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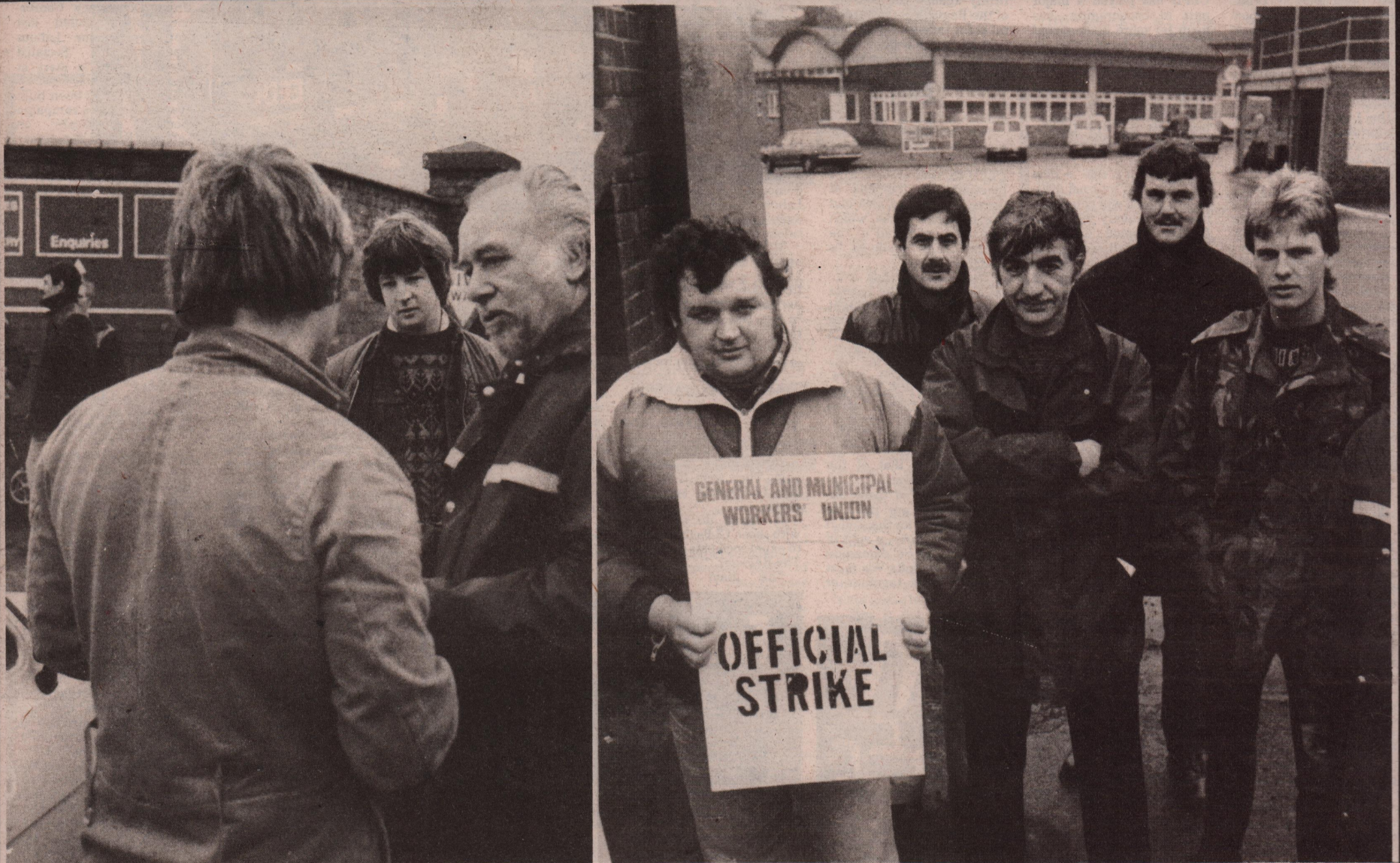
Weekly paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance. No. 117. January 27 1983 25p (Claimants and strikers 10p)

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JOHN HARRIS

SUPPORT THE WATER WORKERS!

INSIDE: Special four-page pull-out on the water workers' strike, with features on the claim and the offer, the Tories' strategy, and the use of troops in strike-breaking.

Remember Bloody Sunday!

ELEVEN years ago, on Sunday January 30 1972, British troops shot dead 13 unarmed people on a peaceful demonstration in Derry. In the years since then, the British Army has continued a grinding, bitter war of attrition against the oppressed Catholic minority in Northern Ireland.

With plastic bullets — and lead bullets — with repeated house-to-house searches, with internment and then long-term jailing on remand, and with torture in the interrogation centres, the British state has tried to beat down the Catholic revolt.

To no avail. No justice and therefore no peace will ever be brought to Ireland by Britain's attempts to maintain the artificial, sectarian Northern Ireland statelet. The broader framework of a united, independent Ireland is necessary for any solution.

This year as previous years, Bloody Sunday will be commemorated by demonstrations in Ireland and Britain. The commemoration in Britain is on Sunday 30th, at 1.30pm from Saville Park, Chapeltown Road, Leeds.

Troops out now!

Campaign for LABOUR PARTY Democracy

Reg Race writes: Don't split over the register!

THE Campaign for Labour Party Democracy is probably the most important rank and file organisation in the history of the Labour Party.

It has won important victories over mandatory reselection and the election of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Labour Party by an electoral college. The CLPD has overcome the disunity of the Left by uniting the activists in the party around a set of democratic demands, in the knowledge that victories on policy at conference could not ensure the automatic implementation of these policies by a Labour Government.

Its modus operandi has been to unite the progressive forces in the constituency parties with left trade unionists in order to win majorities at conference, thus destroying the sectionalism of the Left which has previously isolated the constituency activists.

The radicalisation of the

Labour Party, which the CLPD has played a major part in encouraging, has been far more deep-seated in the past decade than at any time in the Party's history. For the first time in living memory, the right wing trade union barons who formed the praetorian guard for the PLP leadership were pushed onto the defensive.

This historic role is now threatened by internal difficulties which will come to a head on January 29 at the CLPD Annual General Meeting. Small sections of the executive, amounting to no more than a handful of people, are threatening to split the organisation. They have a slate of candidates who have all pledged themselves to split the organisation if they lose certain key votes. Such blackmailing tactics are not helpful, and they should reconsider their position.

There is no point in 'splitting' the organisation

over the Register. I am firmly against the concept of the Register, but there is no point in splitting an important organisation when the NEC has in effect abandoned the principle of the Register and has now moved on to a more thorough-going witch-hunt.

Nor can there be any justification for allowing non-elected members of CLPD to vote at executive meetings, as happens at present. We must also end the personal abuse which has been contained in the recent CLPD mailings to members.

The Campaign has crucial objectives in the Labour Party which must be fought for. These include making mandatory reselection a reality; winning a progressive leadership for the Party as a whole; democratisation of the PLP; introducing positive discrimination for women; and changing, by consent, the relationship of the trade union block vote to that of the CLPs at conference.

In the light of these objectives, and our need to win the battle for the soul of the Labour Party, a split in CLPD would be damaging to the whole left. We must learn to work together or die.

Entry work?

WEARIED by long hours on picket lines? Fed up with tedious trade union branch meetings and time spent in dingy, draughty Labour Party rooms? The Communist Party has an answer for you!

A review by John Kelly in the Morning Star of January 6 assures us that there is equally valuable work for socialists to do in more comfortable circumstances. "Socialists can in principle intervene effectively into capitalist management", he assures us, "and to do so is not simply a pointless exercise, or a step on the road to incorporation".

The conclusion is drawn with approval from a book by Jim Tomlinson, 'British socialism and the capitalist enterprise', the argument of which is based on the hardly stunning fact that capitalist management tactics are not determined mechanically by profit maximisation but also by political views and other factors (like ignorance and stupidity on the part of the capitalists).

What will they think of next? A lecture on the viability of socialists working in the Tory party, based on a learned dissertation which demonstrates that the Tories are not a monolith?

THE French labour movement is full of radical fire and revolutionary traditions, while the German movement outdoes even Britain in stodgy conservatism. Right?



Not quite. France's fiery left-wing leaders are looking not so left at all after a few months in office, and under the pressure of two million unemployed and being forced into opposition the SPD is beginning to show a more radical face.

SPD left-wingers have become more and more vocal against the plans for Pershing and Cruise missiles, and the party leadership has begun cautiously to criticise the NATO arms drive. But last week at the SPD conference met in Dortmund it was embarrassed by a speech from France's Socialist Party president, Francois Mitterrand, in Bonn.

Mitterrand strongly supported the NATO line in what, according to the Financial Times, "sounded uncomfortably like an election campaign speech on behalf of Helmut Kohl, the Christian Democrat Chancellor".

REACH FOR THE STARS!

YOU MAY have discounted the Tory press suggestions of Kremlin funding for the CND, and surreptitious KGB influence in the Greenham Common peace camp.

But there it was, in black and white — proof in the pages of the Communist Party's daily paper that the whole peace campaign is simply an elaborate front!

Leading CP official Paul Hudson blew the gaff in a meeting of its Yorkshire district committee. As the

Star reported (Tuesday January 18):

"The imaginative approach of the peace women at Greenham Common was commended to Yorkshire Communists at the weekend as an example of public campaigning for peace, jobs and Morning Star circulation".

However, the Peace Camp has plainly had far more impact upon the opinion polls than upon Morning Star circulation, which has plunged to new crisis

levels. And while the Greenham Common women go from strength to strength, gloomy meetings of ageing CPers — convinced that the fate of the Morning Star is inseparable from that of the CP — are musing on how to lift sales by even small amounts.

In London, for example, every CP branch is being asked to step up weekend sales with the objective of netting two new readers — by the end of March!

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CLPD and Registration. The recent consultative ballot gave no mandate so it is clearly up to the AGM to decide whether CLPD should apply for the NEC's Register.

Whatever the developments since the ballot, the

Register is still a weapon in the hands of the right wing, even if a discredited one. Disciplinary measures are still attached.

The basic question remains: is CLPD prepared to lead a campaign to boycott this witch-hunting device, and thereby help to render it ineffective; or will it decide to lend it credibility at a time when it has run into real problems?

Until now for CLPD Conference sovereignty has meant "We believe that policy decisions reached by Annual Conference should be binding on the Parliamentary Labour Party" as the supporter's card puts it. It has not meant the 'right' of a conference vote to override basic democratic rights of individual members and the CLPs.

The CLPD should not register.

Resistance by CLPs. There is no dispute that CLPD should oppose expulsions. The question is whether CLPD as the main democracy campaign in the Labour Party is prepared to openly support CLPs that refuse to expel socialists.

Most other organisations on the left, including the Labour Coordinating Committee, have already expressed such solidarity. In fact, the relevant resolution (10a) — calling on CLPs to refuse to expel and expressing support for this — is identical to the one passed at the LCC AGM.

Resistance by CLPs is not new. Hornsey has been doing it for the last year, against both the NEC and (later) a conference decision. They were right, and the CLPD has supported them.

It should do the same with those CLPs that refuse to expel socialists now.

The Register.

The main issue is

whether CLPD should campaign for a weaker version of the Register, but one which still attaches special constitutional conditions to the right of rank and file Party members to organise. This is the Manchester Withington or 'fall-back' position.

There are two arguments against it. First, it contradicts unconditional support for the right of Party members to organise for their views, and concedes an important part of the right-wing argument that there is a 'problem'.

Second, there is no evidence that it would get more support than full opposition to the discredited Register.

date a narrower range of views than the Party as a whole.

This seems to me beside the point. Using threats is no more justifiable in a narrowly defined group than in a broad one.

In any movement, small or large, the right to vote and argue in a conference implies the duty to respect its decisions.

My resolution says, "individuals always retain the right to argue individual views". I hope this will be carried together with the previous resolutions on the agenda, on personal statements in CLPD, so that it is clear that the issue in those resolutions is not free speech.

The resolutions object to the frequent 'personal statements' from CLPD officers in campaign mailings over the last year, statements which have included denunciations, wild allegations (sometimes subsequently withdrawn), and personal smears against other comrades in the campaign.

Such methods are not freedom of speech, but a preliminary version of the abuse of official positions now represented by the threat to split.

MARTIN THOMAS

Issues at stake at AGM

A guide by
John Bloxam



Conference sovereignty can't mean accepting the witch-hunt

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Trade Union Democracy. The main resolutions in this section put forward proposals about making the block vote accountable to rank and file union members. A number of very important ideas are raised.

The history of the last two years has confirmed that it is utopian to talk about any stable democracy in the Party unless democracy also exists in the trade unions, which rightly have the decisive say in the party.

The failure to even begin to tackle this problem has been one of the major weaknesses of the left in the Party, and the Trade Union Democracy Conference jointly called last April by London Labour Briefing and Socialist Organiser was a start at overcoming it.

But CLPD has been built over 10 years as a campaign focused specifically on Labour Party democracy issues. The problem with these resolutions is that they call for the CLPD to become a vehicle for trade union democracy campaigns.

There is no principle which says that a trade union democracy campaign must be organised through an existing Labour Party organisation, rather than in parallel to it. Socialist Organiser has argued that if we want to organise an effective fight in the unions, and not a destructive fight in CLPD, then it is the latter approach which should be supported.

For this reason the resolutions should be rejected.

Three weeks after CLPD AGM there is a trade union conference organised by the Broad Left Organising Committee, with the issue of the Block Vote as the main subject of discussion. This is where these ideas should be being pushed.

Executive Committee elections.

For the first time in CLPD's history, elections to most of the EC positions will be contested. In itself, this is no bad development in a Campaign that has always argued strongly in the Party for the benefits of contested elections.

But one group is supporting a statement which ends with an open call for a split if they lose, while the other group emphasises the need to retain a broad-based and united CLPD, accepting of democracy inside it and the sovereignty of AGM decisions. It also generally supports policies that would keep CLPD in the forefront of the fight for democracy and democratic rights in the Party.

Many of this group are being nominated by Joan Maynard, Jo Richardson, Tony Benn, Bernard Dix and Bermondsey CLP. SO urges comrades to vote for them.





The right wing's Labour Solidarity movement is on the offensive. The Left can't afford unjustified splits.

Campaign for LABOUR PARTY Democracy

Right wing hope for split

by Francis Prideaux

THE enemies of Party democracy are rubbing their hands in anticipation. They will be watching every minute before, during and after the CLPD AGM for the smallest inkling of a personal attack or a torn-up membership card. For they know, as we should also know, that any splintering of the campaign could have a critical impact on the wider struggles that lie ahead.

Whether as individuals we get from the AGM all, some (most likely!) or none of the results we would prefer, the prospects of a constructive way forward will be much enhanced if in uniting around the policies which are eventually decided we all show full

respect for tactical differences and do not question the good faith or socialist credentials of those with whom we disagree.

We must do everything we can not just to reach what seems to each of us to be the wisest possible decisions, but also to do so in a way which will reassure every single CLPD member that she/he will continue to be valued and needed within the campaign.

CLPD has always been a 'broad church' of the more radical forces within our Party. Unless it remains so, its capacity to win Conference majorities will seriously diminish.

The enemies of Party democracy will be looking this Saturday night for something to celebrate. We must not let them have it!

NO TO SPLIT IN CLPD!

MOST CLPD supporters accept that this Saturday's AGM will be the most important in its 10-year history. Its size will undoubtedly reflect this.

At stake is the future of a campaign which is supported by over 1,000 individual Labour Party members, 500 organisations (including national trade unions) and 141 CLPs; which has an influence far beyond that; and which has led the fight for democracy in the Party.

