

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist ORGANISER

Fight the
witch-
hunt

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance. No. 129. April 28 1983 25p Claimants and strikers 10p

Maggie may, but will Labour's left be ready?

Will it be June? No time to lose!

THE PRESS is alive with speculation on the prospects of a June election. Pundits argue whether this is the best time for the Tories to catch the Labour leadership on the hop.

But for sure, if Thatcher goes ahead now, she has a good chance of catching the Labour left unprepared.

With opinion polls still showing a substantial Tory lead, and gloom, slump and sell-outs on the industrial front, the labour movement is not in a confident mood. And many on the left are responding with a retreat from the last four years' struggles for radical policies and for Labour democracy.

Tony Benn declares that "if you spend all your time niggling away at the difficulties, then you are actually assisting Thatcher's prospect of victory". "You can't really argue that continued polarisation of the Party would lead to any hope of removing the Thatcher government".

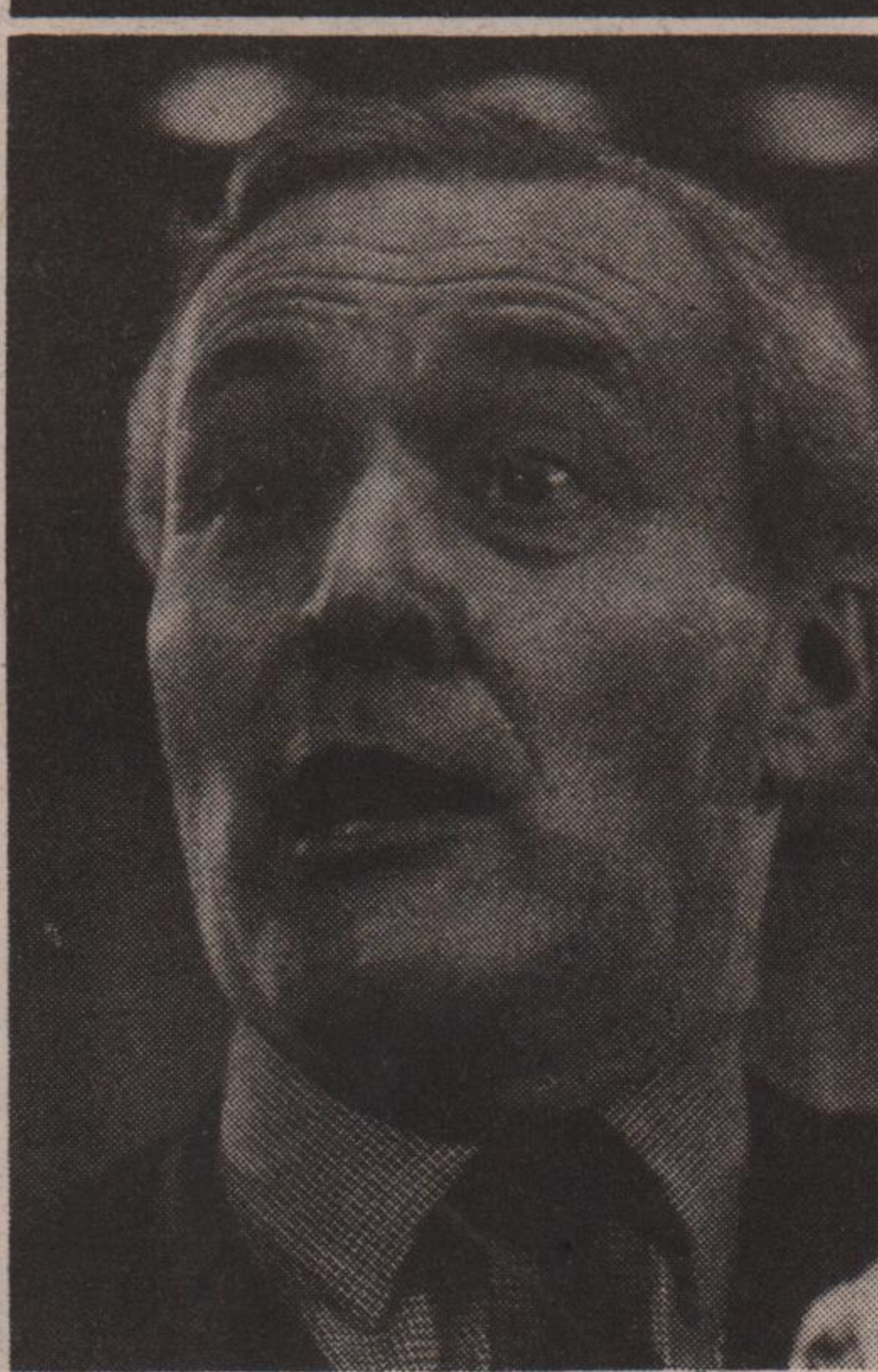
Nigel Williamson in London Labour Briefing argues that warnings about the incomes-policy implications of the 'National Economic Assessment' "are less than helpful... it is surely the task of socialists now to highlight and campaign upon the positive aspects of the [Labour Party campaign] document".

But why is Labour's support low enough to give demolition-squad Toryism real prospects of another term in office? Not because working class people are contented with their situation, and want a comfortable business-as-usual message!

Labour's handicap is that after the record of 1974-9 millions no longer believe in Labour's — or anyone else's — capacity to bring progress. It is that sort of despair that has made it possible for Thatcher to retain support while preaching a "return to Victorian values".

The despair can be cleared away only by the Labour Party and unions advancing bold policies and — just as important —

By Harry
Sloan



Benn

demonstrating a will to fight for them.

That cannot be done without mobilising the Left. The Labour right wing is calling no pre-election truce. And if the Left calls a one-sided truce, all it can do is confirm working-class voters in the belief that the radical promises in the campaign document are strictly for show — just like the 1974 manifesto.

The opening of the union conference season has seen drowsy delegates listening to perorations on the wonders of the latter day social contract — the 'National Economic Assessment'.

Union leaders determined to deliver the goods on wage control to a re-elected Labour government have been flexing their muscles against their rank and file members in the Cowley

sell-out.

Terry Duffy and Denis Healey have resumed the offensive against unilateral nuclear disarmament.

But what of the Left? Where is the organised reply to the tightly knit right wing action that would lose us the election or at best kick Labour voters in the teeth with a re-run of 1974-9?

Nearly two months ago — in good time for any election campaign — an enthusiastic 100-strong meeting in the House of Commons set up Socialists for a Labour Victory to offer a rank and file alternative that will turn outwards to link up with struggles in the unions, the mass anti-missiles campaign, and build the broadest possible working class support.

Yet May Day finds the SLV still largely marking time, and still to an alarming extent restricted to existing left wing circles in the London area.

Of course there have been difficulties: the boundary commission changes — which hand another dozen safe seats to the Tories — have forced a number of left-wingers who support the SLV to look for new seats. There have been organisational problems.

But time is running out, and it is reaching the point where the SLV must get itself firmly on the road to a rank and file campaign if it is not to concede complete control to the right wing.

Some of the MPs appear to be getting cold feet on the question of an independent campaign. Tony Benn, who sent apologies to the SLV founding meeting, has made call after call to shelve polemic within the Labour Party, and supported the National Economic Assessment. Perhaps others will follow him in this retreat.

But if we are going to build an anti-Tory campaign that will win the enthusiasm of workers on the shop floor, dole queues and council estates, and at the same time prepare the fight for socialist policies under a Labour gov-

Continued back page



JOHN HARRIS

The vote to return — secured by a top-level sell-out

COWLEY STRIKE

Bell-to-bell BETRAYAL

See centre 4 pages

EDITORIAL

Mayday and the spirit of Marxism

EIGHT years ago, on May Day 1975 workers around the world celebrated one of the greatest victories since the Russian Revolution. North Vietnamese and NLF forces had finally taken Saigon to end three decades of struggle for national liberation.

In the aftermath of this defeat for the armed might of American imperialism, struggles against US-backed and reactionary regimes in other parts of the world received a major boost, while US intervention was severely restricted. Further victories were recorded — the liberation of Angola and Mozambique from colonial rule, the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, and the ousting of Nicaraguan dictator Somoza.

But it was always plain that the imperialists would not simply fold their arms and surrender their control over whole areas of the world. Since 1980 we have seen increasingly determined attempts to prevent further defeats, and if possible reverse gains made by the oppressed masses.

In Central America, Reagan is not only seeking to step up military efforts to preserve the bloodstained regime in El Salvador, but also funnelling vast sums into a CIA-run covert operation to harry and if possible overturn the Nicaraguan government. In Southern Africa, military and economic resources are being channelled by the apartheid rulers into guerrilla movements aimed at defeating the regimes in Angola and Mozambique.

And in South East Asia, the US military has even plundered its own armories to rush heavy artillery to the Thai generals and enable them to hot up military clashes with Vietnam.

But it is not only the imperialists who are desperately seeking to retrieve ground they have lost to the oppressed masses.

May Day last year saw thousands of Polish workers defy martial law regulations and take to the streets in illegal demonstrations in support of their banned trade union, Solidarnosc. A year later — and 17 months after the military crackdown on the biggest and most democratic union in the world — Jaruzelski's hatchet-faced bureaucracy is still attempting to stamp out persistent signs of life in Solidarnosc and prevent another May Day march.

The irony in Poland — as in all of the Stalinist-ruled states — is that this repression of the independent organisations and actions of the working class takes place under the stolen banners of Marx, Engels and Lenin, which will deck the platforms at countless "official" May Day rallies. In reality they celebrate only the continued power and privilege in the hands of the parasitic state bureaucracy.

There is little for Polish workers — or the workers of Eastern Europe and the other Stalinist states — to celebrate until such time as this bureaucracy is driven from power, and the rule of democratically elected workers' councils replaces the methods of bureaucratic diktat and police repression.

But the task of establishing genuine workers power in Poland is a task that can only be accomplished by the working class — not the imperialists whose opposition to the Polish and Soviet regimes centres not on their reactionary dictatorial methods, but on the progressive, nationalised economies which are for the most part outside the world capitalist market.

It is not the Stalinist rulers, but precisely the nationalised economies — in which capitalism has been overturned — that socialists defend.

This means also, that we cannot stand neutral in the face of Reagan's horrific military build-up. We are *against* the US imperialists, achieving a military superiority over the Soviet Union both because of the ever-growing danger of an actual nuclear holocaust, and because the main US objective is to intimidate the Kremlin leaders into doing even less than they are at present to support the struggles of the oppressed masses in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

This is why the tentacles of US nuclear weaponry are reaching out not only deeper into Europe but into South Africa, the Indian Ocean, Pacific bases and the western seaboard of the USA to create a global network of terror.

May Day 1983 — despite the high hopes and optimism generated by the partial victories of the late 1970s — finds the workers' movement beset by the same grave problems of leadership and perspective that have hampered it in victory and defeat for 80 years.

In pausing to extend our solidarity to those in struggle against oppression and exploitation, we must also point to the utter political bankruptcy of the official 'Communist' and 'Socialist' parties, and the necessity for a new revolutionary leadership to be built in Britain and internationally.

Against the politics of class collaboration and national chauvinism espoused in each country by Stalinists and social democrats, we must revive the revolutionary spirit of Marxism and the programme developed by Leon Trotsky.

'Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains.'



Solidarity with gay teachers

By Tony Gard

THE sight of 300 delegates wearing pink triangles was one of the most striking features of the NUT conference in Jersey at Easter. It was an impressive sign of solidarity with the gay delegates who were potentially criminalised by the NUT's decision to hold its conference in Jersey where homosexual acts are still illegal.

The NUT Executive couldn't claim ignorance. The left and the Gay Teachers Group had opposed the original decision to hold the conference in Jersey and the Executive had been informed by a Jersey solicitor of the possible consequences.

In the circumstances the Executive's action showed total indifference to the interests of 10% of union members. A motion on gay rights, calling not just for equal opportunity but for the encouragement of a positive attitude towards homosexuality in the curriculum had been supported by the Gay Teachers Group, the Socialist Teachers Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party. It was passed by 11 branches of the union, but only came 33rd in the voting on prior-

ities and therefore could not be debated by conference.

Clearly a campaign to educate members and win the union's support is needed. The campaign got underway in earnest in Jersey, the choice of venue forcing the left as a whole to make its position clear.

On the first morning of conference Peter Bradley, a member of the Gay Teachers Group and a delegate from the West London branch of the union attempted to speak against the vote of thanks for the welcome from the bailiff of Jersey.

As soon as Peter got to the word 'gay', the President, Alf Budd rang his bell to rule him out of order.

He did this three times, preventing Peter from getting further than the third sentence of his speech. While some dele-

gates showed their reactionary prejudice, far more people were outraged by the President's treatment of Peter Bradley.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance and Gay Teachers Group appealed successfully to delegates to wear pink triangles and for half an hour of 'same sex' dancing at the young teachers dance that evening.

The Gay Teachers Group leaflet on the following day asked where Conference 1984 would be held? And replied 'Come to sunny Johannesburg'.

A press conference was held to launch the booklet 'Schools Out' produced by the STA and the Gay Teachers Group. Several hundred copies were sold at conference, and orders were taken for hundreds more.

Several branches took copies for use in union casework.

The fringe meeting organised on the Tuesday night of conference was probably the most successful meeting on gay rights held in the trade union movement. It attracted 200 delegates and was addressed by Alan Jack-

son of Wandsworth NUT and the Gay Teachers Group, Wendy Hewing of Lambeth NUT, an SWP member, and Bernard Regan, a member of the union executive and the STA.

The discussion at the meeting showed clearly the strides which gay rights had made at the conference. Alan Jackson's own speech in the conference session on the Executive Report, pointing out the union's indifference to gays, made a very deep impression.

The Daily Mail and the Daily Express showed their reactionary prejudices at their worst in attacking gay teachers. In particular, Keith Waterhouse's article in the Express on 5 April actually defended children's right to verbally abuse gay teachers.

Much needs to be done to maintain the momentum gained in Jersey. For a start, union members should write to their paper, The Teacher, to protest against Alf Budd's treatment of Peter Bradley.

Local branches of the union should hold meetings on gay rights addressed by members of the Gay Teachers Group. Constant pressure should be put on the union executive to take a national stand on the issue of gay rights.

One important and practical way that this can be forwarded is the decision of the union to negotiate agreements with the local authorities on equal opportunities which should include clauses on sexual orientation.

Copies of 'Schools Out: Gay Rights and Education', published by the Gay Teachers Group and the Socialist Teachers Alliance (price £1) can be obtained from London Gay Teachers Group, BM Gay Teacher, London WC1N 3XX.

Defend Hackney NHS!

By Andrea Campbell

"No cuts in our health service" is the slogan on the Hackney Health Emergency banner.

The divide between us and them was there for everyone to see at the City and Hackney District Health Authority meeting on Monday when a motion was put to keep open St Leonards, a very popular local hospital, at least until the new hospital under construction, is opened.

All the speakers against the motion were people who do not live in Hackney, who do not use the Hackney hospitals and will not be at risk from the closure. One, for example, was a consultant with beds at the powerful, major teaching hospital.

Despite their empty and pitiful protests about the agonising pain of taking such a decision (forced to do it — by a Tory government they support!) their hands went up in favour of closing the hospital.

The members of the DHA who live in Hackney voted to keep it open. The vote was 8-8.

The chairperson, a rich Tory who lives in London's West End, then started to speak before he cast his vote. It was too much for the public to stomach and two pensioners said that he should

take their vote and demanded that he listen to them.

Instead, outraged that the public should dare to speak, and obviously keen to cast his vote in private, he adjourned the meeting to closed session.

The farce of how decisions are taken to close hospitals was a lesson which will not be forgotten quickly by the people 'observing' the meeting. Several pensioners pointed out the hypocrisy and dishonesty of calling a meeting 'public' when no-one was allowed to speak and put their point of view.

Hackney Health Emergency, the local campaign launched in February which organised the 200-strong lobby of the meeting, is determined that St. Leonard's Hospital will stay open and that there will be no cuts in the NHS in Hackney.

St. Leonards is a small 97 bed hospital with a limited accident and emergency department, covering a very densely populated area with an ageing population and all the problems of the inner city. In 1979 there was a major campaign to keep it open and now the fight is on again.

Hackney has 17,000 people unemployed, one adult in every five. The NHS is now the largest single employer in the Borough. If the District Health plan goes through, 300 jobs will be directly affected.

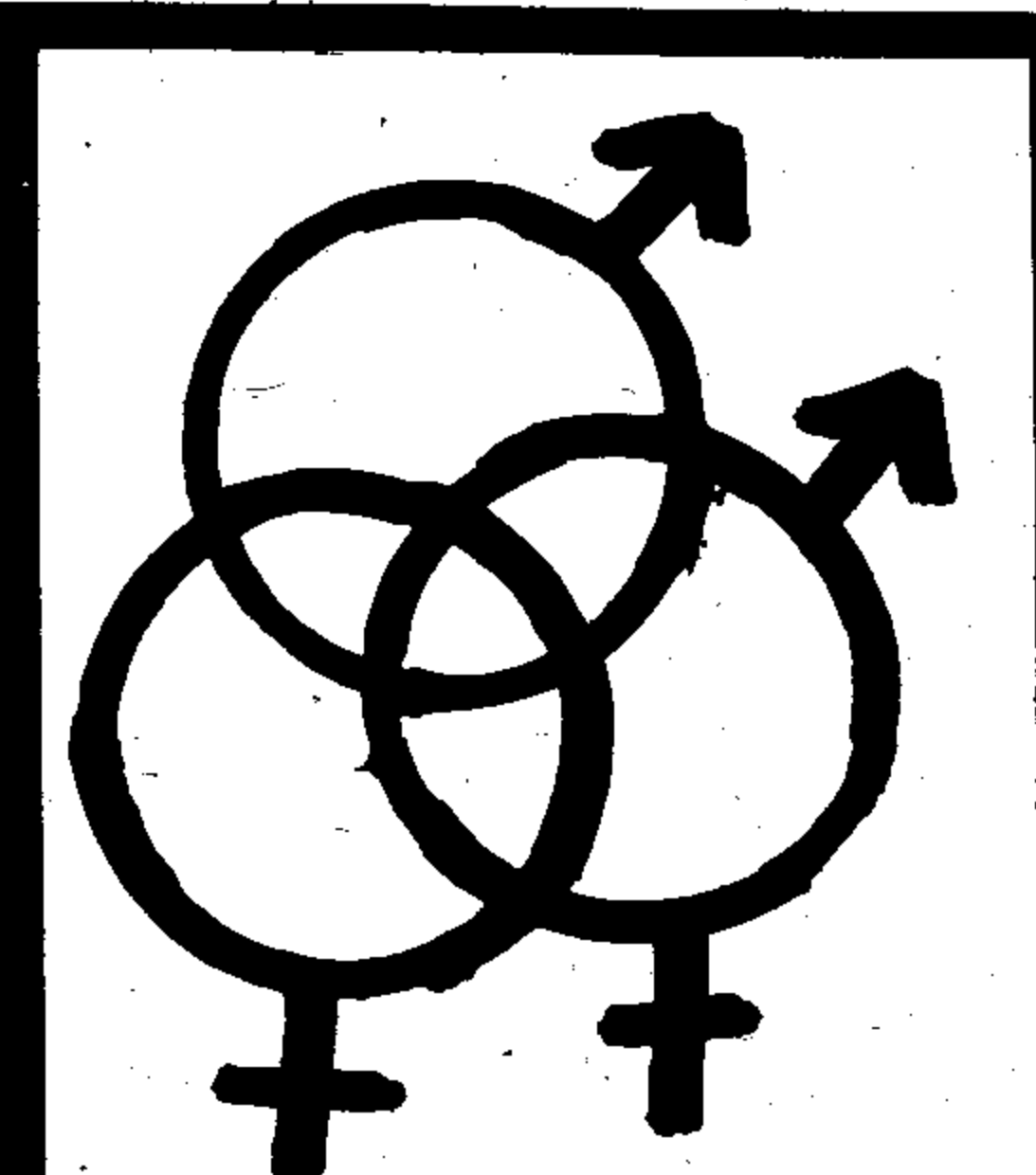
Juggled statistics and distorted 'facts' and all the now sickeningly familiar arguments — "the building is in disrepair" (why?), "we can't staff the hospital" (why?), "conditions are unsafe" (why?) were trotted out.

