

Socialist ORGANISER

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No. 170 March 15 1984 25p Claimants and strikers 10p

Support the pickets who

DEFY THE TORY LAWS!

By Eric Heffer MP

THE miners should be given every possible support. They are defending not only their jobs and their industry, but in a sense they are defending the entire working class trade union movement, because they have the power and the strength to do it.

By their efforts they are also helping to combat the government's policies against trade unions and their industrial relations legislation. The entire movement has to give them every possible backing.

It is very interesting how much the press recognises this and have for example, encouraged miners' wives to come out against them going on strike and so on.

I think this is a crunch situation as far as the miners are concerned. If the miners don't come out of this successfully it could be disastrous not only for their future but for the entire trade union movement.

The miners have been very generous to the Labour Party over the years. Their union has been one of the staunchest supporters of the Labour Party.

How practically can we help the miners? Well we shouldn't do anything without the miners themselves wanting us to do it.

But if the miners want us to give them facilities in areas, whether it is the use of our rooms, helping in the propaganda, whatever it is we ought to be prepared to give it.

If the miners come up against the anti-union legislation, although the government may not be too happy to push their legislation against the miners, I would hope that the miners would respond in a totally positive way.

I was only sorry to see the divisions in the movement in the past. The movement has learnt something. There were some who took the view that we ought not to break Tory legislation, or at the very least were half-hearted about it.



Pickets in Yorkshire

I think that has to some extent changed because of government policy over GCHQ.

So I hope not only the miners will respond positively but the whole movement have got to do everything possible. That means if the miners call upon other unions to come up with positive action, then they should be prepared to do it.

Eric Heffer was talking to John Bloxam

Solidarity can beat MacGregor

AS WE go to press, Coal Board boss Ian MacGregor has obtained a High Court injunction against the National Union of Mineworkers to stop flying pickets.

But flying pickets are moving across the country with great success. Some three-quarters of the country's miners are estimated to be out - called out on strike, or picketed out.

The miners are clearly moving towards a national strike against the threat of pit closures and 21,000 job cuts over the next year.

The National Union of Railwaymen executive has said that railworkers should refuse to cross miners' picket lines, and the TGWU has also called on members not to allow movement of coal.

TUC: break links with the government! Fight the Tories now!

THE TUC General Council meets on Monday 19th to decide on its attitude to 'tri-partite bodies' - joint committees with the bosses and the Tories.

It looks as if their angry words after the GCHQ affair will end in a whimper rather than a bang.

The TUC has decided to boycott the National Economic Development Council, but the TUC employment committee on March 12 recommended staying in the conciliation service ACAS and the Manpower Services Commission.

Several unions are still attending the industry sub-groups of the NEDC, though the GMBU and others, are boycotting them.

And the TUC is not even discussing withdrawal from its talks with the government over new anti-union laws.

Plenty of union leaders have all sorts of other links with the capitalist class - lucrative jobs on the side.

For example, according to the latest reference books, Geoffrey Drain (ex-NALGO) is a director of the Bank of England. Clive Jenkins of ASTMS is a member of the National Research Development Corporation and the British Overseas Trade Board. Gavin Laird of the AUEW is on the BNOG Board, as well as the Industrial Development Advisory Board.

Roy Grantham of APEX is a director of Henley Management College.

The trade unions need to fight the Tories, not plead with them. And you can't fight the fundamentals of Tory policy seriously if you're chatting with them about the details the next day.

JOHN HARRIS

ORGANISE FOR A GENERAL STRIKE!

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Organise for a general strike

TO WIN, the miners need solidarity.

First, solidarity in the coalfields — created by flying pickets making sure that every pit stops.

Second, solidarity from other workers. There are still big coal stocks. They must be tied up.

Rail workers and road haulage drivers must refuse to handle coal. Other workers must join the miners in pickets at depots and at power stations.

All such action breaks the Tory anti-union laws. And thus it makes this not just an industrial battle, but a political confrontation between the trade unions and the government.

During the NGA Warrington dispute Socialist Organiser called for a one-day general strike as a first step towards indefinite general strike action. Over GCHQ, again, we called for a one-day general strike, and in fact the TUC did give some feeble signals for workers across the country to strike for half a day on February 28.

The slowly reviving confidence of the labour movement, on the one hand, and the increased aggressiveness of the bosses and the Tories, on the other, make the general strike weapon more and more relevant. Not just one-day actions to rally our strength, but all-out action.

Rip up anti-union laws

We need to start thinking about it and discussing it.

A general strike could stop MacGregor's pit closures plan and rip up the anti-union laws.

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

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

If the Tories retain power after a general strike, they will quickly counter-attack. So indeed would a Labour government led by the present Kinnock-Hattersley team. But that is the round after this one. The task now is to mobilise the full forces of the labour movement to win this round — to stop the pit closures, to defeat the anti-union laws and the Tory government. Socialists must start organising for a general strike.

Gear up for a fight

1. We must spread the idea and explain the power of workers' unity.

2. We must press the demand for the leaders of the labour movement — TUC, Labour MPs, Labour councils — to break collaboration with the Tories and prepare a fightback. The TUC should organise for a general strike.

3. A general strike will be won through the network of workers' committees and organisations developed in struggle — shop stewards' committees, combine committees, trades councils, Labour Parties.

We must fight to gear these bodies to the urgency of preparing for a head-on clash with the Tories, to strengthen the links between them, and to equip them with a fighting political perspective against the Tories — the perspective of a workers' government, a government based on and accountable to the workers' movement, taking decisive measures against capitalist power and privilege.

London cops crack down

By Paul Canning
LONDON'S police are cracking down on gay men. That's the conclusion drawn from a number of incidents over the last few months. There has been "pretty police" entrapment in Earls Court, Notting Hill Gate and Charing Cross: public exposure in the local press — even of the innocent — in Richmond: raids of 25 pubs on pubs "about infringements of licensing laws" and taking names and addresses in King's Cross and this latest incident in Central London.

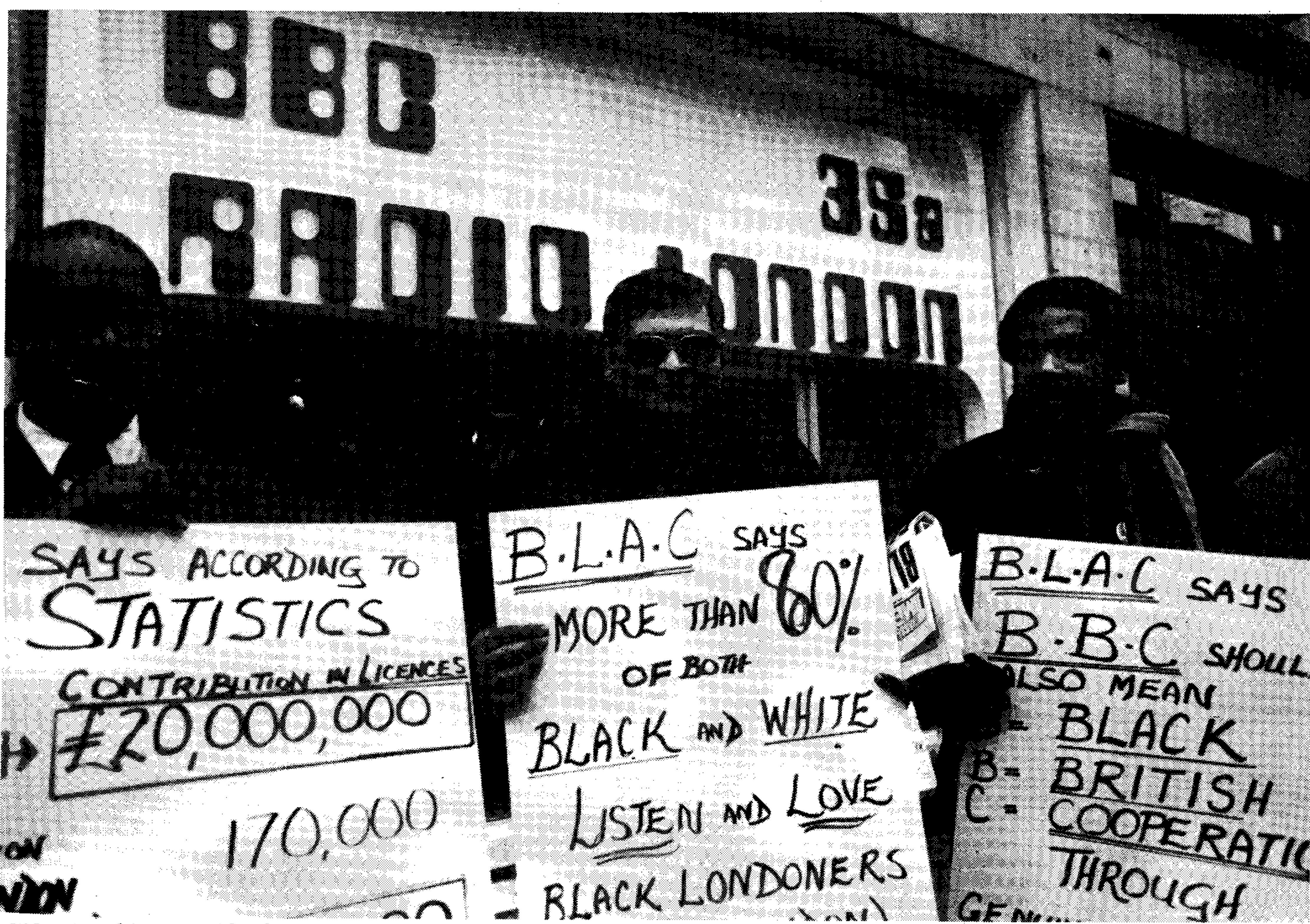
Jimmy Christmas was arrested outside the Golden Lion pub for "misleading behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace": this was kissing his lover goodbye in the street.