Several members of the outgoing EC, including leading officers, have said plainly that if they lose at the AGM they "will continue CLPD's work in a new organisation". This is proposed to happen three days after another National Executive Committee meeting at which the right wing will be trying to get their witch-hunt on the road again, as well as endorsing an enquiry on rejigging the NEC to perpetuate their domination.

In the coming year or so, the fight for democracy in the Labour Party will either advance by electing a Labour government pledged to more radical policies than ever before, and tied by accountability to the rank and file; or it will suffer big setbacks, with many socialists purged from the Party and a 'busi-

ness-as-usual' manifesto rejecting conference policies. Now is not the time for CLPD to split!

The would-be splitters say that the existing campaign is no longer viable. With the recent right wing victories in the Labour Party CLPD's future can only be secured under their control. "The confrontationalists" would only wreck CLPD and the Trotskyists, of course, are in the middle of this "very motley" alliance. They must go.

The truth seems to be rather that the defeats for the left — however temporary — have massively increased the pressure to retreat and splinter and for some of the witch-hunting techniques of the right to be taken up by sections of the left.

Ignore

To ignore areas of agreement and to blow up disagreements is incompatible with an objective assessment of the last year, or of

CLPD's future. If comrades do choose a split, it will not be because the stated issues make it necessary but because they have allowed the pressure of defeat to outweigh objective assessment.

Split

The consultative ballot on whether CLPD should register produced an almost evenly split vote, destroying the myth that those arguing against registration were an unrepresentative London-based minority of confrontationalists.

And everybody who has debated the issue of registration in CLPD agrees that it is a tactical question. The experience in Labour Against the Witch-hunt, for example, is that comrades with differing views on registration can work together against the witch-hunt.

We have even been able to work with Militant,

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy meets for a crucial Annual General Meeting in London this Saturday, 29th. Some members are threatening it with a split. CLPD executive member John Bloxam argues that this is unjustified.

which holds a similar position to the present CLPD EC on registration and on whether CLPs should defy the NEC and refuse to expel socialists.

Such common work, of course, presupposes democracy inside the campaign (one of the major problems with Militant has been their usual insistence on controlling everything they do). In CLPD, until very recently, comrades might argue about what AGMs decided or even hide behind 'ambiguities', but nobody disputed that the AGM was sovereign.

Now some other arguments have been advanced — new to the CLPD, but well-known in the debates on mandatory re-selection and used by the PLP.

Women's demands

Ann Pettifor of the CLPD Women's Action Committee told us about the plans for activity that WAC will be reporting on at the AGM

AT PRESENT the rules of the Labour Party women's organisation are ones decided not by women themselves, but by Labour Party officers. It has no standing orders for its own conference.

So WAC will be campaigning for a rules conference of the women's organisation to:

- draw up rules and a constitution, and decide standing orders for the Labour women's conference and the National Labour Women's Committee;
- determine a basis for

affiliation of women in trade unions to the women's organisation, and a political levy from those women to the organisation.

WAC will also be campaigning for endorsement of the three demands carried by last year's Labour women's conference: for women's conference to elect the women's places on the Labour Party NEC; for it to have the right to put resolutions directly onto the Labour Party conference agenda; and for mandatory inclusion of at least one woman in each parliamentary selection shortlist.

WAC is demanding that the Labour women's conference should elect its own executive, and opposing the current plans for rejigging the NEC.

What happened to the rank and file?

Trade union Broad Lefts Organising Committee conference: Sat. Feb. 19, County Hall, London SE1, on 'Democratising the Block Vote'.

Credentials for delegates from trade union bodies and Broad Lefts from Phil Holt, 108 Prince's Boulevard, Bebbington, Merseyside L63 7PE (051 645 1375)

LAST Saturday night (22nd) BBC2 showed a drama/documentary designed to delight anyone who believes that the essence of politics is clever manoeuvres in back rooms.

The subject — the fight for Labour Party democracy — deserved better.

From the film you would suppose that the whole affair was the work of four men — Vladimir Derer, Victor Schonfield, Pete Willsman (the main officers of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy), and Jon Lansman (secretary of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee) — and that the winning of mandatory re-selection of MPs and election of Party leader was due only to their tactical skills.

Their tactical skills played a part. But to focus

the whole story round that is rather like describing a strike by concentrating on the negotiating sessions.

We see Jock McPherson Quinn arguing with a right-wing AUEW official, and the USDAW executive fumbling its way towards the winning 40-30-30 formula for the electoral college. But we see nothing of the hundreds and thousands of arguments and discussions at rank and file level that led to over 3 million trade union votes, and the huge majority of the Constituency Labour Parties, being committed to democratic reform.

We hear a brief reference to Clive Jenkins being outvoted in ASTMS: but we see nothing of the organisation among union members that made it possible.

We see Tony Benn

grinning on the Labour Party conference platform as voting results are announced: but nothing of the RFMC meetings round the country where he spoke to thousands of activists.

We see arguments at RFMC committee meetings: but not the local work of establishing contacts, distributing bulletins, and calling meetings.

Moreover, even the 'back-room' side of it is presented very selectively. All the RFMC activists aside from the chosen four and a prematurely-aged Chris Mullin are omitted (so none of the RFMC women activists are featured).

If you were listening for it (as I was), you could catch one passing mention of the fact that the Socialist Campaign for a Labour

Victory (the sponsor of Socialist Organiser) initiated the RFMC — and that's the only mention of the SCLV, which, alongside the CLPD, was the major activist support of the RFMC.

Again, from the film's account of the tactical debates about the electoral college, you would never guess that the SCLV was prominent in formulating and pushing the version of the 40-30-30 scheme around which the RFMC was 'with some difficulty' united.

Why did the movement develop? The film did nothing to trace the warp and weft of the interaction between industrial and political struggles — from the mass struggles against the Tories in 1972-4, through the frustrations of

1974-7, to the open industrial revolt against the Labour government from 1977, to the Labour and TUC votes against pay curbs in 1978 followed by the 'winter of discontent', and to the resolve of thousands of activists after May 1979 to make sure the next Labour government would not be like Wilson's and Callaghan's.

Dextrous

From the film, it's all as if the movement could have been called into existence at any time, given sufficiently dextrous tactics.

Perhaps a similar view motivates three of the 'stars' of this film, who are now threatening to split the CLPD unless it endorses their tactical judgements on the register. But the

struggle for self-transformation of the labour movement is something much broader and deeper than tacticians' schemes.

MARTIN THOMAS



Benn: shown on the conference rostrum, but not on to

International News International News International News

Mugabe's incomplete revolution

Ian Smith's anti-union laws still remain in force in Zimbabwe. Despite the gains of the revolution, much remains to be fought for. Jennifer Jackson and Bob Bridges report.

NEARLY three years ago the democratic revolution in Zimbabwe successfully overthrew a white, racist dictatorship.

The leadership of this revolution was from the beginning in the hands of the African petty bourgeoisie. Its forms of struggle — guerrilla fighting in the countryside and appeals to imperialism — were successful within their own limitations, but at the expense of working class organisation.

Urban and agricultural workers had been left defenceless. They were never organised or mobilised to any serious extent by the nationalist forces, chiefly because their specific economic interests did not concern the leadership, although some sections of ZAPU did articulate these interests.

Alien

As a result Mugabe's new regime confronted the African working class as an alien force. Seeing working class militancy only as a threat, it was compelled to make use of the old apparatus to crack down on its new enemies.

Zimbabwe suffered the fate of every democratic revolution led by the petty bourgeoisie: it remained hopelessly incomplete. This incompleteness is not

simply, as most apologists claim, the result of governmental inexperience or caution, nor of external destabilising pressures. It is the direct result of the class forces at work in Zimbabwe.

Clear

Nevertheless there have been clear democratic gains resulting from the revolution. The most obvious is the granting of the vote to all citizens, black and white, male and female, over 18, and the strengthening of mass representation in parliament.

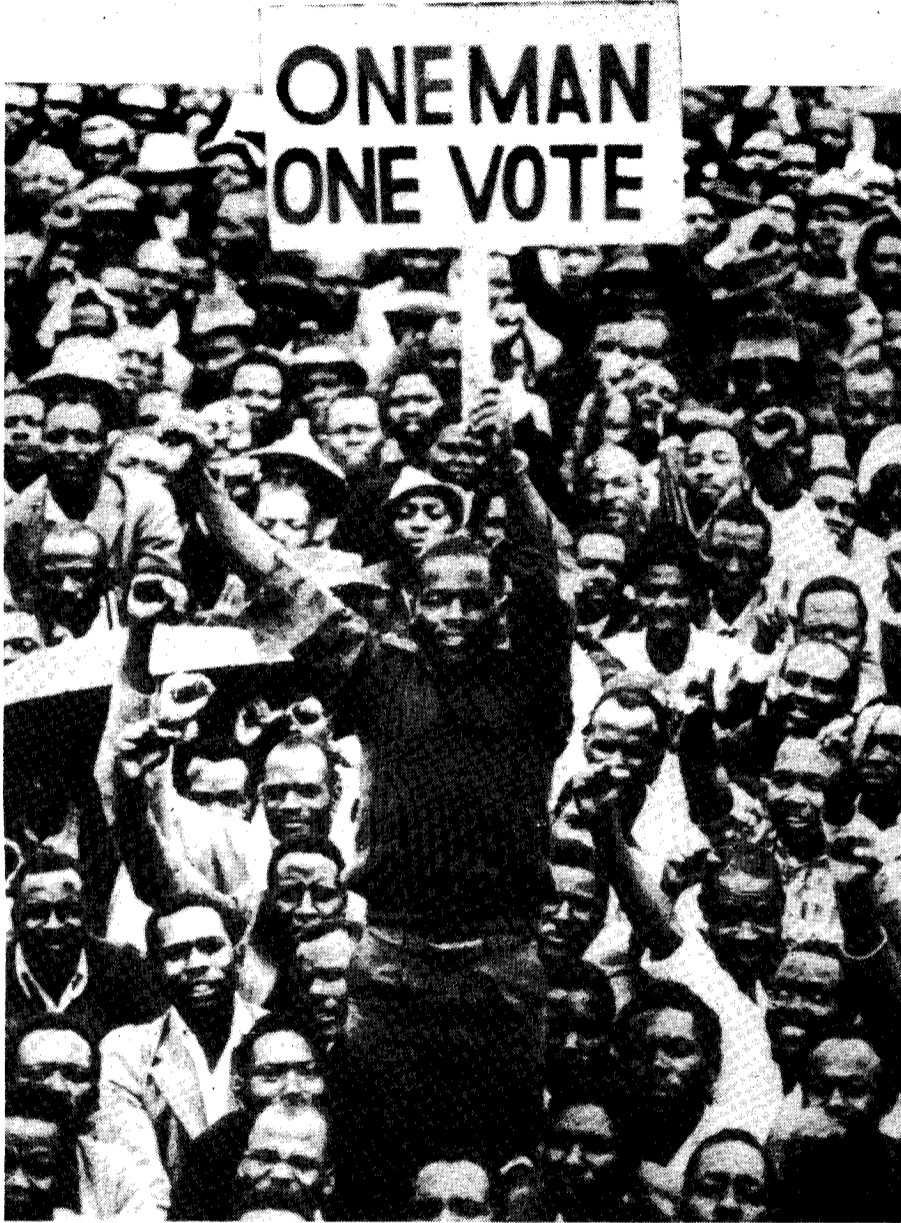
Less well known gains include the growth of free primary education for all, improvements in health care with an emphasis on preventive medicine and rural clinics and an end to enforced birth control. African women are soon to be, for the first time, recognised as legal subjects, with the right to own property, sign contracts, sue and be sued in court and so forth.

Gains

Such gains are important. They demonstrate the folly of saying that nothing has changed in Zimbabwe, simply because one capitalist regime has supplanted another.

On the other hand, reliance on the old repressive state apparatus, and other limits to democracy, are very marked. For instance, the old laws on trade unions — the Industrial Conciliation Act (ICA) — are still in force, with their bans on strike action and constraints on union formation.

Numerous striking and demonstrating workers have been arrested and sacked from their jobs, including nurses, teachers, railwaymen and bus



Free unions and the right to strike have not yet been won

drivers.

The General Secretary of the new ZANU-backed trade union federation — the ZCTU — said in a recent visit to the UK that the ICA is soon to be replaced, but he said nothing concrete about the changes or what his federation wants, and it was apparent that this union body had made no public statement on the issue. His support for recent arrests of strikers bodes ill not only for state entrenchment of workers' right to strike, but also for the ZCTU demanding such a right.

It also seems that trade unionists not within the ZCTU, as well as workers on strike, have been subjected to harassment by the state, often on the grounds of insufficient political commitment to the revolution! Criticism is denounced by members of the government, for instance the Minister of Constitutional Affairs, as "counter-revolutionary".

Overdue

It is likely that the long overdue repeal of the ICA will lead to new legislation scarcely less restrictive.

In even more sinister vein, the security forces have, as under Smith, been

made exempt from prosecution, white farmers in Matabeleland have been armed as a militia against dissidents there (who have no effective legitimate channel for their grievances), and at least 400 Africans, including ZAPU military leaders, are in gaol without trial, many without even being charged.

Racist

These significant deprivations on the democratic rights of Africans have gone largely unremarked by the racist media in this country, while the detention, harassment and torture of whites, dramatically publicised by Smith's televised visit, have received considerable attention. The hypocrisy of Smith's mouthings on the democratic rule of law in his country is breathtaking, but nevertheless the current government's record demands very critical examination.

There are other less dramatic, but highly important, instances of the incompleteness of democracy in Zimbabwe. The political content of all television, radio and newspaper output is directly and indirectly controlled by ZANU(PF), leading to the arrest and/or demotion

of recalcitrant reporters and the daily censoring of copy by the Ministry of Information.

The granting of legal rights to African women will benefit mainly the middle class, those women who can take advantage of their new right to sign cheques and own houses and businesses in their own name. Rural women can now hold land but little has been done to weaken patriarchal control over them.

Nothing has been done to alleviate the long hours of drudgery of the mass of the rural and urban women. As most of this labour is unpaid, its value is expropriated in one way or another by their husbands, fathers, capital or the state.

The new government has as little desire to tamper with controls over the unpaid labour of women, including the form that marriage takes in Zimbabwe, as it has to reduce the controls on wage labour.

More immediate political limitations on democracy include the constant postponement of the ZANU party congress. There has only been one congress in its history (in 1973), and Mugabe now seems to be waiting until the party machinery has been brought firmly under con-

trol and critical factions silenced or weakened. ZANU(PF) is not a party in which debate and democracy are allowed to flourish.

Moreover, the commitment of Mugabe and the Cabinet to the formation of a one-party state is unequivocal. This intention is supported by the British Foreign Office and by the majority of whites inside the country (who now support Mugabe and have joined ZANU(PF) in significant numbers). They believe that a one-party system is the best way of keeping this "pragmatic" politician in power.

Such are the narrowing limits of democracy in Zimbabwe. They are justified by the government in terms of the struggle against the remnants of the old order in Zimbabwe, South Africa's interventionist imperialism, and against the "tribalist", "bandit" forces operating in Matabeleland.

Illusory

These justifications are largely illusory. For instance, while the fight against South African incursions is desperately real (and Zimbabwean troops are now defending the crucial railway and oil pipeline in Mozambique from the constant attacks of South African backed Mozambican rebels), the state repression of the Ndebele, far from strengthening resistance to South Africa, creates precisely the undirected dissent which the South Africans can use, and probably are using, for their own purposes.

The real source of the limits of democracy lies neither in external peril nor

in the remains of the old order, but in the fact that "socialism" among the Zimbabwe elite is in large measure a mask behind which lies the eager pursuit of bourgeois privilege.