But on the lobby a large number were pensioners who have used St. Leonards all their lives — many were born there — and they treated the arguments with the contempt they deserved.

The consultation document will now go out, and we will have three months to organise before the final decision is taken.

Meanwhile, Hackney Health Emergency is growing weekly. Leafletting in markets and shopping areas provided 10,000 signatures against the closure. 100 GPs signed a special petition. Two public meetings (a third is planned) have brought dozens of offers of help.

The campaign has strong support from hospital workers in the District. Already there have been two mass meetings at St. Leonards to discuss opposing the closure.



Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, c/o 61A Bloom St, Manchester 1

Telecom unions step up fight

The British Telecoms unions' campaign to fight the privatisation of BT is beginning to escalate. In London, POEU blacking of maintenance work which initially covered the Bank of England, has been spread to cover all government buildings in the London area except for Buckingham Palace, just in case the Corgis catch flu and need an ambulance.

UCW telephone operators refused to scab on the POEU, when telephone fault control was withdrawn from Whitehall.

Meanwhile, as part of the reorganisation of BT, in preparation for privatisation, Swansea POEU branch have been told by management that they intend to pay off 80 workers over and above the expected job wastage in the current financial year which has just begun. This is just under 10% of the Swansea engineering workforce. A similar notification has been given to Cardiff branch. The Swansea branch

By Ricky Houston

immediately called an overtime ban with life and limb cover only. The overtime ban may spread to other parts of Wales as further management intentions are revealed.

The POEU NEC and full time officers are currently touring the country to hold meetings on members' problems. These meetings will provide an ideal opportunity for demands from the rank and file for more information on the plans to oppose privatisation and for stepping up the fight.

The recent press release by POEU general secretary, Brian Stanley, concerning the London industrial action, does not offer much hope.

He makes it clear that the

officially sanctioned action is to register opposition to the government's plans, but does not make any point of the action being called to defeat the proposed Bill, which is now in its final parliamentary stages.

This has been the official strategy throughout the campaign, basing all attempts to stop the Bill purely in Parliament.

The POEU Broad Left have consistently argued for a campaign spanning across Parliament, to industrial action to stop the Bill, raising the demand that the workers of BT must fight the Bill in order to stop it and the subsequent huge job losses which may reach 100,000.



Telecom workers lobby Parliament against privatisation

Socialists for a Labour Victory

The Socialists for a Labour Victory campaign, launched last month, has now done its first mailing to Constituency Labour Parties.

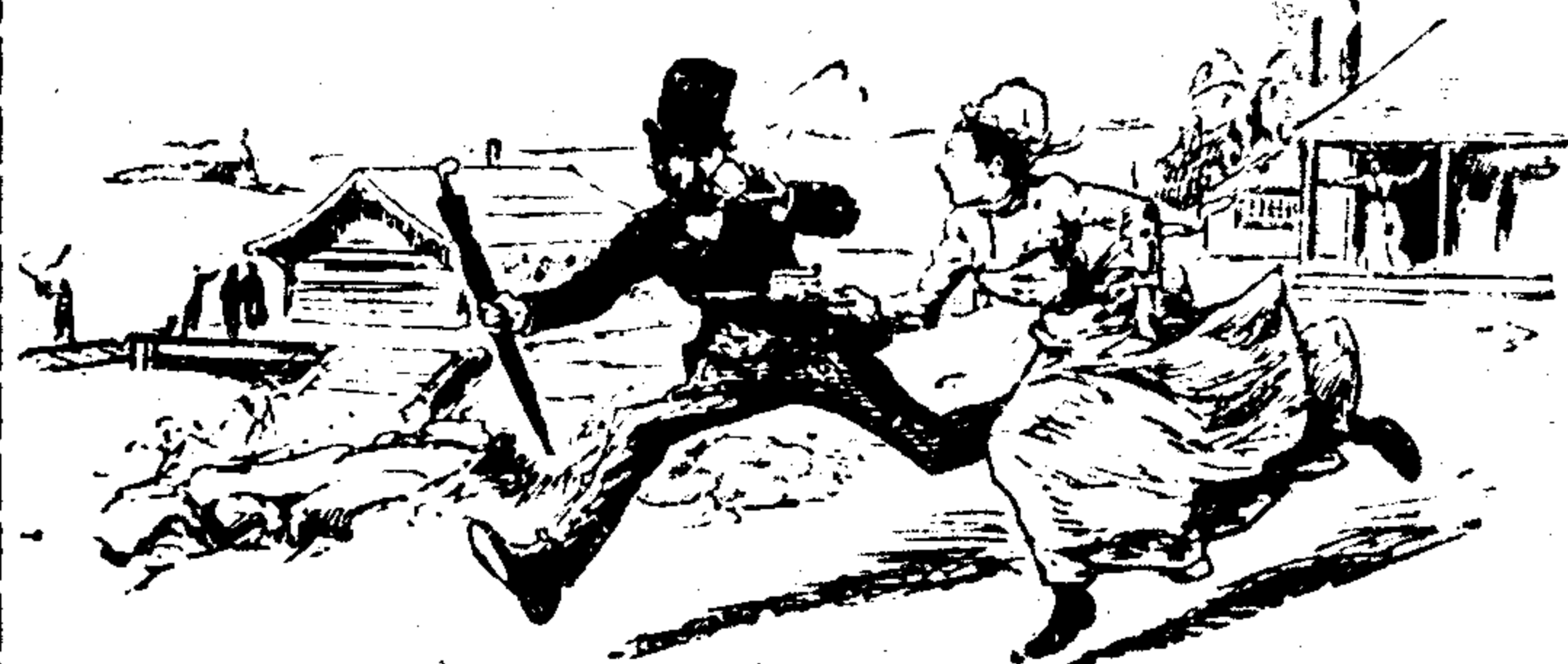
A letter from campaign secretaries Mandy Moore and Andy Harris calls on CLPs to affiliate, and says that SLV will be publishing leaflets for CLPs to use in campaigning.

SLV will also produce suggestions for election activity, and try to help link the Labour Party with struggles like Greenham Common and protests like the People's March for Jobs. And it is preparing a statement for MPs and Labour candidates to sign, committing them against any Labour/Alliance coalition.

Affiliation to SLV is open not only to CLPs but also to trade union bodies, Labour Party women's sections, etc. It costs £5 for organisations, £3 for individuals.

Affiliations to, or copies of the mailing from SLV, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

No time to lose!



- Unilateral nuclear disarmament and removal of all nuclear bases in Britain
- Nationalise the top 25 companies, return social spending to 1977 levels in real terms. 35 hour week, withdrawal from the EEC, expansion of NHS, education, house-building. Renationalisation with compensation only on grounds of proven need and without gain to the recipients
- No incomes policy. Repeal of Tory anti-union laws
- Women's rights, including the right to control their own fertility
- Repeal the Nationality Act and Immigration Acts

- Police accountability, repeal of the Police Bill
- A united Ireland. Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act, ban plastic bullets
- A socialist foreign policy supporting liberation movements abroad
- No formal coalition, no informal deals. End the witch-hunt
- A Labour government that carries out Labour conference decisions.

Contact: Mandy Moore/Andy Harris (joint secretaries), c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8. Affiliation fee: £3 individuals, £5 organisations.

LCC bars socialist

by Ronnie Clyde

The application was immediately challenged by one-time left-winger Chic McCafferty, who argued against the application on the basis of a statement from the Labour Party Scottish full-timer that "no application for membership from Stan Crooke to any CLP in the United Kingdom can be considered unless the NEC reverse their decision at a later date".

Verdict

Stan Crooke argued that, in re-applying, he was asking the branch to stand by the verdict of the appeals tribunal rather than the decision of the NEC, and was backed up by a "Militant" supporter, who pointed to the London CLPs defying the NEC's expulsion of members of the "Militant" editorial board.

NUPE full-timer, LCC member, and Labour Party Scottish Executive member Bob Thomson backed up McCafferty, demanding that the expulsion had to be

accepted, and his fellow LCC member Eileen Dinning, who was chairing the meeting, ruled the application out of order.

Despite the presence of other LCC members and two Militant supporters at the meeting, no one challenged her ruling. The application was thus rejected.

Such a decision makes a mockery of the motion passed just last month at the Labour Party's Scottish conference which opposed any Party member being expelled for his/her socialist beliefs. LCC members, including those at the Crosshill branch meeting, had enthusiastically declared their support for this motion, as "proof" of their "left-wing" credentials.

Unless the LCC at Scottish level provides active support for Stan Crooke's campaign for reinstatement, it will be clear that the Scottish LCC is just as much a gang of witch-hunters as its English counterpart.

Stan Crooke will be appealing for reinstatement to the 1983 Labour Party national conference, and local SO supporters have agreed to initiate a campaign to ensure a successful appeal. Full details of the campaign will appear in future issues of SO.

Support the Greenwich amendment

SEVERAL union conferences this summer will have motions supporting an amendment to the Labour Party constitution from Greenwich CLP.

The amendment, submitted to the 1982 Labour Party conference, must by Party rules be voted on at the 1983 conference. Its aim is to reverse the Register and the witch-hunt by establishing a positive right for groups to operate in the Labour Party.

Even where the amendment is such is not on conference agenda, trade unionists can campaign for it by sending in resolutions urging their union's Labour Party conference delegation to support Greenwich.

For copies of the amendment and of a model trade union resolution, contact Greenwich Labour Party, c/o Jon Lansman, 16 Tyle St., London SE10 9EY (tel 01-853 0056 home, 01-278 0911 work).

ROCK the BOMB!

MARCH AND FESTIVAL - MAY 7.
Assemble, Embankment at 10.30am.
March to Brockwell Park, South
London for Festival, including Paul
Weller, Hazel O'Connor and others.



International news

Step up fight on Ireland

A RATHER dispirited annual general meeting of the Labour Committee on Ireland (LCI), which campaigns in the labour movement for British withdrawal, was held in London last Saturday (April 23).

Although the LCI could point to a number of individual achievements since its last conference, at the same time it has suffered a drastic slump in membership, its broadsheet "Labour and Ireland" has appeared only irregularly, and there has been a serious lack of any central leadership to co-ordinate and build a national campaign.

There was much beating-of-breasts about past failings, but little concrete discussion about what needs to be done to remedy the LCI's prolonged malaise.

The only occasions upon which life threatened to invade the proceedings were in relation to work in the trade unions and the production of "Labour and Ireland". But even then, debate was muted: everyone agreed on the need for more and better union work and issues of "Labour and Ireland"; there were merely marginal differences of opinion on how to achieve such goals.

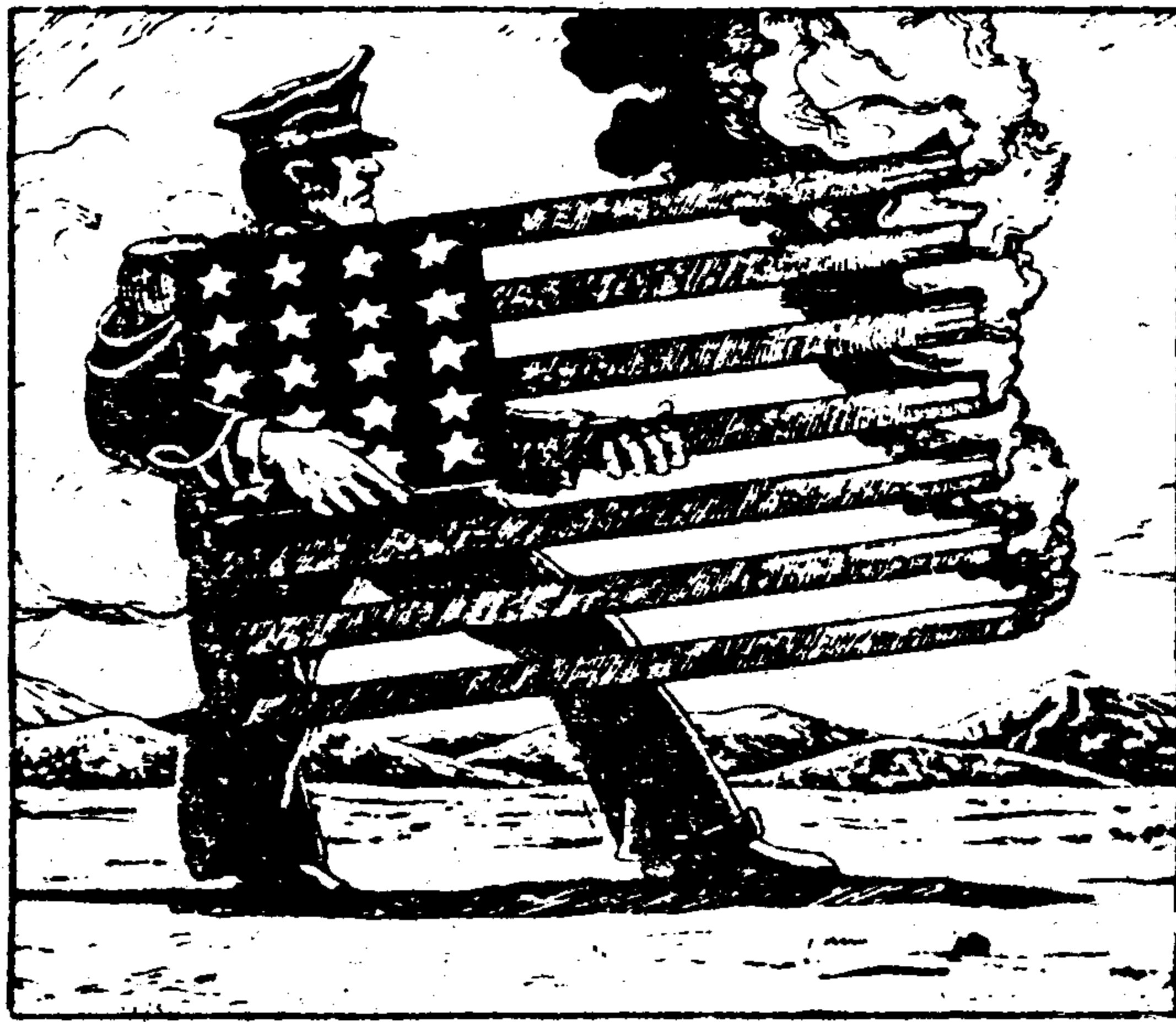
Attempts by supporters of "Socialist Action", to inject their own brand of zany politics into the LCI were however defeated.

Motions were passed committing the LCI to launch a recruitment campaign; build caucuses in the unions and make interventions into union national conferences; and increase the size and frequency of "Labour and Ireland". Unfortunately, as the previous record shows, the passing of a motion does not necessarily mean its implementation.

Although the conference can hardly be said to have fired anyone with enthusiasm for work over the year ahead, provided a serious effort is made on a firm political basis the LCI can pull itself out of its present rut.

In particular what is needed is: —a functioning national leadership capable of initiating country-wide campaigns; —regular production of "Labour and Ireland" to raise the profile of the LCI and help build support for its politics; —a much more serious turn to trade union work and more systematic youth work; —an emphasis on the basic political arguments which have to be confronted if a real labour movement Irish solidarity campaign is to be built, rather than chasing after the get-rich-quick scenarios in "Socialist Action".

Labour Committee on Ireland, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.



Reagan's friends - Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries

CIA's secret war Will US policies produce a second Cuba?

by Harry Sloan

BANDYING around the warning that the USA could face a proliferation of Cuban style regimes in Central America, President Reagan is attempting to press-gang Congressmen and women into voting massively increased military aid to El Salvador.

But so serious is the danger that he may lose the vote for the funds he is seeking, that Reagan has chosen the unusual step of addressing a joint session of the two chambers of Congress.

White House aides and Pentagon propagandists have been engaged in a non-stop campaign of button-holing, arm-twisting and confidence trickery in order to pressurise Congress into agreeing to Reagan's demands.

Reagan argues that El Salvador is the 'front line' against communist expansion, and that it is the 'moral duty' of the American war machine to stop the emergence of a 'second Cuba' — whatever the cost in lives and human misery.

He claims that modern Soviet fighter planes and even Cuban combat troops may be stationed in Nicaragua. And, so the Reagan story goes, if the bloody regime in El Salvador should fall to the FMLN guerrillas, the rot could spread north to Mexico and south to Panama.

Reagan's recipe to deal with this is a further increase in military aid to El Salvador and still more cash and arms for the CIA-sponsored counter-revolutionary gunmen currently fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

The fact that *despite* the present high level of military aid the Salvadoran junta is acknowledged to be *losing* the war against the FMLN — and that the logic of Reagan's position must be to follow up aid, arms, and 'advisers' with US combat troops if this 'front line' position stands on the verge of defeat — plainly alarms a substantial body of Congressmen.

Yet though there is considerable controversy over the CIA operations against Nicaragua, nobody appears to be pointing to the possibility that Reagan's campaign of military harassment and economic sabotage against Nicaragua might actually bring about

the very development that he fears — and drive the Sandinistas firmly into the embrace of the Stalinists of Havana and Moscow.

It was in fact under such pressures in the early 1960s that Fidel Castro's July 26 Movement, which initially disavowed any socialist aims, was driven for its self-defence to mobilise an increasingly radical mass movement, and to seek economic support and a military alliance with the Soviet bureaucracy.

The chief factor limiting such a development in Nicaragua at the present time — given the sinister military threats to the country through CIA-sponsored activities based in Honduras and Costa Rica

— is the obvious reluctance of the Soviet bureaucracy to become directly embroiled in the Central American struggle.

While Reagan paints the conflicts in the region as examples of the East/West struggle for power, and the CIA struggles to produce 'evidence' of Soviet arms and aid to the FMLN in Salvador, the Moscow leadership has stayed well back from the events, and even Castro's involvement has been restricted.

It seems likely that Reagan will get at least the lion's share of the cash he is seeking from Congress to wage his wars in Central America: it is seems much less likely that the guerilla forces in El Salvador will receive the kind of arms and aid they need from the Cuban and Soviet leaders to carry through the fight to a rapid and successful conclusion.

Despite ringing phrases from Havana on May Day and other ceremonial occasions, the fight for real political and material solidarity with the struggles of the oppressed in Central America must be waged by the international workers' movement.

In Britain a step can be taken towards this by the national labour movement conference on El Salvador on May 14. Readers are urged to attend.

Fight Turkish show-trial

LABOUR councils in Hackney, Islington and Haringey (North London) are this week discussing proposals to show solidarity with the people and former local administration of the Turkish town of Fatsa.

They are expected to support moves to organise a delegation of mayors and local councillors from cities across Europe to visit the mass trial currently under way of 759 citizens of Fatsa.

The trial began on January 12, and is likely to last up to two years. The people of Fatsa are charged with turning their municipal administration into a 'commune', and the prosecutor is demanding death sentences for 263 of them.

They were arrested in July 1980, in an army swoop on the town just two months before the military coup. Fatsa had been under a left-wing administration for nine months.

A Dutch lawyer who observed part of the Fatsa trial reports that all the prisoners said they had been tortured during the 2½ years they had been jailed before trial, and that they were in obvious fear of further violence from military guards.

The delegation is being coordinated by the European Committee for the Defence of Refugees and Immigrants (CEDRI), Missionstrasse 35, Postfach, CH-4002 Basel, Switzerland.