What then followed will be

familiar to many gay men. He was bundled into a police van, knocking him out. He was then kicked on the back (he suffers from a creeping disability of the spine), had his earrings pulled out and his trousers ripped off. The police denied him access to his blood testing equipment and insulin — he is diabetic.

Comments from the police ranged from "Okay — you want to have your fucking insulin; we will let you have it up your arse" to much worse.

After 24 hours of this he was released. Unlike many quite legitimately scared gay men, Jimmy is fighting back. Along with the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights he is calling for a mass picket of Bow Street Magistrates Court on Thursday March 22 at 2.00pm.



Vidya Anand (centre) with other campaigners

Black voices on radio

Vidya Anand is the Chair of the Ethnic Minority Working Party of the Executive Committee of the Greater London Labour Party and Black Londoners Action Committee. He spoke to Socialist Organiser about the 'Black Londoners' campaign.

BLACK LONDONERS is suffering along with Radio London and other local and community programmes right across the board. We know this.

But Black Londoners — over fifteen percent of London's population — look at the programme of Alex Pascall's with a special sense of pride. They have been able to identify and relate to it in a very special way.

In a sense Black Londoners' consciousness and involvement in the media has grown with this programme which has been kept alive largely because of support — material, moral and otherwise — from the Black communities in the Greater London area.

Starved of resources of very elementary nature, it has grown from strength to strength over the years. It has become a sort of bridge between the Black community and the host community. It has also helped enormously in inculcating a sense of pride in the minds of Black people who were born here about their culture and about their parents' culture.

I think it is important that comrades on the Left of the political spectrum understand and respond to the problems of Black Londoners, and not wait for the bandwagon to roll on before jumping on to it. Because if we fail them, then it is likely that people whom I call merchants of hate will take over.

Black Londoners has shown that Black culture has a relevance not only to the Black Londoners but also to our community as a whole, which enjoys and listens to Alex Pascall's programme. We have had countless telephone calls and offers of help from ordinary men and women from the host community in the Greater London area.

A successful meeting was

'Black Londoners', a BBC Radio London current affairs programme, began in 1974. Up to 1980 the bulk of the cost of running the programme was met by the Commission for Racial Equality.

The BBC's contribution was air time and a contribution towards the salary of the presenter, Alex Pascall.

Between 1974 and 1978 the BBC paid Alex Pascall £13 a week, between 1978 and 1980, £25. It was not until 1981 that he began to receive the agreed union rates.

By 1983 the BBC employed five people working on the programme, but now the team has been cut to three.

A similar programme in the BBC — half an hour daily — would normally have ten.

The present cutbacks came when the BBC Board of Governors imposed a cut of £30,000 on Radio London as a penalty for the station's 'over-spending'.

The demands of the 'Black Londoners' Action Committee include:

*A new structure which makes it expressly an autonomous part of the BBC,

*A producer, researcher and secretary for the programme, with knowledge and experience of the Black communities.

*A separate budget for the autonomous operation of 'Black Londoners' programme of BBC Radio London.

held in the House of Commons on February 7, 1984. The National Officer of the National Union of Journalists, John Foster, expressed his union's full support, and reported that the NUJ had reported the BBC to the Commission for Racial Equality over its treatment of its Black employees.

MPs who came to the meeting to lend their support despite a Kinnock rally at the same time, included Jeremy Corbyn, Tony Banks, Reg Freeson, Chris Smith, Ernie Roberts, Dennis Skinner, Roy Hattersley, Merlyn Rees and Harry Cohen. Richard Balfe, Member of the European Parliament, addressed the meeting.

During the AGM of the Greater London Labour Party, a fringe meeting was organised and petitions were circulated to be signed by the rank and file members of the Labour Party

expressing their solidarity with the fight to stop the cuts.

But so far the BBC seems to think it is living in a period of pre-war genteel imperialism.

We are hoping that our friends in the House of Commons will keep pressure on the government by way of putting down an early day motion if necessary while the campaign gathers momentum. More public meetings and petitions

are in the offing.

We need support from all the comrades — material, moral and practical help on the picket lines if and when we mount them again, to highlight the despicable plight of the black people working for the BBC and the BBC's apparent refusal to listen to very basic needs of Black Londoners from whom it collects annually over £20 million in licence fees.

Gay/lesbian candidate for Carmarthen?

THE Labour Campaign for Gay Rights is disgusted at the way in which the MP for Carmarthen, Dr. Roger Thomas has been treated by both the press and his Constituency Labour Party.

As socialists we feel that the whole issue has been treated with a distinct lack of comradeship.

As gay socialists we believe that any offence which has no "heterosexual" equivalent should not only be completely discounted, but that a subsequent campaign should be launched to show the public the true nature of this repressive legislation.

There is no dignity in a local party deserting its MP, and treating the whole affair with, to quote Nye Bevan, "a conspiracy of silence."

Abolition

While feeling sensitive to the wishes of Dr Thomas, we hope that the circumstances surrounding the case are not forgotten during the by-election campaign (to assume that the opposition would allow it is politically naive) but that instead the Labour Party both nationally and locally with present the issue of lesbian and gay rights positively, and actively campaign for the abolition of such unjust laws.

They might even go so far as to adopt an out gay/lesbian candidate.

Prejudice

It is no good for the Labour leadership to talk of "support" for long standing MPs. It must take its fair share of the blame for failing to confront the prejudice and bigotry which lie behind the importuning law and for completely ignoring the whole gay issue surrounding the Thomas case.

The Labour Party nationally and locally must realise in the aftermath of Bermondsey that avoiding the subject leaves them at best with egg on their faces, and at worst with a potential disaster in the sidelines.

To talk of anyone resigning "with dignity" is purely



Labour Campaign for Gay Rights

To join or affiliate write to Chris Richardson, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DS

Eric Heffer told Socialist Organiser:

Liverpool City Council has, over a period of time, been dominated by a coalition of Liberals and Conservatives.

They left the incoming Labour council in May 1983 with a very serious problem.

There had been a rundown of the services, a failure to increase rates when they could have been increased.

When the previous Labour government were giving pretty good levels of Rate Support

Heffer backs Liverpool fight

Grant, instead of using that as the basis to develop services, the Tories and Liberals used it to keep rates down.

So when Labour finally took control, after years of Tory cuts in Rate Support Grant, they found an almost impossible situation.

Although Liverpool may not levy such high rates as happens in other parts of the

country, the fact is, if you take the overall situation in Liverpool, it is not acceptable to increase rates by 60% - which is what they would have to do just in order to stand still.

So the council are absolutely right to say that they are not going to levy a high rate, that they are not going to throw 5,000 workers on the dole, that they are not going to put the burdens of

this government policy onto the shoulders of working people, but that they are going to make a stand.

They are quite right to make a stand. They are quite right to make a fight of it. And they need the full support of the movement.

I haven't heard or seen an alternative budget to the one being prepared by the Council leaders. Whether one will be

revealed to the Liverpool leaders when they meet Labour's front bench spokesperson John Cunningham I don't know.

I hope Neil Kinnock will understand the situation. I think it is important that he has further concrete evidence from the Liverpool MPs about the situation and I hope that arising out of that understanding, there will be the very least be no attacks made on

Liverpool council, and even some positive developments.

The rest of the movement could let the National Executive and the Parliamentary leadership know what they feel about this. Resolutions from Labour Party and trade union branches wouldn't be a bad idea. The more response and support there is, the better.

See page 10: report from Liverpool, and other articles on the local government cuts fight.

Support the miners!

Dewi Lewis reports from South Wales.

PICKETS from Mardy and Trelaw's pits turned away the day shift at Bedwas colliery in Gwent on Tuesday. On Sunday, the Bedwas lodge had voted to work normally with only 14 votes for strike action.

Seventeen other pits in South Wales voted not to strike at the weekend, but by Tuesday, only Bedwas and Cynheide colliery in West Glamorgan were in doubt.

Coal was still being raised at Cynheide after fifty men on the day shift crossed picket lines. But the afternoon shift was picketed out.

