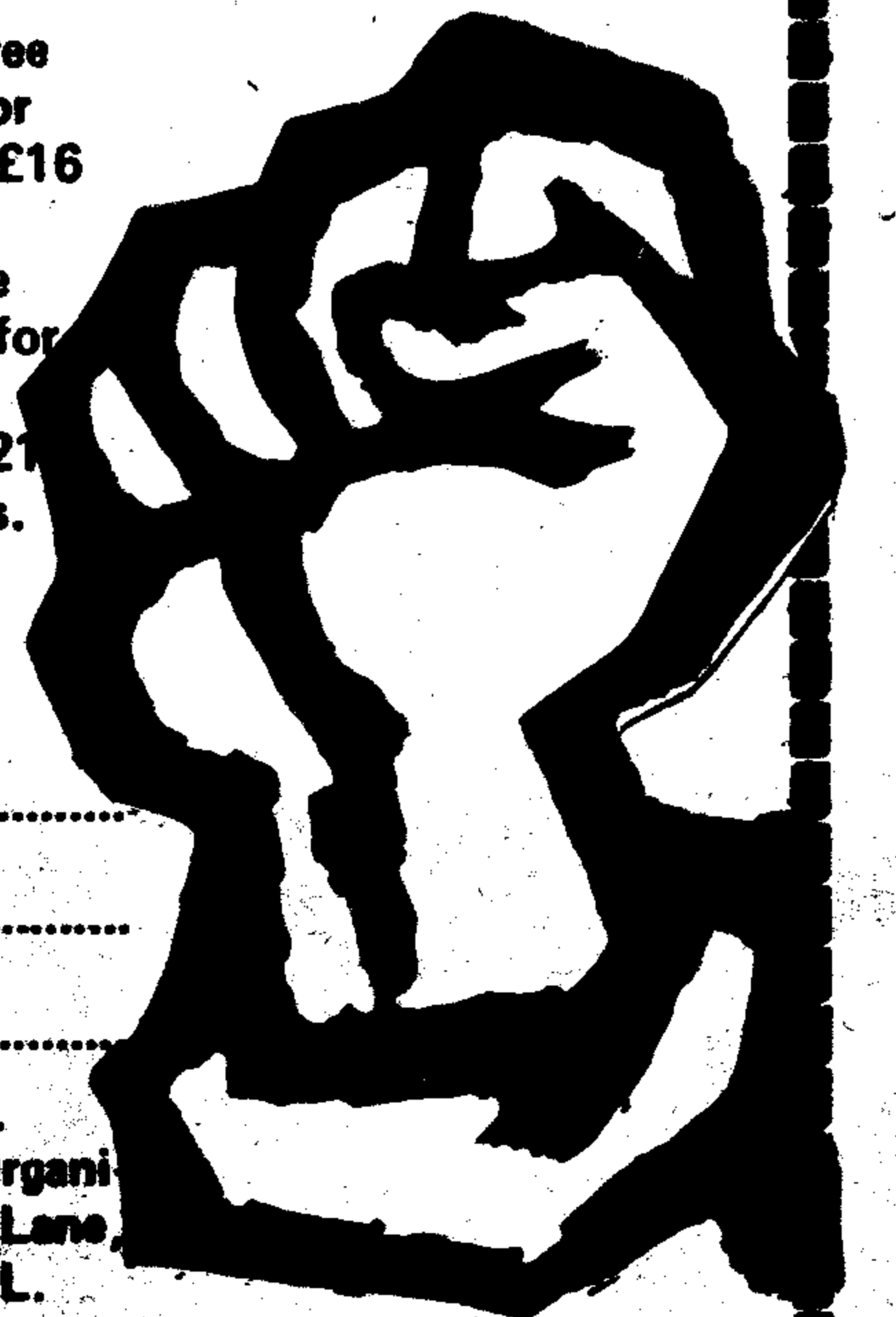
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Socialist Organiser **INDUSTRIAL SPECIAL**

BEHIND THE COWLEY CRACKDOWN

by Bill Peters

BL see the sacking of Alan Thornett as a major strategic move in relation to the future of the Cowley plant.

They are trying to finally resolve the contradiction which has existed for some time between their decision to develop the Cowley complex into a major production area, with a capacity of up to 3/4 million cars a year, and the militant history of the plant.

Their development decision was a practical one, taken in light of the body and assembly facilities next door to each other offered by the complex. But it was taken along with a decision to virtually smash the trade unions and gain complete and unchallenged control over the substantial investment they were planning.

This, dovetailing into the general strategy of BL — broadly along the same lines — creates the kind of situation which has developed in the plant over the past two years.

• A shop stewards' movement of well over 300 has been reduced to double figures.

• Full time trade union positions have been reduced from 20 (on both shifts) to two.

• Shop stewards' facilities have been reduced to a level where top management openly say they only tolerate shop stewards in order to use them to operate the discipline procedure.



• Quarterly shop stewards' meetings, traditionally held on the plant, have been banned, and stewards' meetings only allowed on rare occasions when it suits the management.

• The convenors are disciplined if they call, or even attend, 'unconstitutional' meetings on the plant.

• Convenors are disciplined if they call shop stewards' meetings off plant in working hours.

• Shop stewards have been framed and constantly threatened with victimisation.

Management by fear and intimidation was progressively introduced.

This year the 'blue document', forced in in 1980 but never effectively imple-



mented, was introduced. It gave management control of the workforce through the abolition of the seniority agreements, except where individual sections fought to keep them.

At the same time the 'productivity audit', agreed by the general secretaries during the 1981 wage review, was used to give

management virtually total control of manning levels.

At the end of September this year, the Assembly Plant management began a policy of sending threatening letters to everyone involved in unofficial strike action. They claimed there had been 56 strikes on the plant since May — which is not surprising given the conditions, although most of them were very short.

Since then the letters have been building up, and the threats getting harsher every time. 'Next time we will take disciplinary action against you'... 'Next time we will dismiss you'... 'Next time you will be instantly dismissed'... etc.

Spirit

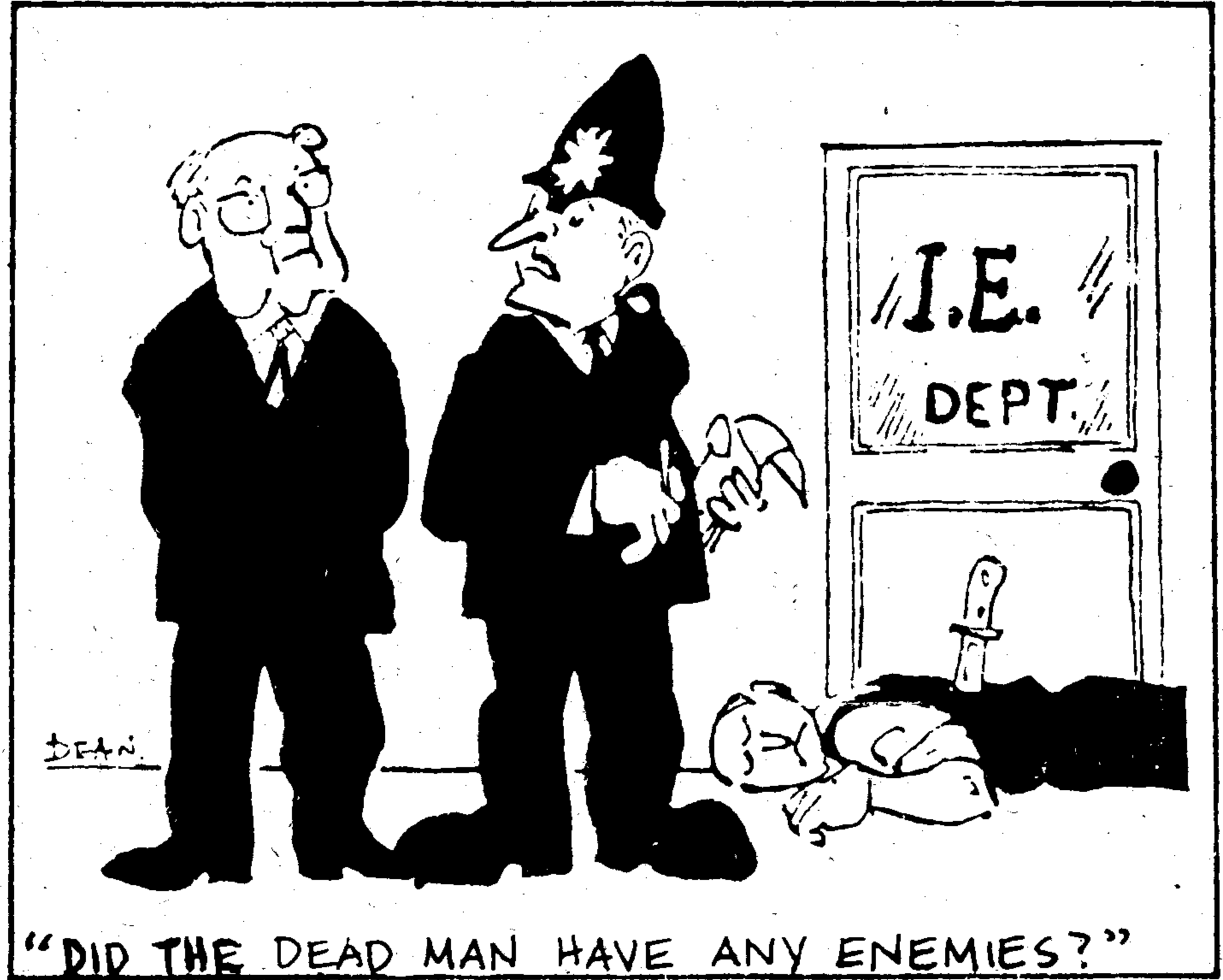
These successes, however, are not enough. The spirit of the workforce has not been broken. This was clearly shown last week by the backlash in the North Works against intimidation.