Protest blocks Reagan's road

by Alex Simpson

THE APRIL 7 edition of 'New Scientist' reports that proposals for a road-building scheme in Honduras with sinister implications for anti-imperialists and conservationists alike have been shelved temporarily as a result of forceful protests by environmentalists.

The United States government wished to put \$7.5 million into a construction project which would simultaneously cause irreparable environmental damage and greatly strengthen Reagan's plans against the liberation struggle.

The plan envisages a road to be built through a large area of unspoiled natural rain forest near the Nicaraguan-Honduran border.

The 'La Mosquita' rain forest is the ancestral homeland of the Moskito Indians. Highly inaccessible, it is a refuge for many rare plant and animal species.

As the forest is situated in the key border area, it could become a vital base for the CIA-coordinated raids into the northern provinces of Nicaragua by the counter-revolutionary supporters of the former dictator Somoza.

The improved transport links provided by pushing a road through the La Mosquita could enormously enhance the operational ability of the counter-revolutionaries to carry out raids as part of the brutal US strategy of destabilising the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

Protests have so far blocked US funds for the project. If pressure is maintained, then Reagan's schemes to devastate the environment and halt the liberation struggle in Central America can be thwarted.



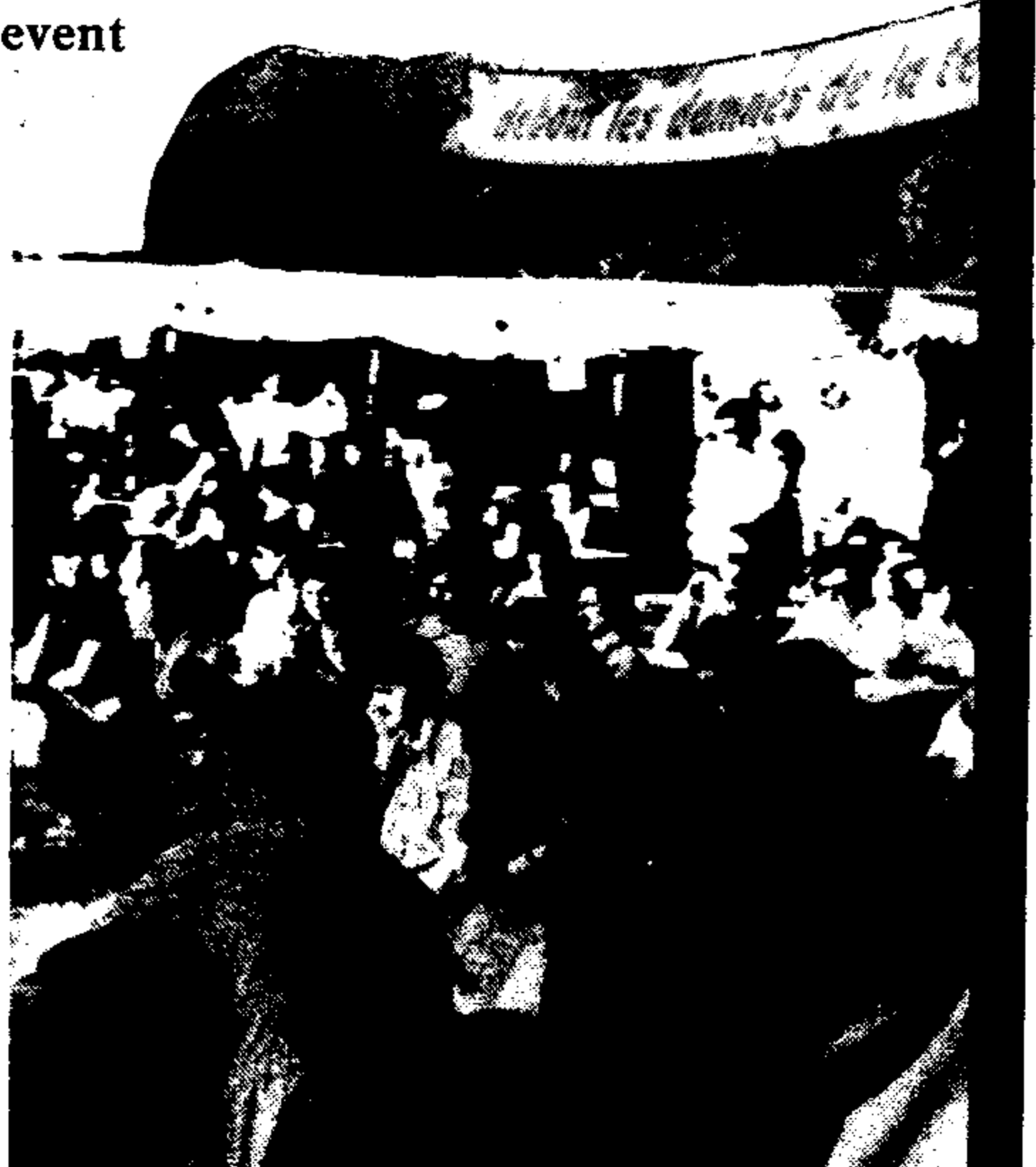
WHILE Lech Walesa has been granted his job back at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, the Polish socialist militant Edmund Baluka (above) has been put on trial by the military regime. And underground Solidarnosc leader Josef Piniar has been arrested. Solidarnosc has called for protests on May Day.

Fete

This year the annual fete organised by the French Trotskyist group Lutte Ouvriere is a joint event with the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire.

The fete — at Presles, near Paris on May 21-22-23 — is a weekend of ~~celebration~~, but also of politics, with revolutionary groups from many countries represented.

A contingent of SO supporters is going over. If you want to go, contact Ellen Taylor, 532 Abbeydale Rd, Sheffield 7 (0742 589307)



LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON EL SALVADOR
 COUNTY HALL LONDON MAY 14

SPEAKERS Judith Hart
 Jenny Pearce (author of 'Under the Eagle')
 Salvador Moncada (FDR Representative)
 Salvadoran Trade Unionists

DELEGATES invited from Trade Union & Political Party branches

FURTHER INFORMATION from:
 El Salvador Solidarity Campaign
 29 Islington Park Street
 London N1 Tel: 01-359 2270

International news

Interview with West Bank student leaders

'There is no struggle against the Jews, only against Zionism'

What was actually decided about the topics on the agenda and how does it bear on the different trends expressed in the Council?

For example, on Egypt, some diplomatic wording was agreed upon, saying that "we will approach the Egyptian regime to the extent that it will distance itself from Camp David.

The position of the left, stemming from an understanding of the Egyptian regime's character, was against approaching Egypt unless it scraps the Camp David agreement. It was not what was agreed in the end but there is neither unconditional rapprochement but a link between the two.

*On Jordan: The right wing, wishing to enter the settlement framework, stressed that there are 1¼ million Palestinians living in Jordan, that we have a common interest, and that it is better to start some "movement" on the political arena, and then we will see what will be offered.

If it is not in our interest then we will be able to reject it and nothing will be lost.

There are two difficulties in such a position. It would have appeared before the world as if the Palestinian Liberation Organisation was ready to enter the framework of the imperialist settlement and secondly, it would blur the character of the Jordanian regime, which is in contradiction to the Palestinian liberation movement.

That's why the left suggested cutting relations with Jordan, explaining that political manoeuvres can bring nothing.

The left completely supported tightening relations with the Jordanian people, to the level of confederation or unity with it — it is part of the aim of the Arab liberation movement to unite the region — but it opposed discussing with the Jordanian regime about ways of implementing the imperialist plans.

In the end the left got through a resolution that confederation with Jordan will be established, but on the basis of an independent Palestinian state.

*On the armed struggle: with all the violence against the Palestinian people, especially in occupied Palestine and Lebanon, it was clear to all that the Palestinian people has no other choice but to continue the struggle. The question was whether after the loss of the base in Lebanon, the armed struggle should be stressed again.

At the end this was confirmed again to everybody's agreement.

*On the Reagan plan: the right wing raised the idea that we might neutralise the US if we co-operated with it politically — basing ourselves on Arab support and the connections of the Arab regimes with the USA. Hence the right wing's activity to establish contacts with the US, through Saudi, Moroccan, Tunisian or independent Palestinian personalities close to the right wing.

The left's position is that one should start from a clear definition of our allies and our enemies — and the US is on the enemy side, together with Israel and Arab reaction.

From this flows a position of total rejection of the Reagan plan, seeing this plan as part of the overall imperialist line in the region, a new shape for the Camp David agreement designed to confuse the Arab liberation movement and especially the Palestinian revolution.

The conference resolutions endorsed the left's stand and rejected the Reagan plan. Despite

Continuing an interview, from our correspondent in Haifa, with leaders of the Progressive Student Action Front, the main grouping of left-wing students in the West Bank. We will follow up in later issues of SO with other left views — including our own

this, more room for political manoeuvres was given — but without giving up principled positions. The Reagan plan was rejected because it does not speak of the Palestinian people as a people, or of the Palestinian revolution as representing this people.

Also, Reagan's term of "freezing Israeli settlements" implies accepting the existing settlements. So the plan has no positive points, and it was wholly rejected.

*On the Fez plan: From the beginning the right wing supported the Fez plan, and even the Fahd plan that collapsed with the first Fez conference. The left opposed this plan as it gives Arab cover to the imperialist plans, gives Arab recognition and security borders to Israel, and gives up the Palestinians' rights in their land. It does not even demand Israeli recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.

In Fez they spoke of "ensuring security borders to all the states in the region, including the independent Palestinian state" — as if the problem is securing the states, while the state of Israel actually exists and the Palestinian state doesn't, and it is not made clear how and where it will be established.

There are two reasons for rejecting the Fez plan on principle: 1) understanding the character of the Arab regimes that developed the plan — that they are part of the camp of the enemies of the liberation movement; 2) the plan itself will give us nothing, and does not recognise the right of self determination. It raises in a diplomatic fashion a request for the establishment of a Palestinian state, and does not suggest any real struggle that will bring about its establishment.

The left criticised the Fez plan publicly in the conference, and completely rejected it, but for unity's sake signed the joint resolution that endorsed this plan.

*On the contacts that took place between the right wing and progressive forces within Israel: The basic ideas of the left about who constitutes the progressive forces within Israel differ fundamentally from those of the right wing. This difference stems from the difference in ideology, as the left represents the attitude of the working class, while the right represents the views of the bourgeois class.



Israeli troops in the West Bank

The left doesn't see Avneri or Reled and their like as a deep rooted left force that represent the Israeli working class, and argue that it is clear that they have not finally broken their ties with the Zionist movement and its goals in the region. The left advocated discussion with democratic and progressive forces that will serve the interests of the whole working class, Jews and Arabs together.

The final resolution endorsed calls in a general way for discussion with democratic and progressive forces, and each side will translate it according to its views.

IT has been said in the world media that the Palestinians in the 1967 occupied territories are more moderate. (The representatives of the occupied territories were prevented by the occupation from attending the conference). This is part of the propaganda waged by imperialism. There is a plan to distance the Palestinian people from its representatives. They try to use pressure from Israel and Jordan to strengthen some personalities here as a substitute to the PLO.

There was a document signed by Elias Freij (mayor of Beit Lehem), Rashed A-Shama (Raza's mayor), Heimat Al Masri (Jordan's man in Nablus) and some 80 notables from Jordan's supporters, asking the Palestinian National Council to accept the Reagan plan.

But before the opening of the conference they cancelled this document and announced their support to the PLO and acceptance of the resolutions that will be adopted by the council. So the imperialist line to split the Palestinian people failed.

Doesn't that testify to the wishes of the public?

It deals with a group that represents the Palestinian bour-

geoisie expose themselves, not only that they are not in the interests of the working class, but they are not in the interest of the Palestinian people as a whole.

The positions of the Palestinian left against diplomatic agreements is posed by many as an extremist position against the Jews...

On the contrary! The Palestinian left today advocate Marxism-Leninism — as a strategy and philosophy — and have finished with all the chauvinist positions that interpreted the struggle as taking place between Jews and Arabs.

There is a national struggle, for the expression of national identity in a Palestinian state, but it also has its class character — a struggle against imperialist, Zionist and fascist plans. Hence we make a complete differentiation between Zionism and Judaism, and there is no struggle against the Jews, only against Zionism as a colonialist, exploiting and imperialist movement, opposed to the interest of the Arab and Jewish peoples.

We support any struggle of the forces opposed to the Zionist movement, be they Jewish or Arab, of any religion, white or black, for the establishment of a democratic secular state that will develop toward socialism.

We know well that many Jewish workers are deceived, today by Zionism. We regard them as people like us, that have been deceived — but might be more sober tomorrow.

That is why it is important that the Jews hear us and understand that we do not want to throw them into the sea — will understand our wishes for a democratic parliament, for socialism, and will see there is a basis for living together.

You should also understand the situation of the masses in the West Bank, that know them from their daily experience only as soldiers and settlers that come as occupiers, oppressing, beating torturing, etc. People here ask where is the progressive force? And if somebody comes and says he wants peace they ask whether he serves in the army and if he would have shot us on command?

Despite all this we believe there is a basis for discussion, and there are people ready to understand, and a way to struggle together for the future.

The plans

Reagan

The Reagan Plan — September 1982.

*Elections among the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to prepare for 'full autonomy' in these areas.

*A five year transition period in which the Palestinians would take over control, leading up to a 'final status' of 'self government' by the Palestinians in association with Jordan.

*Israeli withdrawal from these occupied territories in accordance with UN Resolution 242 adopted after the 1967 war.

*The status of Jerusalem to be opened up for 'negotiations'.

*Peace treaties to be signed by the Arab states recognising Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

*An explicit 'ironclad' guarantee of Israel's security.

Fez

The Fez Plan — September 1982.

*Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem.

*The dismantling of Zionist settlements on these territories.

*Guaranteed freedom of worship.

*The recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and of the PLO as the Palestinians' sole legitimate representative.

*The West Bank and Gaza Strip to be placed under UN control for a transitional period.

*The establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital.

*A UN guarantee of peace among all states in the region.

*UN guarantee of respect for these principles.



Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine: c/o 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Road, London N16.

Campaign on Palestine

'The left criticised the Fez plan, but for unity's sake endorsed it'

Labour's campaign policy document

Why is it mainly "jobs for the boys"?

PARTNERS in Rebuilding Britain talks about expansion and creating jobs, specifically in the public sector, which will mean jobs for women and necessary services to enable women to go out to work.

But it doesn't mention the existing sexual division of labour and how to end it. There are vague references to discrimination in training in and employment practices.

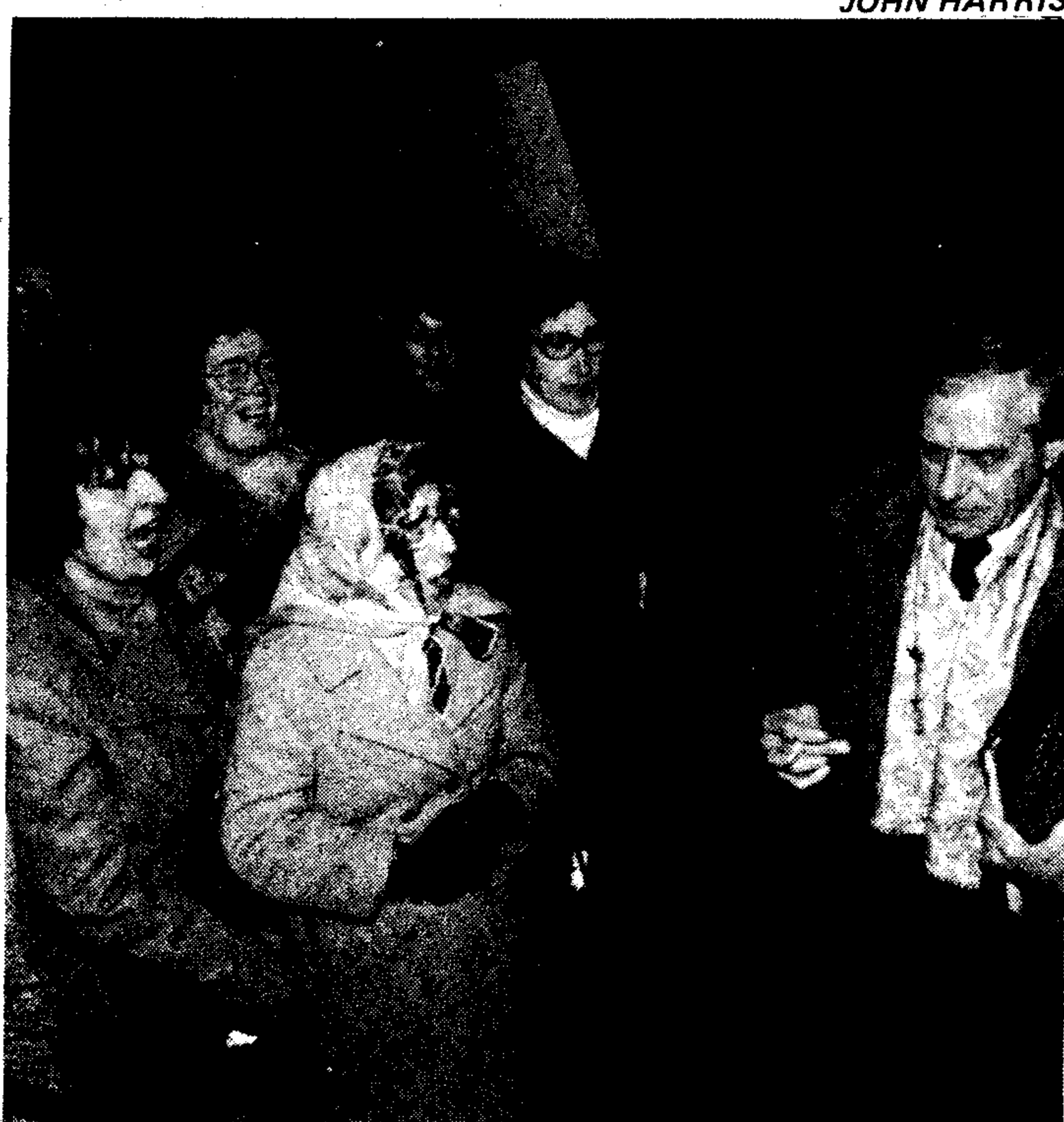
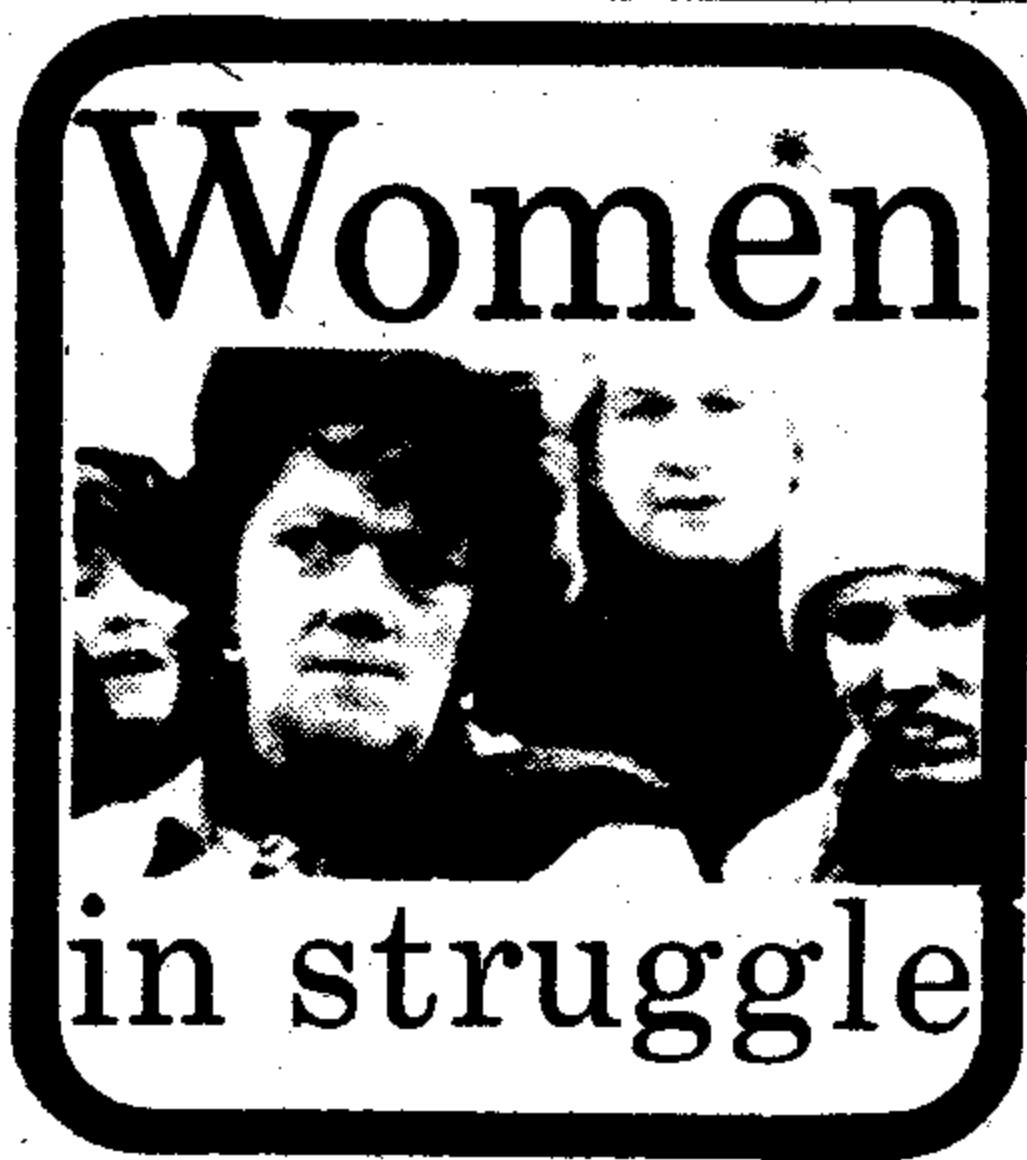
'Partners' talks about creating 500,000 jobs, half of which will be in the construction industry. £30 billion over five years is to be spent on major construction and investment projects in housing, transport, energy and sewerage. Women hardly exist in these industries and there are no proposals to ensure they get equal benefit from this £30 billion investment.