After these successful pickets in the morning, the Bedwas Lodge held a meeting of all three shifts in the afternoon. One hour of furious arguments later, the Lodge Secretary walked out of the meeting in disgust at the strike-breaking attitude of the majority and joined the pickets outside.

He was followed by about 50 men who declared they would go on strike regardless of the way the vote went.

Eventually the meeting broke up and agreed not to work until a further meeting on Wednesday.

The pit will be picketed by the Bedwas strikers to make sure no-one goes in on the day shift.

Anger at the scabbing role the media has played in this dispute was clear as newsmen and photographers were warned off the picket lines.

Eric Price, Mardy Lodge Secretary told Socialist Organiser:

"If the rest of the Bedwas men don't come out, and defy the strike call from the area executive, we will picket them out."

"As soon as it's completely stopped down here we're off to the other areas. As far as we're concerned we'll picket out Nottinghamshire."

The strike will bite quickly in Wales with less than seven weeks supplies at one power station.

The overtime ban was causing big problems for the Coal Board, with 35,000 tonnes - a quarter of normal weekly production - being lifted from stocks every week to supplement falling production.

The NUR and the National Union of Seamen have pledged their full support in stopping the movement of coal stocks.

The speed at which the stragglers come into line in

South Wales so the pickets can be sent to Nottinghamshire is now crucial.

Ellen Taylor reports from South Yorkshire.

JUST about every pit in South Yorkshire was already out by the time the official call for action came. Each had their own complaints.

Manvers was working to rule over tea break times and management weren't too happy about this and forced a confrontation, leading to the men taking strike action and the lock-out of adjoining pits.

Yorkshire Main miners were being asked to hand pick a usually machined coalface, cordoned off by symbolic white lines. One miner said the last time he'd seen white lines was in the days of private mines.

It was significant that the only pit not already out, Corton Wood, was promptly told by the NCB that they would be "down the lane" in six weeks' time.

Already the redundancy offers are rolling in. Miners at Bilthorpe have received individual letters offering pay-offs of £1,000 per year worked. But Yorkshire miners are totally solid. Only token pickets are necessary and flying pickets are active in other areas.

Even the local chippies are supporting them, with fish and chips at half-price.

Stan Crooke reports from Scotland.

IN the run-up to the growing miners' strike, the media gave the impression of widespread opposition in the twelve Scottish pits to the strike call, by focusing attention on two pits in particular.

At Polkemmet a majority of the miners voted in a pit-head ballot on the Friday on which the strike began, against going on strike, as did a majority of the craftsmen.

At Bilston Glen, the biggest colliery in Scotland, scuffles broke out at a meeting on the Saturday when the pit's NUM delegate issued instructions for the strike in the absence of taking a vote on the question.

The impression of widespread opposition was strengthened by claims from the NCB to the effect that ten of the twelve mines

would be working normally, despite the strike call, and that 50% of the 14,000 Scottish miners were opposed to strike action.

But the claim was clearly nonsense: even before the strike began, only eight Scottish pits were working normally. (Polmaise and Seafield were on strike, and miners at Frances and Bogside were laid off).

By Monday evening, picketing at Barony and Killoch had brought these pits to a standstill. 70 miners crossed the picket lines at Bilston Glen to work. 70 miners working in the whole Scottish coalfield is a far cry from the mass revolt against the union predicted by the media and NCB.

In Staffordshire, Wolstanton NUM president John Lockett said (speaking in a personal capacity):

"The Midlands leadership has been fudging; calling for a strike but hoping miners will vote against it. At the Woolstanton Colliery, miners were laid off on Monday and Tuesday because repair work had not been done due to the overtime ban."

"There seems little doubt that we will be out at the end of the week, we're just waiting for the pickets to arrive and we'll be out. It's just a pity we're not getting any leadership at local level"

Tony Dale moved this resolution at the National Organisation of Labour Students National Committee.

MINERS are now moving towards a national strike. For Labour students this strike must be an important priority

NOLS calls on NUS and Labour Clubs to build support amongst students for the miners' fight. NOLS must fight to open students unions and NUS facilities e.g. printing, etc., to the miners.

NOLS must build financial support for the strike by fighting for collections in students unions and for students unions to donate money to the strike fund.

NOLS must also campaign for active support by students on the picket lines.

(Passed, three for; none against; ten abstentions).



Pickets in Yorkshire

AT LAST it was time for the little people to hit back.

After years of witch-hunts, degradation and muck-raking, the press has finally been called to account for its actions. It has been branded as fit for the gutter and attacked for dragging names through the mud.

It isn't the Sun that is the centre of attention and it wasn't Scargill or Benn dishing it out.

The paper in the dock was the Sunday Times and the poor, maligned innocents who needed protection were none other than Dennis Thatcher and son Mark.

The relationship between father and son is a close one. They like to do things together. Like share bank accounts.

All fathers and sons like their privacy. Time to spend

together without nosy newspapers poking their noses in where they are not wanted.

The rest of the world's press had its priorities right. It was quite rightly investigating major international scandals - like what Botham keeps in his kit bag, or what Arthur Scargill will do to miners who try to go to work.

But two Sunday Times reporters set out to hound this innocent family. The paper published details of a Thatcher bank account.

Campaign is hardly the word for it. It is part of the most deferential press investigation ever, to ask most politely - and if she does not consider it too much trouble - whether Mrs Thatcher might possibly see her way to

Daily Mail
EXPRESS
Press FINANCIAL TIMES **Gang**
The Daily Telegraph
SUN

by Patrick Spilling

explaining exactly what the relationship is between her backing Britain and her immediate family backing something more immediately marketable, like mountains of cash.

These reports in the Sunday Times, usually one of Mrs Thatcher's most obedient poodles, when added to the regular reports in the Observer, amount in the eyes of some

observers to a campaign of vilification against the Prime Minister's family.

It was the News of the World - yes, the News of the World - which complained bitterly about the underhand methods used by the Sunday Times. The News of the World said the investigation revealed more about the poor standards of the Sunday Times

than a scandal about the Thatchers.

The only underhand methods admitted by the Sunday Times was that reporters filled in a phoney name when paying in money to the Dennis and Mark account.

(That's right. Paid money in. Is there a queue to have your account investigated by the Sunday Times?)

The gentle investigation continues. Most of the Tory papers (excepting, much to its own embarrassment the Sunday Times) tut-tut and deplore the loss of journalistic ethics while the Thatcher family remains blissfully immune from effective questioning.

Mrs Thatcher's office at No. 10 is said to be satisfied that it

has turned attention away from the relationship between the Prime Minister and her family fortune, towards the question of press ethics.

Not that this inhibits the press from its familiar tirade against the miners, complete with angry wives, allegations of intimidation and cameras peering further up the nose of Scargill than the Sunday Times has ventured into the financial affairs of the Thatchers.

The Sunday Times should stick to this good, clean whole some fun, and leave the Thatcher alone. Next time something smells a little fishy about the PM's family financial affairs, the Sunday Times should do what any decent Tory journalist would do - make an excuse and leave.

MSC clampdown

If they learn, close it down!

By Jane Ashworth

'B1' Youth Training Schemes, the ones which are based in the community or in a workshop, are being cut back or closed.

Last month, Tom King announced that community projects are to be cut and the Manpower Services Commission claim that local breakdowns of the cuts are still under negotiation.

But 'B1s' are being closed now. Metro Action Central in Doncaster will have all their funds stopped from April, even though some 'trainees' only started there in January.

Two schemes in Birmingham are threatened with closure (the two schemes where the YTS Action Group is most involved) and so is Crossover in Newham, East London.

A host of other schemes across the country face the chop, too.

B1 schemes are more expensive than the employer-led mode A schemes. They also tend to provide places for youth who have been rejected from mode A schemes — black youth, ex-offenders or youth with special problems, perhaps learning difficulties.

Last week most of the 15 trainees from Crossover lobbied the London Area Manpower Board, demanding their scheme be left alone.

Review

On this scheme the youth learn silk-screen printing and dress design among other things. On Metro Action Central some trainees are helping to build a new centre for the local Society for the Deaf.

Next month most schemes come up for review. Schemes run by the private training agencies, which are grossly undersubscribed, are being allowed to expand, while mode B1 schemes, some of which have long waiting lists, are to be closed.

The Area Manpower Boards have few rights. Accepting or rejecting schemes is one of them. But not for much longer. From next month this power will lie in the hands of the central Manpower Services Commission itself.

Restricting mode B1 schemes, encouraging the private training agencies,

restricting even more the Area Manpower Boards and introducing compulsion mark a new phase in YTS.

Now it is becoming just what the government actually wants, a scheme to encourage cowboy firms and to force youth to accept low paid work in substandard conditions.

Students march for grants

By Richard Bayley

LAST Saturday's National Union of Students demonstration which was coordinated to tie in with the Greater London Council's campaign to stay in existence, was quite a success.

Thousands of students were on the demonstration, with support from right across the spectrum of higher and further education.