Opposition to the regime is at present weak and scattered. The urban working class have engaged in a number of significant actions, but during the civil war their organisations were either smashed or tended to be incorporated by the ever-active agencies of the CIA, the AFL/CIO and the ICFTU.

Union

To this day the Afro-American Labour Bureau and the notorious Irving Brown — a roving American agent on the trade union front — are very active. The combination of repression and incorporation through the ZCTU has left black workers without much of an independent voice.

In this country, the least that socialists can do is expose the incompleteness of democracy in Zimbabwe, and support unequivocally the fight for basic democratic rights that have not been granted (the right to free unions, to strike, to an accountable security force, to the end of all the old "security laws", to civil liberties for detainees, to the end of female dependence on their husbands), and the defence of those rights that have been won, especially the workers' right to organise, the beleaguered multi-party state, and free public education which is under attack from the IMF.

In our next article we shall look at the economic base of Zimbabwe's current democratic struggles.



Mugabe

Advertisement

NEW!

The Socialist Workers' Party of the USA, an old-established Trotskyist group, has recently and suddenly announced that Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution' was wrong after all. This new pamphlet — 40p plus postage from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD — looks at the arguments



Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

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

Phalangists disappoint their sponsors



"The PLO has done relatively well to manage an ordered retreat"

From our correspondent in Haifa

ANALYSTS of the Palestinian revolution have often based themselves on the Vietnam experience. Israel being massively propped up by imperialism for strategic reasons, they have argued, it couldn't be crushed by one uprising of the masses from inside, but had to be fought by a prolonged civil war, with the main base of the revolutionary forces outside the country.

Thus the Palestinian left tried to turn a disaster into a virtue, using the dispersion of half the Palestinians as a lever to unify with the anti-imperialist

struggle of the Arab masses and get the needed bases to regain their stolen fatherland.

The alliance with the Lebanese National Movement and the civil war in that country opened the way for Lebanon to become the Hanoi of the Palestinian revolution, Palestine itself being the "south".

But reaction in Lebanon was never defeated, and Israel and the US have now set out to fully instal reactionary rule there, rooting out any resistance or mass struggle organisation. Having no possibility of a "long march" — a retreat into the countryside — the PLO has done relatively well to manage an ordered retreat of most of its forces into Syria, and into Syrian-controlled north and north-east Lebanon.

Syria is an even more difficult Hanoi for the

Palestinian revolutionaries. Its current support for their struggle is tactical and limited, stemming from a temporary antagonism of the Syrian bourgeois regime to the imperialist order.

The weakest chain in the imperialist master-plan behind the Israeli invasion in the Lebanese reaction, supposed to form the main force in the "pacification" of Lebanon. The fascist Phalangist militia, with its thousands of soldiers equipped and trained by Israel, has disappointed its masters by showing no strength in the real fighting — its main role in the fighting was the Sabra-Chatila massacre.

Now, according to Israeli reports, the Phalangists are losing the battle to control the 200,000 Druzes of the Shouf mountain near Beirut.

The Phalangists were brought in behind Israeli tanks, but Israel did not want to do the fighting in the villages, having a Druze component in its own army. (Some Druze reservists in the Israeli army are said to have joined the Socialist Party militias in the Shouf, to fight the Phalangists).

When fighting broke out between local militias in Lebanon's second city Farablus, in the north, the Phalangist president Gemayel tried to utilise the situation to send in the "official" army — but both fighting sides in Tarablus united against the army, and it had to retreat quickly.

In Beirut itself Gemayel rules on American and French bayonets.

This week, when Americans, Israelis and Phalangists met in Khalda, just south of Beirut, for nego-

tiations on their "new order" for Lebanon, shells began to fall, wounding Lebanese soldiers and almost hitting the hotel where the negotiations were about to start.

Israeli tanks surrounded Khalda, and threatened to shell Druze population centres. The US Sixth Fleet, just off shore, completed the stage for the installation of this new version of "Lebanese independence".

The death in the last week of six Israeli soldiers, three of them senior officers, and daily incidents of firing at Israeli army vehicles, both keep up pressure for Israeli withdrawal and show that there are forces in Lebanon that without the massive external military presence could yet change the whole situation.

Italy: setback for strike wave

At midnight on Saturday 22nd, the mass workers' mobilisation that has developed in Italy over the last two weeks was torpedoed when the unions signed an agreement cutting workers' inflation-escalator payments — the "sliding scale" — by 15%. The pay increase corresponding to a 1% rise in the price index has been cut from 8000 lire to 6800.

This formula was put forward by the Christian Democrat led government, and accepted by the bosses' federations, who had been demanding a 50% cut in the sliding scale. The government threw in tax and social security adjustments to make it easier for the union leaders to accept the package.

Franco Grisolia of the Italian Trotskyist group LOR spoke to us from Milan.

IT'S practically all over. The government put forward a clever formula, so that although the agreement actually represented a capitulation by the union leaders they could present themselves as having gained something.



"The CP was put on the spot"

The Communist Party was put on the spot. It was isolated because all other political forces — except the far left, of course — supported the government's formula. The CP had to choose whether to reject the agreement and bank on taking the mass movement forward.

If they had made that choice, it is certain that the movement against the agreement would have been followed by the great majority of workers and the CP would have gained strength. But it would have cut — for a time — its links with the other

political forces and especially with the other union bureaucracies.

Of course the CP would have led such a movement only to brake it later and turn it into reformist channels. It would have been a daring reformist tactic. But the CP reckoned it could not do that. It was very clear: before the final decision the leaders of the CGIL (the CP-led union federation) went to the national HQ of the Communist Party.

The CP's volte-face created a reaction in the mass movement of demoralisation

and disillusion. We can give out leaflets in the factories attacking the CP, and people — even CP members — respond by saying: 'Yes, that's true. Everybody's the same. Everybody sells us out. You can't do anything'.

The one positive sign at the moment is that in Genoa there has apparently been a decision by some works committees for a protest strike on Thursday. It may not come off, but it shows that there are still some possibilities for struggle.

French car strike

THE WAVE of strikes in French car factories against the Mitterrand government's pay freeze policy is spreading.

The paintshop at Renault Billancourt returned to work on January 20 having won a 155F (£15) increase in monthly bonus. But the

next day Billancourt was stopped again by other departments demanding a similar increase.

At Renault Flins, where the movement started, the paintshop is still out, and half the works laid off. The strikers have been out on the streets, particularly at

immigrant workers' hostels, campaigning for support.

And four other factories have been hit by similar strikes over pay and conditions: Chausson and Peugeot at Gennevilliers, Citroën at Levallois-Perret, and Unic (Fiat) at Trappes.

Remember Bloody Sunday!

BLOODY SUNDAY COMMEMORATION march: Sunday January 30, 1.30pm, Saville Park, Chapeltown Road, Leeds,



Crisis splits

Bolivia coalition

THE HARD-pressed Siles Zuazo government in Bolivia faces even further trouble.

Ministers belonging to the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) have resigned from the government, condemning its austerity policies. The MIR is reported to be the fastest growing party in the country, and the move must reflect growing discontent with the government among workers and peasants.

Siles took office in October last year after a general strike threat had forced the Bolivian military to hand over to civilian rule. But alongside some reforms he has introduced measures designed to placate the IMF and help Bolivia meet its obligations to the international bankers.

The parties now left in the government are Siles' own Left Revolutionary National Movement, the Christian Democracy and the Bolivian Communist Party.

* We made a mistake in SO 115, writing that "In Milan CP members blocked attempts to occupy the police headquarters". The building that workers want to occupy was in fact the prefecture — a government office — and the police HQ.

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

WHAT'S ON

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.

SOCIALIST Students in NOLS steering committee meeting: Sunday January 30, 2pm, in London: ring Jane at 609 3071 for details. All welcome. Don't forget: February 7 is the deadline for NOLS motions and amendments.

POLAND in 1983: from 7.30 on Friday January 28, the Polish Solidarity Campaign invites you to a thorough discussion of the current issues, led by Timothy Garton-Ash, one of the leading writers on Solidarity, at the Hammersmith Polish Centre, 238 King St, London W6. (PSC phone number: 567 4427).

NOTTINGHAM Campaign Against Rayner conference: Saturday February 19, 10.30 to 4.30, at Nottingham Centre for the Unem-

ployed, Hounds Gate. Creche and lunch available. Morning includes speakers from CPSA NEC and Child Poverty Action Group, and a Labour MP; afternoon workshops on ESSP, job centres/ethnic monitoring, new supplementary benefit legislation.

Open to all unemployed people and delegates from trade union and labour movement organisations.

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

NHS SHOP Stewards' conference: Saturday February 5, 11am, Memorial Hall, Barker's Pool, Sheffield. Agenda includes Joint Shop Stewards' Committees, privatisation/cuts, and defending the unions. Contact: Peter Taylor, c/o Dept. Immunology, Hallamshire Hospital, Glossop Rd, Sheffield S10.

LABOUR Briefings national conference: Saturday February 5, 10.30 to 6, County Hall, London SE1.

LABOUR CND national conference: Saturday February 19, West Midlands County Hall, Lutterworth, Leicestershire, Birmingham.

Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine public meeting: THE FIGHT FOR PALESTINE Speakers: Tariq Ali, Ron Brown MP (Leith), Jeremy Corbyn, and speakers from Women for Palestine and Lebanese National Movement. Wednesday February 23, 8pm at County Hall, London SE1.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland: annual general meeting 1983 will be on March 26. Resolutions to be in by February 27. There will be an extended meet-

ing of the LCI National Council on January 22.

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Save South London hospital!

THE South London Hospital is the only remaining general hospital in Britain staffed by women, for women. It was founded in 1916 by a woman doctor who had practised at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital.

Just as that hospital was the target of a savings campaign, initiated by a Labour government and carried to a ruthless conclusion by Thatcher, so the South London is now threatened with closure by Wandsworth District Health Authority (DHA).

Wandsworth DHA, a spin off from the old Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth Area Health Authority is no stranger to closures. It was the Area Health Authority which presided over the closure of a hospital and used the police and scab ambulances to smash through the occupation picket line. Many of the members of the new authority were on the old one.

Like many other London Districts, Wandsworth has a prestige teaching hospital, St. George's. There have already been 850 beds (including the site at Hyde Park Corner) in the district cut to finance the new complex at St. George's. The next 'phase' of the complex will not be finished until 1990.

Closure

Yet at its meeting on January 27 the DHA will be recommending the closure of the South London by 1984. Women's health must suffer even more so

Jane Goss reports on a fight to save an unique women's hospital

that powerful consultants can get their high technology medicine.

The South London provides a unique service for women. It gives the assurance of treatment by a woman doctor, it has short waiting lists — the average waiting time for an out-patients appointment is only two weeks. It has a philosophy which puts emphasis on prevention of ill health; there are plans for developing a well woman clinic, a breast screening clinic, and last week a special clinic for women wanting to give up smoking was opened.

It has just equipped and opened a birth room. All too often women are denied choice in childbirth and are forced to fit into the system of large impersonal maternity wards. Women's needs and wishes at time of birth are rarely catered for in most general hospitals.

In the medical world women are usually treated with a lack of sympathy and understanding, and are



St Mary's fought closure by occupation

'second class citizens'. The South London breaks out of that mould and that alone is reason enough to oppose its closure.

It is not just because it is a women's hospital, though that makes its survival important. We cannot afford any more loss of NHS beds — that is why the hospital must be defended.

Wandsworth is an inner city area which has had a monetarist Tory council since 1978. Its Social Services provision has been cut to the bone. It has already lost five hospitals as a result of Thatcher's policies. The loss of another 200 beds will be a severe blow to the health of the borough. If the hospital closes, people will die.

75% of the women using the hospital are in social class 4 or 5. 36% are from ethnic minorities. It is clear that this closure will not affect the rich and privileged. It is a blatant attack on the working class people of Wandsworth for whom the Tories do not give a damn.

The District Health Authority meeting promises to be stormy. The workers and residents of Wandsworth are not prepared to let the hospital close.

Over 100 people, most of them women, packed into a meeting last week to hear about closure plans and to begin a campaign around the defence of the hospital. Two local Labour MPs and Val Wise were there to give support.

However, some Labour appointees to the DHA are supporting the closure plans. One member actually came to the meeting to explain why she approved the recommendation to close the hospital. She said there is just no money

left!!!

She was under the delusion that if the South London closes, more money will be available for mentally ill people. When asked which client group benefited from the 'savings' of closing St. Benedict's, she had no answer.

One woman made the point that if the South London closes, it would have such a devastating effect on women that it would lead to more people needing psychiatric care!

The DHA member said that even under a Labour government they would need to close hospitals, since Gwyneth Dunwoody (Labour spokesperson on health) had already made it clear that there will not be enough money to maintain the present level of NHS spending.

Dunwoody's position on health is a disgrace and Labour Party members should get resolutions through their wards and GMCs demanding her resignation as health spokesperson.

On the more positive side a speaker from the EGA occupation gave an account of the tremendous fight to keep the EGA open. It was the first hospital occupation. The account of how the workers united with the community to keep services going gave the meeting a boost.

The mood of the public meeting was angry and the decision was taken to lobby and demonstrate at the DHA meeting on the 27th. As one woman said 'we have to go into the meeting and make it impossible for them to take the decision to close our hospital.'

There were few hospital workers at the meeting it was quite a distance from the hospital).

The workers in the hos-

pital are crucial to the fight to keep it open. Some of them have been shunted from hospital to hospital during the long string of closures in that authority. A doctor and a midwife spoke at the meeting and it is vital that they link with the nurses and ancillary workers to stand firm against the closure and the rundown which is sure to begin almost immediately.

The trade union officials have called a meeting in the hospital for this week. Whilst they are prepared to give lip service to fighting the closure, they will not actively build for an occupation.

Class

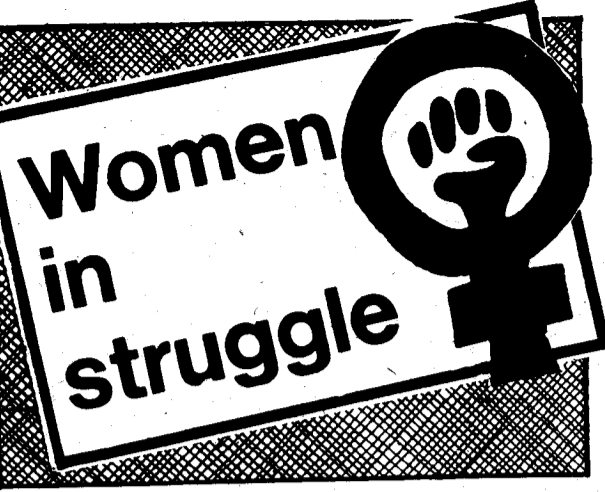
The real fight will come from the women who work there and from the women who use the hospital. But they cannot win in isolation.

Every trade unionist should raise the issue in their branch and send messages of support. Health unionists in London must raise the question of supporting strike action and get a commitment that if one step is taken to run down the hospital there will be strike action.

Workers in Wandsworth should also be building to take strike action. The links which were made during the pay dispute should now be built on for joint action in defence of the NHS.

The Tories are confident in the wake of the pay sell-out that they can now just step in and dismantle the entire NHS. We have to show them that we are not prepared to let that happen.

Messages of support to: South London Women's Hospital Campaign, 9, Rosehill Road, London SW18.



Fighting for jobs

TWO main strands of campaigning were discussed at the Women's Campaign for Jobs conference on January 15: women's signing-on campaigns, and how to get a women's input into the People's March.