A fightback which could defeat BL strategy is quite clearly on the cards, and BL have no intention of sitting around and waiting for that to happen.

The successful victimisation of Alan Thornett would be a major blow against such a fightback, and would create the conditions for the next stage of the management offensive, which goes with the introduction of the LM10 model into the South Works.

This new medium hatchback, which moves from its pre-production stage into production proper next week, will see a new level of hard-line management sweat-shop conditions.

The defence of Alan Thornett, therefore, is completely bound up with the future of the plant itself and the conditions the workers have to face.



A chronicle of destruction

- 1968 — British Leyland created after a series of amalgamations among vehicle-producing firms.
- April 1974 — First victimisation of Alan Thornett: one-month strike against move by company not to recognise him as deputy convenor or shop steward.
- 1976 — Ryder Plan for BL: workers' 'participation' in management.
- October 1977 — Michael Edwardes appointed chairman of BL.
- 1 February 1978 — First Edwardes plan: includes 12,500 job cuts.
- 15 February 1978 — Closure of Speke no.2 plant announced. Beginning of a massive job massacre over Edwardes' five years.
- November 1979 — Derek Robinson, convenor at Longbridge and chair of the combine committee, sacked for putting his name to a pamphlet criticising BL's plans. Immediate strike action (made official by TGWU), sabotaged by AUEW leadership.
- February 1980 — AUEW inquiry into Robinson sacking finds that he acted 'irresponsibly', but sacking was unfair. Half-hearted official strike call voted down at mass meeting.
- April 1980 — 5 per cent pay deal for 1979-80, and 92 pages of strings, imposed unilaterally by decree. Workers who strike against this decree warned that they will automatically be sacked: union leaders crumple.
- November 1980 — 6.8 per cent pay deal forced through for 1980-81.
- December 1980 — Eight workers at Longbridge sacked after a stoppage and demonstration in the plant. Strike to defend them beaten down by threat to sack all the strikers.
- November 1981 — 3.8% pay deal imposed for 1981-2 by trade union general secretaries, over the heads of the Joint Negotiating Committee, under pressure of threats from Edwardes.
- 1982 — Management pressure stepped up in the plants. Two-year pay deal forced through for 1982-4. November 10: Alan Thornett sacked.

OUR ANSWER

BRITISH Leyland is publicly owned. Yet it sets the pace, not for workers' rights, but for management gangsterism.

Nationalisation was not a way out the mad international capitalist rat race in the motor industry. It was just another way for the bosses to organise themselves for that rat race.

For workers, the only answer is to fight for workers' control. The first essential is full information about management's plans — open the books and end commercial secrecy!

Having opened the company's books, the BL workers should work out their own work schedules, based on work sharing with no loss of jobs or pay. With combine-wide solidarity and the willingness to seize the factories if necessary, the BL workers can enforce this workers' control.

They can establish links with workers in the car components firms and in the other giant car firms in Britain and internationally, to fight for a workers' plan in the industry in place of capitalist throat-cutting.

Fight back in Leyland

The Leyland Action Committee groups militants in several plants fighting for an alternative to the existing sell-out union leadership. Contact: LAC, 194 Dawlish Road, Birmingham 29.

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ZIONISM—TWIN OF ANTI-SEMITISM?

Andrew Hornung reviews Tony Greenstein's pamphlet 'Zionism — anti-semitism in Jewish garb'

CHIEF Rabbi Emmanuel Jacobowitz was once asked by a BBC interviewer whether there was any difference between being anti-Israel and being anti-Semitic. 'In theory that is possible,' he replied, 'in practice it isn't.'

Earlier this year, a Jewish shopper in Regent Street, no doubt impelled by the same view, insisted that police arrest Labour Committee on Palestine members who were picketing the Israeli state airlines in protest at the invasion of Lebanon.

'I want you to arrest these people, officer, for stirring up racial hatred. They are anti-Semites,' he confidently asserted, undaunted by the fact that the people he was pointing to said they were Jewish.

Tony Greenstein's pamphlet, 'Zionism, anti-Semitism's twin in Jewish garb' is an attempt to give the lie to the equation made by Jacobowitz; and to show, on the contrary, that early Zionists (particularly) collaborated regularly with anti-Semites.

Now people aren't convinced of the wrong-headedness of Zionism today by having it pointed out to them that Theodore Herzl, the founder of Zionism, negotiated with the notorious Russian anti-Semite von Plehve and with the Czarist minister, Count Witte, who openly boasted that 'If it were possible to drown six or seven million Jews in the Black Sea I would be perfectly happy to do so...'

Obstacle

But the pamphlet also reveals that far from being a road to emancipation for Jews, Zionism has always constituted an obstacle to emancipatory movements.

The establishment of the state of Israel was not only the culmination of a colonial drive whose victims were the people of



Beirut in flames, 1982

the Arab East, but the foul fruit of a movement that set its face against all progress for Jews in Europe.

Zionism began in an age in which quack science looked to physiology for many of its answers. Phrenology and palmistry aspired to be scientific pursuits, and theories were developed according to which criminal behaviour was the outcome of certain physical features.

Thus Pinsker, a pioneer Zionist, could write in 1882 that 'Judophobia is... a mental disease, and as a mental disease it is hereditary, and having been inherited for 2,000 years, it is incurable.'

Herzl came to the same conclusion as Pinsker: the Jews were not to be assimilated; gentile society rightly rejected them. So they had to become a colonising force which, under the protection of

imperialist-colonialist powers, would create a Jewish state.

In his diaries, Herzl wrote, 'In Paris... I achieved a freer attitude towards anti-Semitism, which I now began to understand historically and to pardon. Above all, I recognise the emptiness and futility of trying to 'combat' anti-Semitism.'

With blackhearts like von Plehve and Witte, early Zionism shared the assumptions that racial persecution was inevitable — and the view that socialism was to be opposed.

Tony Greenstein quotes from Herzl's diaries again: 'Herzl told von Plehve, "Help us faster to land and the revolt will end. So will the defection (of Jews) to the socialist ranks..."'

Two decades on, Zionism proved no less intransigent in its attitude towards

revolutionary socialism. The Zionist Organisation in Palestine in 1921 was glad to see the arrest and deportation of leaders of the Jewish Communist Party by the British authorities.

Three years later the fledgling Histadrut (the Jewish 'trade union' movement in Palestine and then Israel) expelled members of the Palestine Communist Party.

Collaborated

Even those trends within Zionism which claimed to be socialist collaborated with the British both against the Arabs and against Jewish revolutionaries. The petty-bourgeois nationalist 'socialism' of these trends gloried in pseudo-radical phrases concerning 'liberation of the land' and 'non-exploitation of Arab labour', when all this meant was the snatching of land from those who actually worked it and debarring Arabs from employment.

The contradiction between the radical phrases and the reactionary reality is well-brought out in this quotation from David HaCohen, a leading Labour Zionist.

'I had to fight my friends on the issue of Jewish socialism to defend the fact that I would not allow Arabs in my Trade Union... to defend preaching to housewives that they should not buy at Arab stores; to defend that we stood guard at orchards to prevent Arab workers from getting jobs there... to pour kerosene on Arab tomatoes; to attack Jewish housewives in the markets and smash Arab eggs they had bought... to take Rothschild, the incarnation of capitalism, as a socialist and to name him the 'benefactor' — to do all that was not easy...'

The image of the Nazi daubing Jewish shops with the slogan 'Don't buy Jewish' here finds its grotesque parallel in the Jewish 'socialist' ruining the Arab crops and telling Jewish housewives 'Don't buy Arab'.

But Zionism did not simply replicate some features of German anti-Semitism, it collaborated with it.

The Nazis were well aware that the Zionists were not their enemies. In 1935 Heydrich ordered 'the activities of the Zionist orientated youth organisations are not to be treated with the same strictness that it is necessary to apply to the members of the so-called German Jewish organisations (the assimilationists).'

In line with this policy the Zionists were put in control of Jewish representative bodies, because, as Hanna Arendt put it, 'according to the Nazis, Zionists were the decent Jews since they too thought in "national terms".'

A Jewish police-force was established to bring in those unwilling to be sent to concentration camps.

Holocaust

Through the period of the holocaust, the Zionist organisations set out not to rescue Jews but to rescue Jews — preferably young ones — who wanted to go to Palestine.

The Jewish Agency consciously decided in the midst of the most terrible carnage the world had ever witnessed that they should concentrate on making propaganda for a Jewish state rather than give aid to Jews in desperate need. As an ex-chairperson of the Chief Rabbi's Rescue Committee wrote in the Times in 1961: 'My experience in 1942/3 was wholly in favour of a



Tel-Aviv crowds celebrate UN partition plan, 1947

British readiness to help openly, constructively, and totally, and that this readiness met with opposition from Zionist leaders who insisted on rescue to Palestine as the only form of help.' (My emphasis — AH)

Hopes

At every stage Zionism, while it reflected the emancipatory hopes of some Jews, sided with reaction, refused to rally resistance and played an ignominious part in ensuring that there could be no escape... except via Palestine.