The whole employment programme doesn't challenge the sexual division of labour; in fact it reinforces it. Although it will create jobs for women in the public sector, this won't involve a redistribution of skills so that women can take their place alongside men in manufacturing, house-building, transport and energy industries.

The TUC has recently produced figures which show that of the four million women jobless and eligible to work, only 1.3 million are registered as unemployed. Neither document refers to the major problems that this poses for any party committed, as the Labour Party claims to be, to make the 'main goal of the next Labour government to put Britain's wealth to use for full employment, industrial revival and social justice' ('Partners').

The reason that 3½ million women are not registered is because of the assumption that they are not entitled to work, and because of the lack of social provision such as childcare, to enable them to go out to work. These same assumptions are embedded in the TUC/Labour Party document: there is no mention of support to enable women to work. Clearly this is a double standard between men in the process of men.

ANN PETTIFOR is a leading activist in the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy Women's Action Committee. She spoke to Gerry Byrne about Labour's campaign document, 'New Hope for Britain' and the joint Labour Party/TUC document, 'Partners in Rebuilding Britain'. What do they offer women?



Public sector jobs confine women to "women's work"

What about low pay?

Six million workers earn less than the average male manual earnings (currently about £90 a week). The majority of these are women.

The Labour Party says "We will discuss the possibility of a statutory minimum wage with the TUC". A very high proportion of these low-paid workers are in the public sector, yet there is no programme for raising public sector wages for school cleaners, dinner staff, health workers.

The major unions opposed the minimum wage at the TUC; and a NUPE-sponsored resolution to Labour Party annual conference was defeated.

Any strengthening of the Equal Pay Act which doesn't deal with the horizontal division of labour will still leave women segregated in the low-paid sectors of the economy. Until the unions show the same willingness to organise women as men, there is little hope that a Labour government would "take action together with the trade unions against low pay" ('New Hope').

Research by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research shows that despite their claims, the Social Contract and incomes policy did precious little to alter differentials. There must be a concerted effort to raise low pay. The Labour and trade union movement must devise a strategy that will guarantee raising the wages of the low-paid and also reduce differentials.

There is no indication that a male-dominated trade union movement is prepared to take this challenge on board. This is not surprising. They won't respond until women organise.

The Sex Discrimination Act didn't include any attempt to put the government's own house in order. Witness the Invalid Care Allowance and Non-Contributory Invalidity Pension, which directly discriminate against married women.

The reason the Labour government did this, and the Labour Party is unable to challenge this discrimination is because they accept wholeheartedly the concept of female dependence

within marriage. Further evidence of the acceptance of this dependence is the promise "to increase maternity grant to at least £100". Maternity grant would have to be £110 to be the same value in real terms as in 1963 when it was introduced.

60,000 women receive no maternity grant whatsoever because they do not pay National Insurance contributions, or are not dependent on men paying it.

It is clear from the document that it has been drafted by men. For example, women's right to choice in birth control has been phrased in negative rather than positive terms: "barriers will be removed", rather than facilities positively extended.

Unless women are given this autonomy and choice, control over our own bodies, our ability to participate equally with men in this proposed industrial and economic recovery will be severely limited. So-called left-wingers on the NEC are still not able to make this connection and extend to women their full and deserved rights.

There are however a number of policies in the campaign document on which the Party must be congratulated. If carried out they will begin the process of altering the present unacceptable balance of power between men and women. For these policies to be carried out with commitment and enthusiasm will require women in positions where they have the power of implementation.

The Parliamentary selection process so far suggests that there will be fewer women in the next Parliament than there are now. More women candidates have been selected - but the majority are in safe Tory seats. Without an organised force of women to monitor and promote these policies, we will have the same situation as in 1976 after Barbara Castle was sacked from the Labour cabinet and a section of the TUC and the Cabinet colluded to attempt to ditch Child Benefit.

Women therefore cannot be confident of anything in this Programme until they have mobilised to ensure proper representation and an equal voice in the labour movement.



Ann Pettifor: the Labour Party accepts wholeheartedly the concept of female dependence

NALGO go-ahead

IN A SUDDEN, uncharacteristic flurry of leftism, NALGO has given a boost to women in struggle against the cuts and against the missiles.

NALGO members have been authorised to take strike action in support of the one-day stoppage and rally being organised by unions against plans by Merton council to withdraw the school meals service entirely, sack a number of school caretakers, and privatise school cleaning services.

The strike call for April 27 had been led by council manual unions. NALGO has also pledged its support for the May 24 women's day of action against the missiles, and invited branches with members wishing to stop work for the day to seek the necessary authority from the union's Emergency Committee.

Though this is a long way short of a national call to action, it is a major advance on the hollow verbal support offered by many more overtly 'left wing' union leaders - and should be used in the struggle for protest stoppages to be called by every union.

What to do for May 24 strike

- What you can do:
 - Find out from your Regional Contact what has already been planned, offer your services and suggestions. Phone Brighton (Carmel or Laura) 0273 553466 for your regional contact.
 - Raise support for the day of strike action in your union, workplace, estate, shopping centre, school college, nursery, just anywhere you go.
 - If your local council has a nuclear free zone policy, and many do, demand that the council gives over office space for organising for the 24th. Sheffield and Leicester City Councils have already done so.
 - Plan action for the day itself - we can do ANYTHING, occupy, encircle, decorate, die-in, blockade at military bases, banks, armaments factories and supporting industries, nuclear bunkers, Ministry of Defence Offices.
 - Leaflet everywhere, so there can be no excuse for not knowing what's happening on May 24. If you don't have local leaflets, they can be obtained nationally from the London Greenham office.
 - Demand the support of men. Ask them to take supportive strike action as well, and to help organise creches so children can be looked after and the women are free to take the main action on the day.
 - Pressure to get unions to support May 24 must now be generated in local branches. Trades Councils can arrange for every delegate to take support for May 24 into their branches and arrange for speakers from Greenham Common to address meetings.
 - Help set up local organising meetings, including women's centres, women's groups, minority ethnic women's groups, trade union women's groups, anti-cuts campaigns, etc.
 - Labour Party Women's sections can take up the call and show that there are Labour Party rank and file members who are determined to commit the Labour Party to campaign on conference resolutions. Let's make May 24 the biggest, most successful action yet!

SAVE SOUTH LONDON HOSPITAL!

Save South London Hospital Campaign meets every Thursday at Balham Food & Book Co-op, High Street, Balham at 8.00 p.m.



WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK 10p

MAY 24 LET'S STRIKE OUT THE MISSILES

FROM: 10b Landseer Rd, London N19

TAKE THE TOOL!

Socialist ORGANISER

Industrial Special

Supplement to SO no. 129, April 28 1983. 5p if sold separately

Day and night efforts bring Cowley's

Bell-to-bell

BETRAYAL!

THE 4½ week Cowley strike, like the London Docks strike, the South Yorkshire steel strike and the recent strikes at Ford and in the South Wales coalfield, reflected the willingness and ability of the working class to fight back against the Tory government.

The betrayal of this strike therefore has implications, not just in Cowley, or even BL, but for the working class as a whole. In some ways the implications outside Cowley are more negative than within the plant.

The record of the working class in successive strikes since Thatcher came to power in May 1979 has been a willingness to fight. The record of the trade union leaders has been one of opposition to an industrial challenge to the Tories.

Politics

These are the politics which lay behind the sell-out at Cowley.

Cowley workers are in a powerful strategic position. Their strike instantly affects not only four models in BL's highest-investment plant, but a section of the engineering industry as well. Compare the publicity and the attention of top union leaders for the Cowley strike with London Docks, where workers have been out two weeks longer.

If the trade union leaders wanted to fight, Cowley was a perfect situation to do so. The sell-out of the strike under these conditions makes its effects on the working class more damaging. Many workers will think that if a victory was not possible at Cowley, where is it possible?

If nothing else can be said for Moss Evans, Terry Duffy, Ken Cure and Grenville Hawley in this issue, their determination and singlemindedness in getting the Cowley Assembly Plant workers back to work on the company's terms should be recognised.

By Alan Thornett



Moss Evans - 'more determined than Duffy to end the strike'.

From the time Moss Evans arrived for the talks last Thursday at a plush hotel near Gatwick in the same car as Austin Rover chairman Harold Musgrove, they have worked unstintingly.

Variant

At that meeting, management repeated a slight variant of their original terms: Audited Plant Status (APS) to be introduced by May 16, 1983 bell to bell running to be introduced by May 30, a four person inquiry into labour relations in the plant.

Out of this meeting came "trade union" proposals which were almost identical to management terms, to be put to a mass

meeting the following day, Friday: "Audited Plant Status will only be introduced in Cowley Assembly from Monday May 16 1983, given cooperation by the workforce in the productivity improvement measures necessary to qualify for APS which includes the 39 hour week, this to be brought about by agreement of the trade unions or by a ballot of the workforce."

Ballot

In other words they were saying *accept* APS (they seem incapable of grasping that the workforce doesn't want it), and *accept* bell to bell running.

The only problem, they were saying, was that the company wanted to force these things in, and that was undemocratic. Incredibly, they were saying that the way to avoid such an imposition was *voluntarily* to accept BL's terms.

The key sentence is "this [APS and bell to bell running] to be brought about by agreement of the trade unions or ballot..."

This gave them two options - get BL to agree to a ballot, or simply agree to the terms themselves.

The shop stewards committee, meeting immediately before Friday's mass meeting, rejected both management and trade union proposals. Instead they passed a resolution calling on the workers to reject BL's terms, to continue the strike and to meet again in a week's time.

The mass meeting was very big, with all the 5,000 strikers attending. The mood was not quite as strong as before. The waverings at national level, and the hardships workers were now facing, were having some effect.

The vote however, was a solid 3-1 in favour of the shop stewards resolution. The problem of the strike was not the resolve of the

workers but the manoeuvrings at the top.

After the vote, which most workers saw as the end of the meeting, Buckle announced that there was to be a *second* vote on the trade union proposals - that BL's terms were OK providing they were voluntarily accepted and not imposed.

There was complete confusion. Hundreds of workers were streaming out of the meeting as Buckle tried to explain the reason for the second vote.

The trade union proposals were then carried with maybe 160 votes in favour and 50 against.

That same evening Evans and Duffy acted on that second vote and met BL management again, this time in the Holiday Inn near Heathrow.

Final

At the meeting the company's terms were formally accepted by the unions. BL presented a document which was their 'final offer' and which was accepted by the trade union side.

The key clause read as follows. "In accordance with the collective agreement between the company and the trade unions, both parties reaffirm that Audited Plant Status will be established in Cowley Assembly as soon as it is practically possible; and the trade unions and management will cooperate in the productivity improvement measures necessary to qualify for APS which include 39-hour working".

That was interpreted by the Sunday papers in the obvious way. The Sunday Express was the most candid, with its headline: "Car Unions Yield Victory for BL". The first sentence of the lead article read, "An almost total climbdown by union negotiators has paved the way for production to start again this week".

The formula also provides for a four-person committee to in-

Continued



Laughing all the way to the bank - BL boss Musgrove

IN an earlier and simpler age, surrender was announced simply by sending out someone with a white flag.

In our sophisticated modern society, it's a much more elaborate process. The Sunday Telegraph on April 24 reported on the talks between top union leaders and BL management at the Holiday Inn, Heathrow.

They were lubricated with steaks all round, wine, unlimited coffee, sandwiches, and a large breakfast. By the time the union leaders were whisked away in chauffeur-driven Rovers, a bill of over £500 had been run up.

But the hotel's efforts were not wasted. The rigours of class struggle were softened.

"Although three rooms had been booked for the talks apparently the different groups drifted between them rather than talking in entrenched little parties. One member of staff said she had difficulty distinguishing who were the bosses and who were the union men... all the suits looked the same."



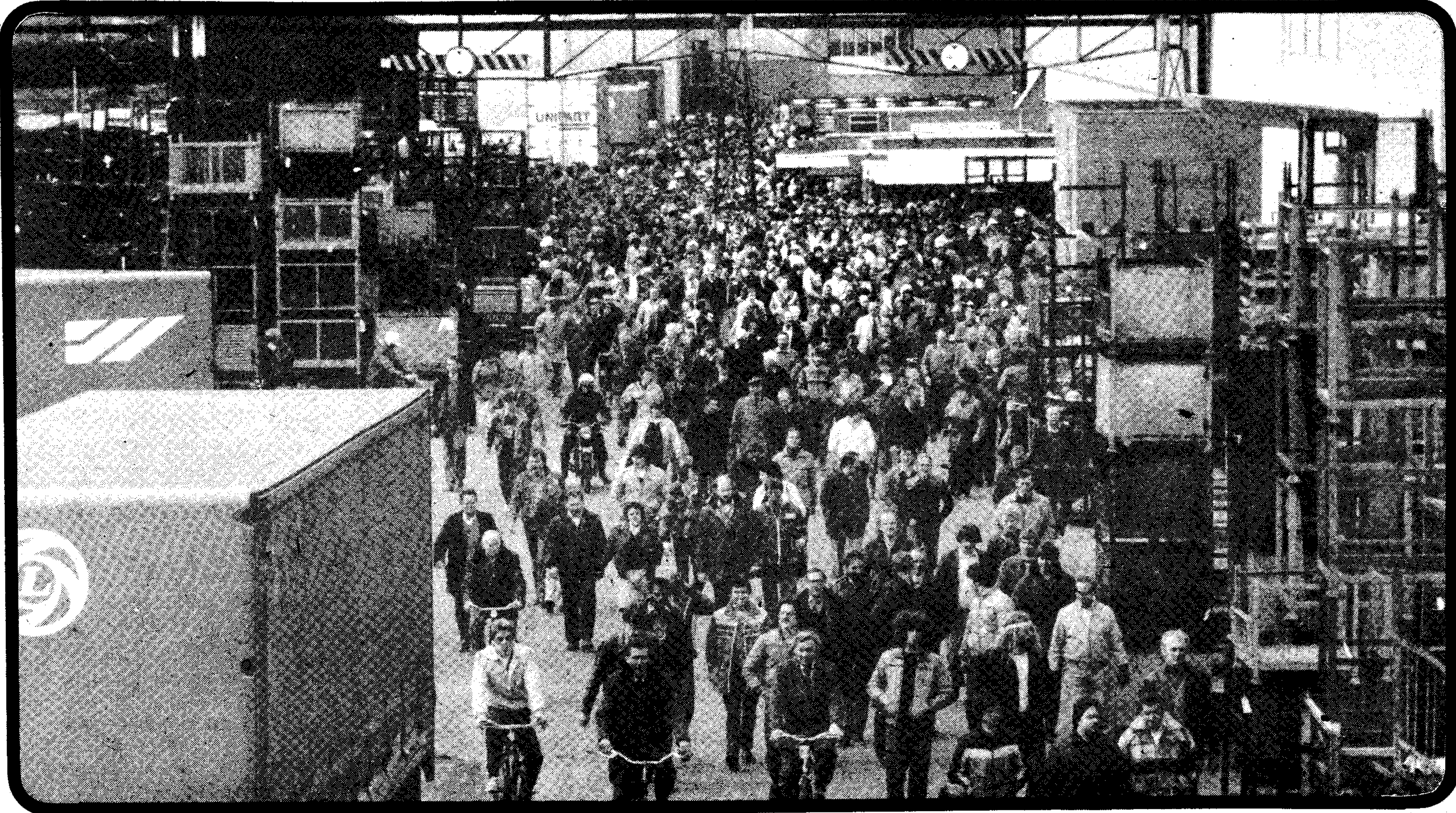
Terry Duffy



JOIN THE LAC!

Join the Leyland Action Committee
Contact: 194 Dawlish Rd, Birmingham 29

'The problem was not resolve of the workers, but manoeuvres at the top'



Continued

quire into the attitude of management, similar to the committee set up out of the so-called 'swearing' strike last year, which resolved absolutely nothing.

In reality the only way to change the attitude of management is for the unions to win something, in this case to successfully defend the six minutes.

The final clause of the formula says that the unions make no recommendation whatsoever to the mass meeting, and allow the workforce to decide - which is astounding when you consider that the formula was not a compromise, but BL's original terms restated.

BL certainly had it both ways, since they promptly placed advertisements in the newspapers recommending a return to work.

The shop stewards' committee, which had given leadership throughout the strike, was also to be gagged. The major part of the shop stewards' meeting on Monday was taken up with the stewards arguing for the right to make a recommendation to the meeting. When that battle was won, the stewards passed a resolution saying that 'the formula was not a basis for a return to work', although whether, and in what form, this resolution would be put to the mass meeting, was not clear.

The main pressure for the sell out did not in the end come from Terry Duffy. Reports to the stewards' meeting made it clear that Moss Evans was the most determined at national level to bring the strike to an end. He had made the running in both the Carlton Hotel and the Holiday Inn meetings. He apparently fought with

Buckle over it, accusing him of being responsible by his support for the continuation of the strike in its early stages.

Formally Moss Evans is presented as being rather to the left in the trade union movement, while Duffy is presented as the extreme right. This demonstrates once more that when the issue of viability arises, and when it is a matter of a major industrial struggle against the government, the left and right of reformism play the same treacherous role.