The Campaign had originally planned to organise a full-scale Women's March for Jobs for summer 1983. Now that a People's March was being organised, we recognised that all resources and energies would go into that, and what was now necessary was to ensure that it was more relevant and appealing to women than the 1981 People's March which was overwhelmingly made up of men and organised by men.

Involving women would require a great deal of work. There would have to be facilities for children, or mothers would be excluded. There must be proper arrangements this time for sleeping, washing and toilet facilities for those women who didn't want to muck in with the men. (One woman described the experience on the last March of having to run the gauntlet of three rooms full of boisterous young men to get to the toilet in the night).

Part of the success of the last People's March was that it didn't just appeal to the traditional labour movement activists — we could make the next march even broader by making sure it was attractive and relevant to women. Numbers were important: if women were a substantial proportion of the march it would be easier for them to appeal to women along the route. This means a special effort to include women in the March.

The conference recognised that the best way to

ensure that all these issues — and the work they involved — would not drop to the bottom of the agenda was to have women's sub-committees of the March organisation, nationally, regionally and locally.

The other workshop was an intensive training session run by the members of the Greenwich Women's Signing-On Campaign, who had produced a detailed pack to help other women start similar campaigns.

Mine

The work they have done, which only started last September, has prised out of the Department of Employment a mine of information previously unavailable to legal advice workers. And their style of campaigning — going direct to women in laundrettes and health centres, buying space in the local newspaper to advertise how women can get their dole money, street leafletting by a 'Mother Xmas', and getting the local council to lay on an information caravan outside the dole office — has finally broken the confidence barrier and produced a buzz of interest among local women.

Their workshop emphasised both optimism and caution: it is possible to help women to claim their rights; but it needs careful preparation and briefing (if possible not just in writing, but with similar training sessions) and a serious approach, not just a few mornings' casual leafletting in a local shopping centre.

Start

However, their pioneering work must surely now make it easier for others to start such campaigns, especially around unemployed centres. As well as the briefing material (which the Women's Campaign for Jobs will include in its next newsletter), a leaflet based on prototypes worked out by Greenwich and the Women's Campaign for Jobs is being produced by the GLC in an initial two-colour run of 100,000 which will be available free from the beginning of February. (Contact Nicola Murray, Room 133a, County Hall, Waterloo, SE1. Tel: 633 5676).

The Women's Campaign for Jobs can be contacted at 41 Ellington Street, London N7 (607-5268).



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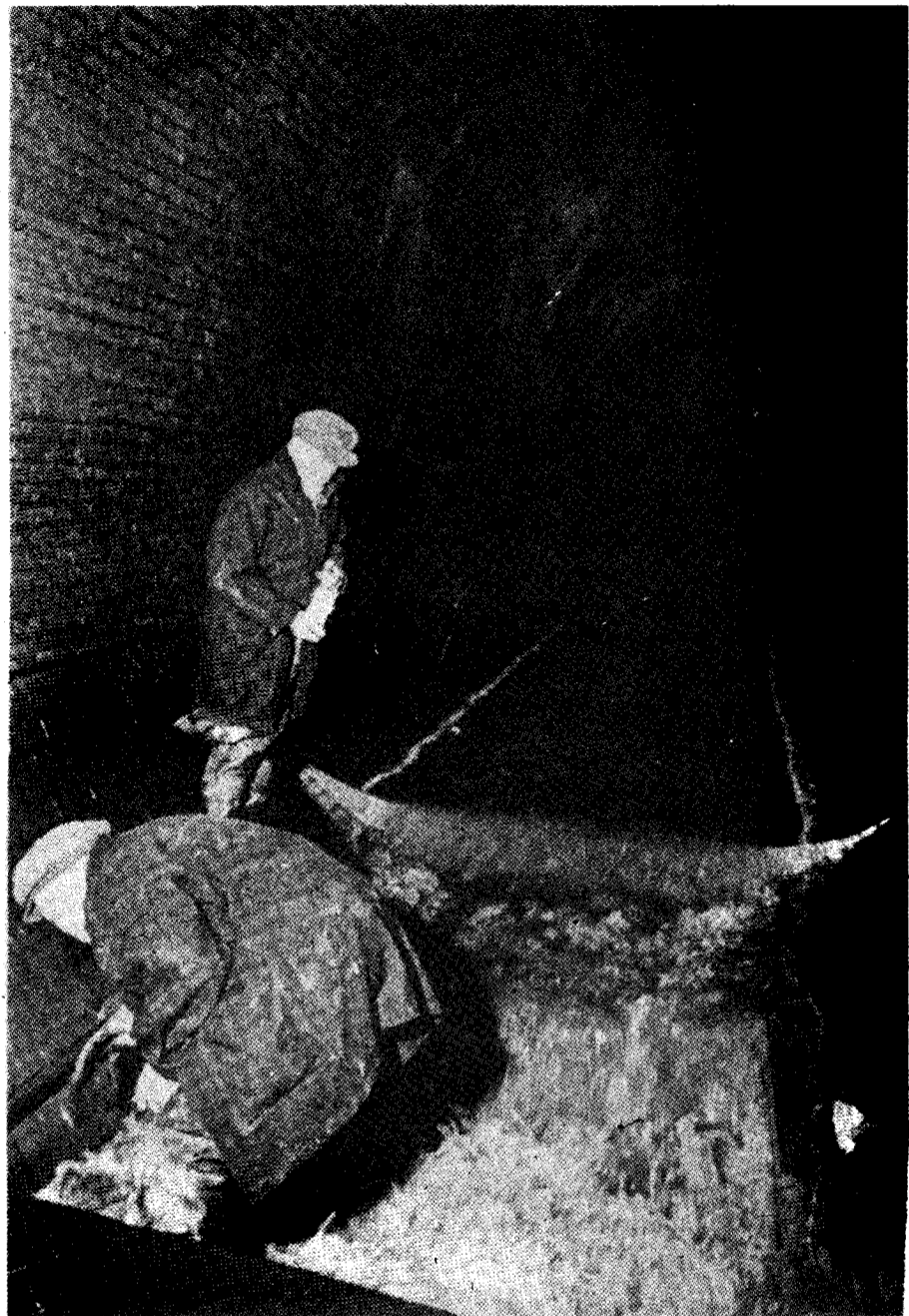


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SUPPORT THE WATER WORKERS!



FOR the first time since the 1980 steel strike, the whole of a major industry is on all-out indefinite strike. After many long months of lengthening dole queues, cuts and closures, struggles stopped halfway, and the Tories riding high on 'Falklands factor' jingoism, an opening has been created for the labour movement to see that the tables can be turned. The Tories can be beaten.

The previous Tory government also had a string of victories — though less dramatically — in 1970-72. Only after the 1972 miners' strike was it put on the defensive.

The water workers in 1983 can do what the miners did in 1972 — if they can develop the same sort of strong rank-and-file organisation, which can stop the top union leaders backtracking, and if the labour movement gives solid support.

Rally round

Tony Benn MP

I would hope that the whole labour movement rallies behind the water workers. This is an attempt to enforce a Government pay policy on a group of workers who have slipped behind and who perform essential work. And everyone should be on the look-out for the sort of attacks upon these workers that we've experienced in the past, as with the health workers and the miners.

FBU call

The Executive Council of the Fire Brigades Union at its meeting on January 19 unanimously agreed to support the water workers in their struggle.

A circular has been sent to all branches instructing members not to carry water other than as part of their normal duties. It also calls on members to take part in activities supporting the water workers.

The FBU fought a similar battle in 1977 to bring its wages up to the 'upper quartile' of manual workers' pay

"Health workers should support"

by Andrea Campbell, Broad Left candidate for general secretary of the health union COHSE.

THE Tories have gone from one major public sector dispute — the health workers — to another one — the water workers.

The similarity is clear. Both we and the water workers are vitally necessary for the health of the country, and both groups do dirty work for very low pay.

We could have won the 12% claim if we had had the right kind of leadership. The water workers, claiming 15%, can win, and have at least started off on the right foot by taking all-out strike action.

As a health worker I will be campaigning for support for their struggle in my trade union.

Health workers now know how important solid-

arity action is. It meant a lot to us when workers from other sections came down to our picket lines. We must now ensure that that solidarity is returned, with health workers picketing with the water workers and sending messages of support and donations.

The Tories are using the same threat to break the strike as they used with the health workers — the troops. Thatcher has become more arrogant with each strike she breaks, and there is no doubt that she will not hesitate to bring in the troops.

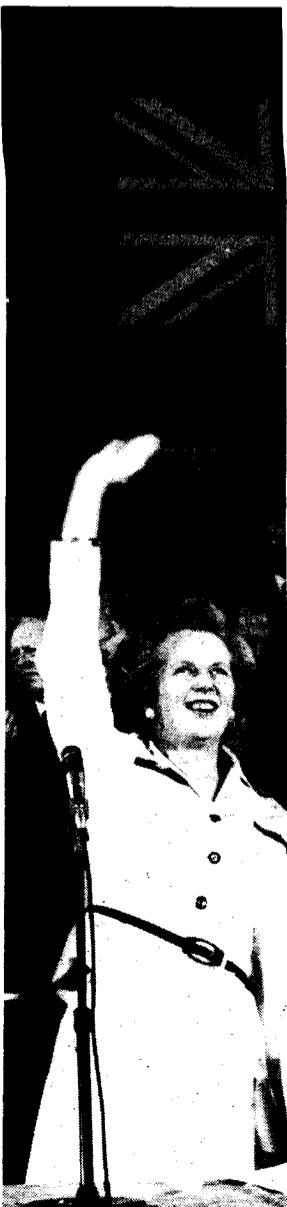
The links which were made during the NHS pay dispute must be built during this strike. All health service stewards should get resolutions passed in their branches, districts/regions and nationally in support

of the water workers.

It is important that low pay remains an issue in the minds of the public. Last week there was a report in the papers of a top-executive getting a £2,000 per week increase. Meanwhile thousands and thousands of workers providing for the health and welfare of the country are living on the poverty line.

Our fight is the same fight as the water workers — against low pay, exploitation and the policies of the Tory government.

All health workers should be out there supporting the water workers, just as they supported us.



WATER WORKERS TURN

A fight against Tories

THE water workers' strike is a struggle directly against the Tory government.

The Tories intervened right at the start to push the employers' offer down to 4 per cent. And they are also pushing through legislation to abolish the National Water Council as from September 1983.

This will mean that *all the present national agreements* will be torn up, to be replaced by regional agreements. Jobs and conditions will be at threat across the board.

And wage negotiations are to be regional, not national. In this way the Tories hope to break up the tremendous power of water workers united nationally.

From the local water workers' strike in the north-west in 1979 the state machine concluded that "as long as the strike was localised, and as long as managerial and supervisory staff kept working, such a strike could be beaten". But they're not so sure about a national strike!

What the water workers face is only another application of the Tories' general strategy:

*To 'sweat out' the crisis, using unemployment as a weapon to bludgeon union organisation and to force wages down and profits up;

*To use public sector workers as a pacesetter in keeping wages below price inflation, with the current 4 per cent norm;

*To chop public services, with the aim of redirecting resources to private profit.

United nationally, the water workers are strong – strong enough to defeat the Tories' plans. Their strength could be doubled by a common front with gas and power workers.

Both these groups have pay claims confronting the Tories' 4 per cent norm – 13% for the gas workers, 8% for power. The gas workers have already turned down a 3.9 per cent offer.

By coming out now alongside the water workers, they could win their claims – and deal a devastating blow to the Tories' anti-working class strategy which, with the aid of the slump and the feebleness of the top trade union leaders, has scored far too many successes recently.

The Tories could even be forced into an early election.

Some local Labour Parties are already organising to support the water workers. The whole labour movement, including the national Labour Party and TUC leadership, should be throwing its weight behind the strike.

An active labour movement which supports and develops every militant struggle can drive the Tories from office – and win the general election, and fight to hold a Labour government to serious measures against the power and privilege of the capitalist class.



What they are demanding

What is the claim?

A 15% rise to bring water workers in line with higher-paid manual workers (the 'top quartile') in other industries and in electricity and gas.

Isn't 15% too ambitious?

No. Water workers' basic pay is at present between £78.20 and £85.85, and their average gross earnings about £134 a week.

To keep up with inflation and have the same real value as their £61.80 average earnings in 1975, water workers would have to be getting about £160 a week now – or rather more, since tax would take a bigger cut from their pay. That means an increase of 20% or

more.

Where their own money is concerned, the bosses don't consider 15% rises as over the top. British Oxygen boss Richard Giordano got a 21% increase last year – a rise of £2,000 a week!

Thirteen top British Oxygen directors shared an overall increase of 15%, and 15% was the figure, too, for Coal Board chairman Norman Siddall, who pocketed a handy £150 extra each week.

What's the offer?

The National Water Council originally wanted to offer 6%. The Tories refused to let them go over 4%.

In the last-minute... was bumped up to 5... mean a wage cut in real

Haven't they been offered

Yes – but over 16 months is worth no... 16 months is worth no... 12. Besides, the longer fits in with a trend in... elsewhere – means lo... eaten away by inflati... union comeback.

Economic experts a... rise again over the con... factory-gate prices are a

Link up with power

UP THE PRESSURE

**Rank
and
file
must
control!**



Strike committees have been set up at water and sewage plants, organising picket lines, ensuring that the craft workers respect those picket lines and that NALGO members hold to their union's national instruction not to cooperate with scabbing.

Control of emergency cover – for hospitals, for dialysis machines, and for the fire service – will also be an important task for these strike committees. It should be firmly in the hands of the rank and file, to ensure that 'emergencies' are not used as a pretext for strike-breaking.

Many water workers are also arguing that negotiations should be under the control of the local strike committees, or rather of a national strike committee elected by them and accountable to them.

While the employers' representatives have been militant and ready for a fight, the union representatives have been practically apologising for the strike, and constantly ready to negotiate on almost any basis.

re

Wading in untreated sewage every day, doing repair work in decayed Victorian sewers sometimes as narrow as the narrowest seams worked by coal miners, working waist-deep in icy water on jobs at reservoirs, regular spells of being on call 24 hours a day – water workers' jobs are often among the most difficult and dirty anywhere.

For those working at sewage plants, illnesses and infections are a regular occupational hazard.

Fleet Street editors will be holding forth against water workers 'holding the nation to ransom'. But would any of them do the job themselves – even for twice the pay?

negotiations the offer 7%. That would still terms.

and 7.3% now? months. And 7.3% over more than 5.9% over period deal – which the NHS, in BL, and per for wages to be without any trade

expect inflation to ing year. Import and ready rising sharply.



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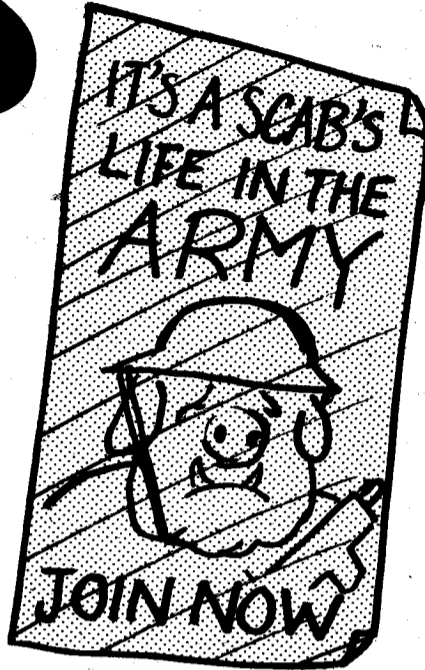
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and gas workers

THE STATE'S ARMED BODIES OF SCABS



Plans for strikebreaking by troops have been prepared and perfected over many years. Harry Sloan reports

"CALL off the rail strike, or we'll call an air strike", gloated one of the slogans of Thatcher's returning Falklands Task Force at the height of the jingoistic fervour last summer.