Tony Greenstein's pamphlet provides irrefutable evidence of the reactionary nature of Zionism in terms of the interests of Jews. He takes for granted that the colonising pro-imperialist project of Zionism had wholly reactionary results for the people of the Arab East, above all the Palestinians.

The weakness of the pamphlet arises out of its initial intention — to reply to the jibes coming, for the most part, from Jews. In attempting to counter the common charges levelled against anti-Zionists by Jews, the author sometimes fails to give a balanced assessment.

For instance, he rightly attacks the nationalist ideas of Zionism. But what makes Zionism reactionary is not its nationalist character alone.

Garvey

After all, the Garvey movement in America (and beyond) was a profoundly progressive one — despite Garvey's announced intention not to stay to fight American racism but to organise emigration to a 'Negro Zion', despite Garvey's contact with the Ku Klux Klan, and despite a certain inverse racism.

Why — I can almost hear the question being asked by

people like Jacobowitz — pick on Jewish nationalism? Tony Greenstein isn't sufficiently explicit about what makes Zionism different.

Zionism's unremittingly reactionary character arises out of the fact that:

firstly, it teamed up with imperialism to establish and maintain itself where other national movements fought imperialism to gain liberation;

secondly, because Zionism was a colonial movement of Europeans it inevitably became an instrument for the denial of the national rights of millions of Arabs;

thirdly, unlike Garveyism, for instance, it did not draw hundreds of thousands — even millions — into political struggle but out of it;

and fourthly, its class composition and dependence on Diaspora capital as well as imperialism meant that from the beginning Zionism was virtually devoid of those class contradictions that remain live within nationalist mass movements in spite of their nationalism.

Lastly, because the author is at pains to fling back the accusations of Jews, the pamphlet — its title immediately reveals this — is too much concerned to deal with the events of the first half of this century. Too little is said about, say, Zionism in the last ten years.

The last six months have revealed the open collaboration between the fascist-inspired Phalange and the Israeli forces; the blitzkrieg and the butchery have reminded less-blinded Israelis of the hellfire of Hitlerism.

Such will always be those living proofs of the nature of Zionism that might be capable of raising a movement to oppose it, stronger and more compelling than the most thorough historical research.



The horror of the Lebanon war has shaken even ardent Zionists

Lenin and the Russian workers' Revolution

In the second part of their series, Andrew Hornung and John O'Mahony look at Lenin's activity in the 1905 Revolution and in the years of defeat and retreat that followed



The Bolsheviks combined an underground party with the use of 'legal' newspapers

The ebb and flow of revolution

After living in Munich and London, Lenin was in Geneva when the revolutionary storm actually broke in Russia.

On January 22 1905 thousands of workers, dressed in their Sunday best and carrying religious ikons, marched to the Tsar's Winter Palace in St Petersburg to present a petition to ask for "amnesty, civil liberties, higher wages, the gradual granting of land to the peasantry and the convocation of a Constituent Assembly".

Led by the priest Gapon, these "unfortunate reviled slaves", as they called themselves, proceeded peacefully towards the man they saw as their protector, the Tsar. Suddenly the Cossacks were unleashed against them. Over 1,000 were slaughtered and over 2,000 injured.

Strikes immediately spread throughout Russia, drawing in the soldiers, the sailors, and the peasantry. Throughout 1905 mass revolutionary struggles engulfed Russia.

Although the liberal bourgeoisie seemed to have gained control of the movement, strikes broke out once again towards the end of 1905, and it was this massive upheaval that created the first Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

Soviets

The soviets were councils set up by the workers to draw the threads of the different struggles together and unify them, to link the factory organisations, to combine the employed and the unemployed, and in short to be the 'parliament' of the working class — not, however, one resting on a sham democracy with elections every five years, but on a real democracy knowing the right of workers to recall the deputies to the Soviet and at will elect new ones.

Quickly the Soviet in St Petersburg became (with Leon Trotsky as its chairman) the focus of the strength and power of the working class, and an alternative authority to the Tsar-

ist state. It was to the Soviet that the working class looked for leadership and organisation. Into it was channelled the energy and aspirations of the class.

The Russian workers had improvised the form of democratic self-organisation which the working class needs as it begins to rouse itself and challenge the ruling class's power in society. Soviets reappeared in the 1917 October Revolution. After World War 1 soviets sprang into existence in East Europe and Germany.

In 1956 the great working class uprising in Budapest against Stalinism could find no better form of self-organisation in a struggle for power than the workers' council. At Gdansk in 1980 the workers created a powerful soviet-style 'parliament'.

This universality proves that the soviet, invented in 1905, was not merely a Russian or an ephemeral form of proletarian organis-

ation, but the necessary form for overcoming the atomisation of the proletariat and simultaneously the best organisational network for democratic working class rule in society.

In St Petersburg the Bolsheviks did not at first know how to evaluate this new form of organisation. But Lenin, though he could not then know its full historical significance, quickly grasped the soviets' importance in the struggle of the working class, and could not wait to get to St Petersburg himself to see and direct events from close at hand. Moving first to Finland, he arrived towards the end of the year in St Petersburg.

Once again, Lenin's unshakeable sense of the concrete led him to translate what he saw into an answer to the question, 'what is to be done?' And once again the answer was in terms of party organisation.

Here was an opportunity 'to develop our activities

in the most extensive and audacious manner". But first the party had to develop many legal aspects of work while maintaining an underground apparatus. It had also to open its doors, hitherto rigorously guarded against easy entry, to the recruitment of thousands of workers and ensure that workers took leading positions on all the committees.

Recruit

This was no reversal of the view that consciousness and system were the fundamentals of the revolutionary party — on the contrary, it was precisely because in the previous three years the Bolsheviks had achieved this that they could now recruit without any danger of dilution.

"The working class is instinctively, spontaneously Social Democratic", declared Lenin in the first article he wrote on returning, adding, "and more than ten years' work by Social Democracy has done

much to transform this spontaneity into consciousness".

Here and elsewhere, he introduced essential qualifications and modifications into the ideas of 'What is to be Done?', developing those ideas in the light of the experience of the working class struggle.

The party, Lenin realised, must not be like a priest reciting sacred and unchanging texts. It must always be the organised richness of the experience of the working class, given sense and direction through the science of Marxism.

By 1906, especially after the defeat of the Moscow insurrection in December 1905, the storm was dying down. Soon Tsarism was victorious and most of the revolutionary leaders were once again forced into exile, Lenin himself going to live in Paris.

Everywhere there was "demoralisation, split, discord, renegacy", with "mysticism serving as a cloak for counter-revolution". It was now, in this period of black reaction, with the revolutionaries increasingly isolated, that the lessons of the 1905 Revolution were drawn and the political tendencies in the working class movement were hammered into their final shape.

And now too the Bolshevik Party, which was to lead the proletariat to victory within a decade of the decisive defeat of 1907, was forged.

Lenin summed up what happened after Tsarism had defeated the 1905 revolution: "Victorious Tsarism is compelled speedily to destroy the

remnants of the pre-bourgeois, patriarchal mode of life" in Russia. Russia's development along bourgeois lines marches forward with remarkable rapidity... Revolutionary parties must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they must learn... how to retreat properly".

But for the revolutionaries, to learn to retreat, to face the situation of massive depression in the aftermath of defeat, to adopt tactics appropriate to this new situation, to go down again into the underground after the open work possible during the revolution — this was indeed difficult. Reorientation and re-education of the revolutionaries proved a bitter task to accomplish, specially against the background of defeat and consequent demoralisation.

Two fronts

The whole period was for Lenin taken up with a battle on two fronts, against both ultra-right and ultra-left tendencies. In the heat of the revolution the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had reunited. After the defeat new divisions emerged. A section of the Mensheviks became open reformists, and a section of the Bolsheviks reduced themselves to ultra-left posturing, which threatened, no less than the reformist Mensheviks, to make the revolutionary tasks impossible.

The Bolshevik ultra-lefts were known as the 'otzvoists' (recallists), and led by Bogdanov, Alexinski, and Lunacharski. The Social Democrats had successfully boycotted the undemocratic Tsarist Duma (parli-

ament) during the revolution, when mass struggle provided its own alternative. Now, in retreat, it became necessary to change tactics, to learn to utilise even a reactionary undemocratic Tsarist parliament for socialist propaganda.

Lenin, in alliance at first with the Menshevik section of the party, advocated such use of the Duma. Eventually he overcame the at first almost unanimous Bolshevik resistance; the continued revolutionary depression made the need for change increasingly obvious.

Except to the hard-core 'otzvoists'. Their ultra-leftism, threatening to reduce the revolutionary party to self-isolation and unrealism, was linked with a retreat into mysticism. They tried to develop socialism as a sort of religion. Eventually they were expelled from the Bolshevik faction.

The Menshevik reformists, the 'Liquidators', unlike the otzvoists who were their mirror opposites, wanted to confine themselves entirely to open work within Tsarist legality, liquidating the underground party. Legal trade unions were now possible, and on this basis they increasingly argued, in effect, for the creation of a working class party of reforms.