Failed

The workforce remained completely disciplined after the sell-out at the weekend. Musgrove's call for a return to work on the Monday failed completely. Only one or two workers turned up, to face a picket of several hundred.

At today's mass meeting [Tuesday], the mood was equally strong. The media had for two days set out to create the mentality that the strike was as good as over, and this had obviously had its effect, but it was clear from the reaction of the meeting to the platform that a substantial vote to continue the strike was possible, given a strong lead from the platform.

There was however no such lead. The meeting was gradually talked back to work.

Last night's [Monday] Oxford Mail was very skilfully presented. "The 5000 men and women who have supported the washing-up strike are likely to vote tomorrow for a return to work. But a small minority of militants are claiming that the latest peace terms are a sell-out". It went on to say that

the workers would "only be asked to suspend the strike, and not abandon it".

This kind of line was equally skilfully put from the platform this morning by every speaker. Buckle spoke as if the strike was already over. There were endless patronising statements about how magnificent the strike "had been", long references to what "must happen" when everyone was back at work, great praise for the four-person inquiry which was going to bring changes in the plant. Workers were urged to bring their grievances to it so that it could begin its work.

When it came to dealing with the shop stewards' resolution, Buckle simply lied about it. He said the shop stewards had expressed a view, but "we're not

recommending either way".

It was of course stressed continually that the platform itself was not recommending either way.

Buckle had been saying that he was not prepared to allow Harold Musgrove to "write his script". But Harold Musgrove, in return for no concessions at all, had certainly determined what was not said at the meeting by Buckle or anyone else.

Bob Fryer, as the final speaker, did mention the stewards' resolution. But it was in the context of a speech which was in tune with the rest of the platform.

Inevitably, after this, the meeting voted to return to work by a majority of about four to one.

It was certainly a major victory for management. The Mus-

grove management will claim to have cut their teeth and successfully continued Edwardes' hard-line management style into the post-Edwardes period in BL. The Tory government will claim it as a victory for their policy on the shop floor, and use it to clamp down in other sectors of industry. Local BL management will use the new commitment they have to APS to force in new manning cuts and push up productivity. Local full-time officials will use it to gain control of a plant traditionally run by a democratically elected shop stewards' movement.

But that's not the whole story. The strike was the product of a process of breaking down shop floor organisation in the plant, which had gone a long way. The shop stewards' committee, for example, had been reduced to a fraction of its previous strength. But now gains can be made to begin to rebuild the shop stewards' movement.

Hundreds of young workers fresh in the plant have been in action for the first time. They work on tracks where in many cases there are no shop stewards. Militants who came forward in the strike must remain active in the trade union movement, become stewards and trade union activists, begin to tackle the political problems which led another powerful strike to defeat at the hands of the bureaucrats..

"Tough came from"

by a TGWU steward, BL Longbridge

Longbridge shop floor workers and rank and file stewards were very sympathetic towards the Cowley strike. Although most areas of Longbridge had their "washing-up time" taken away some years ago, the general attitude was to say 'Good luck to anyone who fights this management'.

The "tough-guy" managers, presently at Cowley, are all people who came from Longbridge - Andy Barr, for instance - and we know exactly how the Cowley workers feel because we've had exactly the same treatment from these people.

Press Gang

Moral agitators

LEAVE to one side for a moment the question of whether John Lister crawled into Cowley and put something in the BL tea or whether the sight of Pat Lally selling Socialist Organiser outside the mass meetings reaches the votes other papers can't reach.

The workforce, as seen by the Daily Express, is a passive mass incapable of thought, feeling or independent political action. 'Marxists move in for the kill', the paper declared and went on to report accusations that the workforce were lemmings, following the union over the cliff.

The red baiting was taken up to a lesser extent by some of the fellow Fleet Street outside agitators, but it was a minority voice and a weak one. Majorities of up to ten to one at mass meetings need better explanation than Marxist plotting.

The real contest this week has come from the Christian mafia.

It was probably best expressed in the BBC Sunday programme the Heart of the Matter which posed the scales of the strike as a moral dilemma - on the one side the need for economic success, on the other a need for social justice.

The paper concluded that the Marxist approach began by blaming the other fellow", while Christians began with penitence.

He didn't seem very penitent himself but then he wasn't a car worker so he didn't have so much to be penitent about.

This year being the centenary of Marx's death has given all kinds of parrots the opportunity to confuse a Marxism which exists largely in their own minds - but this analysis took the biscuit. The long careful brick building analysis of Capital is reduced to a game of name calling.

The Reverend Tony Williamson, Lord Mayor of Oxford, body plant lift truck driver, and worker priest, was confident that it was possible to reconcile his ideal of Christian management with profitable car production - Buckle was not. He raised doubts as to whether car production should be undertaken at all if the consequences were slave conditions.

We can confidently predict a flood of articles trying to reconcile Christian morality (love your neighbour) with factory production (work harder than your neighbour). This could be the theme of the next big speech from the Archbishop of Canterbury, drawing on his vast experience of the matter.

Finally BL might be forced into a compromise. Compulsory prayers every morning before the line breaks into motion. A three minute service before starting and stopping work. Or more production. Now there's a deal that would really appeal to Duffy.

OUR POLICY

BL is publicly owned. For years it even had workers' participation as a cosmetic to cover the real face of speed-up and tight-fistedness on wages.

Participation was kicked aside by the bosses when it no longer suited them. Now, several insulting pay offers and several ultimatums and closure threats later, BL is still setting the pace for managerial gangsterism.

Faced with a serious crisis, the BL bosses react no differently from private capitalists. Their answer has been to take it out on the workers.

BL was nationalised in order to bail out the private shareholders. Throughout the 1950s and '60s the shareholders have pocketed fat dividends. If you invested £3000 in the British Motor Company in 1952, then by the time of the merger with Leyland in 1967 you would have received £33,000 in dividends.

Meanwhile there was very little investment. In 1969 BL had fixed assets of £969 per employee, compared to Ford UK's £2709. So when the world competition in the car industry became sharper, in the late '60s BL went onto the rocks.

BL workers came under attack, but the shareholders were safe. The government paid them 10p for every share, although the shares had been fetching only 6½p the day before nationalisation was announced.

BL still has to pay millions every month in interest charges.

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

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

Having opened the company's books, BL workers should work out their own work schedules, based on work-sharing without loss of jobs or pay. With combine-wide solidarity and the willingness to seize the factories if necessary, the BL workers can enforce this workers' control.

They can establish links with workers in the car components firms and in the other giant car firms in Britain and internationally, for a common struggle for an integrated, publicly-owned, car and components industry under workers' control.

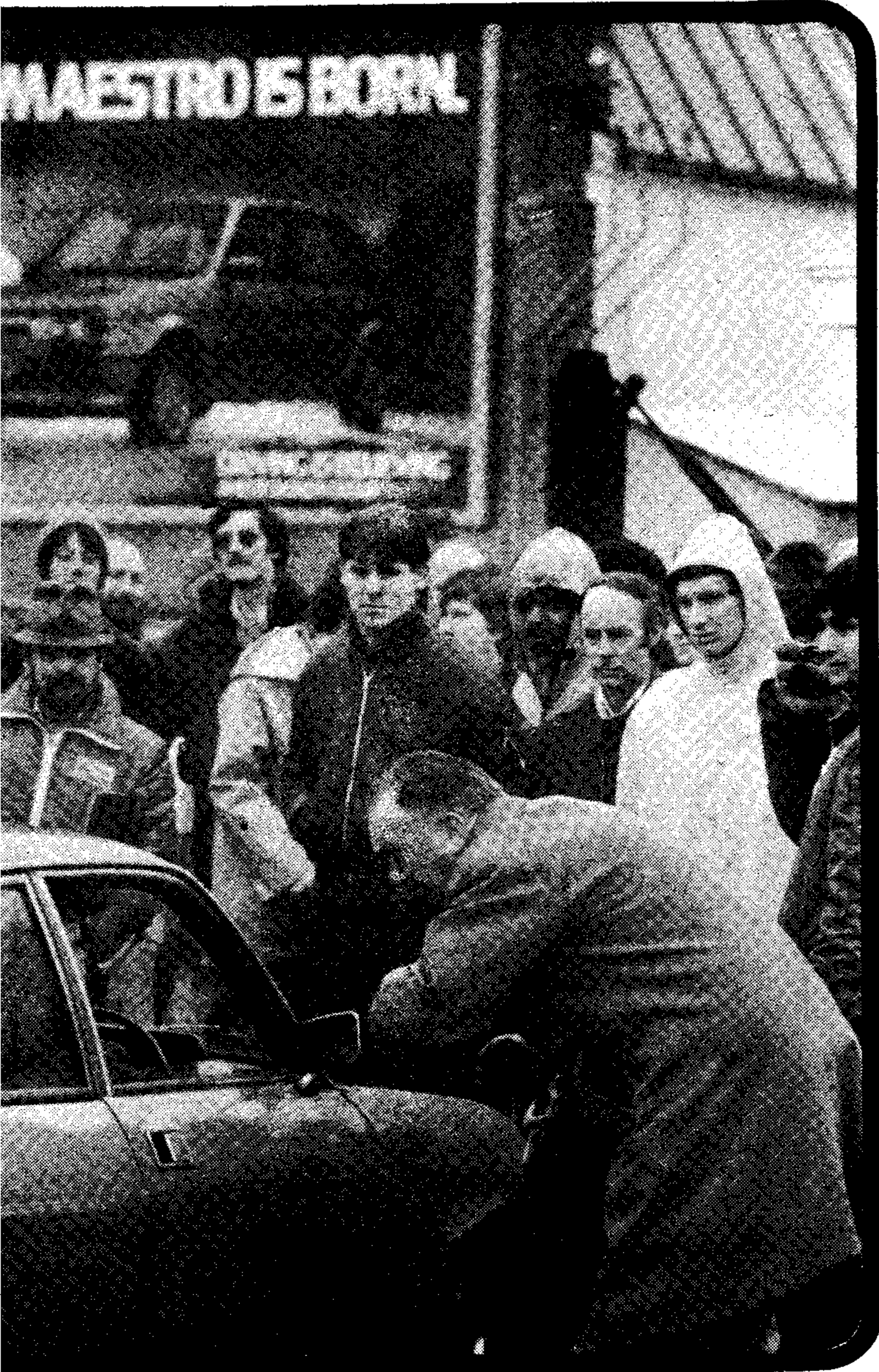
ON THE MARCH

There will be seven legs - from Glasgow, starting April 23, Land's End (May 11), Liverpool (May 9), Newcastle on Tyne (April 30), Keighley (April 27), Hull (May 1), and Great Yarmouth (May 21) - all merging to enter London on June 4/5.

The 500 'core' marchers will be selected by the Regional TUCs, though the TUC organisers say they expect more to join sections of the march along the way.

Ron Todd, chair of the national organising committee, told a press conference on March 28 that he expected "at least a quarter of a million" in London on June 5".

BL still sets pace for ga



"guy" managers on Longbridge

The Monday after the sacking threat was announced, the shopfloor workers at Longbridge were saying that if a single Cowley worker was sacked, then we all had to come out.

Grasp

Everyone at Longbridge understood the implications of the sacking threat for the whole trade union movement... everyone, that is, except the works committee. They seemed unable or unwilling to grasp the seriousness of the situation. They didn't organise any measures to prepare the workforce to meet such a threat.

On the Tuesday after the ultimatum, the delegation of shop stewards went to see the works committee and proposed that a joint shop stewards committee meeting be called to prepare for solidarity action.

The convenor, Jack Adams, was away at the Scottish TUC, and the rest of the works committee seemed unable to operate without his presence. The works committee without Adams is like a chicken with its head cut off, except that at least a chicken without a head runs about. These people were simply paralysed.

They failed to even call a works committee meeting to discuss the situation. Their answer to the delegation's request for a joint shop stewards committee meeting was a bland "Cowley hasn't asked for any support so far and when they do, we'll start to move."

Later a suggestion was made by another steward who went over to see them, for at least a message of support and a donation. Even this met with a similar negative response.

One of the works committee members actually said that because the strike was official, everything was OK and we didn't need to do anything at Longbridge!

The other reason that Longbridge rank and file workers have identified so strongly with the Cowley workers is because they know that the Longbridge

management is only holding back on further attacks here because of the Cowley situation.

Three weeks ago, workers in CABl voted to resist management plans to remove all inspectors from the tracks and to force all operators to carry out their own inspection (stamping their own work). Since then the company has held back from implementing this measure for fear of having both their major assembly plants in dispute at the same time. But nobody is in any doubt that if Cowley is defeated, the Longbridge bosses will go ahead with their plan immediately.

Our bosses only held back because of Cowley

I've got no doubt that if the Cowley strike continues and if BL management go ahead with their sacking threat there will be a strong response from the shop floor at Longbridge. The only problem is the weakness and cowardice and complacency of our plant leadership here. However even they now show some signs of moving. Last week at the TGWU branch of which Jack Adams is chairperson, a resolution was proposed by him, giving full support to Cowley, sending £100 donation and calling for strike action in every BL plant if management go ahead with the sackings threat. That is obviously the kind of solidarity action that is needed and it is good to see that Adams and the works committee seem to be pushing for this. Better late than never.

ngsterism



Leyland Action Committee

Five years fighting a chain of betrayals

THE Leyland Action Committee is a body of Leyland workers, formed at the time of the 1978 wage review, whose aim was to campaign within the plants against a wages sell-out.

It has remained in existence ever since then because of the continuous sell-outs.

From the 1980 review, in which the workers were balloted and voted in favour of strike action, which was then not implemented, through to the present Cowley assembly plant sell-out, it has been clear that what is required is a new leadership to struggle for the workers' interests, independent from the employers.

Leyland has been used as an example by successive governments, as to how they want industry's profits defended. Under the last Labour government it was through workers' "participation", whereby unions at all levels were to be used to jointly agree speed-up and low wages.

With the Tory government it has been through dictatorial measures, using the union leaders to sell out struggles. In both cases, the result is the same.

The central plank of the employers and the government has been to look after the "profitability" and "viability" of the industry to the detriment of the workforce.

Collusion

In this they have benefitted from the collusion of the trade union leadership.

In January 1980 the steel strike started. The November 1979 BL pay review was still being negotiated. BL workers were held back from taking any action alongside the steelworkers.

In February of that year there was a national ballot of BL workers, who voted 2-1 in favour of striking. The trade union leaders refused to implement this. It was the Leyland Action Committee that organised coaches of steel workers and BL workers to lobby a convenors meeting at Canley, demanding they implement the strike vote.

They refused. And it was only put to Leyland workers whether they wanted to strike or not on April 8 - the day after the steel strike ended.

Throughout each of the subsequent wages campaigns, the Leyland Action Committee has put forward proposals and campaigned in the factories and at BL combine level for action to defend wages.

Similarly on jobs. Our consistent opposition to speed-up, which means job losses, is exemplified by the issuing of a different leaflet to each of the mass meetings of the Cowley assembly

plant strike.

Our supporters have taken a principled stand in fighting this struggle from the beginning.

On victimisation: Our record is clear. We took a strong position in defence of Derek Robinson, of the Longbridge 8 and of Alan Thornett.

In the case of Alan Thornett, for example, we produced a special edition of our bulletin, distributed at the main plants, explaining the case and showing how the union bureaucracy sold out.

The Leyland Action Committee holds regular meetings and throughout the Cowley Assembly strike we held fortnightly meetings.

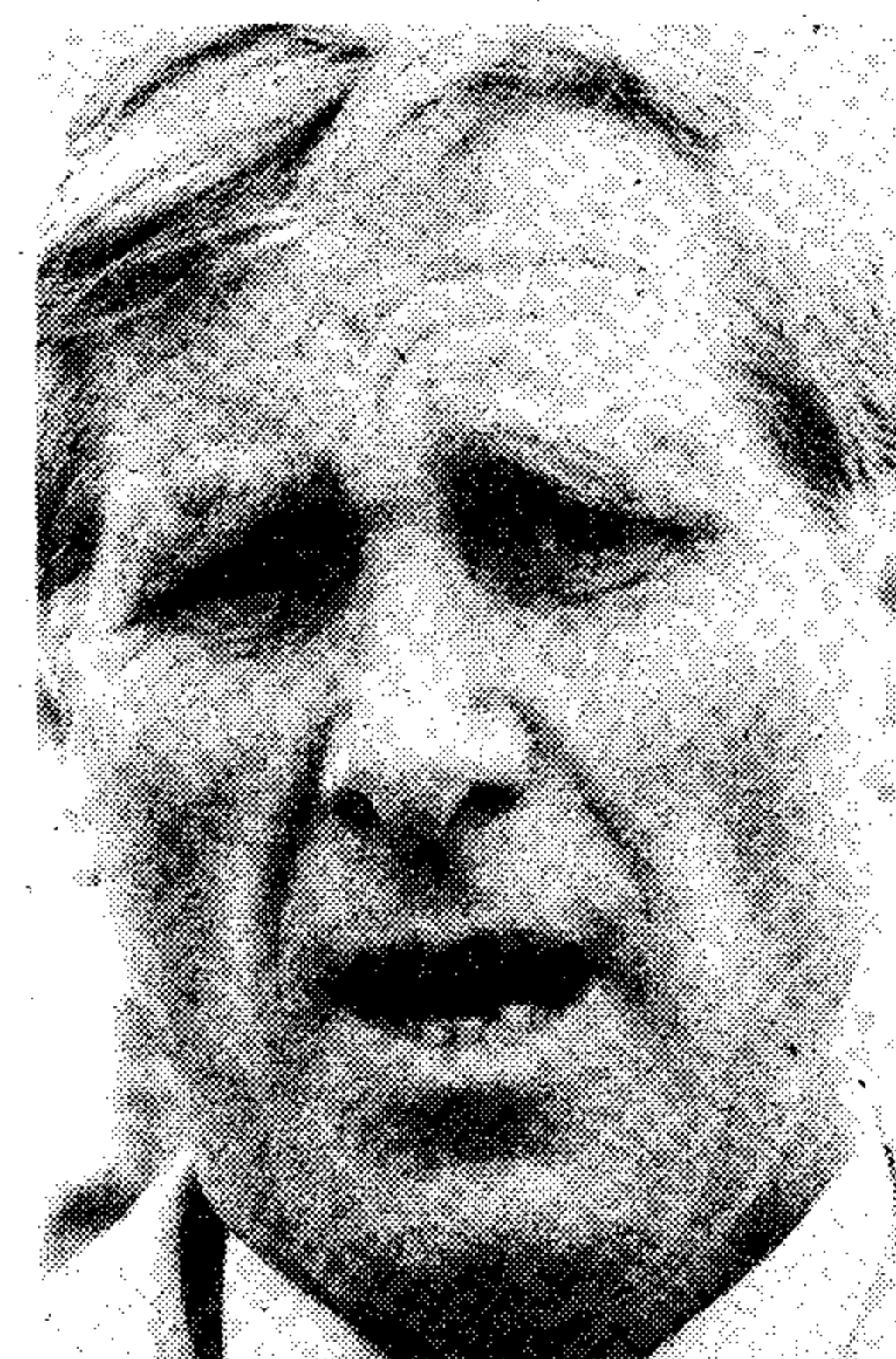
The meeting on Monday, 25th, for example, heard reports from assembly plant stewards, and discussed the state of the

union organisation and the crisis of leadership and drew up the leaflet for Tuesday's mass meeting.

We do not see the Leyland Action Committee as an alternative to the BL Combine Shop Stewards Committee, which is unofficial, but as an alternative leadership that struggles within both the official and unofficial bodies.

The Combine Committee, controlled jointly by the Stalinists of the Communist Party and the right wing, has been virtually defunct, having met only once in the last year. This in itself shows the crisis of leadership.