And now that the union leaders' fear of their own rank and file members has plainly outweighed their fear of action against the government, Thatcher is counting upon a revival and continuity of the "Falklands spirit" to crush the water workers.

This includes the preparation of a 15,000-strong army "Task Force" including drivers, technicians, command and control staff, and general duty soldiers.

The use of the army for strikebreaking activity is of course nothing new in Britain.

Since the turn of the century there have been repeated occasions on which troops have been brought in and states of emergency invoked by the government of the day to smash strikes.

In 1910 troops were sent on the orders of Winston Churchill to Tonypandy valley in South Wales to assist police protecting imported blackleg labour during a miners' strike. Nine months later in 1911 troops in Llanelli gunned down four strikers, while virtually the whole army was mobilised along the rail network to combat the first-ever national rail strike.



Army scabs in the 1977 firemen's strike

area-by-area bonus scheme in the mining industry, designed to split the strength of the NUM, while legislation now completing its way through Parliament will abolish the National Water Council — and thus national agreements and the possibility of national strike action by water workers by September 1983.

Water workers will then find themselves divided into no less than ten different regions with negotiations only on a local level.

Disputes which break out in this set-up would be more vulnerable to isolation — and to military strike-breaking.

The 1973-4 miners' strike which eventually toppled the Heath government, brought an even higher degree of police/military preparation.

A special "Anti Picket Unit" was established headed by Commander John Gerard, to coordinate action against the miners' dispute. In Yorkshire alone a squad of 800 police were on permanent standby throughout the strike while a special unit kept tabs on 'known extremists'.

Previously inactive 'Home Defence and Emergency Planning Committees' were drastically expanded. These are committees that would oversee wartime or peacetime emergencies.

The plant producing army riot helmets was specifically exempted from Heath's 3-day week restrictions.

There were special appeals to rail workers to join the Territorial Army, while army HGV drivers were warned they may be recalled from Xmas leave.

And in December 1973 Heath put on alert the alternative government apparatus which would take over the country in the case of extreme national emergency. The secret bunkers housing the regional seats of government were put on standby.

As we know, these measures — like so many of the previous attempts to crack strikes by military and police intervention — failed to save Heath or his incomes policies.

This did not deter the returned Labour leadership from further exercises in army scabbing.

The Glasgow dustmen were the first to suffer this attack when troops moved in to clear rubbish during their strike in 1975.

But it was the fire fighters' pay strike of 1977-8 which brought the most concerted and prolonged army strike-breaking exercise seen this century.

For eight weeks, amidst a barrage of adulatory press publicity, thousands of troops were deployed with their "Green Goddess" fire appliances

in an effort to crack the militancy of the first national strike against Labour's wage controls.

In the event, though the immediate deal forced in by the FBU leadership fell short of the original claim, the whole scabbing exercise failed to prevent the firefighters from securing a long term boost to their wage levels.

The careful cultivation of an "acceptable" face of mass scabbing — the use of troops to break a strike by emergency workers who provide a vital public service — was to be seen again however during the ambulance workers' struggles in early 1979, and again under the Tory government. The working class will pay heavily if it relaxes its guard against each and every form of military intervention and exercise in mass scabbing.

In recent years the development of the savage Special Patrol Group and analogous bodies within the police force has to a large degree avoided the necessity to deploy soldiers to protect scabs and smash picket lines.

The prime role of the military in strikebreaking is now as an obedient workforce that can be ordered in to fill the jobs of strikers.

In this role however the largely unskilled manpower at the disposal of the armed forces restricts its ability to break strikes in — for instance — the railways or the power industry.

In the water strike the army effort will be dependent upon the cooperation of supervisors and white collar staff not directly involved in the dispute. Solidarity action by NALGO and the other unions covering these workers could swiftly paralyse the scabs and create conditions for the defeat of Thatcher's plan to crack a major section of workers.

Key

But the other key to defeating the army strategy is the mobilisation of those other public sector workers whose claims are still outstanding — the power and gas workers. Attacked on three fronts, Thatcher's "Task Force" could not keep all three industries ticking over.

Above all, the last 80 years' experience shows that if confronted by a solid and determined working class and sufficient supporting action beyond the immediate section in dispute, the army scabs can be beaten.

The task before the water workers is to reach out at once to their fellow trade unionists and the wider labour movement — and ensure that their leaders are given no room to retreat from a crucial struggle.

Docks

In July 1911 during a docks strike in which several thousand pickets had fought pitched battles with police and with scabs, 800 cavalry and infantry troops moved into the Lancashire town of Salford, taking up positions guarding the bridges leading into Manchester.

During the rail and police strikes of 1919, there was



Harry Sloan, author of the article

also a show of armed force by the government.

And in 1926, the General Strike saw troops used to convoy food from the docks to Hyde Park, while warships ferried supplies to Liverpool, and army units were held in readiness should the police and special constabulary fail to protect the scabs.

The use of the military in the General Strike was further facilitated by the implementation of the Emergency Powers Act of 1920, passed in the immediate aftermath of a massive strike wave and angry demonstrations by unemployed ex-servicemen.

Emergency

The Act — the same that will be used if Thatcher proclaims a state of emergency to combat the water workers — gave the government power to break up any large strike said to be "interfering with the supply and distribution of food, water, fuel or light, or with means of locomotion".

In reality it offered a blank cheque for police and

scabs to baton, ride down and beat up pickets.

Under the Emergency Powers Act, the government was empowered to seize land, buildings, food, vehicles and other essentials, and issued licences to take over docks and railways and control gas, electricity and water.

A statement issued by the government at the start of the General Strike declared:

"All ranks of the armed forces of the Crown are hereby notified that any action which they may find it necessary to take in an honest endeavour to aid the civil power will receive, both now and afterwards, the full support of His Majesty's Government."

To further protect the value of the military as a strikebreaking instrument, the Increment to Disaffection Act (1934) made it illegal to seduce any member of the armed forces from their duty.

Though the war period brought a dramatic vote by Montgomery's largely con-

script Eighth Army to uphold the right of workers to strike even during the war itself, the post-war period saw army strike-breaking once more the order of the day — this time under Attlee's Labour government.

Nine times

Nine times between 1946 and 1950 workers in dispute were confronted by army scabbing. Smithfield meat workers, Ministry of Works employees, London dockers, Avonmouth dockers, power workers in London and Belfast, and gas workers all saw troops drafted in to smash their disputes — though in most cases the arrival of soldiers led to a hardening and escalation of the strike.

Harold Wilson's government elected to office in 1964, was by the summer of 1966 invoking a state of emergency and a massive anti-communist witch-hunt to confront the seamen's strike.

In 1972 it was the Tories

turn once again to bring in the troops, during the dock strike.

A new twist to strike-breaking activity emerged in the aftermath of the miners' strike of 1972 which delivered a stinging defeat to Edward Heath's Tory government.

A new committee, the Civil Contingencies Unit, was set up, with a brief of preparing measures to reduce the potential social and economic impact of strikes by small but powerful sections of workers, such as the miners, the power workers — and the water workers.

At first chaired by Lord Jellicoe and then by Jim Prior, the CCU also continued during the Labour government, masterminding strike-breaking efforts by Wilson and Callaghan.

It is now headed by William Whitelaw, and backed up by a secretariat led by a Brigadier, Tony Budd.

It seems no coincidence that the Thatcher government has seen the introduction of the divisive

BITTER LESSONS OF HITLER'S RISE

50 years after
Jan 30, 1933

Martin Thomas looks at the fight against Nazism

50 YEARS ago on January 30, Hitler came to power in Germany — opening an era of bloody destruction of the labour movement, mass slaughter of Jews, violent persecution of gays and of gypsies, doubly brutal oppression of women, and world war.

Why did Hitler triumph? Could it happen again?

TV and press comment on the anniversary — like the BBC2 Timewatch programme this Wednesday, 26th, on 'How do you democratise a Nazi?' — is liable to focus on authoritarian traditions in the German character and suchlike. But such explanations give us little idea of why, for example, a broadly similar fascist regime was installed in Italy, a country where the stereotype 'national character' is

undisciplined and anarchic. Leon Trotsky, writing in the 1930s, gave a better analysis of Nazism. And more: before the triumph of Hitler he proposed and argued for a strategy to stop Nazism. The scene was set for

1928: Coalition government with the Social Democrat Herman Mueller as Chancellor. CP swings over to the theory of the 'third period': capitalism is in its final crisis and the Social Democrats are just 'social fascists'.

1930-1: Slump hits Germany. Unemployment rises to 3 million in 1930 and over 4 million in 1931. Nazis gain strength. In September 1930 parliamentary elections they gain 18% of the vote, as against 2.6% in May 1928.

March 1930: Coalition collapses. Heinrich Brüning of the Catholic Centre Party becomes Chancellor, rules by emergency decree.

September 1930: New parliamentary elections. SPD, alarmed by Nazi gains, decide to tolerate Brüning government as 'lesser evil'.

August 1931: Referendum, called by Nazis, to bring down SPD-dominated state government in Prussia. CP supports this, under the slogan of the 'red referendum', but SPD regime survives.

December 1931: SPD creates anti-fascist 'Iron Front'.

March 1932: Presidential election, as unemployment mounts to 5 million. SPD supports Field Marshal Hindenburg ['lesser evil', again], who wins.

May 1932: Hindenburg appoints Franz von Papen [Centre Party member promptly expelled by his party] as Chancellor to form a government 'above the parties'.

July 1932: After Nazi provocation, Papen dissolves SPD-led Prussian government. SPD says it will appeal to the courts: CP calls for a general strike [to defend the same government against which it had called the 'red referendum'], but there is little response.

Already the CP leader Thaelmann had explained in September 1930 that through the Mueller government, 'the rule of fascism has already been established in Germany'. Now, as Trotsky recounted: "Thaelmann, Remmele, and others speak of the fascist coup d'etat of July 20. At the same time, they warn the workers against the approaching danger of the Hitlerite, that is, the equally fascist, overturn. Finally, the Social Democracy is designated just as before as social fascist. The unfolding events are in this way reduced to this, that species of fascism take the power from each other with the aid of 'fascist' coups d'etat."

December 1932: Hindenburg appoints General Kurt von Schleicher as Chancellor.

January 30 1933: Hindenburg calls Hitler to be Chancellor. SPD calls for calm, CP blusters about a general strike.

February 1933: 'Reichstag [parliament buildings] fire' blamed on CP. Civil liberties suspended.

March 1933: Parliament votes dictatorial powers to Hitler. CP deputies have all fled or been jailed — only the SPD votes against.

May 1933: SPD trade union bureaucrats urge workers to march in Hitler's 'National Day of Labour' parade. The next day, the Nazis take over the whole trade union movement and send militants and bureaucrats alike to the concentration camps.



Stormtroopers outside the Communist Party HQ in Berlin, January 22 1933

undisciplined and anarchic. Leon Trotsky, writing in the 1930s, gave a better analysis of Nazism. And more: before the triumph of Hitler he proposed and argued for a strategy to stop Nazism. The scene was set for

fascism, he argued, by the economic decay and crisis of capitalism in the 1930s. But fascism was not just the gradual, organic product of those economic and social conditions. It was the result of specific political processes.

Fascism was a mass movement of the middle class (and also partly of the unemployed). Directed in words both against 'finance capital' and against the reds, in reality its aim was, and could only be, to smash the workers' organisations — with a thoroughness and brutality not possible for 'cold' capitalist methods.

The economic crisis, making it impossible for the capitalists to rule stably with the old methods of bourgeois democracy and class collaboration, drove the bourgeoisie — or at least important sections of it — towards support for fascism, despite all the risks and overhead expenses. It also ruined the middle class, driving masses of them to look for desperate remedies and thus towards fascism.

But whether or not the ruined middle classes would swing to fascism depended on the reaction to the crisis of the other major class, the working class. If the working class rallied solidly against the rising fascist movement, knocking the swagger out of it, and if the labour movement could show a way out of the economic crisis, then the rise of fascism could be checked and the middle classes won to socialism.

Fascism could triumph only after the labour movement had missed its chance.

The reason why the German labour movement missed its chance, argued Trotsky, was the policies of the Social Democratic (SPD) and Stalinist (CP) leadership. The German workers'



The Social Democrats backed Hindenburg (right) for president as a 'lesser evil'. Then Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Chancellor.

movement was the strongest in the world — even in November 1932 the SPD and CP between them won 13 million votes — and the workers were willing to fight. Members of the CP and of the SPD-led Iron Front fought the Nazis on the streets heroically again and again.

But the SPD always resorted in the end to reliance on capitalist 'lesser evils' and appeals to the police and courts to deal with the Nazis.

The CP capitulated in a more radical-sounding but equally disastrous way. It made a great noise about fighting not only fascism but capitalism as a whole.

But it blinded workers to the specific threat of Nazism by denouncing all capitalist regimes as fascist.

It rejected a drive for SPD-CP united action against the Nazis on the grounds that the SPD was only "the moderate wing of fascism". It isolated the revolutionary workers

from the mass of their class by forming separate 'red' trade unions, which at the end of 1930 had only 150,000 members while the SPD-led unions had five million.

Trotsky's writings were all directed at the members of the CP, urging them to change policy. SPD members and even bureaucrats could be won to action against the Nazis — but only if there was a serious revolutionary force mapping out and pushing for that action.

In the short term that revolutionary force could only be the CP — a party that was heavily bureaucratized and disoriented by the grip of the cynical Kremlin bureaucracy, but still a world removed from the totally degenerate Communist Parties of today.

"A new historical party cannot arise simply because a number of old Social Democrats have convinced themselves, very belatedly, of the counter-revolutionary character of

the Ebert-Wels policy. A new party can just as little be improvised by a group of Communists who have as yet done nothing to warrant their claim to proletarian leadership. For a new party to arise, it is on the one hand necessary to have great historical events, which would break the backbone of the old parties, and on the other hand, a principled position elaborated, and cadres tested, in the crucible of events."

Trotsky dissected the Stalinist proclamations that there was no difference in 'class content' between bourgeois democracy and fascism. Yes, he replied, the ruling class is the same in each case.

"The ruling class, however, does not inhabit a vacuum. It stands in definite relations to other classes. In a developed capitalist society, during a 'democratic' regime, the bourgeoisie leans for support primarily upon the

revolutionary road. The work of the Second International consisted in creating just such bulwarks during the epoch when it was still fulfilling its progressive historic labour.

"Fascism has for its basic and only task the razing to their foundations of all institutions of proletarian democracy. Has this any 'class meaning' for the proletariat, or hasn't it? The lofty theoreticians had better ponder over this."

And he exposed the Stalinists' bluster about a 'united front from below':

"It is necessary to show by deeds a complete readiness to make a bloc with the Social Democrats against the fascists in all cases in which they will accept a bloc. To say to the Social Democratic workers: 'Cast your leaders aside and join our 'non-party' united front', means to add just one more hollow phrase to a thousand others."

"The overwhelming majority of the Social Democratic workers will fight against the fascists, but — for the present at least — only together with their organisations. This stage cannot be skipped. We must help the Social Democratic workers in action — in this new and extraordinary situation — to test the value of their organisations and leaders at this time, when it is a matter of life and death for the working class."

"It is necessary, without any delay, finally to elaborate a practical system of measures — not with the aim of merely 'exposing' the Social Democracy [before the Communists], but with the aim of actual struggle against fascism."