Lenin wanted to make the fullest use of all possibilities for legal work, such as in the Duma and the unions, but never to limit either the activity or the propaganda of the workers' party to what Tsarism permitted. That would have been to surrender the ideological, political and organisational independence of the working class.

Once again, an apparently technical question of organisation represented really crucial issues, as the eventual evolution of the liquidators into full-blown reformists demonstrates.

"The proletariat is revolutionary only insofar as it is conscious of and gives effect to [the] idea of the hegemony of the proletariat... To preach to the workers that what they need is 'not hegemony but a class party' [the slogan of Livitski, a liquidationist] means to betray the cause of the proletariat to the liberals; it means preaching that Social-Democratic labour policy should be replaced by a liberal labour policy". (By a 'class party', the liquidationists meant a party sociologically working class and narrowly confined to bread-and-butter working class issues within existing society).

The struggle on both fronts culminated for Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the Prague conference of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party at the beginning of 1912. Together with a group of 'Pro-Party Mensheviks', the Bolsheviks decisively cut off the Liquidators. Thereafter the RSDLP was essentially the old Bolshevik faction.

Now, after years of depression and isolation, the Russian labour movement began to revive, particularly after the shooting of striking workers on the Lena Goldfields. In 1912 Lenin moved from Paris to Cracow (in Russian-ruled Poland), to be as near as possible to the struggle in Russia. The Bolsheviks began to reap the rewards of their combination of legal and illegal work. In 1912 they began to publish Pravda as a legal daily paper.

Continued next week



The first moves of the 1905 Revolution were led by a priest — Father Gapon

Word from Glasgow's "Mole"

NEWS about the Mole in Glasgow District Council's Housing Department has recently surfaced in the Glasgow Herald.

Produced by person or persons unknown, 'The Mole' is an irregularly appearing bulletin which circulates in the catacombs of the Housing Department. As the name suggests,

it belongs to a literary genre halfway between Private Eye and a Solidarnosc underground paper.

A recent article in the Glasgow Herald (November 2) exposed the Mole to a rather larger audience than it is accustomed to enjoying. As the article points out, 'The Mole's sharpest barbs are reserved for a

number of companies which have been successful over the years in winning contracts from the District Council'.

The article continues by referring to an earlier edition of the 'The Mole' which carried an apology for failing 'to pass comment on the startling frequency with which Messrs Aitken,

Lafferty, and Gilbert Ash are awarded district council contracts'.

The reason which 'The Mole' gave for this was that 'We have grown quite attached to our kneecaps'.

The Glasgow Herald also notes references in 'The Mole' to alleged irregularities by councillors.

What makes the article in the Glasgow Herald of particular interest is the closing paragraph, dealing with the attitude of the controlling Labour Group leader to 'The Mole'.

'Jean McFadden [Group leader] believes the Mole does no real harm. But she did add that she could take this liberal attitude because she had not yet been a target of the Mole's cruel pen'.

Socialist Organiser was recently threatened with libel action by McFadden over an article dealing with housing in Glasgow which, in the course of a polemical conclusion, contained a throw-away line about back-handers.

This phrase about back-handers was clearly an off-the-cuff comment — and

has been withdrawn and apologised for.

Even so, McFadden reacted with a threat of libel action and by bringing in the police to investigate this 'allegation' of corruption. 'It is my duty when allegations of corruption are made to see that they are investigated by the police', she said.

Her reaction to a throw-away line in a socialist newspaper is clearly very different from her attitude to much more explicit references to alleged 'irregularities' in 'The Mole'.

Could it be that McFadden's reaction to the SO article was dictated not by concern for the good name of the council but by a desire to help whip a witch-hunting atmosphere conducive to the expulsion of the article's author from the Labour Party?

There is certainly a crying contradiction between McFadden's attitudes to the different papers and articles. Perhaps the Mole could supply us with an answer?

STAN CROOKE,
Glasgow.

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.



Should solidarity with South African workers all be channelled through ANC?

DEFEND MILITANT!

I AGREE with Alan Campbell (SO 108) that Militant is "an ossified sect, incapable of any creative application of Marx's tradition to today's problems".

However, he is totally wrong to suggest that socialists should not defend Militant from the present witch-hunt in the Labour Party. Campbell confuses support for Militant's right to exist in the party with support for their politics.

The offensive by Labour's right wing against the left and against democracy in the party has chosen Militant as the easy target for its attacks. Nevertheless the witch-hunt is an attack on the whole left, including Socialist Organiser, and it is crucial that socialists oppose it and defend its initial target: Militant.

We need to declare that the left, and the rank and file of the Labour Party, will not accept expulsions or proscriptions of any socialists, including and

especially Militant. Despite our political differences with Militant, we do support their right to exist in the Labour Party. It is a basic act of solidarity with a working-class grouping under attack from the agents of the ruling class.

Comrade Campbell should learn the lessons of the workers' movement: together we stand, divided we fall.

If Militant choose to take a sectarian stance towards the fight against the witch-hunt, that is their decision. Socialist Organiser is not sectarian. We will take a principled position of defence of the left as a whole against the right.

Socialists will be judged by their actions, not their theory. If Socialist Organiser were to stand aside while Militant is attacked, we would rightly be condemned as irrelevant sectarians.

ANDY DIXON,
Stockport.

Don't knock the ANC!

I AM sure that many South Africans and others were distressed to read Bob Fine's article in Socialist Organiser last week, in which he launched a vitriolic attack on the ANC [African National Congress] and SACTU [South African Congress of Trade Unions].

While I agree with Bob that the Anti-Apartheid Movement should promote greater trade union solidarity with opposition movements inside South Africa, including direct

contact in appropriate cases, I find his attack on the ANC and SACTU vindictive and unwarranted. His claim that "they fear... that they cannot keep black workers in their place as a supporting cast for a struggle directed by themselves" is the type of comment which destroys the very solidarity which he claims to be promoting.

Bob Fine does not bother to mention any of the 'long list of generally bad arguments' which SACTU and

the ANC use against direct links, so here are two of them:

1. Direct links, unless handled with due skill, put South Africans and their organisations at risk.

2. Direct contacts are open to a variety of abuses, both by the South African and British governments (for propaganda purposes) and by trade unions in both countries which do not genuinely serve the interests of the working class.

These are reasons to

avoid a 'free-for-all' of direct links. Rather, what links there are should be channelled through the Anti-Apartheid Movement with the advice of the representatives of the South African people and trade unions.

Bob Fine points out that SACTU has no affiliated organisations in South Africa. He must know that to admit SACTU connections in South Africa is to invite swift destruction, but anyone with a grasp of

recent events in South Africa will know that this does not mean that there is any lack of support inside the country for either SACTU or the ANC.

Let us fight the racist government, not the liberation movements!

Since I am a South African and not keen to go on a mailing list for letter bombs, I will have to remain,

yours anonymously,
Tsotsi

SCIENCE Battersea Power Station — mon amour

Power of the pen

by Les Hearn

HAVING spent my first three years of life in Battersea, one of my earliest impressions of the world around me was of the giant 'upturned table' of Battersea Power Station.

So it was with a certain sadness that I heard of its impending closure, after a long period of rundown. Happily, it has been list-

ed' for preservation, so the Central Electricity Generating Board won't be able to replace this "flaming altar of the modern temple of power" (Daily Herald, 1933) with another South Bank office block!

Battersea joins a long line of London power sta-

tions to be closed — seven since 1978, with two more to go by 1983, as well as three which have been 'mothballed' without ever being used.

They are being replaced by more efficient coal-fired power stations in the East Midlands, giant oil-fired power stations at Littlebrook and the Isle of Grain, and nuclear plants in Suffolk (Sizewell), Essex and Kent.

The history of CEGB policy is a rather sorry one. Many post-war power stations were obsolete before they were built. Their heat efficiencies* were about 27%, instead of the 35% attainable at the time. In other words, their electricity cost about 30% more than it needed to.

The situation now is no better, and possibly worse. The modern oil-fired stations cost a vast sum of money and, though they are much more efficient, the cost of the oil they burn has rocketed, something the CEGB ignored — to our cost.

Mounting problems with nuclear power plants also mean more expensive electricity.

So, is the answer to return to coal? One problem

with coal (as outlined in these columns) is acid rain. Sulphur contaminates all coal supplies, and, when burnt, turns into oxides of sulphur, gases which float away in the air until it rains.

Then they combine with the water to make acids which destroy buildings, forests and lakes (particularly in Scotland and Scandinavia).

Here, we find ourselves looking again at Battersea Power Station — one of only two coal-fired power stations which removed oxides of sulphur from flue gases, with 97% success. If this innovation had been incorporated into all coal-fired plants, acid rain would have been a thing of the past.

But generating power from fossil fuels (actually the remains of plants and bacteria that died millions of years ago) suffers from the drawback that supplies will eventually run out. North Sea oil will probably run out in 30 years, for example.

So we are sending up in smoke assets which are not being replaced, assets which ought perhaps to be used for making useful chemicals.

In any case, we don't want to inherit a vast industrial society from capitalism, only to find that we have no power to run it on! So we should be using our influence now to get 'renewable' sources of power established and to see that power is more efficiently used.

Which leads us once more to Battersea. This station was the pioneer and only British representative of 'district heating'. In this, waste steam from the station was piped across the Thames to heat flats in Pimlico, rather than being uselessly vented into the atmosphere?