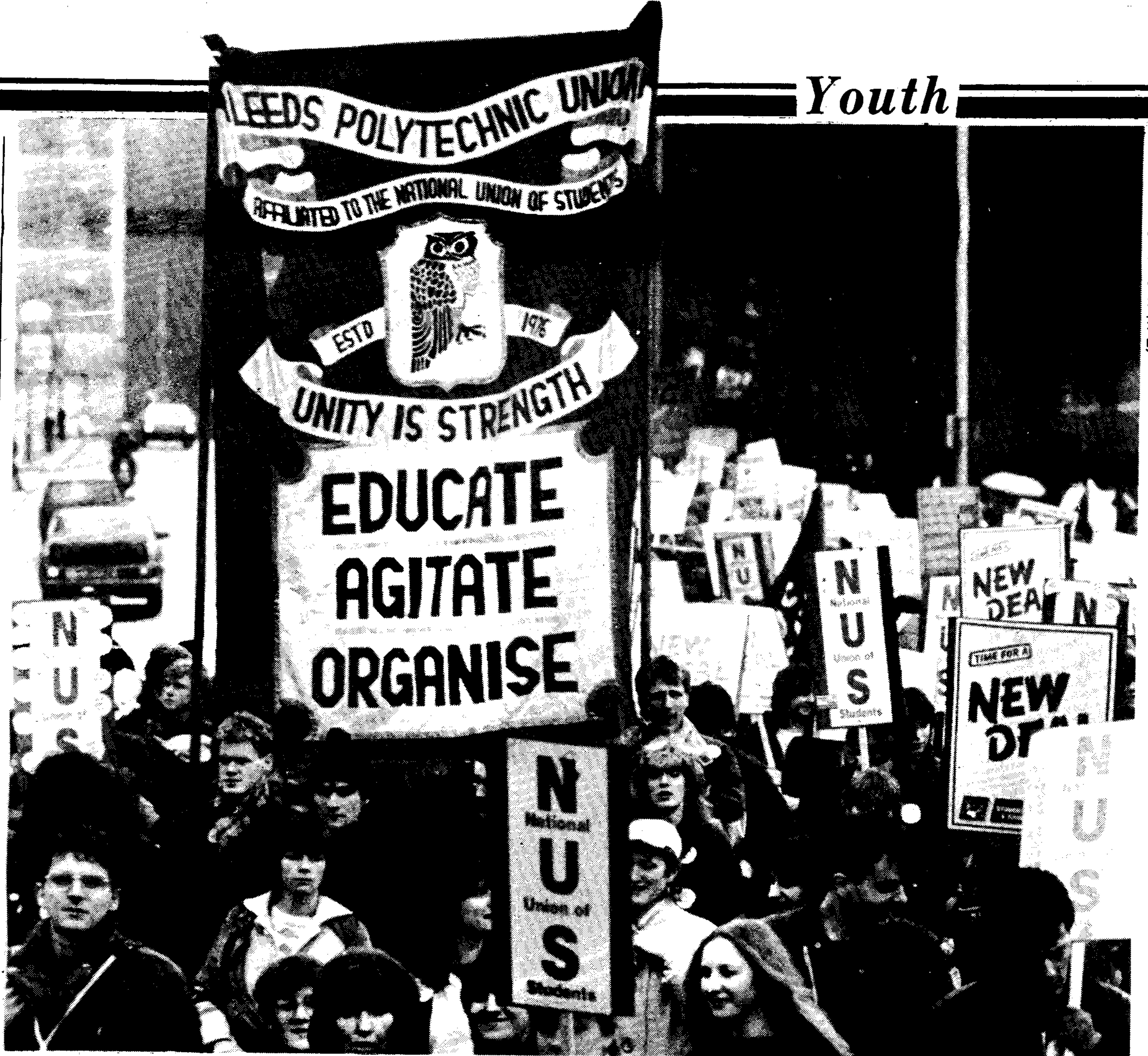
The biggest contingents were from colleges hardest hit by the cuts or whose student unions are most under threat from their administrations.

Warwick University brought 600 students and Bradford University also had a large contingent.

The GLC's campaign, however, did not get across very well — the student issues and the campaign to preserve local democracy were not linked properly.

As more and more youth — especially in the FE sector, who are hit hardest by local government cuts — look for real answers to the problems of youth education and unemployment, the traditional NUS "day out" appears as being elitist (dominated by universities) and increasingly ineffective.

Socialist Students in NOLS conference Saturday March 17, starting 10.30am at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology.



Thousands of students demonstrated for higher grants

STOP THIS CONSCRIPTION!

By Jim Denham

"THE Manpower Services Commission, the careers service and the Department of Health and Social Security are using bully-boy tactics to bludgeon people into joining the YTS. It is against all morality and principles of the scheme."

Those are the words of Mr Jeff Wedgewood, quoted in last Thursday's Birmingham Evening Mail. Believe it or not, Mr Wedgewood is the director of a YTS private training agency, Midland Training and Recruitment Services, whose dubious activities (sending out mail shot letters to students studying under the 15 and 21 hour rules) we recently exposed in Socialist Organiser.

Whatever Wedgewood's motives for speaking out, what he says is undoubtedly true. YTS is still officially described as "voluntary" (and the TUC

only agreed to back the scheme in the first place on condition that it was). But for some time it has been effectively compulsory for most unemployed school leavers.

And all the signs are that the elements of compulsion are being rapidly tightened up.

Careers Officers have been instructed to send reports on youth who refuse a YTS scheme (or leave one before completion) to the DHSS, who can then cut a benefit by 40% — taking it to below £10 per week.

The DHSS justify this on the grounds that YTS has been designated "approved training", and so the scheme's places are treated as normal job offers and benefit can be cut if a "reasonable" offer is refused.

But NALGO members in the careers service are resisting these developments: in London, Sheffield and Birmingham, NALGO have now voted to refuse to report "refusers".

In Birmingham, NALGO balloted all members in the careers service and achieved a majority for the following policy.

(A) refuse to complete any documentation or reveal by any other means information in respect of young people refusing to take part in the YTS which may be used by the Department of Employment to withhold or reduce the state benefits those young people would normally receive.

(B) refuse to enter into negotiations with unemployment benefit office staff on the circumstances of young people leaving a Youth Training Scheme.

(C) refer ex-YTS trainees to local welfare rights agencies with a view to making an appeal against any reduction in benefit that may have been imposed."

Decide

Careers officer and NALGO activist Barry Johnson explained how most workers in the careers service felt about the issue: "It should be up to a youngster to decide whether to join the scheme — not up to the careers service or the

DHSS. We strongly object to being used as grasses. We won't spy on those who come to us for help."

The campaign against compulsion on YTS is presently organising activity around the country, centred upon a series of lobbies on March 21 and April 5.

A major part of this campaign must be to contact local NALGO branches, and to press them to adopt a policy of non-cooperation, along the lines of the Birmingham resolution.

DAY OF ACTION

By Mark Osborn

Harrogate is not exactly a hot-bed of labour movement direct action. But with 300 of our 16 and 17 year old school leavers passing along the YTS conveyor belt, some campaigning was obviously needed.

The local college staged events on the NUS National YTS Day of Action, but by all accounts it was a flop.

When the issue of compulsion on YTS was first raised, a few months back, Harrogate YS stepped into the gap the students union had left. We're pretty good at spending money but not very good at raising it so our first call in the local campaign was Harrogate Labour Party's General Committee.

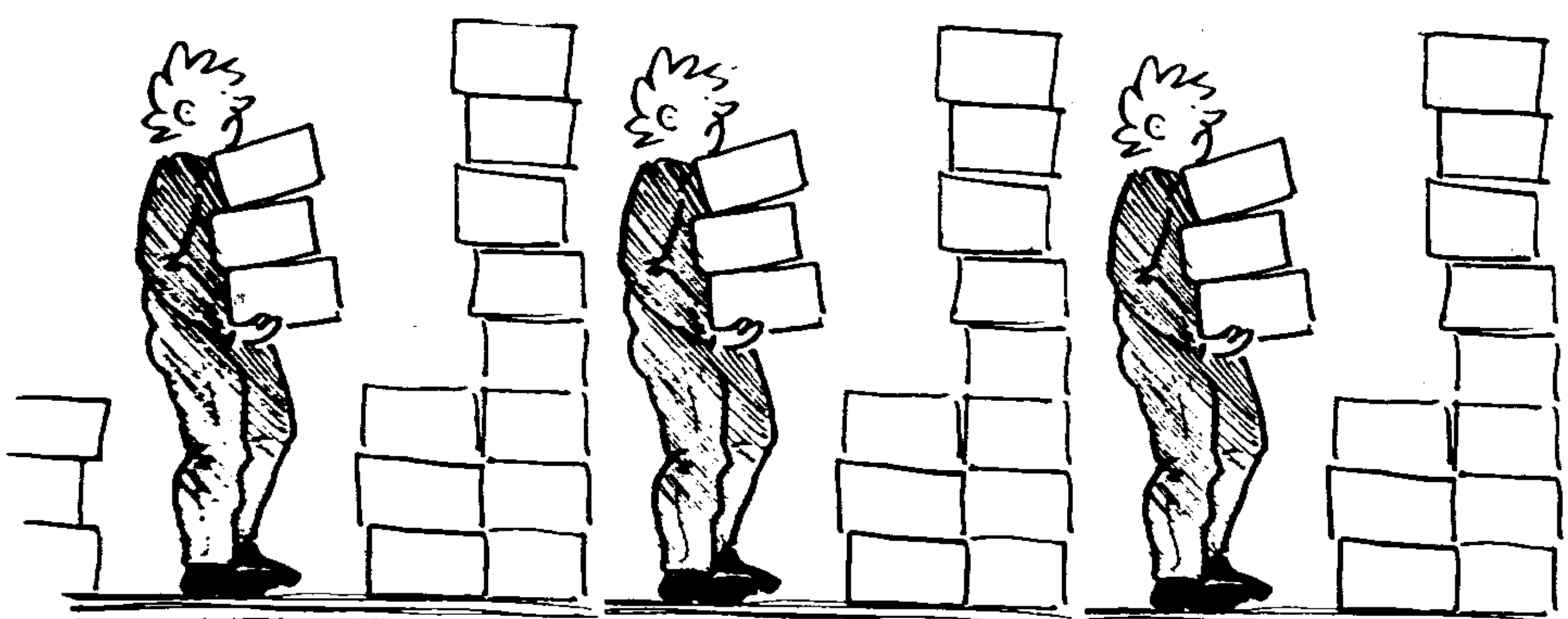
We touched them for some cash and then asked a local County Councillor who had already established a good record at the Trades Council if he would speak at a public meeting.