"The programme of action must be strictly practical, strictly objective, to the point, without any of those artificial 'claims', without any reservations, so that every average Social Democratic worker can say to himself: what the Communists propose is completely indispensable for the struggle against fascism. On this basis, we must pull the Social Democratic workers along with us by our example, and criticise their leaders who will inevitably serve as a check and a brake. Only in this way is victory possible."

To shout about revolution while rejecting the united front against fascism was empty words, he explained.

"The logic of events is such that the struggle for 'parliament' and for 'democracy' becomes for every Social Democratic worker a question of power. Therein lies the main content of the whole conflict from the standpoint of the revolution."

But the Stalinists remained deaf. Even after Hitler's victory they insisted that their policy had been 'absolutely correct'. The Trotskyists concluded that the CPs were 'dead for the revolution' and that a new revolutionary movement, a Fourth International, must be created.

Trotsky's writings on Germany remain one of the finest sources of strategic education for us trying to build a revolutionary socialist movement today.

Democracy and CLPD

JOHN Bloxam presents himself (Socialist Organiser 13.1.83) as the defender of democracy in CLPD. However he lies on uncertain ground in doing so.

The main argument of his article is his assertion that the decision of three EC members to resign if certain AGM resolutions are carried is a threat to democracy. In fact the three EC members in question consider that these resolutions are on subjects so crucial to the tactics of CLPD that, if they are carried CLPD's priorities will be so transformed as to make it a different organisation.

Is John Bloxam asking that people should continue to work in an organisation whose methods they consider to be fundamen-

tally misguided? He appears to be suggesting that, for the sake of maintaining a facade of nominal unity, people of fundamentally conflicting views should remain in the same organisation when they have long ceased to be able to co-operate together.

Did John Bloxam himself campaign for the "fall-back position" on the register agreed by the majority of the EC, even when he was fundamentally opposed to it?

John Bloxam heads his article "Defend Democracy in CLPD" and poses as a champion of democratic principle. Nevertheless on some of the issues he takes up in his article he takes a fundamentally undemocratic line.

He pretends to believe

that the personal statements circulated in the CLPD bulletin are semi-official campaign statements on behalf of the campaign, with the implication that access to the bulletin is limited to those with a certain point of view. This is untrue, as the contents of CLPD bulletins have never been presented as official CLPD policy, but merely the views of the articles therein.

He also refers disparagingly to "personal attacks and personal views" as though there is something inferior or undesirable about a personal view.

What these personal views amount to, in reality are political statements. The suppression of their circulation is undemocratic, and would restrict CLPD sup-

porters to sight only of the official documents of the campaign: minutes and agendas of meetings, model resolutions, recruiting leaflets and the like.

John Bloxam also defends, in the name of democracy, a group of resolutions designed to divest CLPD of all its regional representation. What he does not say is that there are two proposals for reform of the existing system, to make it more representative.

One is the proposed limit on the number of key persons per Labour Party region to three, and the other is the proposal by Jeremy Cuss to introduce a postal ballot of all supporters in each region to elect key persons.

John Bloxam also pontif-

icates about the damage that a split in CLPD would do to the campaign for democracy in the party. However, the split has been anticipated precisely because certain members of the EC have consistently advocated methods which the EC majority believe would lose CLPD its position as the major organisation campaigning for democratic reform.

It is also hypocritical for John Bloxam to appeal in his final paragraph that "majority decisions must be loyally implemented by those responsible", as he knows very well that the views of the present EC majority are quite irreconcilable with the political position he advocates.

TONY MARIES

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.

GEORGE BOX MEMORIAL

GEORGE BOX was a familiar and widely respected figure, particularly in the socialist and trade union movement. He was well-known not only in Nottingham, but also in many other parts of the country. His death, in November 1982, was a tragic and shocking loss.

Those who knew George will also remember him as a collector of leaflets, documents, journals, books, and papers. He assembled an

impressive collection spanning the period from the late 1950s through to the present day. Many of the journals in particular, are now comparatively rare.

We wish to make the collection available for study, and to establish a permanent tribute to George's memory. Negotiations are taking place so that a suitable home for the collection can be found that will offer both security and access. We believe that, once established, the collection will become a valuable resource for those interested in socialist politics, supplementing the private collections already held in the East Midlands. In the longer term it could be the nucleus for further additions and donations.

All this, of course, requires money. Binding, cataloguing, purchasing to fill gaps, and erecting an appropriate plaque will prove costly. We are therefore appealing to those who remember George, and to the wider labour movement, for contributions to aid this important project. Cheques should be made payable to the 'George Box Memorial Fund' and sent to: 13 Balmoral Road, Nottingham NG1 4HX. Please indicate if a receipt is required.

EDDIE ASHBEE

East European disarmers

AS comrades may be aware there have been some highly significant developments taking place in Eastern Europe outside of Poland in the past two or three years. I refer to the emergence of a distinct dissident peace group in Hungary and East Germany as well as the Soviet Union itself.

The groups have appeared for two interrelated reasons. First to what many is the inspiring — and well publicised in Eastern Europe by party propaganda — example of the Western European disarmament movements.

The second is the rejection in particular by sections of youth, of the hypocrisy and stifling of debate by the Stalinist authorities in relation to the question of nuclear disarmament.

In East Germany for example, many young people became sick of attending rallies orchestrated by party organisers which only protest at the West's possession of atomic weapons.

The process of anger and disillusionment deepened

when they were not permitted to question let alone protest about the Warsaw Pact's nuclear arsenal.

The party tried to stop any criticism of its official stance that imperialist weapons were offensive in nature while the weapons possessed by socialist states were purely for defensive purposes. This was and is encapsulated in the slogan "The peace must be armed".

The youth started to create a constructive outlet for their political frustration. Many who were tired of the stifling of discussion at official seminars started to organise activities, often spontaneously and at the fringe of official functions, their own rallies and discussion groups free of political control.

As the movement spread it found a political ally and an organisational umbrella in the form of the Protestant Lutheran Church. Many youth, in a rejection of Stalinism, turned to religion.

The Pastors in many churches were prepared to take a leading role in the

movement and put facilities such as church buildings at the disposal of young people and dissidents.

The church in East Germany as with all the churches in Eastern Europe, have an ambivalent relationship with the state authorities. Their political stance is ambiguous in its role of being simultaneously pernicious and progressive.

The unofficial movement has taken a predictable line of caution and conciliation towards the Stalinist regime as might be expected by a movement with strong clerical overtones. The party apparatus has been equally predictable in its response — the usual mixture of concession and repression.

It has tried with an intense propaganda campaign and stepping up of activities to woo young people back to the party line. This has conspicuously failed so it has resorted to a policy of harassment and arrest.

One of the ploys employed by the party is to deliberately conscript into

the army anyone they know or suspect of involvement.

This is particularly disturbing as one of the demands of the unofficial movement is an end to compulsory military service and respect for the conscious objectors. Related to this is the call for an alternative to conscription whereby useful community service is performed instead of being drafted into the army.

I know that the comrades in Socialist Organiser have as their policy Soviet defencism. I happen to believe as an individual that the stance of defence of the Soviet Union is outdated and incorrect. I can well understand if there is some reticence by some comrades about discussing and showing solidarity with the unofficial movements, as it seems at least superficially they reject Soviet defencism.

I hope the supporters of SO do not use the slogan of "defence of the Soviet Union" to turn a blind eye to their existence and unwittingly collaborate with the Stalinists in their persecution or anticipated

persecution.

Such movements could be as significant in the development of the struggle against Stalinism as the free trade unions.

ALEX SIMPSON

Our mistake

MY by-line was omitted by error from the front page article in last week's Socialist Organiser, and this has caused some consternation.

Both I and a number of other writers for SO argue that a democratic solution in Ireland should include some provision for regional autonomy within a 32-county state to accommodate the Protestant community.

However, this view has never been debated and voted on at a Socialist Organiser delegate meeting, it is not an agreed SO policy, and it should not have been in an unsigned article.

We will debate this issue, I hope, in discussion articles and letters. Just

one preliminary point, however, may be in order. I have the impression that some comrades reject any proposal for federalism in Ireland because they are worried it may be a first step towards conciliation with British imperialism.

Right or wrong, it certainly isn't that. Some of us have argued for it since the '60s, and I think it's fair to say we have as good a record as any socialist current in Britain — and better than most — on supporting the struggle in Ireland, even at times when there was much less sympathy in the labour movement for the Republican cause than there is now.

MARTIN THOMAS

SCIENCE

Revolution in the field

by Les Hearn



When it was first developed, a hundred years ago, Triticale was a disappointment, or one thing, like the mule, it was sterile. This is because, even though the parent plants were closely enough related to breed, their chromosomes* did not match enough for germ cells (egg and sperm cells) to be produced.

For this to happen, and breeding to take place, any plant or animal has to have two complete sets of matching chromosomes. These are shared out between the germ cells, so each has one complete set. Then, when a sperm cell and an egg-cell join together, the resulting fertilised egg has two complete sets of chromosomes again.

If the chromosomes don't match, the mechanism that shares them out seems to get snarled up.

This problem was solved for Triticale by the discovery of a drug called colchicine (obtained from crocuses). This drug causes plants to double all their

chromosomes, so Triticale now has two complete sets from its wheat parent and two from its rye parent — and can breed.

Lots more selective breeding and research was needed, though, before the originally feeble Triticale developed into the present variety — short, strong, hardy and quite high-yielding.

Importantly for the Third World poor, Triticale grows well in harsh environments — better than wheat in parched and sterile earth (often all that's left to the peasantry after agribusiness has had its pick!), and it doesn't need expensive irrigation. It can also tolerate the salty soils that result from years of artificial irrigation and it doesn't need harvesting with expensive equipment.

Triticale contains 13% protein, the same as wheat. But the protein is more valuable as it contains a better selection of amino acids (the building blocks

for proteins).

It is also resistant to many diseases of wheat and so needs less expensive fungicide treatment.

The Triticale story looks like having a different outcome from the "Green Revolution", where high-yielding varieties of rice

A FRIEND remarked recently how much healthier she was after moving from a very damp flat to a dry one and a news item in last week's New Scientist suggests one possible explanation for this.

A survey of some 250 homes in various parts of England found the vast majority to be contaminated with bacteria from the human gut (enterobacteria) as well as various others, including some known as the pseudomonads.

Both groups of bacteria are usually harmless. For example, the enterobacteria live peacefully in our guts and do no harm — they even do good, by prev-

needed lots of fertilisers and pesticides for a successful harvest — which only the rich peasants could afford!

*In all living things (except bacteria and viruses) the DNA (or genetic code) is too long to exist as one thread. So it is

entering harmful bacteria getting established. However, in the wrong place, they may cause illness, particularly where resistance is low.

The enterobacteria are often found causing cystitis and may cause acute gastroenteritis, infantile diarrhoea, pneumonia, wound infections and blood infections.

The pseudomonads are normally harmless skin bacteria but can cause infections in those with low resistance. They are a particular problem in hospitals, where people with low resistance (because they are already ill) are gathered together so as to reduce NHS overheads.

split up into more manageable chunks, called chromosomes. Each chromosome carries a certain number of genes, the individual sentences of the genetic code, so a chromosome is a bit like a separate chapter.

Other more harmful bacteria may also contaminate these homes, probably brought in on meat products (e.g. Salmonella bacteria which can cause food poisoning, typhoid, etc).

The houses in the survey were not contaminated throughout. Bacteria find it difficult to survive in dry areas. They favour set areas in kitchens and bathrooms — particularly sinks, baths, cloths, and nappy buckets.

Obviously, we're not all suffering from pneumonia and diarrhoea, but the more bacteria there are, the more chance of even a healthy adult catching something.

MASS ANGER AT POLICE STATION KILLING

ON WEDNESDAY night, 12th, a friend gave Colin Roach a lift from his home in Bow to visit his brother in Stoke Newington.

The friend was worried when he saw Colin enter Stoke Newington police station. Colin was black, and the station is notorious in the area for racist cops.

But he can hardly have expected what happened next. The police say that they heard a shot and found Colin lying dead, his head blown to bits by a shotgun fired through his mouth.

Killed

Their story is that he had killed himself and was pro-

bably mentally ill. Colin's friends and family insist that he was certainly not mentally ill, and showed no suicidal signs.

Responded

The Stoke Newington cops have responded with characteristic brutality to repeated demonstrations of the local black community outside the police station, condemning the cops and demanding a public inquiry. 22 were arrested on Saturday 24th, and 27 at previous protests.

A Roach Family support committee has been formed, and local Labour councillors have pledged their support.

Defend Ranjit Dhakravorty!

LAST Wednesday afternoon in Sheffield 200 people, mostly from the Bengali community, demonstrated outside the Bangladeshi Advice Centre against another sexist/racist deportation - this time of Ranjit Dhakravorty.

He is a Bengali voluntary social worker for the community, who came to England from Bangla Desh as a student in 1976.

His financial problems at home forced him to abandon his studies two years later. But since his arrival in

Sheffield his services both to the Bengali community and to the Sheffield community as a whole have been invaluable.

He has acted as an interpreter in courts, worked with solicitors and on welfare rights, housing and DHSS rights and has taught Bengali children their mother language.

The Bengali community have recognised the valuable service that Ranjit has to offer them and have offered him permanent, paid, full-time work. He has received support from all over the



**National Day of Action
STOP THE DEPORTATIONS!**
Suspected 'illegal immigrants' are facing not only threats by the Home Office to deport them, but refusal by the DHSS to pay them supplementary benefit and child benefit. The Khan and Kaur Defence Campaign has called for a protest on Monday January 31.
PICKET YOUR LOCAL DHSS
Manchester: Gt. Ancoats St/Clarence Road, Longsight, 11am to 2pm. Nottingham: Castle Boulevard, 10am-1pm, called by Nottingham Campaign against Racism and Fascism. Pickets also planned in Brighton, Southampton, and other places: phone 051-225 6886.

Muhammed Idrish NALGO to back fight

NALGO's national conference in June will be asked to take up the case of Bengali social worker Muhammed Idrish. He is a member of the union's Dr. Barnardo's branch and is being threatened with deportation because his marriage, to a British-born woman, has broken down, although they are not yet divorced or even legally separated.

The branch has agreed to send in a conference resolution demanding that NALGO fight for his right to stay. They have elected him as their conference delegate and have promised to pay his airfare from Bangladesh if he has been deported by then! Will the union leadership be prepared to see a duly elected conference delegate excluded by the immigration laws?

We don't need to wait till June to find out. Pressure should be put on Geoffrey Drain and the National Executive to take a stand against the deportation right now. His branch, which organises Dr. Barnardo's workers nationally, is asking the union's London district committee for support. Militants in the West Midlands are also taking the issue up.

The 'Muhammed Idrish Defence Campaign' stress that the fight is not just over one individual but about racism and the immigration laws.

Support for the campaign has been received from more than 20 Labour MPs, the Indian and Bangladeshi Workers Associations, Sheffield and Rotherham City Councils, several union and Labour Party branches and the community and Race Relations Unit of the British Council of Churches.

Next moves in the campaign include a delegation to Idrish's MP, Peter Snape, on February 4, and resolutions to Birmingham Trades Council and other union bodies. Idrish will be speaking at a public meeting in Handsworth on February 11, called as part of Sandwell branch Labour Party's campaign against the immigration laws.

Despite a £125 donation

from NALGO and £5 from Sandwell Labour Party the campaign still urgently needs more money. We expect a decision from the Home Office adjudicator in the next few weeks and we may have to try legal action to delay the deportation while the campaign is being built in the Labour Movement and in the community.

That will be mighty expensive! Donations and affiliations (£5 organisations, £1 individuals) should be sent to Barry Lovejoy (address below).