Why has the CEGB never introduced combined heat and power (CHP) schemes, linking power generation with cheap district heating?

Why are they closing power stations often less than 30 years old, replacing

them with expensive oil-fired 'nuclear plants'?

Why have they not installed anti-pollution equipment in coal-fired power stations?

Indeed, what are the relative costs of producing electricity from coal, oil and radioactive substances?

The answers to these questions remain shrouded in secrecy. Though the CEGB is supposed to belong to the people, we still have to struggle to impose accountability on it.

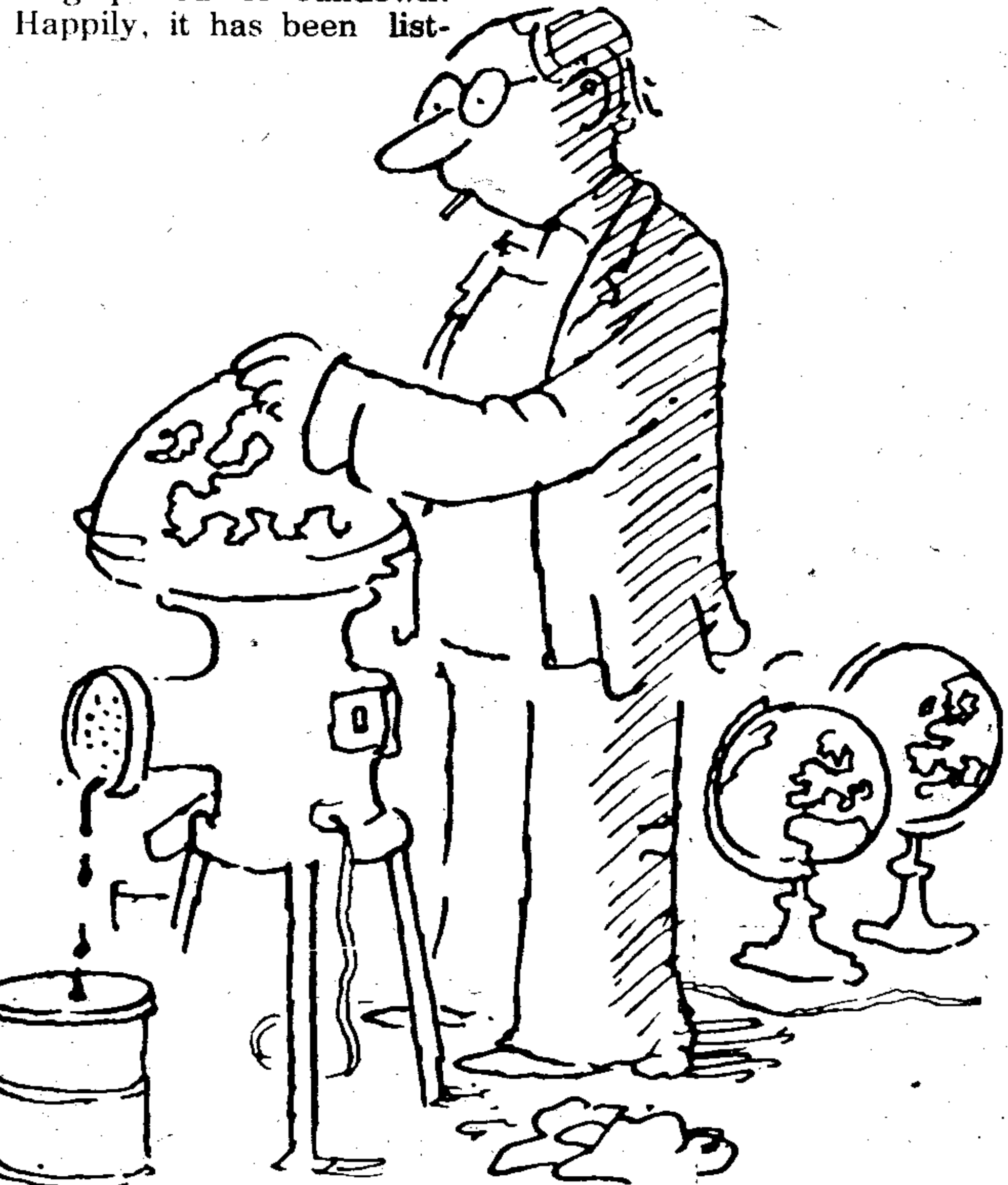
A good start would be to shake up Labour's energy policy.

* Heat efficiency is the percentage of heat produced by the burning fuel which is used. The H.E. of a coal fire is about 2%!

P.S. I'm going to the BSSRS conference [see advert]. How about you?

'BEYOND THE WHITE HEAT': a weekend conference to debate socialist strategies on science and technology in the recession.

10.30 Saturday November 27 to 1pm Sunday 28th, Manchester Business School, Booth Street West, Manchester 13. £5 (£2 unwaged), creche available; details 01-437 2728. Organised by British Soc. for Social Responsibility in Science



Do I detect division in their ranks? Probably not for long, as no doubt this despicable conference will still take place at some time.

Ian Rez

DHSS STRIKERS FIGHT TO BREAK ISOLATION

HUNDREDS of DHSS workers in Birmingham and Oxford are on strike in a fight for jobs.

All eleven offices in Birmingham are now on strike. Some have been out for ten weeks; while the action in Oxford is seven weeks old.

They must not be left to fight alone against a ruthless employer. The government is fundamentally opposed to creating more jobs.

The rank and file membership have shown the way. The Broad Left leadership in the CPSA must be made to follow and organise for victory.

The DHSS section executive of the CPSA, the largest civil service union, already have a mandate for all-out strike action against the cuts (see article by Rod Bacon in SO 107).

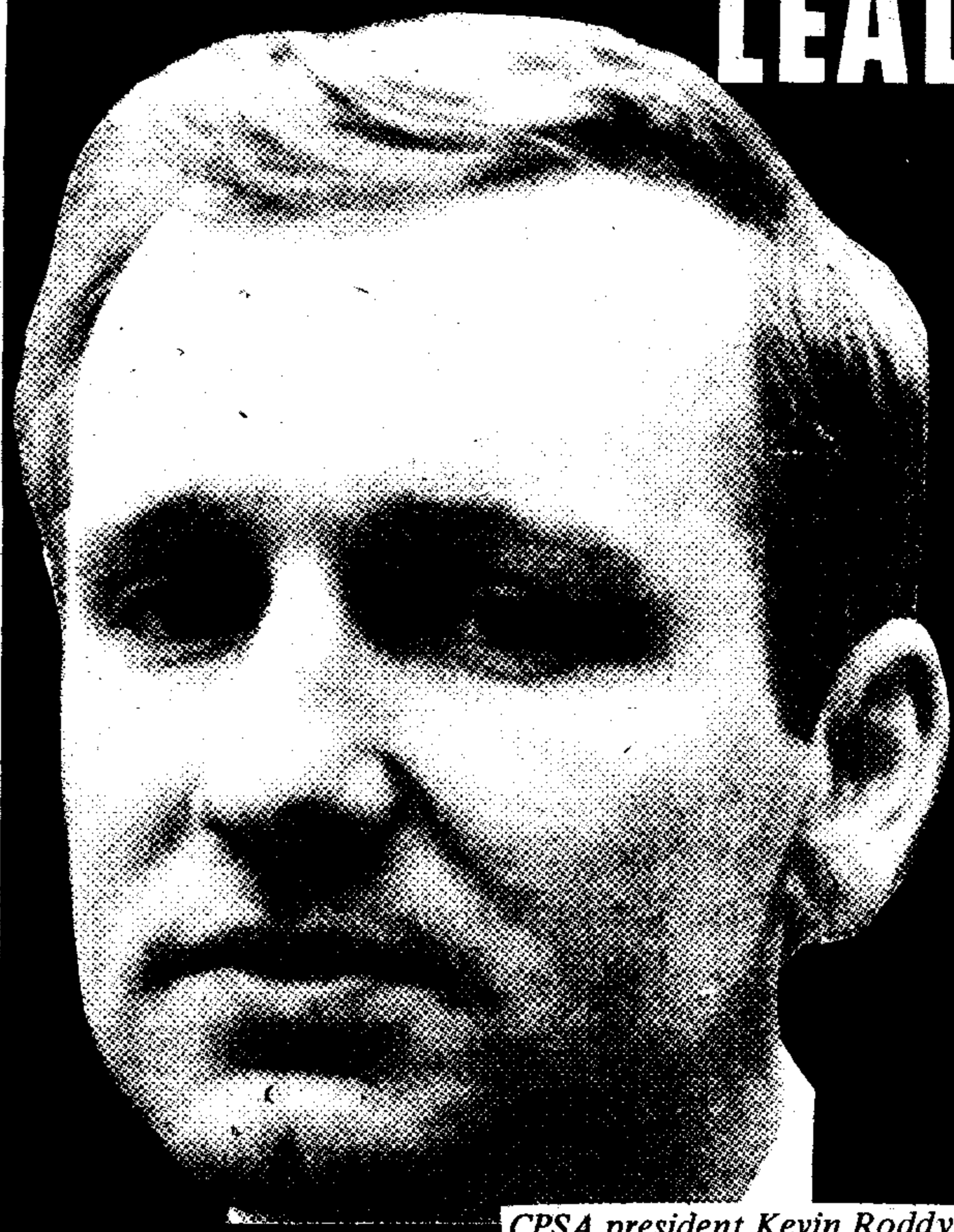
Although the CPSA leadership have accepted the decision of those on strike to reject the return to work deal that gave no permanent jobs, they are still anxiously seeking a deal that can end the dispute and 'save the union's resources for the '83 pay campaign'.