Anybody interested in receiving copies of leaflets and LAC material or wishing to join LAC should write to Leyland Action Committee, 194 Dawlish Road, Birmingham B29.



Buckle - betrayed fight to defend Alan Thornett.

THE Leyland Action Committee put out bulletins at every turn in the dispute, warning of dangers and pointing a way forward.

On April 6, the bulletin explained that "the so-called 'offer' the management have made is actually worse than the conditions they were threatening to impose at the beginning of the strike..."

"Audited Plant Status (APS) is not a concession, it is a further imposition. It involves, in management's latest figures, a *manning cut* of a further 243 across the plant... Management's *problem* has been that they have been hesitating to force APS in because they feared the reaction of the

workforce - now they are trying to get it in as a *concession* in return for the acceptance of bell to bell running!"

The April 14 bulletin underlined the statement from BL boss Geoffrey Armstrong that for him the six minutes was "only the beginning" towards a rate of exploitation "equal to the best international standards in Japan, the continent and the USA".

On April 19 the bulletin argued the case against a 'buy-out' of the six minutes. The April 22 bulletin picked up on hints dropped by union officials Ken Cure and Moss Evans on TV the evening before, and accurately warned against the danger of

proposals for a ballot on the six minutes and APS being "brought in in a deliberately confusing way".

April 26's LAC leaflet argued against the sell-out. "We have the unity of the workforce, the official support of the unions and the full support of the community in Oxford. That doesn't happen very often and we should not throw it away now."

With more supporters and more resources the LAC can have a bigger voice next time. Join the LAC now; help to rebuild the shop stewards' movement in BL, and help to prevent future sell-outs.

Advertisement

Workers Socialist Review OUT NOW!

Articles on the stewards' movement, the public sector and the fight against cuts and privatisation, lessons from the NHS strike, and unions and the Labour Party. Polemics on the Socialist Workers' Party and the Communist Party. Features on the left and the Stalinist state 'unions', and on workers' politics and national liberation. From the arsenal of Marxism: Leon Trotsky on boom, crisis, and workers' struggle.

70p (plus 16p p&p) from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD



Socialist ORGANISER

Industrial Special

Viability argument leads to

The slippery slope of concessions

IF POPULAR myth is to be believed, everything is bigger in the USA — even the sell-outs by union leaders.

That may be pretty hard for Cowley workers to believe — but even they have not (yet) been forced by their leaders into legally-binding three year contracts embodying an actual *reduction* in wages. That — if Duffy and Evans have their way — is a treat yet to come.

In the USA, however, wage cutting concessions or 'givebacks' have been 'negotiated' by union bureaucrats in a wide range of industries in which employers have claimed the only alternative is redundancies or closure.

A recent leaflet put out by the New York rank and file grouping 'Teamsters for a Democratic Union' sums up the results of these 'deals':

"In the steel and rubber industries giant corporations like Uniroyal, US Steel, General Tire and National Steel closed plants even when workers made concessions.

At Chrysler, the auto workers made concessions three times, giving up \$1 billion in pay, yet 50% of them are laid off.

Across the auto industry including suppliers, the union has made \$ 5 billion in concessions. The net effect of this no-fight strategy has been the loss of 600,000 jobs.

Freight Teamsters [transport workers] see carriers closing up nearly every week, despite the recent sell-out Master Freight Contract which freezes wages, cuts cost of living allowances, forces drivers to pay into the pension and health funds, and gives major concessions on work rules.

Besides carriers like Time-DC which have folded anyway since the new NMFA contract was signed, hundreds of others, seeing the union in retreat, are refusing to sign, and are demanding even more 'relief'.

Not only have the union bureaucrats been giving concessions,

Problems



and Policies

By Harry Sloan

but the government has cut money out of social programmes, and shifted it into programmes which go directly to the corporations, into military spending, direct subsidies, loans and tax cuts.

Still, big business is not investing in production that increases employment, but mainly in speculation.

No jobs are being created for working people. US Steel, for example, instead of modernising the decaying steel industry, just

bought Marathon Oil. Unemployment is over 10 million — the worst since 1939.

Sometimes the extra money a company saves when we make concessions is used to automate existing jobs out of existence, or, as at Cooper Jarrett, to invest in new areas while the company lays off the very workers who helped the employer finance them out of a job.

The biggest problem is that the employers rightly see union givebacks as a sign of weakness, and this whets their appetite for even more concessions. This means less job security, because the company knows it can walk all over the union without the union doing a thing.

Wage cutting at one company may help that company get a competitive edge on other companies for a while.

Jobs may be transferred from one place to another, but it won't create a single extra job in the balance.

It does, however, cut the heart out of unionism, if it gets Teamsters in one local or company competing with those in another so as to undercut the wages and working conditions of our brothers and sisters.

The current economic crisis is driving many, especially smaller, companies to the wall. The freight industry, for example, under the impact of deregulation and recession, is undergoing rapid consolidation.

The largest carriers are expanding their facilities and service, and increasing their profitability. Yet, even they are demanding concessions as they prepare for more cut-throat competition with other firms. No amount of union givebacks will keep the weaker companies from being swallowed up.

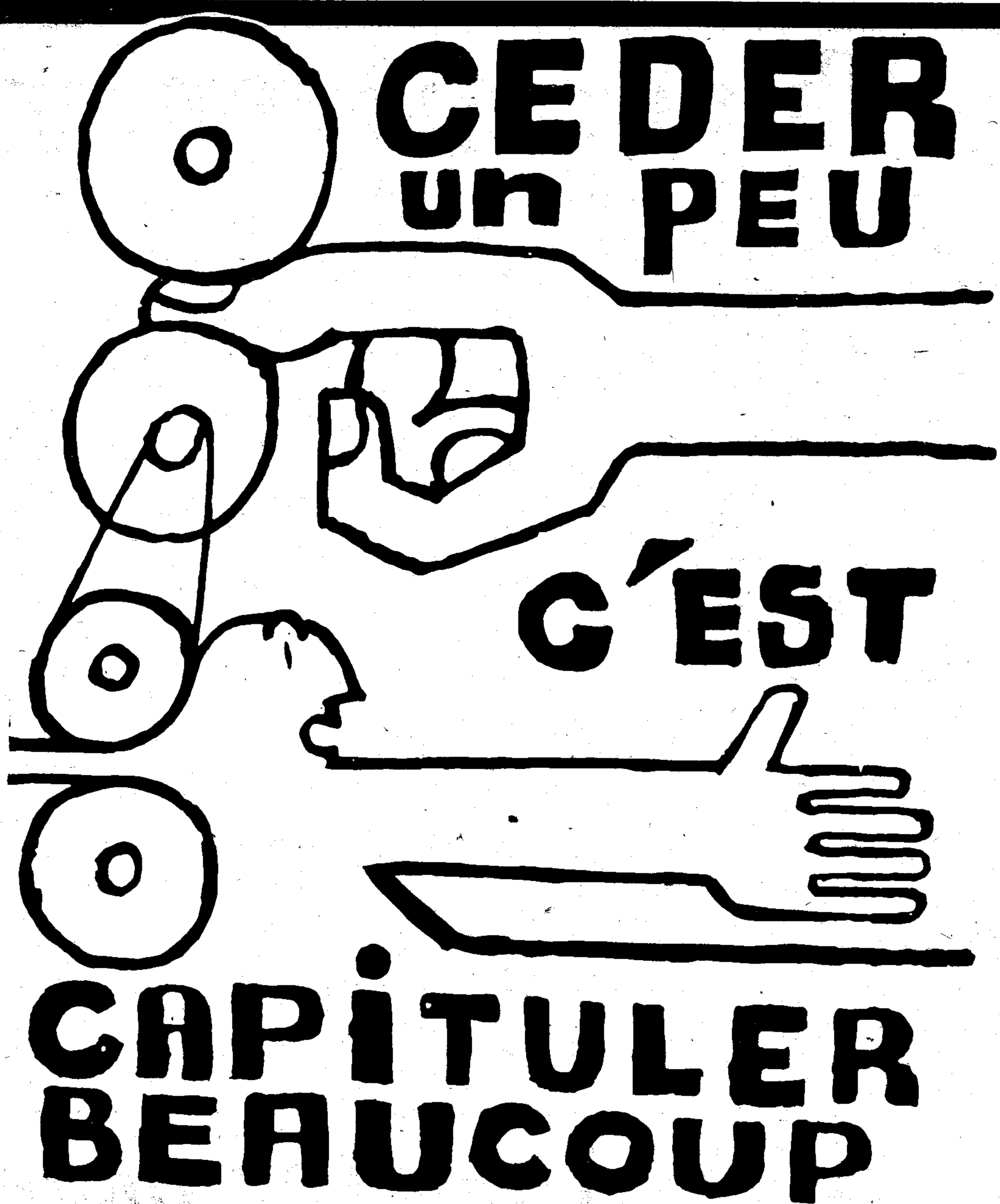
Since 1976, 150,000 Teamster freight jobs, over one third of the total, have been lost due to industry reorganisation and the carriers' union-busting campaign. The growing non-union sector is being used as a club against unionised workers by the employers to force more concessions.

The only way to end this threat is by a campaign that mobilises the Teamster rank and file to help organise the unorganised, and proves to them in deeds that the 'muscle of the entire IBT will be used to back them up, including supporting strike action and secondary boycotts'.

The American experience is echoed in each and every example of retreat by British union leaders. Far from being satisfied by the concessions they have gained, the employers see these as mere appetisers for further inroads into workers' rights and living standards.

The answer must be no. For workers' interests to be defended, the bosses' offensive must be halted, and the 'viability' argument exposed.

The unions, in the instance of the... (text is partially obscured)



A poster from France, May 1968. 'Give a finger and they'll take an arm'

management threats of impending bankruptcy, closure or mass sackings can just as easily be suckered into wholesale collaboration in this or that 'miracle' scheme that might 'save' the company — most recently the BL Maestro.

The financial crisis hitting whole sections of capitalist industry flows not from workers' excessive demands but from capitalism's own chaotic methods of restructuring production and re-viving profits, by driving weaker firms to the wall.

Employers — whether 'loss-making' or highly profitable — have embarked on a sustained and ruthless offensive designed to drive up the rate of exploitation on the shop floor. Some have pleaded impending bankruptcy: others — such as Ford — have bluntly threatened to shut down 'uncompetitive' plants and shift production elsewhere.

In such conditions of confrontation it becomes crystal clear that there is a conflict of interest — of class interest — between the bosses and the workforce.

As far as the ruling class is concerned, providing employment, and production of even the most socially useful goods, are secondary to the drive for profit. For the working class, the creation of profit for the capitalists is simply an unavoidable by-product of seeking to earn a living wage.

The lower the wage, the higher the potential profit: the smaller the workforce, the harder each worker is made to toil, the better the employer is pleased. There is no common ground.

The employers obviously pressurise union leaders to sacrifice their members' rights and conditions in order to ensure a satisfactory level of profits. This is dressed up in fancy talk about 'saving the company', 'saving the industry' or 'saving jobs', in a supposedly common 'national interest'.

But how should workers respond to such blackmail? Must their conditions be driven down at every whim of the capitalist class? Is the mere threat of closure now to be enough to force a miserable capitulation?

The answer must be no. For workers' interests to be defended, the bosses' offensive must be halted, and the 'viability' argument exposed.

The unions, in the instance of the... (text is partially obscured)

company's bluff on the sacking of the whole workforce of a vast, newly re-equipped plant that produces the company's star model, and mobilising the full industrial strength of the TGWU and AUEW to occupy the plant, and to paralyse the car and engineering industry until the sackings are reversed and union demands conceded.

Plants

It means in smaller plants taking a similarly hard line against management demands and threats, fighting closure threats with mass occupations and the struggle for supporting strikers and boycott action by the trade union movement.

The calling of management's bluff could often save jobs by halting redundancy plans. If threats of closure are implemented, it is clear that a fight to defend jobs could not have been long postponed even by making concessions.

Workers must challenge every management claim of bankruptcy and every financial argument for redundancies, rationalisation and closure, by fighting for the opening of the books of the firm concerned to elected trade union committees — to show the ways in which the massacre of jobs and hard-won conditions shovels profits into the vaults of the big combines; banks and multinationals. A crucial task is also that of building awareness among rank and file members that the slippery slope of concessions begins in one firm, but leads at once into its

competitors and into a never-ending drive for more speed-up and lower wages, while the weakest firms must in the end, under the present system, inevitably go to the wall.

The logic of sacrifices to the god of viability is the pauperisation and super-exploitation, the division and fragmentation of the working class into competing units identifying each with their 'own' employer and cutting each others' throats in the fight for the remaining few jobs available.

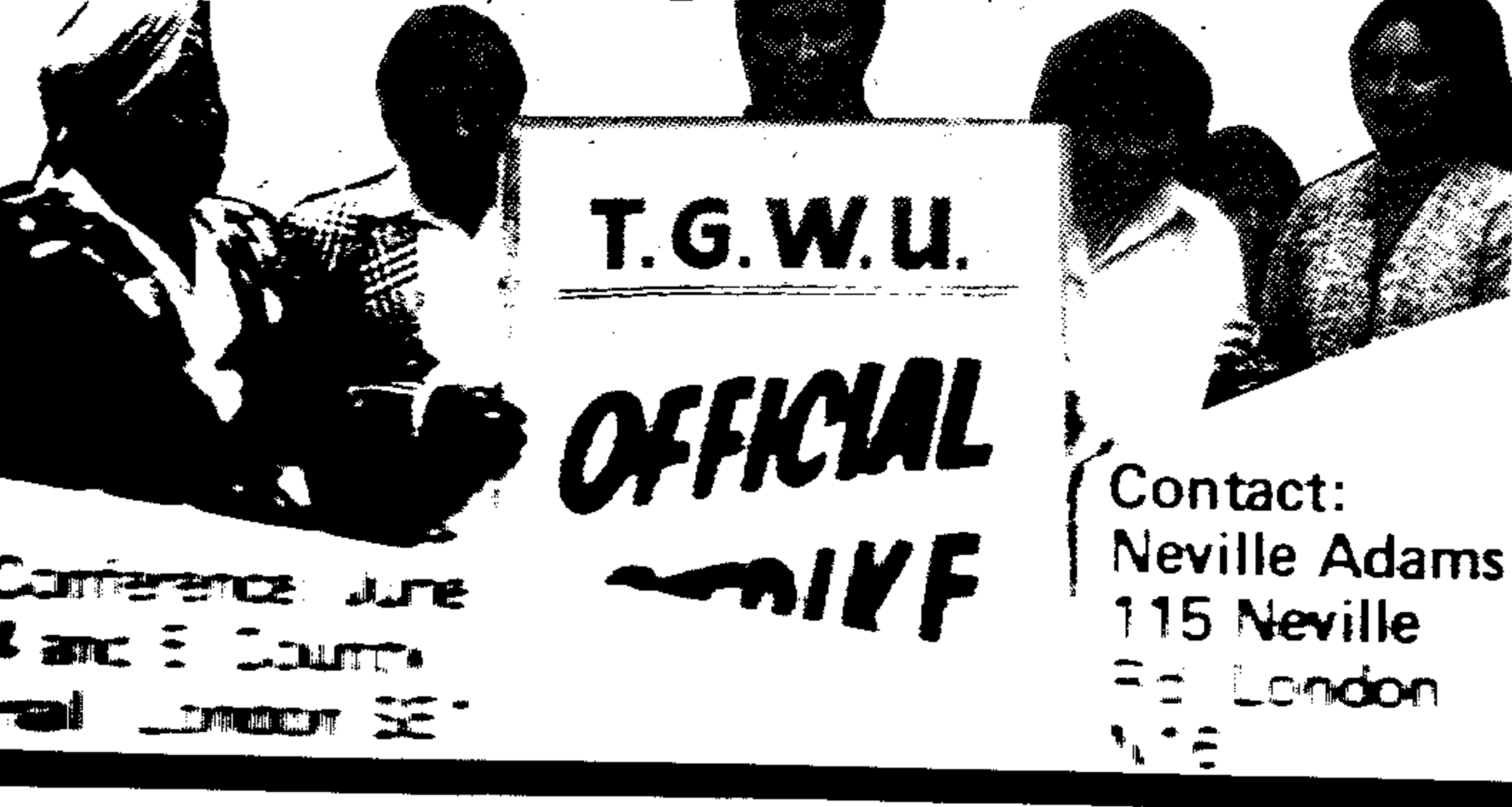
Against that fearful prospect we must fight for the logic of the class struggle: just as the employers gang up against workers, so we must unite as a class to defend jobs and living standards, our organisations and our self-respect.

Anarchic

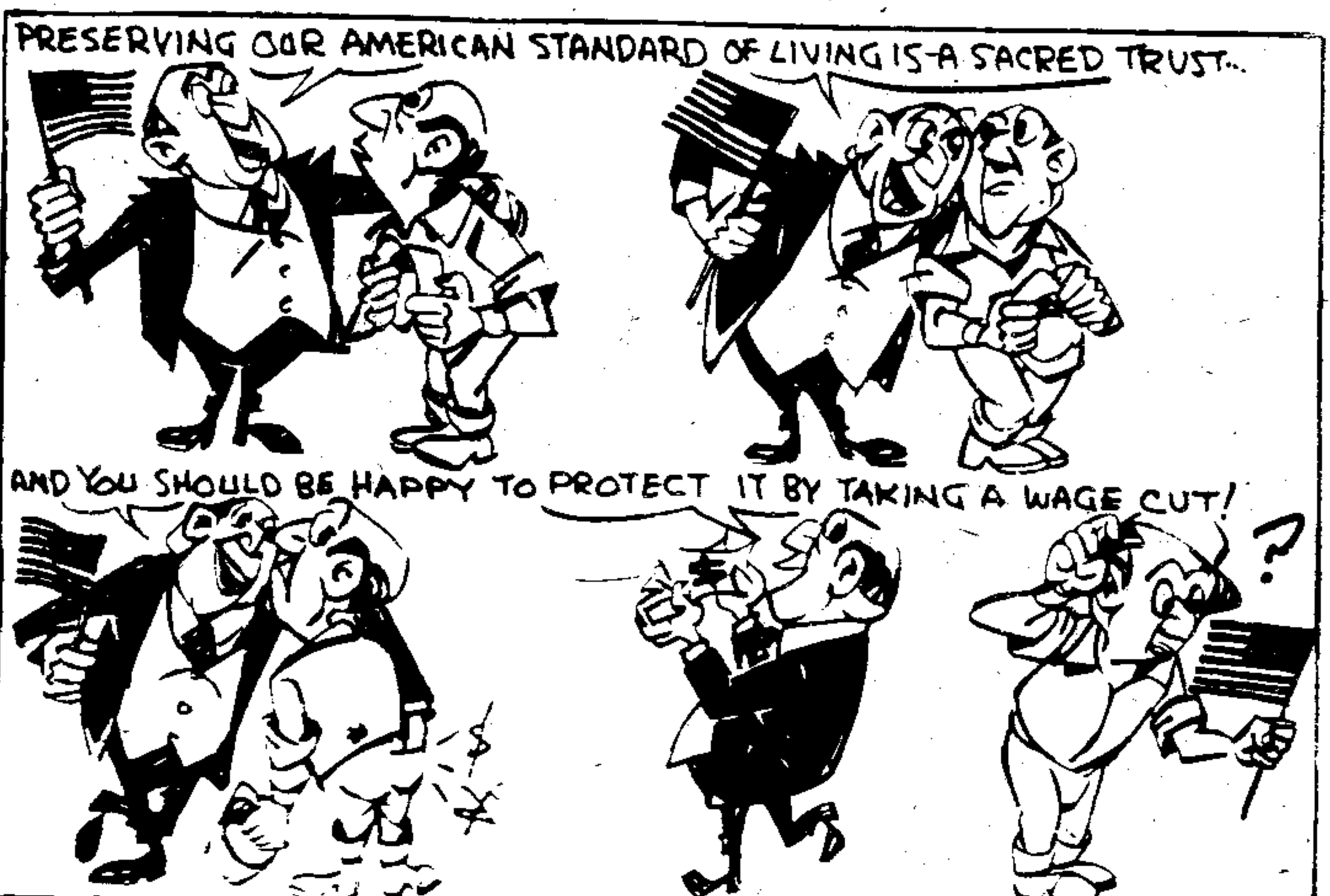
Against the never-ending decline imposed by the anarchic capitalist system we must look towards the fight for a workers' government, the nationalisation without compensation of the major monopoly firms, the banks and finance trusts, and the establishment of a workers' plan of production that can utilise and expand the wealth of society, creating the millions of new jobs that are needed and creating goods which are socially useful on a national and international level.