If you want to help build the campaign come along to our regular meetings every Wednesday at 7.30 pm at the Shaheed Udhham Singh Centre, 346 Soho Rd., Handsworth, or contact:

Barry Lovejoy, 30, Antrobus Rd., Handsworth, Birmingham 21, or Graham Reid, 62, Bedminster Parade, Bristol 3 (0272-667933) or phone Ahsan 021-551 1846.

SANDWELL BRANCH LABOUR PARTY
PUBLIC MEETING
AGAINST THE IMMIGRATION LAWS
Speakers: Alex Lyon MP, Muhammed Idrish, Phil Rose (Prospective City Council Candidate)
February 11th, 7.30 pm, Rookery Road School

Problems - and Policies

By Harry Sloan

Workers' democracy vs Tebbit's 'reforms'

THE UNIONS have "a rich diversity of democratic practices, including secret ballots".

With such guarded words, TUC representatives have tried to conceal the fact that the brazenly bureaucratic practices and structures of most unions leave them sitting ducks for Norman Tebbit.

His Green Paper on "Trade Union Reform" is plainly laying out one of the main arenas on which the Tories will fight the next General Election.

By posing as advocates of "democracy" in the trade unions, the Tories will aim to capitalise on the confusion, frustration and demoralisation of sections of trade unionists who have been offered no lead in mass action to defend their jobs, wages and conditions - and to consolidate the anti-union sentiments of whole sections of the middle class.

Previous articles in this column have examined the

gulf between the privileged, entrenched full time official hierarchy of the unions and the demands, struggles and concerns of the rank and file membership.

The Tories have understandably seized upon this weakness in the position of the bureaucracy as a means to drive forward their attacks on the unions.

Pronged

Tebbit's Green Paper discusses a three-pronged attack, centring on the election of union leadership by secret ballot, the enforcement of postal ballots before strike action, and breaking the unions' links with the Labour Party by changing the political levy from 'contracting out' to 'contracting in'.

By focussing on these issues, the Tory press can exploit the bogey of 'extremist' and 'unrepresentative' union leaders whose alleged willingness to call irresponsible strikes

at the drop of a hat is portrayed as the major problem, while the gap between affiliated and active membership of the Labour Party offers Tebbit the ostensibly "reasonable" argument that people should have to opt into paying the political levy.

In none of these cases - hypocritical though the attacks may be - is it sufficient to answer the Tebbit offensive by simply defending the status quo in the unions. The fact is that they are bureaucratically controlled, and this works consistently against the interests of the membership - though not in the way the Tories suggest.

Divorced

The fact that most union officials up to General Secretary level are either appointed or elected for life means that - completely divorced from the harsh reality of wage cuts,

speed-up, staffing cuts, redundancies, closures and victimisations which colour every day life for their rank and file members - they feel free to pursue policies of collaboration with the employers without ever having to account to their members.

Recall

The answer to this is not the trade union equivalent of Parliamentary elections - a secret ballot every five years, leaving the elected candidate to do as he/she wishes in the meantime - but a genuine and living system of democratic accountability through which periodic reelection of all officials is linked to the power to recall them at any time.

Such accountability cannot be enforced by the passive 'involvement' of individual members merely filling in occasional ballot forms at home; it requires the participation of the



Would you buy a rulebook from this Tory?

most actively committed and aware trade unionists in collective debate and discussion on the policies and record of each of the candidates for office. Every candidate must be given the right to campaign for elected office.

Workers should have the opportunity to make their assessment of the candidates not through the Tory press and mass media but at first hand in general workplace meetings timed to allow the maximum

participation.

Where ballots are held, rules must be tightened up to stamp out ballot rigging by officials at branch, regional and national level.

And the careerists and opportunists who currently sponge off the workers' movement should be squeezed out by reducing the pay of full time officials to the average wage of the members they are elected to represent.

Passive

Similarly the question of strike action requires not a passive postal poll of atomised, individual members, but the holding of mass workplace meetings, a clear lead from convenors and national officials, and in this way a collective show of opinion for what must be a collective class response to Tory/management attacks. The control of disputes must be in the hands of elected strike committees, and decisions taken by mass meetings, not by General Secretaries.

When it comes to the unions' link to the Labour Party we can most clearly see the Tory plan to drive a wedge between workplace struggles and 'political' questions.

The campaign against 'contracting in' must include a combined struggle both inside the Labour Party itself - to ensure that it adopts and publicly presents policies

which will attract and hold the allegiance of workers - and in the unions.

Affiliated union branches must ensure their delegates attend the local GMCs and should discuss the policies the union is taking into the Labour Party at local and national level, and ensure that they reflect the interests and demands of their members.

This can be facilitated by redoubling the fight for the establishment of workplace branches of the Labour Party - which themselves are then entitled to send delegates directly to local General Management Committees.

And of course the other issue to be confronted is the democratisation of the block vote of the unions - to prise the political decisions on key Labour Party issues out of the hands of the top union bureaucrats and ensure that the voice of the rank and file is that which decides.

Seriously to fight Tebbit is therefore to embark on an all-round fight to democratise the labour movement as a whole, and gear it up for the struggles to come.

It is because this means an onslaught on the power and privilege of the bureaucracy that we can expect a half-cock, mealy-mouthed campaign from the TUC and Labour leaders to this projected third phase of anti-union legislation.

Yorkshire steel workers get organised

by Rob Dawber, secretary, Sheffield and Chesterfield District Council NUR (in personal capacity)

AFTER their success in privatising BSC River Don by merging it with Firth Browns to produce Sheffield Forgemasters (the Phoenix 3 plan), the profiteers have decided to revive and extend the talks on Phoenix 2.

This is the plan to take BSC Special Steels and put it under the management of a private dominated consortium. The other companies are GKN, Glynwed and Hadfields.

Hadfields chair Derek Norton admitted a couple of weeks ago that BSC can undercut Hadfields by £200 per tonne, and in fact the firm has made no money whatsoever for its Lornho parent company.

Glynwed also cannot compete, having already lost a major order from British Leyland to BSC.

If the merger talks are successful, Industry Secretary Patrick Jenkin has said he sees it as an ideal candidate for partial denationalisation along the lines of Sheffield Forgemasters.

Predicted

2,000 redundancies are the predicted result, mostly in South Yorkshire. BSC Tinsley Park, Hadfields East Hecla works in Sheffield, and GKN's Brymbo complex in North Wales will be closed as well as some smaller mills in the Midlands.

Management have already sent out Redundancy Assessment letters to every worker on Special Steels. 600 have already volunteered to go.

On top of this, BSC are looking at the possible shutdown of one of the two BSC continuous casters on South Yorkshire and the partial shut down of melting and rolling at Aldwarke just outside Rotherham.

In response, the South Yorkshire Action Committee Against Steel Closures and Redundancies was set up in November of last year by local steelworkers. Its chairperson is Ted Thorne, also secretary of Temple no. 1 branch of the ISTC



"The strike brought steelworkers into the labour movement..."

and recently secretary of Rotherham Joints Branch until he was 'relieved' of his post by the ISTC Executive in 1980. Ted Thorne spoke to Rob Dawber of Socialist Organiser:

There are 3,000 jobs threatened in Sheffield. We anticipate more as a result of the rationalisation of engineering steel in the Phoenix 2 plants. Phoenix 2 is part of the denationalisation process.

"We set up an action committee prior to the announcement of the redundancies in anticipation. This put out a resolution that said 'Only action backed by a broad trade union and labour movement campaign can ensure the survival of the steel industry in any meaningful form. It resolves to cam-

paign for opposition to job losses and the reduction of plant capacity, and in particular to oppose any attempts to transfer any plant, equipment, materials, work or employees which can be construed as part of the programme of job cuts by the employer.'

"The resolution has been adopted by the majority of joint representative committees at the various works.

"The Action Committee includes ISTC, the National Crafts Co-ordinating Committee (EETPU, AUEW, UCATT etc), the TGWU, GMWU and ASTMS.

"We had 70 reps along at the last meeting. It strikes me there are far too many reps not doing their jobs.

"Management made their announcements about

redundancies last November and the ISTC is under instructions not to negotiate redundancies at local level. So we are waiting the results of national negotiations. But the Action Committee is not prepared, choose what happens at national level, to negotiate redundancies.

"The last national meeting on January 12, adjourned with nothing settled. Now discussions are to take place with all major unions involved with a view to a common front being put forward that is basically a wage claim of 9%.

BSC have offered 2½% if we accept all their conditions. These would result in redundancies, much more flexible working and what they call the interface between production

worker and craftsmen, that is the craftsmen doing production work and production workers doing tasks associated with crafts. This can only result in further job losses."

What about the Triple Alliance?

"As far as the Action Committee is concerned, its first function is to organise steelworkers. If they're not prepared to help themselves they can't expect help from miners and railworkers. The same goes for the NUM and the NUR.

"Then there'll be a place for the Triple Alliance.

Are there any links with other areas?

"No, no links. We are concerned exclusively with South Yorkshire. It is not the function of the committee to organise on a national scale.

"In our opinion only steelworkers themselves, in South Yorkshire, can effectively block management's attempts to bring about the redundancies.

Does that include strike action?

"If after all other avenues have been approached and failed and the membership deem that it is necessary to take strike action, the Action Committee will be prepared to lead and support the membership.

Isn't that standing on both sides of the fence?

"The 13 week strike wore us down. And the memory is still there. But if that strike did nothing else it brought steelworkers into the labour movement.

"There is a demonstration on January 29 called by the Action Committee and supported by Sheffield City Council, Peter Hardy MP, Martin Flannery MP, Joan Maynard MP, Stan Crowther MP, Ian McKay MP, Brian Kees MEP, Richard Caborn MEP and Rotherham Trades Council. We're writing to the Yorkshire NUM and anticipate support.

Scholl schocker

Islington Labour councillor and Scholls shop steward John Worker reports

From their office in Memphis, Tennessee, the giant Schering Plough Company had a review of worldwide production facilities in 1982 and decided to sack 225 north London workers in two Scholl (UK) sandal-making plants at Stamford Hill and St. John's Street, Islington. At the stroke of a pen, sandal production is to be moved to Austria.

The first we heard of it was on Friday 14 January when, after reading a statement to union officials and then shop stewards, the local management called the workers together to announce the redundancies and hold a short question and answer session. Not many questions and even less answers! I think the officials were as shell-shocked as the rest of us.

Hard

But I wasn't that surprised. 225 jobs lost is only the tip of the iceberg for this firm as far as I'm concerned. Two associate factories in Northampton were closed last year, losing 300-350 jobs, Plough of Old Kent Road lost 50 jobs recently and there may well be more.

Redundancies at the Scholl factory in Islington will hit hard. The firm has been there 50 years and a lot of family groups work there, many of the workers have been there over 20 years and are probably too old to ever find work again.

The effect on women's unemployment in the area will be colossal because 65% of the firm's employees are women — of the 225 jobs lost probably 150 will be women.

The effect on opportunities for minority groups will be bad too. In my own department, which is to be shut, there are seven Africans, five West Indians, five Asians and 12 Irish. I particularly mention the Irish because most of them on my floor are young girls who have come over here for jobs and are stuck in digs and have no family here — so it will hit them even harder.

The company isn't losing money on an out of date or expensive plant though to 'justify' this blow. Wages for most labouring and semi-skilled jobs there are around £85 gross and most people rely on overtime a great deal.

Sandals

Production has steadily increased over the last two years from 12,000 sandals a week to over 18,000 and over the same period the company has put in £111,000 worth of new machinery in my department.

They've got everything companies are meant to want: increased production and modernisation, but our jobs will go down the pan.

In the past the unions there (TGWU, AUEW, ASTMS) have been rather weak. But there are people now in the unions who are

very active and trying to move things. But the main concern is the ordinary shop floor workers, that's what it will all boil down to in the end.

At the moment, a week after getting the closure notice, they are still confused and shell-shocked. They are shocked at a company many of them have given loyal service to for thirty years or more. Scholls has been seen as a 'family firm', my own son works for them and there are many examples of fathers, mothers, sons and daughters all working for the same company.

They are also shocked at the union who they considered their guardians, but who clearly weren't aware of the situation. They feel very much alone.

But anger is beginning to emerge. Islington Council's leaders have agreed to give the workers their support as have the Islington Labour Parties. Together, with the rest of the London labour movement we can, and should, form a united front to stop this closure.

COUNCILLOR JOHN WORKER



Strike greets Tebbit

FOUR hundred workers left the production line at Jaguar's Browns Lane Plant in Coventry on Thursday January 20 in protest at the planned visit of Employment Secretary Norman Tebbit.

Anger from both the rank and file and the union led practically every section of the 3,000 strong workforce to vote to take action if Tebbit toured the shop floor. Management tried to persuade the union to stop any protest, but hatred of Tebbit and the government was too strong to allow that.

Coventry, the boom town of the 50s and the 60s, has suffered more than most cities from capitalism's crisis and the Tories' anti-union offensive. In the event, the workers' protest prompted the plant manager to announce to the workers outside the main offices that Tebbit's proposed tour was cancelled. The workers' demonstration — effectively a strike — had made Tebbit's tour of the shop floor impossible.

The feeling was summed up by the waving of a bicycle and a banner which read 'On your bike, Tebbit!'

Aly Mir Coventry SO

GEC walkout

650 workers on strike at GEC in Openshaw, Manchester, decided today, Monday 24th, to stay out for at least another week.

A big majority of the mass meeting voted for continued action, and as of tomorrow, Tuesday, the manual workers will be laid off and GEC will come to a halt.

The strike by staff, involving four unions, ASTMS, AUEW-TASS, MATSA, and APEX, is against the introduction of new technology that would

entail redundancies. Workers on the picket line said it was also in protest against an increasingly belligerent management.

Support has come from other workers, including at GEC's plant in Trafford on the other side of Manchester. Drivers making deliveries have been successfully turned away since the strike began last week.

The strike is vitally important. It comes in an industry that has been devastated for the last decade in the Manchester area, and at

a time when the bosses have been largely getting their own way.

In conjunction with the water workers' strike, it could provide a focus for a wider fightback in the Manchester area.

GEC is only a few hundred yards from where the epic battle of Laurence Scotts was fought last year. In Manchester we should show we have learned some of the lessons of that strike by organising support for the GEC action now.

Clive Bradley

SHIPYARD SACKINGS

2300 JOBS to go by the end of March, and more redundancies to come before the end of the year. That's what British Shipbuilders announced last week.

The job losses will mainly be in the north-east,

with 500 jobs to go at Swan Hunter, Wallsend, and 415 at Sunderland shipbuilders.

A delegate conference of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions last week decided to send delegates

back to the shipyards to build support for action against the job cuts. A final decision on what action to take will be made at a further delegate conference on February 17.



To join national CND:

Send £6 (or £2 unwaged, £9 couples, £3 students) to CND Membership, FREEPOST, London N4 3BR (no stamp needed), or to Scottish CND, 420 Sauchiehall St., Glasgow G2 3JD.

Cowley workers fight back

BL's Body Plant at Cowley has, like all BL plants, been under vicious attack by the management.

There has been continuous speed-up "to get bonus" and a worsening of working conditions.

The company has been able to get away with this because the right wing leadership of the TGWU in the plant has isolated any resistance. So most sectional disputes have been defeated.

It is this action that led in early December, to a motion of "no confidence" in the leadership in the union branch which was defeated by only one vote majority.

The mood in the plant

has been for plant-wide struggles.

In December the company made a move to change the present tea breaks, during which the tracks stop. They wanted continuous running of the tracks and instead relief people to come round to relieve the workers while the track was still running.

In a dirty plant, like the Body Plant, there was a lot of hostility to the plan. Floor meetings all over the plant voted to resist and the company backed away.