There is no sign of them giving the mandate to give a strong lead to the membership to make this a national strike for jobs.

If there is no fight on jobs now that offices are taking action, what chance there for the pay campaign?

The Oxford strike committee and most of the

CHALLENGE TO BROAD LEFT LEADERSHIP OF CPSA



CPSA president Kevin Roddy

Oxford strikers have decided that escalation is needed.

Other offices coming out would secure us media coverage — at the moment the government can pretend nothing is happening.

The Strike Committee in Oxford supported the suggestion of the Socialist Caucus in the CPSA for a national meeting of regional and branch representatives in Birmingham to discuss how best to promote the dispute.

Two of the strike committee travelled to Birmingham last Thursday to seek support for such a meeting.

Strikers at the Ravenshurst Street Office and members of the Regional Strike Committee all expressed support for the idea. They too agree on

the need for escalation.

Proposals were also discussed about joint Oxford/Birmingham delegations to offices in Scotland and Wales.

It was agreed that the Oxford representatives would return to Birmingham the next day to attend the Birmingham Strike Committee and the strikers' mass rally in Central Hall.

However, on the Friday those who had previously been supportive now raised organisational objections as reasons to withdraw their support.

At the rally one branch secretary from Birmingham was persuaded to support — but on approaching the other Branch Secretaries they said they would oppose her if she proposed such a motion. Undaunted, one of the Oxford representatives moved the motion from the floor and in a second contribution asked that it be put to the rally to vote on.

Hurried consultation took place on the platform. David Woods and Dai Havard, CPSA and SCPS full timers, opposed a national meeting, saying it would use money from the strike fund.

Intention

This was never the intention.

The chair put the motion to the vote without clarifying for the meeting what

they were voting on and so quickly that if you blinked you'd have missed it.

It was defeated 2 to 1 but with easily half of those present not voting.

Despite this setback in attempts to provide a national forum to discuss escalating the action it was important for the Birmingham strikers to hear such ideas.

Escalate

They will not hear them from their leadership. It is significant that two contributions from the floor at the Birmingham mass rally supported the Oxford proposal and wanted assurances from the top table that they would escalate the dispute.

One speech from the platform did bring the rally to life and that was from SEC member Stewart McLennan from Glasgow. He said a face to face confrontation, shutting down the whole department if necessary, was needed now. There was no other way to win.

This is the message that must be taken out from the offices on strike to other parts of the country.

The government won't be moved by how much money is collected — it is offices out on strike that count.

The chance of joint Birmingham and Oxford delegations must not be lost and the links between

the Birmingham and Oxford strikes should be built on immediately.

Large contingents from the strikes should be encouraged to attend the forthcoming CPSA Broad Left conference in Leeds on November 27, and move emergency resolutions demanding that the SEC escalate the dispute.

Civil servants from other offices should attend the conference and put similar pressure on the Broad Left leadership to make this a national dispute and not falsely attempt to separate the fight on pay from the fight on jobs.

The members on strike have shown the lead. Every job is under the Tory axe. It is time for a united fightback — and the union executives must be forced to lead that fight.

How you can help:
•Send a resolution to the CPSA Executive from bran-

ches demanding they use the mandate on all out action.

•Invite speakers from the Oxford and Birmingham strikes — preferably as a joint delegation.

•Argue for industrial action in your office.

•Organise delegations to the picket lines — in Oxford mass pickets Monday and Friday 7 till 9, in Birmingham check with Regional Strike Committee.

For delegations and speakers ring: Regional Strike Committee, 021-643 8191, ext. 2333.

Messages of support and donations to:

(Birmingham) R. Horton, Strike Committee CPSA Room 337, Fiveways House, Islington Road, Birmingham.

(Oxford) M. Robertson, CPSA, 24, Beechcroft Rd., Summertown, Oxford. OX2 7AZ

Eviction threat

THE 42 strikers at Arlington House hostel for single men in Camden, North London, have been informed that they are to be evicted. Rowtons, who own the hostel, have got a court order to remove the striking workers from their rooms in the hostel by midnight of Thursday November 25.

The strikers are planning an all-night demonstration on the night of the evictions, starting at 8pm on Thursday November 25 at the hostel in Arlington Road.

Camden's Labour council has promised accommodation for the evicted strikers, and the struggle to improve the wages at Arlington House — currently around £30-odd a week — will continue.

Money is needed, and also help on the picket lines at

Arlington House and at the London hotels owned by Rowtons: the Mount Pleasant, Calthorpe St; the Grand, Southampton Row; and the London Park, at the Elephant and Castle.

Contact: strike committee c/o Camden Labour Centre, 8 Camden Rd, London NW1.

I'm a UNREGISTERED Socialist

25p plus 15p postage from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Setback in privatisation fight

AT ITS mass meeting last week, the Birmingham branch of NALGO voted not to take all-out strike action in support of striking social service workers.

However, the meeting was attended by some 7,000, out of which approximately 2,500 voted for all-out strike — around 900 NALGO members were out on strike.

NUPE social services branch later voted to return to work, arguing that there was no guarantee if they stayed out that they would get the support of other unions. They too accepted the statement from the council which gave no indication of any change of direction on the council's plans to privatise.

It was argued that the fight against privatisation would continue, and a resolution was passed condemning privatisation. However, the strikers accepted the possibility of not cooperating with the 'efficiency'

consultants put in by the council: under conditions of a return to work, non-cooperation would be suicide.

The defeat of this dispute represents a major setback in the fight against privatisation in Birmingham. The experience of the strike, and the links developed between the two unions, are a positive development — one that will have to be developed and built on in the coming period.

Plans to privatise the cleaning services in 50 schools will need to be resisted by all-out strike action.

Services can be defended against cuts and privatisation through strike action — directed and maintained by workers, with democratic strike committees, despite the union bureaucrats. The record of the union bureaucracy in the recent dispute illustrates their reluctance to offer clear leadership.

Teresa Munby

November

S	7	14	21	28
M	8	15	22	29
T	9	16	23	30
W	10	17	24	
T	11	18	25	
F	12	19	26	
S	13	20	27	

WHAT'S ON

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

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

OXFORD Socialist Organiser meetings, Thursdays at 8pm, 44b Princes Street. 18 November: Polish workers fight for Solidarnosc.

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).

In Poplar and Clay Cross, Labour councils have defied Tory governments. But a confrontation over refusal to balance a council budget would be different and unprecedented? What would happen? What tactics would be best?

Islington Socialist Organiser meeting: speaker, Martin Loughlin. Sunday November 28, 3pm, Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Road. For baby-sitting, phone-Nik, 607 5268.

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

LONDON Workers' Socialist League educationals on basic Marxism. Next one, 'Socialism and nationalism'. Friday November 26, 7.30pm. For details of venue, write to WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

NO PASS Laws conference. Sunday December 12, 10am, County Hall, London SE1. Details: 146 Kentish Town Road, London NWS.

ISLINGTON Labour Party Young Socialists meeting: Annajoy David (national secretary, Youth CND) on 'Jobs not Bombs'. Tuesday December 16, 8pm at the Labour rooms, 295 Upper Street.

CAMPAIGN for the release of political prisoners in Sri Lanka. Public meeting, Friday November 26, 6.30, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1.

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy Women's Action Committee conference: Saturday December 4, County Hall, London SE1.

Next Socialist Organiser delegate meeting Saturday December 4, 11am to 5pm, in Sheffield. Local SO groups should start electing delegates now.

BAN PLASTIC BULLETS, a Labour movement delegate conference, planned for Manchester, February '83. Sponsors include LCI, Bernadette McAliskey, Ken Livingstone. More sponsorship needed from LP/TU bodies. Contact Martin Collins c/o Box 15, 164/6 Corn Exchange, Manchester M3 4BN.

ANTI-APARTHEID Trade Unionists' conference. Saturday November 27, details from AAM, 89 Charlotte St, London WC1.

FROM WAR in the Third World to World War 3? Dayschool, Saturday December 11, 11am, at Hargrave Hall, Hargrave Road, London N19, sponsored by CND, EISSOC, CAAT.

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

Workers' Socialist Review no. 2 includes: debate on the Falklands/Malvinas; Bob Sutcliffe on Argentina in the world economy; articles on Lebanon, Central America, Poland, South Africa, France. 80p with supplement, plus 20p p&p, from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

NATIONAL Abortion Campaign/Labour Abortion Rights Campaign trade union liaison committee: public meeting, Monday November 22, 7.30pm, County Hall. 'Going forward on abortion rights' — about the NHS and abortion. Speakers from LARC, Pat Leman and others. Workshops, bookstalls.

No to NUPE expulsion Why the turn-about on NHS pay?

ANNE Marie Sweeney, the NUPE militant threatened with expulsion from the union by witch-hunting Oxfordshire officials, has received strong backing from the local Trades Council.