The meeting, entitled 'Youth Exploitation has got to Stop', is a week after our first action which will be a picket of Harrogate Job Centre.

Leaflets, posters and a school bulletin are being produced. The school bulletin will come out regularly with future issues on education cuts and war.

Local trade unionists and Labour Party members are being invited to the events. We aim to have a YS Action Group based on the local labour movement and YTS youth set up in the next few weeks.

Spot the Difference



£25 "Training on YTS" £41.99 "Lowering Expectations on YWS"

£61.70 "Working"

From 'Youth Action'

Fightback conference

Women against the cuts

Gerry Byrne of the Women's Fightback editorial board spoke to Socialist Organiser about the conference on women and local government cuts planned by Women's Fightback for June 23.

Why call it now?

The situation is urgent. The government wants to push through both the rate-capping and abolition Bills this session. Already there are lots of moves to organise against them — but none addressed specifically to rank and file women.

We must aim firstly, to attempt to make it too costly for the Tories to push ahead with the Bills; secondly, if they are passed, to block their implementation by industrial action backed by mass support in the community.

Why a women's conference?

It's become almost a truism to say that women will be worst affected — by almost any measure this government pursues! But local services do primarily affect women.

The vast majority of council workers are women, especially in the lower clerical grades and in low-paid service jobs. It's these jobs that will be cut back most.

And of course in education the majority of teachers, especially on the bottom grade, and ancillary staff, are women. So women have an interest as workers and trade unionists in pushing their unions to put up a real fight.

And women who don't work in local government rely heavily on council services to enable them to get out to paid work and gain some modicum of financial independence.

When nurseries or facilities for the elderly are cut back, it is women who are expected to give up their jobs and perform those same jobs for free.

The majority of single parents and elderly people are women.

Also, tenants associations and other grass roots community organisations are often where women are politically active — rather than higher up the movement.

The government's attack is a political one, part of its overall drive to reassert reactionary values. The abolition of the metropolitan counties will actually cost money, but it's worth it from the Tories' point of view if it succeeds in smashing one pole of political resistance.

The GLC, for example, has put quite a lot of focus on supporting feminist projects, funding women's centres and trying to get away from the usual unthinking sexism of local government.

They've attempted similar work for ethnic minorities.

The abolition proposals must be seen as conscious political attack on the ideas and self organisation of women's liberation. Any campaign for its defence must take on responsibility to counter-attack in defence of black, lesbian and disabled women.

Who is it for?

We want it to be a rank and file conference of women from the unions, Labour Party, tenants', community and women's groups.

We want to cooperate with, and obviously welcome support from the official campaigns, especially the women's committees, but we're trying to do something separate.

The official campaigns are tied to a non-(Party) political approach. This has sometimes meant putting more emphasis on persuading Tory Lords and businessmen than organising the labour movement rank and file.

This is less true of the women's committees. The GLC Women's Committee has produced quite impressive propaganda that is clearly aimed at attracting "ordinary" women.

But, I think, there's still a problem of casting women as victims/passive consumers. What we want to do is organise and stress the strength that women do have as part of the working class movement.

What do you expect to come out of the conference?

Merely bringing together women from different areas of struggle will be important in and of itself. What I would like to see, personally, is women taking a militant stance and committing themselves to take back to their respective organisations a call for determined resistance up to and including defying the law.

Any serious fightback means solidarity action. The Tories call it "secondary" action, but it seems primary and basic to me that we should stick together.

That means coming up against the Tories' anti-union laws and the specific legislation against local authorities.

I hope, too, we'll be able to come up with ideas for organisation across unions and between union and non-workplace organisation that will reflect women's experience. We are very often marginalised by traditional structures, but in all-out action that overflows the traditional split between industrial and political work and "home", politics and community, I think women have shown themselves to be incredibly inventive and audacious.



Birmingham school meals workers have been sacked by the council and told they can have their jobs back only at a lower wage. Above: at a NUPE meeting.

Women's TUC: fine words but...

THERE are plenty of good composite motions ready to be voted on at this year's Women's TUC.

Plenty which show that the trade unions recognise — in words anyway — that women workers are doubly exploited and that there need to be special campaigns around issues like the closing of screening centres in the NHS.

Composite motions reaffirm that it's a woman's right to work. Composite 8

from the GMBATU and the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers takes up the problems that women workers face as the wages inspectorate and wages councils are threatened with abolition.

Composite 8 also points to the increasing number of women homeworkers and the dangers and exploitation they face.

But the composites demand monitoring, lobbying and increasing awareness. Not

one outlines a campaign of action for women workers. Not one relies on the trade union movement at its most powerful — in direct action.

The 'Equality for Women, within Trade Unions' report is an up-date of the 1979 Charter which drew up ten demands for opening up the unions for participation by women.

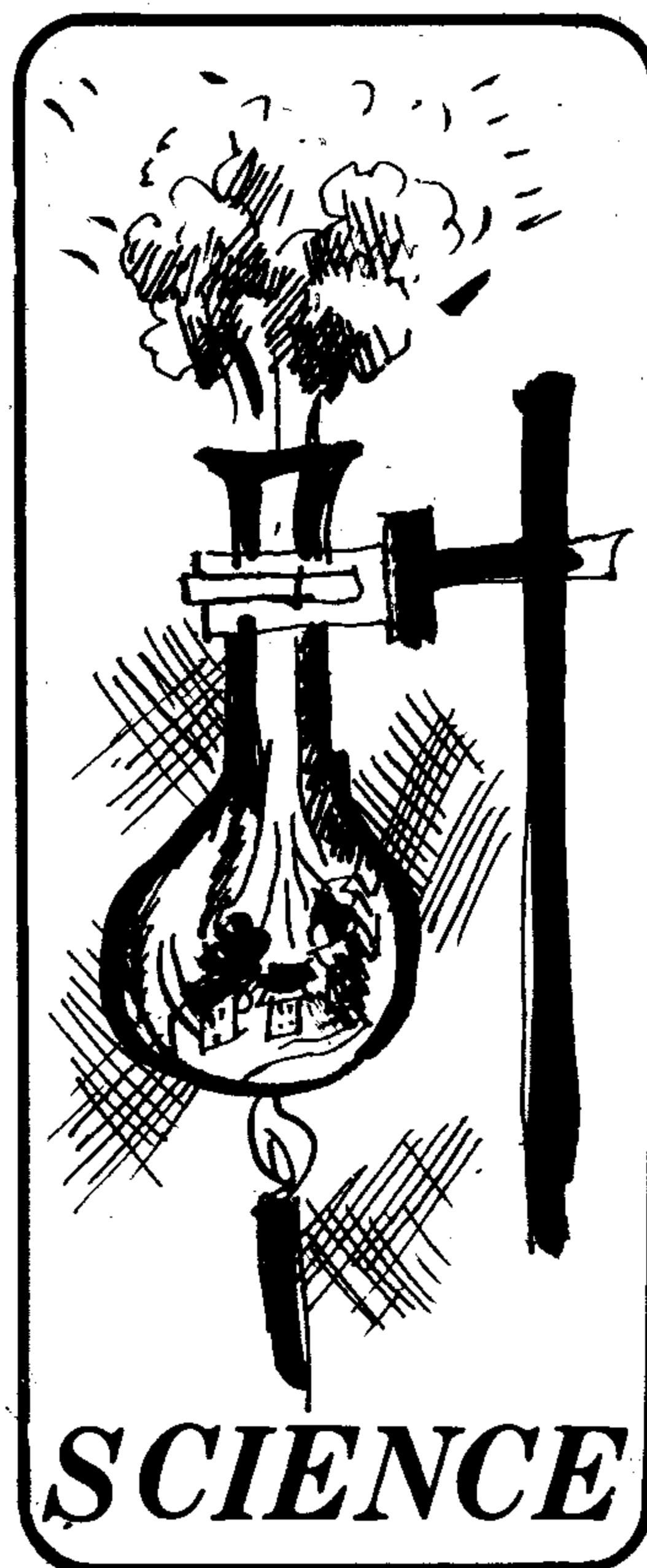
It reports a patchy response from the unions and notes resistance to the demand for union meetings

to be held in works time.