A necessary starting point in this is to begin within the unions and the Labour Party to build the necessary alternative leadership to Evans, Duffy and the apostles of 'viability'.

Black trade unionists SOLIDARITY



Contact: Neville Adams 115 Neville London



A world at the end of its tether

WE ALL need reminding sometimes of the tremendous impact of television on popular consciousness. For more and more people the printed word matters less and less.

Labour doesn't need a daily paper. It needs its own television channel.

Nonetheless, in a world where even the high spots of Coronation Street or Dallas are instantaneously obsolescent, and where the evidence of serious television drama related to contemporary political problems is slight and its impact negligible, it is surprising to find the BBC drama series *The Boys from the Blackstuff* still a talking point in homes, workplaces, pubs and clubs long after its second showing.

The indomitable figure of Yosser Hughes has entered the pantheon of modern folk heroes. 'Giz a job' and 'I can do that' have become instantly recognisable parts of modern street lore, and his fondness for the violent use of his head has meant in Liverpool what was formerly termed a 'Kirkby kiss' is now called a 'Yosser Hughes'.

Whilst plays which challenge and subvert the status quo from time to time appear on television — the Loach/Garnett/Allen films are perhaps the best examples — they rarely have had anything like the resonance beyond the circles of the already politically interested, committed or active, of Alan Bleasdale's cycle.

The plays have probably done more to publicise the plight of Britain's unemployed, the coercion and oppression they suffer from the state, the impotence and desperation people are *feeling* in our devastated cities, than a thousand leaflets or newspaper articles.

The central reason for this is quite simply that the five plays constitute a major artistic achievement. With the help of brilliant casting, acting, production and direction, Alan Bleasdale has succeeded in capturing in all its complexity and contradiction the real universe millions inhabit in Britain today as the working class is caught in the decline of the system that created it.

Where television so often lies, Bleasdale tells the truth. He creates working class life as it is lived. He shows vividly what Thatcher-

'The indomitable figure of Yosser Hughes has entered the pantheon of modern folk heroes'. But does it represent a radical challenge to the status quo — or just a statement of despair?

John McIlroy continues the discussion on Alan Bleasdale's celebrated TV series, 'The Boys from the Blackstuff'.

ism does to human beings, what mass unemployment does to any sense of worth or dignity.

Researchers touch on a reality that one per cent on the unemployment figures means up to four per cent on admissions to mental hospitals, four per cent on the suicide rate and a five per cent increase in murders.

It is because Bleasdale captures the psycho-drama of Liverpool in the '80s and compellingly portrays the *range of reality*, the rage, the desperation, the futility and the *resistance* of the maimed and wrecked citizens of this world at the end of its tether that millions have been convinced, imaginatively involved, emotionally engaged.

Weeks after the plays it is easy to recall the horror when the young socialist, Snowy, worn but still defiant, goes to a ridiculous wasted death, the passionate grief of his father, George Malone, as he visits the grave, the anguish of the bitter, wrenching conflict between Chrissie and Angie, and the despair as he destroys the pets which, with drink, were his only solace.

Or the joy which lights up and rejuvenates the beaten features of George's wife when the doctor treating the old socialist asks whether he was the same George he heard addressing a mass meeting when he was a boy.

Or the jolt of surprise when the old security guard, the one pillar of rectitude and conventional morality in the corrupt world of the docks, is revealed as the organiser of the heist — rotten beneath the facade.

Or the final ray of optimism when Yosser, a sane figure in the mad pub, lays 'Shakehands' on the floor in an affirmation of the necessity to continue the struggle and the residual power to do this.

If Bleasdale had merely illuminated in all its oppressive detail the system under which the unemployed exist, he would have deserved our gratitude. He shows us what the welfare state has become. Thrown onto the dole the victims are unable to exist on its handouts.

The authorities, the social service bureaucracies, are there to see that they do. Everybody with a job in the plays is an agent of discipline and control, whether the police themselves, the social security clerks, the Department of Employment snoopers, or the social workers.

Whatever their own beliefs, the apparatus forces them into an oppressive role. By linking his characters' responses to his description of the state's creation and institutionalisation of helplessness poverty, Bleasdale links private suffering to public issues, the personal to the political.

The real strength of the plays lies in their depiction of the spectrum of responses. Chrissie gives in. He takes refuge in the old Liverpoolianism, 'You have to be a comedian to live here'.

But as his wife Angie says, 'It's not funny. It is not friffin funny. I've had enough of that "If you don't laugh you'll cry". I've heard it for years. This stupid soddin city's full of it. Why don't you cry? Why don't you scream? Why don't you fight back, you bastard, fight back'.

Stuffing

But Chrissie doesn't. The stuffing has been knocked out of him. Despite pleading he fails to negotiate his way back into the other world of steady jobs and remains locked into his mutually destructive struggle with Angie.

Dixie enters the path of rolling with the punches and beating the system. Throughout this episode there is the taste of fear. He moonlights for a security firm and embarks on a war of manoeuvre with the DHSS.

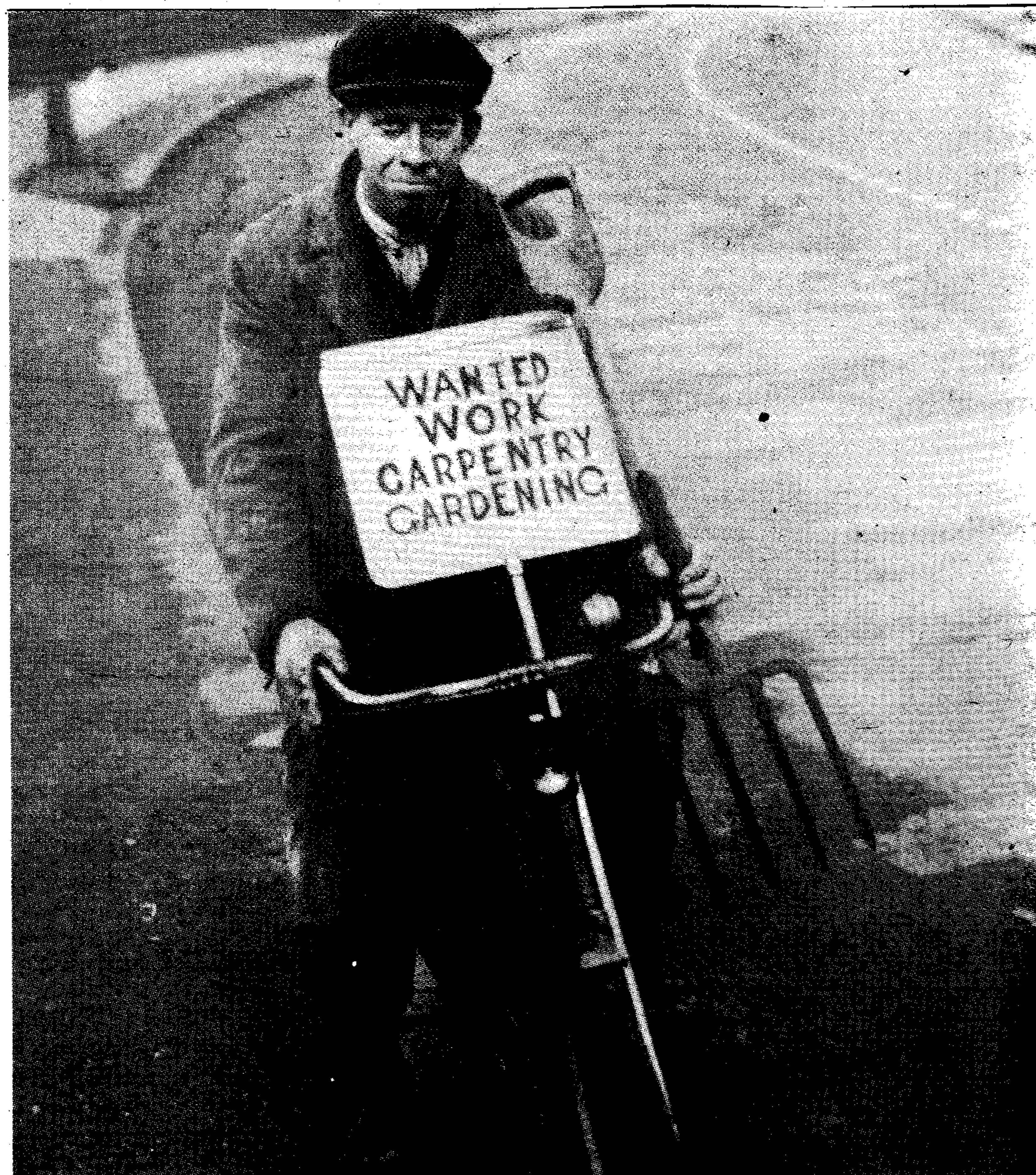
He is bribed and bludgeoned into cooperating with the rifling of the ship he is paid to guard. And, like Chrissie, his family life is devastated. Where one of the characters earlier claims in response to Snowy's militant preaching, 'Don't you think we know all that stuff... but at times like this you look to your own', the family is unmasked as no refuge at all.

It disintegrates as Dixie becomes estranged from his children, sees with quiet desperation what the system is doing to his eldest son, and watches his wife become a bundle of nerves terrified to answer the door or answer the phone as the snoopers close in.

The main will to resistance in the plays is exemplified by Yosser Hughes. The situation has driven Yosser mad, but his madness is a measure of his iron will to resist.

Yosser demands a job. When the wall he builds is crooked and he is sacked he lays out the bent building contractor just as he lays out the invincible 'Shakehands' before whom all others crumble.

For his children Yosser is not



"One per cent on the unemployment figures means four per cent on the suicide rate..."

mad. Unlike Dixie and Chrissie he has not been turned in on his own. His family has to be physically destroyed by the state.

Even when Yosser wants to give in, wants to kill himself, wants to accept that resistance is futile, he can't. His suicide bid fails. If everything that is worthwhile in humanity is to be preserved, you have to go on fighting. You can't cop out.

But if Bleasdale is not ultimately pessimistic, does not believe the game is up in a hopeless world, still Yosser's struggle is individual and demented. The tradition of collective, explicitly political struggle is represented by George Malone, his wife, and his son Snowy. The tide is running strongly against that tradition.

In the first plays the workers on the site discuss politics, the riots, unemployment, the Tories. But the view is pessimistic. One of the characters complains, 'Everything's gone sour. Everyone is looking after number one. We're not winning any more... Your beliefs go out the window when the bailiffs are at the door'.

George's other sons articulate the feeling of many trade union activists today. 'I'm telling you da, honest to God. Sometimes I look around at some of the fellas I'm supposed to be fighting for, and they don't seem to care or understand about anything that hasn't got tits or comes out of a barrel'.

They are answered by their mother, who exclaims that she and George have spent a lifetime struggling against defeatism. The point is to keep resisting even when you are not winning.

Rocky

But the collective struggle she and George represent is almost entirely excluded from the plays. It is no longer relevant. Snowy's words fall on rocky ground. His death suggests the futility of his ideas. George, the unions, the Labour Party, are echoes from a foreign country where they did things differently.

Where once George addressed mass meetings, the addressal dockers loot the ships. George holds the community together. Even as he dies they queue for advice. But he can pass this into Yosser, who in turn can't even relate to Chrissie and Dixie.

Where once workers built organisations and fought successfully trade unionism is now dissolved into manic drunken camaraderie. Trade unions can't help the employed or unemployed. 'Yet an-

ther redundancy party' puts its £1000 down on the bar to drink away defeat.

The last play in the series is a key one for socialists. George, who represents all that was best about his class, takes a last ride in a wheelchair past the silent cranes, the decaying warehouses and dying docks, where the Liverpool proletariat was forged, recalling in a final monologue old battles and old friendships with a delight and warmth which turns cold in the face of the present reality.

But George rages against that reality, crying over and over again, 'I can't believe there's no hope for my class...'

It is not the playwright's job to provide answers, and Bleasdale doesn't. We can all certainly recognise an important truth in the play's argument. The unions have failed thousands.

The Labour Party appears all too often and culpably irrelevant to the preoccupations of those trapped by our economic and social crisis in the Kirkbys, Dingles and the Garstons.

Do the leaders of our party and unions really understand the world of the Chrissies, Dixies and Yossers? Do they really know what is going on?

Many of us will have our doubts, but we will still disagree with the play's conclusions. We cannot go on in the old ways. But the tradition of George Malone is not irrelevant to the concerns of Britain's unemployed. It should not be written off.

It does need development. It does need revitalising. But there are answers, there are ways out for the Chrissies, Dixies and Yossers. Fundamental social

change in the interests of the working class is still possible. To achieve it we have to start with the tools at hand. And despite their inadequacies — and god knows they are numerous — those tools are still the unions and the Labour Party.

Whilst we should not demand of drama which enriches people's lives, illuminates reality, and explains us to ourselves, that it should have a neat political message tagged on, the exclusion of collective struggle from the plays is not only a political deficiency. It is, in the end, a limitation on Bleasdale's dramatic vision.

Liverpool — like Glasgow, like Newcastle — is full of Chrissies and Dixies. It is also full of Jimmy Forsyths, Rose Murphys, Dave Kirkbys, Jenny Dales, Tony McQuades, Bobby Owens, men and women thrown onto the scrapheap who share the world of Chrissie and Dixie but who have kept faith with George Malone.

They are still involved in their collective organisations. They are fighting to turn them to their purposes. They ensure that collective struggle and optimism are still part of Liverpool in 1983.

The Boys From The Blackstuff has done a marvellous job. If it had shown a little more of this, its importance would have been incalculable. Perhaps we should not ask for too much, but rest with the hope that the cycle constitutes a breakthrough for real drama on television.

Nevertheless, when the 1983 People's March reaches London, wouldn't it be wonderful if both Alan Bleasdale and Bernard Hill, who played Yosser Hughes, were on the platform?



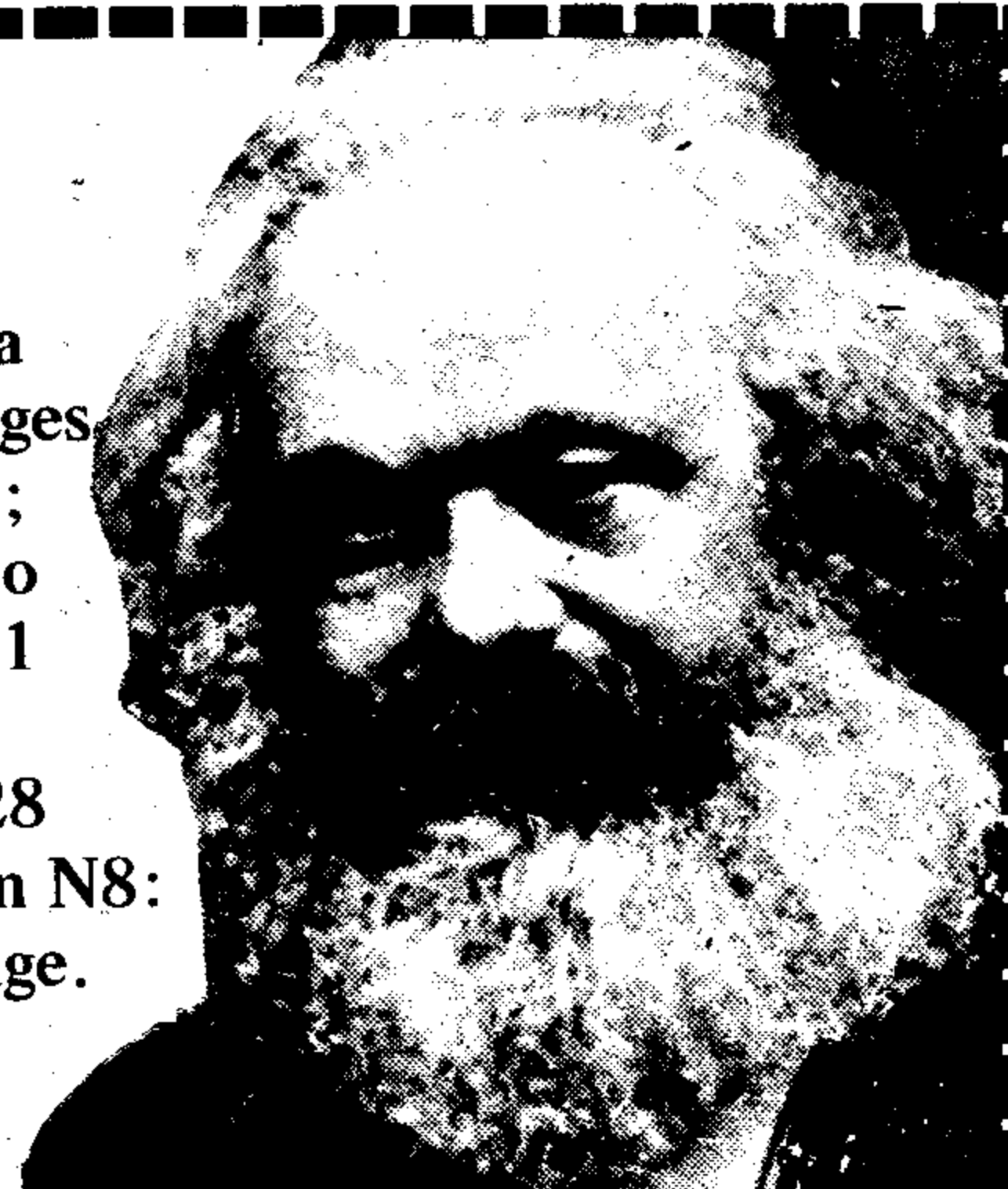
HARD TIMES

Just out from Pluto Press: an analysis of capitalism in crisis from regular Socialist Organiser contributor Bob Sutcliffe. £2.50 from bookshops, or (with 50p post and packing) from Pluto, The Works, 105a Torriano Avenue, London NW5.