The company then gave ten days' notice of implementation of these changes and of further cutbacks in labour. The cutbacks were proposed with the same production, and

came under the establishment of what the company calls 'Audited Plant status' (APS) which is part of their bonus scheme.

One of the plant's union committees then decided "enough was enough" and that all TGWU members in the plant would support any section "taken on", over the tea-breaks or APS.

The ten days' notice ended two weeks ago last Friday. The company did not implement straight away. They decided to try to persuade sections. They were completely unsuccessful.

Nearly every day in the last two weeks there has been a walk-out of important sections in the plant. The workforce has regained

its confidence.

Last Tuesday the company moved to implement cutbacks in several sections in the plant. They all stopped work immediately. A mass meeting was only averted by the company backing away.

On Thursday the full shop stewards committee voted unanimously to endorse the policy of plant-wide defence of any section under attack.

These struggles could give a lead to the whole of Leyland.

If a strike erupts in the Body Plant it should be spread. Even though a stoppage at the Body Plant would itself at once affect all Leyland models except the Jaguar and the Metro,

spreading the strike could be the basis reconstructing the shop stewards movement throughout BL.



What happened at COWLEY
New Leyland Action Committee pamphlet, 10p plus postage from LAC, 194 Dawlish Road, Birmingham 29

Short-circuiting Fleet St sparks

THE EETPU Press Branch, the branch which Frank Chapple thinks 'deserves Fleet Street management as much as the management deserves them', is under attack again.

Having failed to flog the branch off to one of the print unions for an asking price in the region of £60,000 the EETPU's Executive Council is planning to try and bring it under control by packing it out with their own supporters.

The EC decided in December that, in future, the union's London Area Secretary should keep a register of members who want to work in the Print — rather than leaving the

matter up to the branch.

Naturally enough isn't just an administrative decision. Britz, the London Area Secretary, is a Chapple supporter who once had ambitions of succeeding him as the right's nominee for General Secretary and his brief for the new job makes the intentions pretty clear. "The questions of service to the union will be items of major consideration, as will experience and qualifications."

And if you can't read between the lines about what "service to the union" means you don't know how the Chapple machine works.



Lines for the axe?

No surprises from Serpell

NOW that the Serpell Report has finally been published, it can be seen that the various leaks to the press were more or less accurate.

There are six options on offer to the government and all suggest various sizes of railway smaller than the present 11,000 route miles — right down to the 'A' option of 1,600 miles, which would give Wales 31 miles of track, nothing in the South West, only 2 stations in Scotland and make such places as Sheffield and Leicester disappear from the railway map.

Dramatic

This dramatic option has got most coverage in the media, and the only people who have not rejected it outright have been the government and BR boss Sir Peter Parker.

Boosts for hostel strike

STRIKERS at Arlington House hostel have received two boosts. One, of course, is the water workers' strike; the other is the decision by Camden's Labour council to begin proceedings against the hostel's owners, Rowtons, under public health regulations.

The aim is to put pressure on Rowtons to sell the hostel to the council, which has made an offer to buy and is willing to re-employ the strikers on decent wages and conditions.

An unresolved problem, however, is that the capi-

tal spending by the council necessary for renovating the hostel (not the purchase, as mistakenly reported in last week's SO) is being refused Department of the Environment approval.

Kick

In many ways, yes, but it does have another purpose. And it is to do with it being easier to kick someone while they are down.

After the blows struck against railworkers, including Weighell's last act of getting the NUR AGM to accept the McCarthy 'award' which means the end of guards and more as the price of a 6% pay award which we still haven't had, Serpell is meant to soften us up even more.

Frighten the life out of railworkers by harping on

about cutting the network down to 1,600 miles, and they'll think they done well to keep half of it.

Such a small network, or a profitable railway, are ridiculous suggestions when no railway in the world makes a profit. (BR is the least subsidised in Europe), and most countries are expanding their railways. But it is power to the hands of those who want to see railworkers make more sacrifices in jobs, pay packets and conditions.

Where to find us

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

• SCOTLAND

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

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

• NORTH-WEST

Wallasey. Contact Colin Johnstone, 1 Wellington Road, Wallasey.

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

Manchester. Meets every Sunday evening, 7.30pm, Lass O'Gowrie, Charles St. SO is sold at Grassroots Books, Newton St, Piccadilly.

Stockport. Contact c/o 38 Broadhurst St. Meetings every Sunday, 7.30pm: phone 429 6359 for details.

SO is sold at Stockport market every Saturday, 11 to 12.30.

Rochdale. Contact 353 Rochdale Old Rd, Bury. Next meeting Monday February 14, 8pm Castle Inn: John McIlroy on 'Why Thatcher is winning'. SO is sold at Metro Books, Bury.

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

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

• YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

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

York. Contact: 425739. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, outside the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings. Day school: 'The politics of Socialist Organiser', Saturday February 5, 10 to 5 at the Co-op rooms, Millgate, York.

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

Bradford. Contact Barry

Next Socialist Organiser delegate meeting: Saturday March 5, in York. Further details to be fixed: please make plans for meetings to choose and mandate your delegates now.

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

Sheffield. Meets every other Wednesday, 7.30pm at the Brown Cow, The Wickler. Next meeting Wednesday February 2. SO is sold outside Boot's, Foregate (Saturday 12 to 1) and at the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Road.

Hull. Meets every Wednesday, 8pm: details from SO sellers. Childcare available. SO is sold at the Prospect Centre (Saturday 11-12).

Halifax. Contact 52156.

• WALES

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

• MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Meets alternate Fridays, 7.30, the Labour Club, Bristol St. Next meeting Friday January 14. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop, Digbeth High Street.

Coventry. Contact Keith White, 75623. SO is sold at the Wedge Co-op, High St. Meets on first and last Thursday of each month, 7.30 at 'The Queen', Primrose Hill St, Hillfields. Next meeting: Thursday January 27, John O'Mahony on 'What is Socialist Organiser?'

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

Northampton. Meets alternate Mondays. Next meeting February 7. For details contact 713606.

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

• SOUTH

Oxford. Next meeting Thursday February 3, 'Women, the Bomb, and Socialism', with speaker from Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. 8pm, 44b Princes St, main hall. SO is sold at the Corrmarket (Saturday 11am to 1pm) and outside Tesco, Cowley Rd (Friday,

5pm-7pm). Also at EOA Books, Cowley Rd.

Basingstoke. Next meeting Tuesday February 3, 7.30 at Chute House: 'Tebbit's 'democracy' or workers' democracy?': speaker Stephen Corbishley.

• LONDON

North-West London. Meets fortnightly: contact Mick, 624 1931. SO is sold at Kilburn Books.

Islington. Meets every other Sunday, 3pm at Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Copenhagen St. Next meeting February 6: 'Council budget 1983'. For childcare phone Nik 607 5268.

Haringey. Contact 802 0771 or 348 5941. Meets every other Sunday, 6pm, Trade Union centre, Brabant Rd. Next meeting January 30.

Tower Hamlets. Contact 790 4937. Meets fortnightly on Fridays, 6.30 to 8.30pm. Next meeting January 28.

Newham. Socialist Organiser/Communist Party debate: 'Which way to socialism'. Thursday January 27, 8pm. For venue phone 555 9957. Speakers: John Grahl (CP), Martin Thomas (SO).

Newham SO jumble sale: Saturday February 5, 2pm at Harold Road Centre, Harold Rd, E13.

South-East London. Contact 691 1141. Next meeting Thursday February 10, 7.45pm at Lee Centre, Islibie Rd, off Lee High Rd. Pat Longman (Islington councillor) on 'Socialists and local government'.

Lambeth/Southwark: meets every other Wednesday, Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. Business 7.30 to 8.30, open forum discussion 8.30. Next meeting February 2.

Hounslow. Meets fortnightly on Sundays, 8pm. For details phone 898 6961.

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

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

Socialist Organiser Alliance

Get Organised!

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

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

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

Name

Address



Socialist Organiser

FUND

WITH more donations from readers and supporters, and Sheffield SO group organising a social for us, we've had £127 this week, bringing us just over the £1,000 mark for January - £1009.85.

Now we need the same for February! Added to last week, we know that jumble sales are being planned by Basingstoke, Manchester and Nottingham SO groups. Leicester SO supporters have organised a "Hundred Club" draw, and there are other various plans for raising money in Manchester, Northampton, Stockport and Stoke.

Other groups should all make plans now to make sure we reach our February target of £1,000. Organise a jumble sale or a social. And while you're fund-raising, don't forget to have a paper sales drive, and use the "Buy a paper for a pound" campaign - already we've had a cheque for £15 from an SO reader for a regular subscription at a pound a paper.

Send money to: The Treasurer, 214 Sickert Court, London N1.
Thanks this week to: SO reader in the British Library £5; Manchester reader £2; Proceeds from social held by Sheffield SO supporters £30; June Crowley £10; Bob Hague, Castleford £30; Rob Strinati £5; Dave Ludlow £25; Tom Rigby £20.

TIMEX: LEARN THE LESSON OF LEE JEANS!

NEARLY 400 Dundee shop stewards attended a meeting on 19 January in support of the campaign against the threatened redundancies at the Timex plant.

The meeting had been called by the recently established Shop Stewards Liaison Committee, local union officials, and the Dundee Trades Council.

The main theme of the rally was summed up by local AUEW full-timer Harry McLevy when he said: "It is terrible for the government to just stand idly by. We are fighting to defend our lives and the future of our families. There is no more moral fight than that one."

Pressure

Time and time again reference was made to the "immorality", the "unfairness", the "unjust nature" of the imposition of redundancies in Dundee.

And equally often, the focus of the campaign was seen as: putting pressure on the Scottish Office and Tory government to win investments for the factory.

As Timex convenor Gordon Samson put it:

"We know we're in a major political battle. We have the right arguments. If we can express them, then we can win... We're determined to take it to the highest political level to get the government to put in the investment necessary to keep camera production in Britain."

A TGWU Dundee full-timer took up the "industrial relations" record of the workforce: "The Timex workers have carried out all the proposals going away with restrictive practices, accepting job flexibility and so on. Timex came to Dundee in 1947. Since then only 21 days have been lost by strikes at the factory. There is no other multinational in Dundee that has a record like that."

Noone could criticise the Timex workforce for feeling cheated, betrayed

The Dundee labour movement has rallied behind Timex workers threatened by job cuts. But strike action will be crucial. Stan Crooke reports.

and ripped off - if the redundancies go through that is exactly what will have happened to them. Their readiness to implement management's proposals over the years will have been met by mass sackings.

But that is exactly what capitalism is all about: job "flexibility", speed-ups, de-skilling, switching production from one plant to another, etc. A failure to fight back against such management attacks does not mean job security.

As the women at Lee Jeans found out before them, the Dundee workers are now discovering that a no-strike record of "good industrial relations" simply paves the way for further attacks by management, ultimately in the form of mass sackings.

But this is the major problem when it comes to the question of fighting back against the proposed sackings. Instead of discussing how to best build strike action both within and beyond Timex at Dundee, the rally showed that the campaign against redundancies was to be on the basis of appealing for a "fair deal" from the government.

Given this emphasis, the question of strike action was mentioned only twice during the whole rally, very much in the context of a last resort if compulsory redundancies were implemented. It was noticeable however that the two references to strike action drew widespread spontaneous applause from the rally.

The implication here also from McLevy and Samson was that job losses in the form of voluntary redundancies would be accepted.

Appeals

Given the starting point and perspectives of the campaign, it was only inevitable that the measures of support called for did not go beyond appeals for financial and moral support, inviting in Timex speakers to workplace mass meetings, and generally helping to "get the case across" to the public.

And the motion which was formally moved to close the rally simply pledged full financial and moral support on the part of all present for the Timex workforce. It was passed unanimously.

Defusing

In practice, such a strategy leads to a defusing of militancy and a demoralisation on the part of the workers. And then the union bureaucrats turn round and blame the workers for not being willing to fight!

The key element in a successful fightback against the sackings is strike action, both inside the plant and outside it.

Inside the plant the shop stewards committee must continue to step up the propaganda campaign to solidify support for strike action, not as a last resort but as the main weapon. The relative narrowness of the vote to fight the redundancies (60%-40%) shows the need to step up the campaigning inside the plant.

And when addressing mass meetings at other workplaces, Timex workers must appeal for active strike support, in addition to moral and financial support. Shop stewards committees outside of Timex must lead campaigns amongst their members to ensure such appeals are responded to with

action.

And all trace of British/Scottish nationalism must be combatted. Such nationalism can only work against building links with workers in other parts of the Timex empire. We fight foreign bosses not because they are foreign but because they are bosses. We fight Tory rule at Westminster not because it is at Westminster but because it is Tory rule.



"The key... is inside the plant..."

Stem the tide!

**Socialist
Organiser
EDITORIAL**

CAR components, tyres, shipbuilding, steel, the never-ending toll of redundancies and closures continues almost daily.

For some workers, like those at Timex, the news of cutbacks comes as a bolt from the blue; for others it is the grim confirmation of their fears and suspicions.

For some workers the initial response is gloomy resignation to what seems an unstoppable tide; for others, however, a willingness to fight in defence of their jobs runs up against immediate problems.

Union convenors and officials, having become accustomed over the years to negotiating pay and conditions on the basis of the employers' ability to afford concessions have no answer to the pleas of the bosses that they are bankrupt.

Decades of tacit agreement that the company's books and "business secrets" are closed to trade union eyes do not prepare stewards for the necessary fight to uncover the real workings of the firm that is threatening the livelihoods of their members. Old habits must be discarded, and a sharp struggle waged for the opening of the books to elected trade union committees.

An examination of the accounts and the plans of many of the larger corporations will show the inter-connections between redundancies in one plant and speed-up elsewhere in the combine, between the "losses" in one plant and "profits" accumulating elsewhere in the same combine.

It can in this way point to the necessary campaigns for joint action between the threatened workforce and their fellow trade unionists in other plants - for supporting strikes and blacking action.

An obstacle to such action however is the attitude exemplified by the union officials at Timex in Dundee - seeking to protect jobs not through strikes and mass action of the working class but through pressure campaigns designed to persuade the employers or the government of the "reasonableness" of the union case.

With union leaders in general refusing to give any

lead or mount any fight for strike and occupations in defence of jobs - as the unending chain of closures, and most recently the isolation and betrayal of the Kinneil colliery struggle have shown - an additional problem is that militants who wish to fight in a particular plant feel certain that their struggle will be isolated or sabotaged by the officials.

As a result of this they may either opt to restrict their campaign and action to their own immediate area [like the Sheffield steelworkers, see page 14], or, worse, become demoralised by the scale of the task, and abandon the struggle.

It is certainly true, as the Sheffield steelworkers argue, that without action by the workers directly under threat, there is no prospect of wider support. But it is also true that without a perspective of mobilising broader supporting action - in particular from some of the bigger plants - it is unlikely that morale in the threatened plant can be raised or sustained at a level adequate for a prolonged strike or occupation against closure.

The union bureaucracy which exploits this situation to avoid a fight is an obstacle that cannot be simply avoided - it must be confronted, through the mobilisation of the maximum action, links and awareness at rank and file level, raising demands for the extension of strikes and sit-ins to national action against the corporations involved.

And in place of their persistent attempts to negotiate away jobs "peacefully" through voluntary packages, union officials must be forced to fight in defence of jobs through the demand for work-sharing across the board in each industry without loss of pay.

The health workers' pay dispute last summer showed that given sufficient preparation, sections of workers will strike in support of others and against the Tory offensive. The fight on jobs - never taken up seriously by the TUC - now demands that we fight to create once again such feeling and unity. Only in this way can the steamroller be halted.