The report suggests among other things, that each union should appoint a women officer and make special provision for women in their higher bodies.

It also suggests that "women's conferences should be organised which are representative of the membership and which have an impact on the decision-making bodies."

Maybe they should start by reforming the Women's TUC Conference.



By Les Hearn

I LAST wrote about Sickle Cell Anaemia (SCA) two years ago, soon after the Sickle Cell Society's report detailing the need for improved services.

Last week's Observer reported the death of a two year old child in Lambeth, South London from undiagnosed SCA, and revealed that none of the SCS recommendations had been carried out.

A grim reaper

No doubt, this is partly due to Tory health cuts, but I cannot help suspecting that if SCA affected people from all sections of society instead of just black people, then the very simple test needed to detect SCA would have been introduced.

All oxygen-breathers bigger than a pin-head need a chemical to trap oxygen from the air and a circulatory system to take it round the body. In humans, the chemical is haemoglobin (Hb), which is carried by blood cells. Normally, the chemical cooperates with the circulatory system admirably well, but in SCA, a defect in the Hb can have a disastrous effect on the circulation.

Hb is a large protein molecule, made up of chains of hundreds of amino acid sub-units, folded in a special way. Each Hb can trap four molecules of oxygen whilst in the lungs, but when it reaches a tissue with little oxygen, it changes shape slightly, squeezing the oxygens out rapidly. It is now deoxy Hb, instead of oxy Hb. This change of shape is crucial to understanding SCA.

SCA victims, and carriers of SC trait, have mutant Hb genes, so that just one amino acid is altered, one which is on the surface of the Hb molecule.

Instead of being electrically charged and attractive to water, the amino acid is now fatty and repellent to water. And in the deoxy state, sickle Hb is much less soluble.

If enough of the sickle Hb is in the deoxy state, the fatty amino acid makes the molecules stick

together in a long rigid crystal, distorting the shape of the blood cells from a flexible plate to a rigid sickle. These tend to get stuck in blood capillaries, making it more difficult to pump the blood round, and they are more easily damaged, making the sufferer anaemic.

On average, 50% of an SCA victim's blood cells are sickled. However, in a crisis (caused by sudden exertion, anaesthetics, high altitudes, etc), more of the sickle Hb becomes deoxy, more cells get distorted, capillaries get blocked and organs and tissues get starved of oxygen. This is a very painful condition, as well as causing lasting damage to bone and kidney. There is danger of kidney or heart failure, thrombosis, infection, etc., and SCA sufferers frequently die young.

These symptoms only occur in those with two genes for SCA. Carriers with only one sickle gene and one normal gene have half normal and half sickle Hb. They rarely suffer ill effects, and only 1% of blood cells are sickled on average. This is because only in extreme conditions would enough sickle Hb be deoxygenated to form crystals.

SCA is not a rare disease — some 3 per 1,000 Afro-Caribbeans suffer from it, while as many as 10% are carriers. How come such a harmful gene has survived and prospered? And how is it that up to 40% of people in some parts of Africa possess the SC gene?

The highest frequencies are found in those areas most

plagued by malaria. Malaria tends to afflict those with a normal Hb or all sickle Hb, while sparing those with half and half.

One sickle gene confers protection against malaria and so this accidental and normally harmful mutation has survived. Black people in Britain, Caribbean and the US do not need SC gene protection but have inherited it from their ancestors.

Treatment for SCA is difficult. Probably most effective would be simply care and support to keep the victim well nourished and protected from situations that would provoke a sickle crisis. Research is going on into drugs to stop the deoxy Hb from crystallising, though perhaps portable oxygen supply might be most effective.

But most crucial is simply to identify victims. This can be done by a simple blood test. Because of the lesser electrical charge on sickle Hb, it moves less in an electric field. The test could be done at the same time as the routine test for phenylketonuria already done at birth.

This was recommended by the Sickle Cell Society in 1981 but even though SCA is more common than phenylketonuria, nothing is being done.

Other recommendations such as free prescriptions for people with inherited diseases have yet to be implemented, while little is being done to even educate and counsel people about Sickle Cell Anaemia and Sickle Cell Trait.

Women's TUC Fringe Meeting on
HOMEWORKING
Thursday 15 March 1984 at 5.45pm
in the Caribbean Bar, Rainbow Hotel,
Belgrave Road, Torquay.
Speakers: Mary Thacker, ex-GMWU
Homeworkers Branch, Anne Spencer,
Tailor & Garment Workers Union



Lebanon's road to crisis

By Clive Bradley

THE religious or confessional divisions in Lebanon were enshrined in a political system, called the National Pact, in 1943.

The basic idea was that representation in the Assembly, and other state institutions to an extent, was specifically organised on a religious basis.

Seats in the Assembly were allocated to religious groups, supposedly in proportion to their numbers.

Particular positions were reserved for representatives of a particular religious community. For example, the President was to be a Maronite Christian.

Much praised as a paragon of democratic virtues by Western liberal commentators, this system was in reality a farce.

First of all it guaranteed for the Christians a majority of six to five and discriminated against the various Muslim communities who by the 1960s were a majority of the population.

Second, by deciding politics on a religious-sectarian basis, it reinforced the long-standing sectarian divide in Lebanese politics. Political party organising on political or ideological lines was more or less impossible, and the task of parties trying to span sectarian divisions was made extremely difficult.

Within each community political divisions developed of course, but the general pattern of politics was that traditional leaders vied with and allied with each other to maintain control over their respective communities.

Such control was organised in an elaborate system of patronage generally based on traditional family or clan lines, and reinforced by mafia-like gang leaders.

In this situation the Lebanese state was extremely weak and regularly broke down.

In 1958 US Marines intervened to protect the Maronite Christian government of Camille Chamoun who was eventually replaced by President Shihab who attempted to strengthen the state apparatus, largely by strengthening the secret police, the Deuxieme Bureau.

But with a weak state, real power tended to fall into the hands of various sectarian leaders.

The capitalist class itself spanned the religious divide but its political power depended on the preservation of the old traditional loyalties and an alliance of the traditional leaders. There thus arose an extremely complex system of political control.

Two main factors caused its collapse. First were the internal contradictions. The extremes of social and political inequality upon which the system was based. There is no doubt that the civil war which got underway in earnest in 1975 was an expression in a confused way, of the deep class divisions that exist in Lebanese society.

Second was the presence of nearly a million Palestinian refugees, and in particular the Palestinian guerrilla movement based on those refugees.

The Cairo Accords in 1969 gave the guerrillas the right to possess arms and control their

own camps and after 1970, when the Palestinian resistance was driven out of Jordan, Lebanon became the major base.

The resistance developed close links with some of the more radical mainly-Muslim Lebanese political groups that had been influenced by the rise of radical Arab nationalism after World War Two. These groups were trained by Palestinian guerrillas.

Politically, Lebanese society polarised on the issue of the Palestinian presence. The Christian Maronites tended to be opposed to it, the Muslims tended to be in favour of it.

In addition many of the social tensions were increased by an influx of Lebanese Shi'a Muslims fleeing the Israeli raids in the South.

By 1975, the economic crisis and social unrest were deepening.

The causes of the outbreak of violence included the suppression of the fishermen's strike in Sidon by the army, and shortly after a revenge attack by Phalangists on a Palestinian bus. By August the situation had worsened to all-out civil war in which some 50,000 people were killed. Its roots were to be found in the oppressed within Lebanese society increasingly acting in alliance with the left Palestinian movement.

To maintain their political base, sections of the Muslim leadership identified with the revolt and attempted to gain control of it, to a degree successfully.

Phalange

Amongst the Christians it was the Phalange who were most effectively seen to be defending Maronite independence, as they saw it, against pan-Arabism.

The Lebanese National Movement, founded at the peak of the Civil War, grouped together Arab nationalists, Communists, and right wing organisations, such as the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. So from the outset it had a sectarian overtone. By 1976 the LNM had dropped its secular anti-sectarian programme in the face of the communal degeneration of the conflict, for which it saw no way out.

The conflict had degenerated into a sectarian bloodbath. People were often shot only because their names betrayed their religion (the Maronites tended to have French first names as a result of their historical connection to French colonialism).

Nevertheless, by 1976, the LNM was on the verge of victory, albeit partial. The neighbouring Syrian regime saw a victory for the LNM as a dangerous possibility, a potentially radical threat to itself that might provoke Israeli attack.