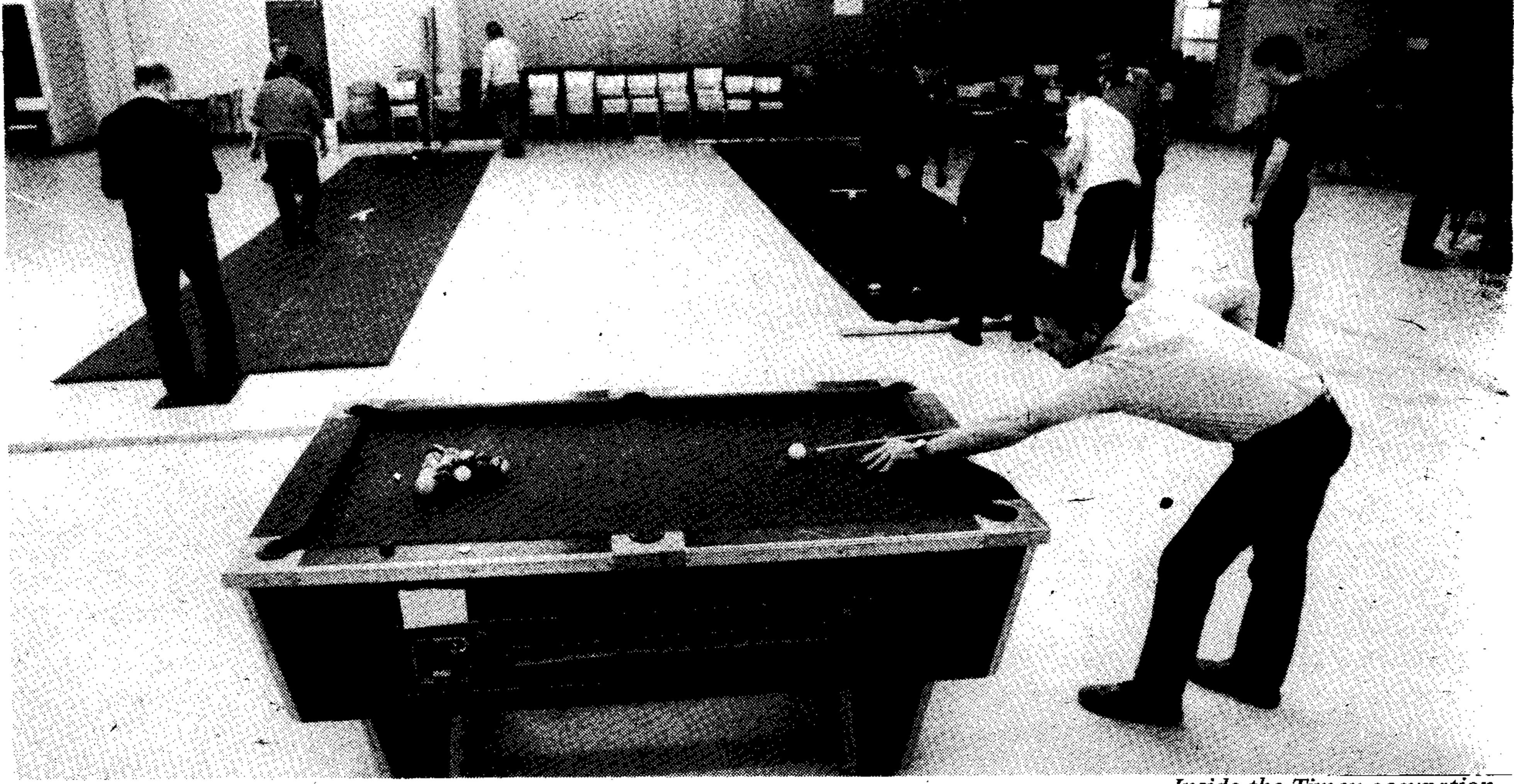
BOOKS

Critique of the Gotha Programme, 30p; Wages, price and profit, 40p; Communist Manifesto 60p; Capital volume 1 £3.95. Available c/o Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8: add money for postage.

by MARX



Support floods in for Timex occupation



Inside the Timex occupation

By Stan Crooke

THE sit-in at the Timex Milton factory in Dundee entered its third week with an ever increasing amount of support continuing to flood in.

The occupation began on Friday 8 April, in opposition to management's demand for 197 compulsory redundancies, after it had already achieved 1,700 voluntary redundancies at the two Timex plants in Dundee.

Management's reaction was at first to ignore it, not even bothering to suggest any negotiations. Then they switched to using Michael Edwardes style tactics, by threatening the 197 on whom compulsory redundancy had been served with immediate dismissal, and consequent loss of redundancy pay, unless they immediately accepted the redundancies.

The workers refused to be intimidated. Only 20 backed down and accepted the redundancies, whilst the remaining 177 continued in the occupation, in

which the number of workers involved grew from an initial 100 to over 500 by the end of the first week, representing some 90% of the workforce at the Milton plant.

Those in occupation remain in high spirits and their determination to fight on to victory was reflected in speeches to last week's Scottish TUC by the chair and vice-chair of the occupation committee.

"We shall remain in occupation until we win, and we are confident that, with the unity and support of the labour movement, we shall win", Gordon Samson, chairperson of the committee told the conference, whilst the committee vice-chair stated: "Fred Olsen (owner of Timex) has told us he doesn't accept threats and has taken on better people than us. But we don't make threats, we believe in action. And with your support we can win."

Official support for the occupation has been mushrooming. Both the AUEW, Engineering Section and AUEW-TASS (the main unions involved) support the occupation as does the STUC, whilst Michael Foot has also issued a statement of support.

There has also been a good response to date to appeals for financial support, with donations coming in from Dundee District Council, UCS, and local NALGO, COHSE and NUM branches amongst others.

At the same time though, the occupation faces a series of very real problems which need to be confronted and overcome if it is to win the victory it deserves.

The support presently being sought, and offered, is in reality extremely modest. The official occupation committee leaflet does no more than "appeal for

both moral and financial support".

The union bureaucracies are only too happy to respond to such limited demands, whilst dressing this up in outlandish rhetoric such as the GMBATU delegate to the STUC who urged "all delegates to campaign for meaningful support - letters, messages and money."

Particularly inadequate was the emergency resolution passed by the STUC itself. It simply called on the General Council to "request an immediate meeting with the Secretary of State for Scotland to deal with this urgent situation."

Equally damaging is the leadership's uncritical attitude towards the union bureaucracies. Instead of demanding that union officials translate their verbal and written support into action, the occupation committee seems prepared to take the bureaucrats' stock-in-trade left rhetoric at its face value.

A strongly nationalistic - and thereby self-defeating - undercurrent continues to run throughout the whole campaign. Great play is made of the "dictates of foreign multinationals" and the "unfair government support being received by the watch industry in France and the camera industry in Japan."

Such arguments inevitably lead in the direction of collaboration with British capitalists and their political representatives. Hence the importance which the STUC attached to seeking a meeting with the Tory Secretary of State for Scotland, the importance attached to the fact that "all political parties" support retention of the watch industry

'Our bottom line is no compulsory redundancies'

in Dundee, and Gordon Samson's at first sight peculiar statement that "we have been deserted in our struggle by the Tory government."

The pernicious influence of the politics of the Communist Party (CP) is only too clear. In fact, the whole campaign is steeped in the CP's politics: an absence of any appeals for active support in the form of solidarity strikes and occupations, a failure to take up the inadequacies of the union bureaucracies, long tirades against the evils of foreign multinationals, and a populist, cross-class type of campaign rather than a specifically labour movement one.

The very act of occupation was in itself an indication of workers' seriousness.

For the jobs to be saved, there must be a turn away from appeals to the Tories and uncritical acceptance of the extremely limited support forthcoming from the union bureaucracy. Instead active support must be argued for and won from both the Scottish labour movement and Timex workers abroad.

Donations

*For speakers contact G. Sampson, 32 Elgin Terrace, Dundee, (0382 818452).

*Send donations to J. Kydd (Treasurer), 81 Brownhill Road, Dundee.

Deputy convenor John Kydd spoke to Stan Crooke

THE campaign against management's cuts in the size of the workforce has been going on for several months. What lay behind the decision to launch an occupation at this stage?

Because the 90-day consultation period on the redundancies was exhausted, management had not moved at all on the question of compulsory redundancy. We felt that management was more likely to occupy the factory than us if we didn't make a move.

How was the occupation carried out? What are you demanding?

A fortnight ago a mass meeting here backed a motion giving approval to any extraordinary action required, such as occupation, to save jobs. Only five out of 700 voted against. After that the management was expecting an occupation, but we thought that they wouldn't expect one during the holiday break, which began last Friday. So at the shift change-over at 9.00 pm on the Friday about 100 of us met outside the main gates and just walked into the factory. Only security was there, so there was no problem.

We are arguing for the retention of the watch business. This is the last mass manufacturing unit of watches in Britain. Our bottom line is no compulsory redundancies.

Have you had any trouble from the police?

The police have paid us a visit and told us that as far as they are concerned, only if an injunction is served on us would they take any action. But we will resist any police action and there will be maximum resistance to anyone entering the plant other than the workforce.

There's obviously nothing you can do about it now, but don't you think you would be in a stronger position if the 1,700 voluntary redundancies had not gone through?

Yes, we would. But like you said there's nothing that can be done about that now. But we're also of the opinion that the 200 redundancies the management is now looking for won't be the end. If they get them, then it will be days rather than weeks before they declare another six or seven hundred surplus to requirements.

At the big rally held in Dundee in January in support of your campaign there was a speaker there from Besancon, expressing the support of the French Timex workers. How have such links with Timex workers abroad been developed?

We've sent a letter to Besancon informing them of the latest development but haven't had a reply yet. But the letter was only sent last week. We know from the last contact we had with them that they are just as concerned about developments there as we are about developments in Dundee.

The government grants and aid they are receiving are only for a three-year period. Olsen's philosophy can hit them just as much as us.

Future

He has made his philosophy quite clear to us: In a recession we should not be producing many products, and the recession will not end until 1990 or 1995. He also talks of a new high technology age in which people born before 1965 have no future and no chance of a job.

UCW pay vote

MANCHESTER. Amalgamated, one of the country's biggest UCW branches, has voted with only one against for rejection of the pay deal recommended by the union executive.

Other branches are also debating the deal over the period up to Wednesday May 4.

Manchester members were contemptuous of the offer of 5% on basic from April 1, and 1% extra from August 1. The deal also includes just one day's extra annual leave this year, continuation of the bonus scheme, no reduction of the working week, and an agreement with mail order firms that could cut lots of jobs.

Another item important in motivating rejection of the deal was a 12 month trial of Optical Character Recognition machines - which would completely automate sorting.

Firemen retreat

by Doug Mackay

THE FBU recall conference on Tuesday 26th defeated the recommendation of the Executive Committee for a series of one day strikes against the employers' intention to raise pension contributions by an average of £6 per week.

12 WORKERS - drivers and labourers - at Holden's Glass in Birmingham are now in their fifth week on strike.

The action started when two workers (including the TGWU steward) were made redundant and other workers told to cover their jobs.

The strikers are mounting a 24 hour picket and have got Holdens blacked by most of their suppliers including Pilkington's.

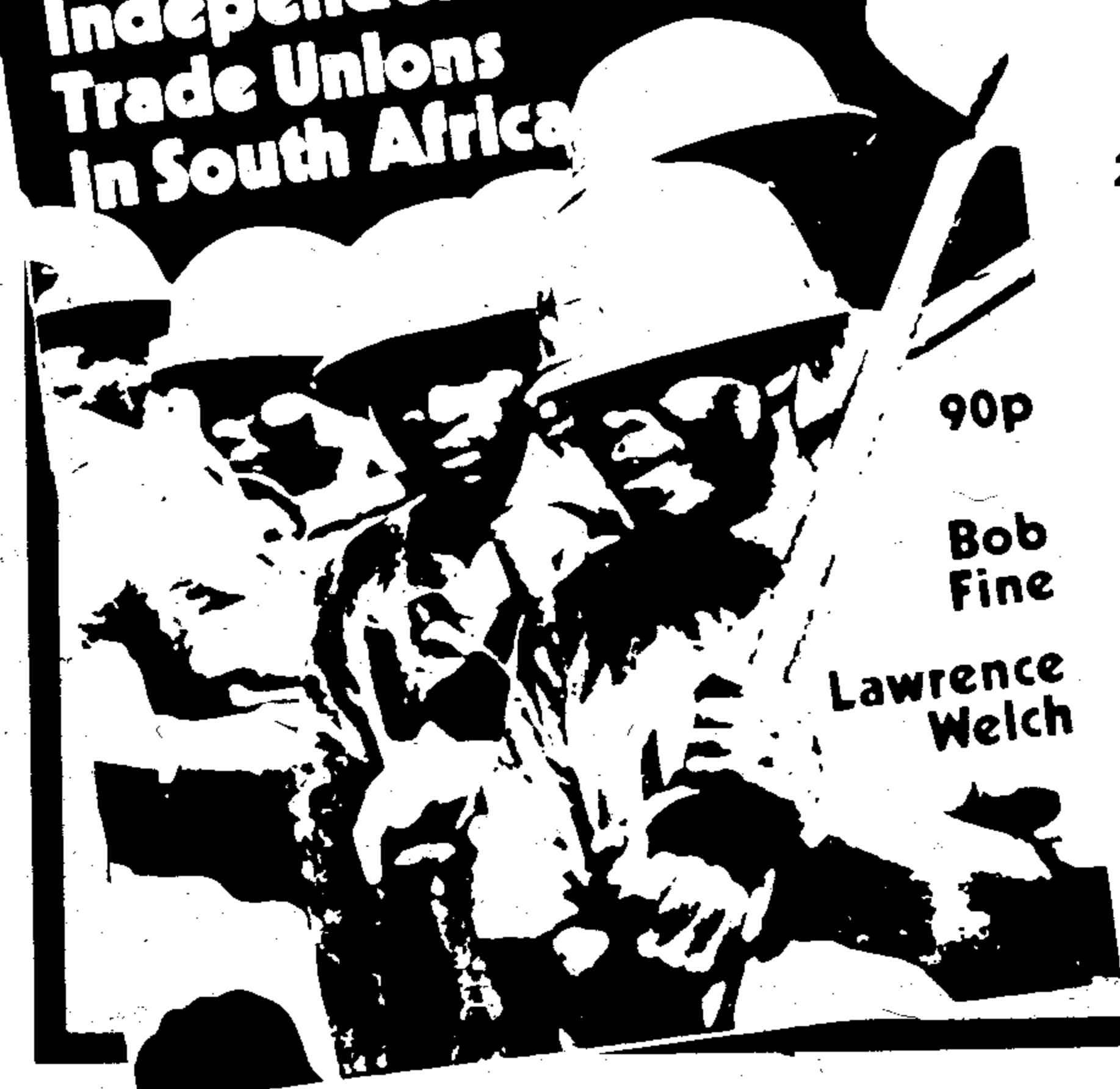
Although the TGWU made the strike official from the start, the union has not been publicising the dispute, and hasn't even supplied collection sheets or official placards.

Meanwhile scabs, including one TGWU member, FTAT members, and some recruited into the EETPU by the management (!) are still going in. Members of these unions should be raising the matter in their branches as a matter of urgency.

Send messages of support and donations to J. Johnson, 68 Jayshaw Ave. Great Barr, B/ham 43.

A QUESTION OF SOLIDARITY

Independent Trade Unions In South Africa



90p

Bob Fine

Lawrence Welch

Published by Socialist Forum for Southern Africa Solidarity. Available at 90p plus 20p post) c/o SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

For an independent inquiry into the death of Colin Roach! Roach Family Support Committee, 50 Rectory Rd, London N16



Socialist ORGANISER

A noisy cover-up

By Sean Matgamna

THE 'WORKERS Revolutionary Party' and its 'leading member responsible for writs and litigation', Ms Redgrave, have so far made no direct response to my open letter challenging them either to sue me for saying that there is reason to believe that they take Libyan gold, or agree to a workers' inquiry, or else shut up.

No new writs have been thrown at us. They have ignored the challenge. But they haven't shut up.

A page a day in Newline is still being given over to letters denouncing the BBC and... SO. Last Saturday there was also a 'reply' to the SO article on the WRP's anti-semitism, covering three pages - that is, one quarter of 'the first multi-colour daily paper with a four figure circulation' was given over to it.

It accused us of being 'state provocateurs' of 'setting up' the WRP leaders for assassination by agents of the Israeli state, and other idiocies. It made a great fuss over alleged inaccuracies in last week's SO report of their Conway Hall meeting - from which we were excluded, apart from an unrecognised but inexperienced reporter.

Even all the alleged inaccuracies they cite - if they are inaccuracies - would not seriously change the picture we gave SO readers of the political character of the meeting.

Mr Healy, Ms Redgrave - your failure to sue me over the Libyan money question, you who have repeatedly sued me for comparing you to the Moonies, is taking on the status of an admission of your guilt with every day that passes.

Do you get money from Libya? If you don't, and you still won't go to a labour movement inquiry, then why don't you sue me for saying that all the political and circumstantial evidence suggests that you do?

Help defend freedom of political comment in the labour movement press against the WRP's use of its money and of the capitalist legal system. A labour inquiry, not the courts!

Donations towards our defence costs to: Labour Movement Press Defence Fund Treasurer, Jonathan Hammond, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.



RICK MATTHEWS (IFL)

The Peoples March for Jobs is now on its way to Carlisle. The Yorkshire leg also starts this week from Keighley

No time to lose (from p.1)

ernment, we need a rank and file campaign.

Tony Benn has said that if a Labour government is elected, then the Greenham women - far from shutting down their Peace Camp in the confidence that the government will now do everything - should double their contingent at the US Air Force base. On the same principle, the approach of an election should be the signal for a fiercer, not a quieter, fight for left wing policies.

We need to turn not simply to the old, bureaucratized union officials, but to militants at branch level, and to stewards' committees, if we are to build a struggle in every workplace for a Labour vote.

We need to turn Labour wards outwards from their existing

circles of activists to organise and enlist the support of the unemployed, women and youth.

We need to convince organisations of black workers that there are forces in the Labour Party who will fight for their demands to be taken seriously and for the repeal of racist laws.

We urge those readers who have not already done so to move at once to raise resolutions in their organisations, affiliating to SLV; to organise campaign meetings locally, aimed at building rank and file support; and to argue for their Labour Parties to start election campaigning now.

To drift becalmed at this point in the fight is to risk the complete collapse of any broad left alternative to the right wing before and after the election.

Reject Heseltine smear!

CND needs more politics not less

MICHAEL Heseltine may have been brought into the Defence Ministry to counter the arguments of CND but the job seems to be completely beyond him. Support for CND continues to grow.

So he's now decided to resort to the age-old tactic - if you can't beat 'em, smear 'em.

According to Heseltine, CND is a conspiracy by left wingers in the Labour Party and the Communist Party to dupe thousands of honest but naive citizens into accepting the Moscow line on disarmament.

He's even published short biographies of leading CND members for use by Tory candidates in the next election to "prove" his point! CND, with nothing to hide, have already published detailed biographies of their leaders but some of the mud being thrown by the Tories is slowly beginning to stick.

Bruce Kent is now coming under increasing pressure within the Catholic church to give up his job as leader of CND because the campaign is supposedly becoming "too political" to have a religious leader.

On the contrary, the problem with CND is that it isn't political enough. By posing the question of disarmament as a moral rather than a political issue, CND ends up trying to pressure the Tory government by force of argument instead of turning to the labour movement as its natural ally in the fight for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Let's show Heseltine that we reject his smears against CND. Let's show the Tories that

hundreds of thousands of people are opposed to Trident, Cruise and the nuclear arsenal being built up by the governments of America and Britain.

All out on May 7 for the march and festival in Brockwell Park!

YS for YCND (YCND activists in the Labour Party Young

YOUTH CND Secretary Annajoy David spoke to Jane Ashworth about the YCND "Rock the Bomb" festival on May 7.

The phones are going all the time and the 1,200 new members who joined YCND in March look like being followed by another 1,200 this month.

The Festival is obviously a big draw and CND's adverts in the national press have been drawing in new people. 30% of the returns from the advert in the Mirror were under 21.

We haven't got any definite plans for after May 7, because this National Committee finishes at our Conference (July 2/3 in Manchester). But we are assuming that the General Election is going to be in June, and we're preparing for it.

We have a responsibility to inform first time voters of the issues involved - to link up the social issues with military expenditure.

Also we've organised a couple of conferences which the incoming National Committee will have to ratify - one is for international youth and the other is for young trade unionists.



MAY 7

Britain out of Ireland; self-determination for the Irish people. Demonstration sponsored by Labour Committee on Ireland and others, Saturday May 7, 1pm from Hyde Park (Speakers' Corner).