When the letter from

area officer Alf Collier, announcing that Anne Marie (because of her suspension from NUPE) is no longer a delegate, was read to Oxford Trades Council, delegates reacted with anger and surprise. As a consistent attender and

activist in Trades Council campaigns, Anne Marie has been at the forefront of struggles — particularly those involving defence of public sector jobs and services.

A fellow NUPE home help spoke out strongly in Anne Marie's defence, and Trades Council secretary Marie Campbell was instructed to write to NUPE stressing the value of Anne Marie's contribution and the Trades Council's surprise and concern at losing her as a delegate.

There was a similar response at the next day's meeting of the Oxfordshire County Association of Trades Councils, of which Anne Marie is President, and a letter is also to be sent from the CATC to NUPE on the issue.

Anne Marie's 'crime' is to query ballot procedures in election in her branch, NUPE County, where she has been assistant secretary and shop steward representing home helps on a county level.

She is at present suspended from the union pending the outcome of a branch appeal to the National Executive Committee demanding she be expelled.

NUPE branches and committees across the country should add their voices to the Trades Council protests, by sending resolutions to the NEC. Please send copies of any resolutions passed to Anne Marie Sweeney, c/o Oxford Trades Council, 167 Walton Street, Oxford.

The 'all-out' call was rapidly followed by moves for a sell-out. Martin Thomas asks why

ON October 28, the health workers' pay dispute reached a high point. The union leaders of the TUC health service committee called for an all-out indefinite strike (with accident and emergency cover).

Within days the dispute plunged to a low point. Union leaders called off the November 8 transport/health strike, and then agreed to put to their members a pay offer worse than the previous one.

Why the turnabout? The truth is that both high point and low point were sides of the same coin.

If the union leaders were really out to win the 12% claim as swiftly and surely as possible, then the all-out strike call would have come months earlier. Instead they organised a level of activity which showed them as maintaining the campaign — without raising the heat too much.

Such a stop-start campaign, could indeed, as Albert Spanswick of CoHSE once declared, continue until next spring at least.



Spanswick: "We'll carry on till spring".

For the union leaders, that would be fine; for the government, it would not be much worry.

Health workers, however, wanted a pay campaign not for show but to get results! By October all the varieties of token action had been tried out — and the rank and file were sick of it.

Thus the call for all-out strike — which put the union leaders on the spot.

While the campaign remained at the level of one trial shot after another, it was no trouble for the union

leaders to take a principled stand and reject the Tories' miserable offers. But after October 28 matters became serious!

Settle or escalate decisively, was the choice. So they rushed to settle at all costs.

The NUPE leadership have generally maintained a more combative stance than CoHSE and most other unions. They have described the offer as 'ludicrous', and may well recommend rejection.

Good. But their line — as expressed for example by leading NUPE official Ron Keating — runs something like this: 'The offer is lousy. But you must understand that the Tories are stubborn, and the only other option is all-out strike.'

'As for us, of course, we would be happy to lead the most militant action imaginable. But members should think over whether they are really ready for indefinite action.'

In short, they keep their noses clean while doing everything to discourage the members.

These manoeuvres harm the campaign. They cannot, however, wipe out the

experience gained in seven months of action, or the sinews developed through joint shop stewards' committees and local coordinating committees.

Even trial-shot actions develop local leadership and organisation. And that rank and file strength — beginning to link up nationally, in a small way, through networks like the Sheffield stewards' meetings and Health Workers for the Full Claim — can thwart the union leaders' attempt to lop the head off the campaign at the point where it is about to reach beyond trial shots.

The miners' vote not to strike was a knock to the health dispute — that's true.

But Arthur Scargill and other militant leaders of the miners themselves have not let that vote knock them flat on their backs — on the contrary, they are talking about a new ballot for action on pit closures alone. So what justification can there be for health unions collapsing?

The 12% can still be won. Maintaining and extending the local committees, making them a pressure on and alternative to the top official leadership, is key to victory.



The strike continues at S&K cash and carry in Birmingham. Messages/money: S&K strike committee, c/o 88 King George's Avenue, Coventry.

DISCREDITED NEWSLINE BLEATS AT UNION JUDGEMENT

Since September the WRP paper Newsline has carried a campaign of allegations that Oxford NUJ member Peter McIntyre collaborated with the police preparing a swoop on homeless claimants in Oxford. Oxford Trades Council has issued this reply.

Now Newsline is protesting that the Trades Council and the NUJ have no right to pass judgment. Sean Matgamna reports.

THE Newsline, the paper published by the WRP, carried on November 11 a reply to a statement by Oxford Trades Council condemning Newsline's campaign of vituperation and slander against Socialist Organiser supporter Peter McIntyre.

Newsline has repeatedly branded Peter McIntyre as a police nark, accusing him of helping to set up the savage police action in Oxford in which homeless people were arrested, interrogated, and tried for alleged social security 'fraud'.

McIntyre has made a formal complaint in the NUJ against Newsline editor Paul Jennings and writer Alex Mitchell. The Trades Council statement vigorously defends McIntyre against the lies of Newsline.

How does Newsline reply? It whines. The people who have taken legal action to drag Socialist Organiser into the High Court for libel insist that it is unprincipled for Peter McIntyre to appeal to Oxford Trades Council or the NUJ. "Our case against Mr McIntyre is political".

Actually the 'case', totally rejected by labour movement activists 'on the ground' in Oxford, is a pack of lies. McIntyre's

complaint is not that Newsline made hard-hitting critical comments against him, but that it called him a police nark. To brand someone as a police nark is not political debate. And McIntyre's action is not calculated to bankrupt and silence Newsline.

Stream

For Newsline and its publishers, the WRP, who for many years have systematically poured out a stream of lies, truth or lies will serve equally well to achieve a purpose — in this case to discredit Peter McIntyre and Socialist Organiser.

The Stalinist, or Goebbelsian, approach is more or less stated by Newsline: "Our attitude to Mr McIntyre is conditioned by the fact that Newsline is the daily newspaper of the WRP and he is not any run-of-the-mill reporter". He is "a leading supporter of SO".

The facts of the case, and Peter McIntyre's account of what happened between himself, the Oxford Mail, and the police, "may be acceptable to the Trades Council, but it is completely unacceptable to the WRP, a party whose task is to fight for the revolutionary leadership of the working class as part of the struggle for workers' power".

(That is, their 'task' is to discredit, by fair means or foul, a Marxist paper like Socialist Organiser and its supporters).

Listen to these High Court heroes complaining against being hauled by Socialist Organiser before the tribunals of the labour movement.

"We believe that it is monstrous that the rules and procedures of the NUJ should be abused by a group of revisionists for political and factional purposes". But it is fair game for the WRP, which claims to be part of the labour movement, to take the same revisionists through the ruinously expensive lawcourts in the hope of bankrupting us. That's dialectics and 'Bolshevik intransigence', my dear.

"The union is not a political party, and nor is the Oxford and District Trades Council. Trade unions should be trade unions and trades councils should be trades councils: their aims are clearly set out in their constitutions, to further the interests of trade unionism. Mr McIntyre and SO appear to believe that they can be used to settle differences between political tendencies in the working class movement".

Well, not quite. An organisation which sues Socialist Organiser writers for saying, among other things, that it is like the Moonies rather than a political tendency, and yet did not sue us for saying and repeating that there is wide suspicion that it receives money from Arab bourgeois governments, is no ordinary part of the working class movement.

Those who use Ms Redgrave's money to bring the courts in as arbiter between the WRP and SO say: "It is for 'Socialist Organiser' to reply directly to the Newsline and to make a full statement, if it can, on the role he [McIntyre] played... [This] group cannot browbeat us with Trades Council resolutions, nor trade union rule books, to try to have Newsline staff... expelled [from the NUJ]". So what would they do if Peter McIntyre sued them for libel?

They declare 'total opposition' to the recent NUJ expulsion of an editorial writer on the Sun for calling serious journalists 'traitors' during the Falklands war — though the writer has been expelled not for his opinions, but for trying to create an atmosphere of witch-hunting war hysteria that would have made it impossible for other journalists to express their views.

And they promise us: "Our campaign of exposures against [McIntyre's] brand of revisionism will continue". With the old methods, no doubt. They don't tell us why it is worth while discussing politics with a 'police nark'.

At the start of its campaign, Newsline itself launched the demand for the NUJ and Oxford Trades Council to investigate the affair. But to look to the WRP for consistency, logic, principles, or even a vestigial sense of shame, is to go to the goat's house for wool. Its members are conditioned not to reason in terms of principles or logic, but to keep in step emotionally with 'the revolutionary party' and its ayatollah.

They'll be whining that we took them before Oxford Trades Council and the NUJ — all the way to the High Court, where early next year they'll do their best to have us bankrupted.

DEFENCE FUND

LABOUR MOVEMENT PRESS DEFENCE FUND

Vanessa Redgrave of the WRP is attempting to ruin Socialist Organiser by legal costs through taking us to the High Court for libel. To defend our right to publish and speak the truth, we need money. Send to Labour Movement Press Defence Fund, 214 Sickert Ct, London N1 2SY.

(...) Finally, we note that handing out these leaflets [with the 'fantastic and vic-

WORSE

Socialist Organiser

THAN THE LAST OFFER!

by Anna Lunts



After seven months, an attempted sell-out...

OVER seven months of fighting! Standing on picket lines, writing leaflets, appealing for solidarity, marching, lobbying leafletting. And suddenly the NHS union leaders return to negotiations.