It intervened to curtail the LNM and the more radical Palestinian organisations. It did this first by proxy through the pro-Syrian Palestinian groups in Fatah and then directly by occupying parts of Lebanon.

The Civil War ended in stalemate but one in which Lebanon had been rapidly divided between competing groups - an Israeli-dominated south, a Palestinian-dominated central-southern area, the Syrian-controlled east, and various areas under Maronite control.

Throughout the whole of this process regional powers manoeuvred for influence. Israel generally backed the Phalangists although as we have seen Syrian intervention was, in its first stages, explicitly pro-Phalangist; Saudi Arabia and Jordan made various attempts to influence groups through political and financial means.

Since the end of the Civil War proper, it has never really ended, of course, the international significance of Lebanon has increased. Partly this is because of the havoc caused by Israel's two major invasions, the first in 1978 and the second - and biggest - in 1982.

Israeli troops are still in occu-



Gas masks during World War One

World war one horror returns in Iran/Iraq

THE use of a form of mustard gas by Iraq on Iranian troops focuses attention on this terrible weapon long outlawed in warfare.

Humanity didn't arrive at nuclear weapons and the possibility of annihilating itself all at once. There were many terrible steps on the way. Chemical warfare was one of them.

Mustard gas was widely used by both sides in the First World War after its initial

use by Germany on the Russian Front in January 1915.

It is one of the most terrible weapons ever concocted.

Last week's Observer quoted the greatest of the First World War poets, Wilfred Owen, describing an attack by mustard gas.

One failed to get his gas mask on in time: "Yelling out and stumbling and flound'ring like a man in fire or

lime . . . /Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light/As under a green sea, I saw him drowning."

Mustard gas warfare was outlawed by an international convention at Geneva in 1925.

The ban on gas warfare held in World War Two to the surprise of all the powers - they had issued civilians with gas masks in expectation that it would be used. Instead, cities were firebombed and

something even more terrible developed - nuclear weapons.

Like the hydra, the mythical monster on which new heads sprouted whenever one of its heads was cut off, capitalism replaces horror with more horror.

In fact both the USA and the USSR have stocks of chemical weapons and do research into chemical warfare. The Americans have recently stepped up such research.

pation in the south.

Solving the crisis has become a question of international power politics. Syria has reemerged as a major political force because of its role in scuttling the Israeli-Lebanese agreement backed by the US. The agreement was intended to lead to the withdrawal of all foreign forces.

Abrogate

Syria refused to participate and in the last couple of weeks, successfully persuaded the Lebanese government of Amin Gemayel to abrogate the treaty.

Behind Syria stands the USSR to a large extent in reality and definitely in the perceptions of the US administration. For the US and its allies, Lebanon has become a thorn in their side. The forced withdrawal of US, British

and Italian troops from the Lebanese mainland was a significant blow to imperialist policy.

The collapse of the agreement between Israel and Lebanon organised by Secretary of State Schultz last May was a further blow.

The future of Lebanon hangs in the balance. The situation of de facto partition has existed since 1976. It is possible that a formal partition may result from the present conflict - a solution in the interests of reactionary communal leaders and Israel only.

We need to give our solidarity to those people currently fighting Israeli occupation and oppose further imperialist involvement. But we also need to give solidarity to those on the Lebanese left attempting to learn from the mistakes of 1976 and build a non-sectarian movement.

NEW Jewel Movement prisoners in Grenada have been tortured, according to Jamaican lawyer, Jacqueline Brown.

Ms. Brown saw the prisoners for the first time last Thursday.

Bernard Coard, a leader of the NJM faction which overthrew Maurice Bishop shortly before the US invasion, showed Ms Brown bruises and boot marks. He said that interrogators had aimed their blows so as to maximise pain from an old back injury.

Lian James, a colleague of Coard's, said that interrogators had tied a sock around his testicles and pulled sharply.

A doctor has admitted that he was called to the prison to treat prisoners, but he refused to give details.

ACCORDING to the organisation Turkey News and Views, quoted by Jeremy Corbyn in a recent House of Commons debate, there are at the moment 200,000 people in jail in Turkey, of whom at least 45,000 are political prisoners.

NELSON Mandela, who has been imprisoned for over 20 years in South Africa, has refused to consider an offer from the apartheid regime to grant him "conditional" freedom.

The conditions would include mandela agreeing to live in the Transkei - one of South Africa's "tribal homelands" which are used as reservoirs of cheap labour.

TURKEY
INFORMATION BULLETIN

THE RETURN
DEMOCRACY

Box 5965, London, WC1N 3XX

Women in Ireland



North and South

By Paddy Dollard

Catholic Ireland has changed much in the last two decades, but nothing fundamental has changed for women there. In Britain a working class woman is oppressed in at least two ways. as a worker and as a woman.

IN SPITE of some widely publicised reforms dealing with discrimination against women, there has been little change in the lives of the mass of Irish women in the South. The increasing awareness of their oppression has merely served to highlight the lack of commitment to effective change.

Legislation on equal pay and equality of treatment in employment in relation to access, opportunity for training and promotion has not become a reality and discrimination against women in employment is still widely practised.

The Employment Equality Act of 1977 made it illegal also to discriminate against women on the grounds of sex or marital status or in recruitment for and conditions of employment.

Maternity leave

Women also have the right to 14 weeks' maternity leave, and to return to their jobs if they want to. For many women, returning to work is not a matter of choice but of necessity, but the difficulty in finding, and the high cost of, child-care imposes an intolerable burden, particularly on single mothers.

A woman's right to work is also being particularly eroded with the rising unemployment rate. Irish women workers are traditionally concentrated in the clothing and food-processing industries, and in light factory work, the industries that have been worst hit by the recession.

Legislation on equal working conditions and treatment has not changed attitudes to women in work. Eileen Flynn, a teacher employed in a convent school in New Ross, County Wexford, was sacked because she had a baby, the child of a man who had been married before but who has been separated from his wife for several years. Her dismissal was, incredibly, upheld by the Labour Court.

Discrimination

In 1982, the Social Welfare Act was amended to entitle married women not living with or maintained by their husbands to unemployment assistance.

In southern Ireland her oppression will be reinforced by the fact that she is a working class woman, living in a Catholic-Sectarian state which does not allow divorce or abortion at all and which strictly limits and controls contraception.

The legal right to contraception and abortion, or its absence, is a pretty basic test of the status of women in any society, or in any political movement.

Last year's referendum on abortion was fought out between those who wanted a constitutional ban on abortion and those who just wanted it banned as it is now. The pro-choice forces were and are tiny.

Provisional Sinn Fein is a comparatively radical organ-

isation with a vocal distinctly feminist element within it.

As in this article by Siobhan O'Malley, they agitate passionately against the conditions women suffer in the 26 Counties.

Yet last November's radical Sinn Fein conference limited its radicalism about women's oppression to trimming the word "total" from the clause in Sinn Fein's constitution opposing abortion. Now it is merely 'opposed' to it.

A number of Sinn Fein members joined the campaign against the anti-abortion amendment to the Southern Ireland constitution, but the official Sinn Fein line was that they took no sides because they did not recognise the constitution anyway.

Roisin Conroy, separated from her husband for many years, had taken a case to the High Court to challenge the discrimination earlier that year, and it was this case that forced a change in the law.

Pre-natal care

However, there are still many discrepancies in dole and social welfare payments to women, married or single, including the duration of time for which unemployment benefit is paid, although women pay the same PRSI contributions. A Campaign for the Unification of the Social Welfare Code is active in challenging such discrepancies and discriminations.

In the area of women's health, cut-backs in the Free State government's spending has seriously affected services. A vigorous official policy of closing down maternity units which, according to the Health Boards, do not have the required 'quota' of births means that women in rural areas face journeys of up to 50 miles for pre-natal care and delivery. An equally vigorous campaign by local people and by the Association for the Improvement of Maternity Services has, in some cases, reversed decisions to close a few units, as in Dundalk last year, but such victories have been few.

Contraception

The withdrawal of medical cards, and the restrictions in granting new ones, have also caused severe hardship to women and there have been cases of particular callousness in withdrawing medical cards from families with handicapped children. The redefining of what is available on prescription to medical card holders has also badly affected women and children, and the provision of a network of local women's health centres is as far away as ever.

Contraception legislation has, if anything, made it more difficult for women to obtain advice and help in getting safe contraception, with the power to refuse or grant such provision in the hands of local GPs. Well Woman Centres and family planning clinics are still only based in the large cities, as are services and help for unmarried mothers.

The tragic case of a 15-year old girl who died giving birth to her baby, who also died, in a churchyard in Granard, County Longford, exposed the isolation of young girls in this situation. The media reaction, with people from Nuala Fennell, Free State Minister for Women's Affairs down, using the tragedy to castigate anybody but themselves, was a sickening exercise in opportunism and buck-passing.