What bold, generous move prompted this change of position? Did a rumour that the government was prepared to increase its pay offer significantly circulate round Congress House? Did Fowler admit a sudden change of heart? Were some of Britain's lowest-paid workers about to hit the big-time?

No — after a week of rumour and counter-rumour, lies and distortion, the new offer was unveiled. 1/2% extra on next year's offer of 4%!

The offer consists of a two year deal. Nurses have been offered 7 1/2% from

August 23 of this year to April 1 1983, and 4 1/2% from April '83 to April '84. In other words, exactly the same as the September offer, but with an extra 1/2% next year and no back pay from April 1 to August 23.

Although a formal offer has yet to be made to ancillary, clerical, professional, technical and administrative staff, it will consist of 6% this year and 4 1/2% next year, the extra 1/2% being conditional on calling off industrial action. It is highly likely that this also will run from August 23.

There are five very good reasons why health workers should tell the Government what to do with this offer.

1. No back pay from April 1 to August 23

In return for the measly 1/2% extra, we will lose

nearly five months' back pay. A nursing auxiliary or first year student nurse will lose £110, a ward sister approximately £190, a cook about £100, and a domestic £75. The offer is worse than the previous one.

2. It's a two year deal.

This means no more money until 1984. We can't sell our right to extra pay in the future — what if the cost of living starts to rocket again?

3. The deal will mean up to 15,000 job losses.

Health authorities will be expected to cough up £69 million out of existing revenue, by cutting jobs and services. That's bad for us, and bad for our patients.

4. The review body is divisive and anyway will not be

binding on the government

What's the point of having a review body to look into nurses' pay if the government will refuse to implement its recommendations when not in the 'national interest' (i.e. when they reckon there's not enough money left after 'priorities' like Trident and other weapons of war). The doctors' and dentists' review body this year called for a 9% rise for these two groups, and the government only agreed to 6%. So that doesn't make for confidence in a review body for nurses.

One of the strengths of the action has been the refusal to allow nurses to separate off from other health workers. Such a review body will permanently split off the nurses.

5. Most important, it's just not enough!

We started this dispute by asking for 12%. Even the 12% would leave hospital workers close to the poverty line, and would not restore our real wages to the level of the early '70s. For a family living in a council house, the cost of living has risen by 16.1% in 1981 and 8% in 1982. So much for inflation disappearing!

So say no to this offer!

What's the alternative? Perhaps this government is so hard-bitten that they'll never budge.

The truth is that they've never really been tested. One day strikes, selective action, and protests, had their uses in the beginning of the dispute, but were never likely to win the full claim.

NUPE conference voted unanimously for an all-out

indefinite stoppage with accident and emergency cover back in June. The leaders did nothing about it. The TUC health committee voted on October 28 for an all-out strike. Two weeks later, they were eagerly looking for a path to selling out the dispute.

So far only ASTMS has decided to recommend rejection. NUPE has to decide next weekend, and we should insist that the executive not only calls for rejection but campaigns vigorously for the NUPE conference policy.

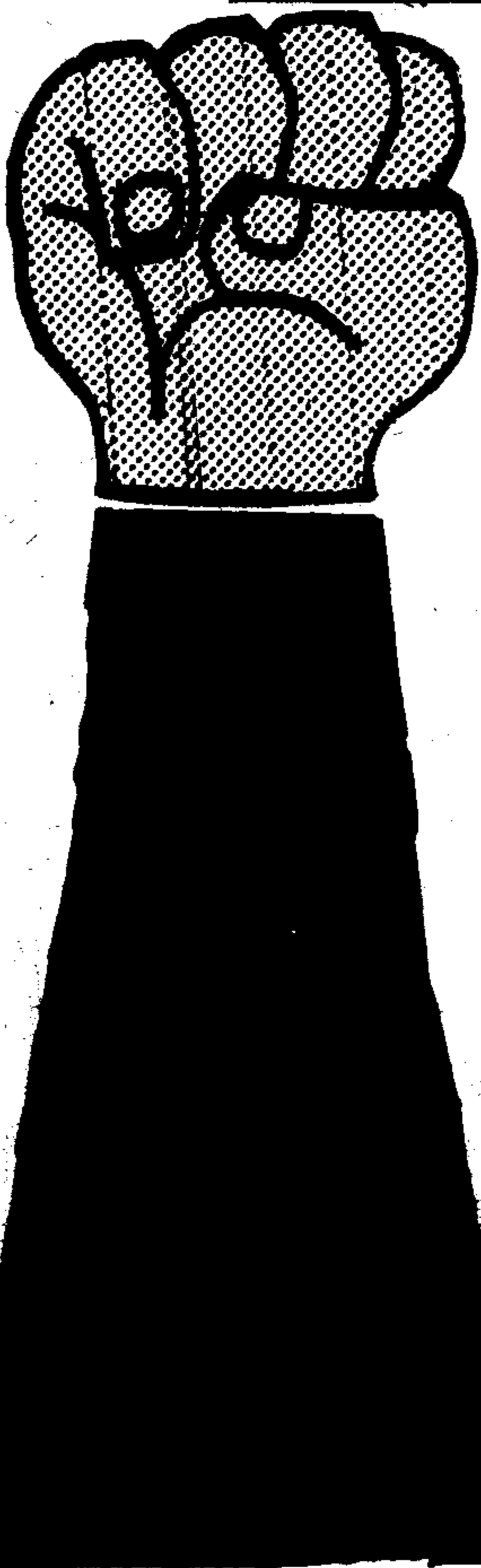
NALGO is likely to call a delegate conference to decide on the offer, and we should support this as opposed to a branch ballot. The NALGO executive has endorsed the TUC health service committee policy for an indefinite strike. This must be publicised and argued for.

CoHSE has already planned a recall conference on December 14 to vote on indefinite action, and it is important that this conference is not called off. So far CoHSE has not made a recommendation for rejection. It should be pressed to do so.

The next few weeks are vital, as the TUC health service committee meets again on December 15 and the results of the consultation will be known by then. We need urgent meetings of branches and stewards' committees to organise bulletins, and joint union mass meetings to hammer home the truth about this new package and to campaign for all-out action. Our national and local officials and executive members should be urged to speak at these meetings.

Stop the sell-out — reject the new offer! Prepare for an all-out strike!

£6000 fund



We've made it! £900 given by a health worker supporter in Manchester — from 'a windfall' — plus £465 from other donations, brings the total up to £6026.82.

It's late (we originally hoped to make the £6000 by the end of July), and that means while many old debts have been cleared by the £6000, others have developed in the meanwhile. But the final rush of £1365 will improve our position considerably.

It brings our head above water again. But we still have to continue bailing hard! The sad fact is that fund-raising is a permanent necessity for a socialist paper without wealthy backers.

A number of supporters have launched us on a possible next fund-raising target. They have given, or guaranteed, a week's (take-home) wages, and suggest we ask as many supporters as possible to do likewise between now and December 31.

This can be a straight personal donation — or a guarantee of money to be covered by public fund-raising activities (jumble sales, socials, sponsored runs, bazaars) and collections from readers who are not active supporters.

To start us off we have the following amounts in already: Colleen Molloy £30 (making a week's wages with another £30 paid recently), Stephen Corbishley £100, Mary Corbishley £50, Gerry Byrne £100, Cheung-Siu Ming £100, Tom Cashman £70.

Other money received this week: collected at Manchester SO day school £55, Anna and Dave Lunts £25, Andrew Hornung £5, Bob Sutcliffe £10, Mick O'Sullivan £20.

We need a good total next week, too, because Socialist Organiser needs to throw resources into the campaign behind victimised Cowley shop steward Alan Thorne. Phone calls, leaflets, petrol, fares — the costs will mount, and we'll be hamstrung if the money's not there.

Donations to:
Treasurer, c/o
214 Sickert Court,
London N1 2SY.
Cheques payable
to Socialist
Organiser.

STEWARDS SAY "NO"

DELEGATES representing JSSCs and union branches from Coventry, Oldham, London, York, Sheffield, Wolverhampton, Glasgow, Manchester, Oxford and Leicester met in Sheffield on Saturday 13th, at a hastily reconvened national health shop stewards' meeting.

Despite the short notice, 50 people came, and gave reports on whether members could be expected to back all-out action in the forthcoming consultation. The general view was that it would be a hard job to get the vote for all-out action.

But most representatives who had had a chance to consult local committees reported that they were totally opposed to two year wage deals, or any agreement to fund an increased pay offer out of existing health authority budgets.

The main discussion at the meeting was about calling a conference in the New Year of health service shop stewards to build a national stewards' movement. Responsibility for convening the existing coordinating committee was left in the hands of the Sheffield and Leicester JSSCs.

Appeals were made for new names to add to the mailing list. Contacts were needed in London, Birmingham, the south east,

Liverpool, and Newcastle.

The meeting also passed several motions. One from Leicester JSSC condemned the TUC health service committee for calling off the day of action on the 8th — especially at such a late stage. It welcomed Bickerstaffe's statement that NUPE still stood for the 12%, and called on other unions to make similar

statements.

Continued canvassing for all-out action was called for. At the next steering committee meeting, a leaflet from Manchester will be considered for use in meetings all over the country.

• Contact: Martin Robinson, 70 South View Road, Sheffield S7 1DD.

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