Last year's referendum on abortion, in spite of opening up the whole debate on contraception and the reality of Irish women in their hundreds seeking abortions, out of fear and desperation, in Britain, has had no practical effect, even though both sides of the argument pledged themselves to real support for mothers, married or not.

Endemic sexism

However, the glib suggestion that sex education and contraception is the answer ignores the real oppression of women throughout a society which enforces the inability of women to exercise real control over their bodies and their lives.

Sexism is endemic in Irish society. It pervades the schools, workplaces, hospitals, sports clubs, political parties and the media. A glaring example is the 'most popular' Sunday newspaper, the Sunday World, whose main advertising slogan is: "Are you getting it every Sunday?"

This paper pretends to expose injustices against women, but instead exploits women. Sensationalist stories of child pornography are juxtaposed with photographs of women in suggestive poses — both for cheap titillation.

An outraged National Busworkers Union have made a stand against the Sunday World, refusing to handle any papers from the Independent group following a particularly objectionable story which denigrated women busworkers.

Women in the home, supposedly revered, protected and supported by the Free State Constitution, are in fact the most discriminated against of all. The 'family unit', upheld as the holy of holies by church and state, is in fact largely unprotected by law and



"There is a vocal distinctly feminist element in Sinn Fein..."

vulnerable to abuse.

A Meath woman, for instance, recently discovered just how much her family home and family unit were protected by the Family Home Protection Act, when she and her husband were jailed when they refused to surrender their house to a loan company.

The law banning divorce, and the meaningless 'separation' legislation, coupled with the Catholic Church's hypocritical attitude to 'nullity', leaves many women and children in a legal tangle impossible to understand. The Free State, to add to their confusion, turns a blind eye to what is, according to their own laws, bigamy.

Illegitimacy is still a stigma and a legal reality, in spite of the verbalising of Nuala Fennell and her cronies, desperately looking for a word to replace 'bastard'.

There are very many dedicated and committed women struggling to overcome the repressive laws and oppressive attitudes that Irish women suffer. The Women's Centre in Dublin's Dame Street provides a meeting place for women despite a chronic lack of funds. The Well Woman Centres and Family Planning Clinics, the women's refuges and advice centres all provide as extensive a service as they can in the face of prejudice and hostility.

The producers and presenters of the RTE radio programme Women Today and on TV, The Women's Programme, raise issues of importance to women. Women in trade unions fight sexism in the workplace and discrimination in employment, and in the many campaigns on specific issues women battle on, undaunted by the opposition to change.

But the experience of recent 'reforms' in regard to women and the reality of women's continued oppression has enforced the belief that the only way to real freedom for women lies in the achievement of radical change in society at every level.

Support the Armagh women

THE Provisional Sinn Fein paper An Phoblacht made this appeal for solidarity:

If International Women's Day means anything in Ireland, it must mean the highlighting of the obscene treatment of the republican women prisoners in Armagh Jail at the hands of the British administration.

(...)

The barbaric strip-searching of women prisoners — introduced in November 1982 — is still being systematically enforced in Armagh.

A staggering total of 1,216 such strip-searches were carried out during 1983. One woman was strip-searched 84 times in that period.

Not satisfied with this particular perverse persecution, the prison administration in recent weeks has continued to use every possible new petty harassment to inflict further suffering and attempt to break the spirit of the prisoners.

Cell switches and searches have been stepped up, the limited choice of recreational and handicraft facilities have

been further curtailed. The gymnasium is now out of bounds for 'security reasons'.

Spot-checks on cells are used by malicious prison staff as a constant invasion of privacy, the

movements and comments of prisoners are constantly logged.

(...)

The conditions in Armagh Prison amount to an international outrage.



TROOPS OUT NOW!

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

To - t

Revelations about fascist Tory party took a new turn as members of the far right are being deported and giving extreme racist reasons.

A reader from North Yorkshire writes an article about the last time...

"Surely there cannot be any doubt that the close relationship between the Blackshirts and the British Establishment (and the rising fascist dictatorships in the years immediately preceding the Second World War) is largely derived from the close relationship between the Blackshirts and the British Establishment (and the rising fascist dictatorships in the years immediately preceding the Second World War)."

THESE sentiments explained the close relationship between the Blackshirts and the British Establishment and the rising fascist dictatorships in the years immediately preceding the Second World War.

Sir Thomas Moore was a founder member of the Anglo-German Fellowship, the most influential of the pro-fascist groups.

Other founder members included:

Clement Davies, National Liberal MP for Montgomery, who was also a director of Lever Bros. and Unilever Ltd.

Sir Robert Gower, Tory MP for Gillingham and President of the Property Owners Protection Association which represented investments valued at £500 million.

Sir Frank Sanderson, Tory MP for Ealing, Chairman of Salts (Saltaire) Ltd., the Humber Fishing Co. Ltd., and a director of United Premier Oil and Cake Co. Ltd.

Mr Norman Hulbert, Tory MP for Stockport, also chairman of British Steel Construction, Birmingham Ltd.

There were many others — Tory MPs, industrialists, high ranking civil servants, bankers, members of the armed services. As the Secretary of the Fellowship, Mr E. Wright, told a reporter of the News Review in January 1936, "It isn't numbers that matter. We want 'names', otherwise how can we have any influence with the Government or the Foreign Office?"

And they got their 'names'.

Lord McGowan, Chairman of ICI, H.B. Schroeder, along with two fellow directors of the banking firm of J. Henry Schroeder & Co; Mr F.D'Arcy Cooper, member and later Chairman of Unilevers; Sir George Beharrell, Chairman of the Dunlop Rubber Co; Sir Barry Domville, Admiral, who was also founder of the fascist paper, The Link; Wing Commander AWH James, also Tory MP for Wellingborough and a fervent supporter of Franco.

Not only did these 'names' join the Fellowship but, in many instances, they took up a 'corporate membership' option. Schroeder's were enrolled, as were the banking firms of Lazard Bros. and Guinness, Mahon & Co.

Dunlops were 'corporate members'. So too was ICI.



RICK MATTHEWS (IFL)

Black people have fought back increasingly against racism. But deportations under the immigration laws become more and more numerous — like the case of Rashida Abedi (below).

Rashida Abedi is a totally deaf woman, living in South Norwood with her brother, sister and other relatives. She is learning English, lip-reading and typing and is determined to become more independent.

Now the Home Office is threatening to deport her to Pakistan, where there is no-one

to support her.

Rashida came to Britain in 1981 from Quetta in Pakistan to cure her deafness, which was caused by meningitis ten years ago. Unfortunately the treatment was unsuccessful.

In Quetta there are no facilities for the deaf. Her mother is elderly. No-one else is available

to look after Rashida. She is now living in South Norwood with her elder brother, and sister and their family.

Her brother has supported her financially since her father's death. They all want Rashida to stay.

The Home Office say that sisters are not really part of the

family, and cannot be considered 'dependents'.

This is how you can help. *Write to the Home Secretary, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1. (Quote Ref. no. 246501).

*Write to your MP, House of Commons, London SW1.

*Take leaflets and a petition.

*Invite us to speak at your meeting.

*Ask your union, or Labour Party, etc., to send a resolution to the Home Secretary. Send us a copy.

Contact: Friends of Rashida Abedi c/o 45 Wellesley Road, Croydon. Phone Liz at 686 8014.

Talking about socialism

Housework and socialism

THIS column was suggested by the Nottingham Socialist Organiser group — a short article each week explaining some basics of socialism, maybe by an excerpt from one of the socialist classics.

This week: an excerpt from 'America's Road to Socialism', by James P. Cannon.

ONE thing I'm absolutely sure is going to happen early in the period of the workers' government, maybe during the first five year plan. Under the slogan of more efficiency in production, reinforced by moral arguments which are powerful in the case — the rights of women to leisure and freedom for cultural and spiritual growth — there will be a tremendous popular movement of women to bust up this medieval institution of 40 million separate kitchens and forty million different housewives cooking, cleaning, scrubbing and fighting dust.

Thirty or forty million women every day of the year trudging to the market, each one loading her separate basket and lugging it home to cook thirty or forty million different meals for thirty or forty million different families.

What a terrible waste of energy, waste of productivity; to say nothing of the cultural waste; to say nothing of the imposition upon the women victims.



The enlightened socialist women will knock the hell out of this inefficient, unjust, and antiquated system. The mass emergence of the socialist women from the confining walls of their individual kitchens will be the greatest jail break in history — and the most beneficent. Women,

liberated from the prison of the kitchen, will become the free companions of free men.

The drudgery of housework will be organised like any other division of labour, on an efficient communal basis, so that women can begin to have some leisure too. Cooking and house cleaning, like any other

work, can be done much better, much quicker, in an organised, scientific manner.

Proper air-conditioning and dust-catching "PRECIPI-TRONS" — which will be standard equipment for every home — will take care of most of the house cleaning automatically.

I cannot see why the average housewife, who isn't specially trained for it or specially adapted to it, should want to bother with it. I cannot see why cooking, house cleaning and janitor work shouldn't be one of the national divisions of labour, for which various people take their turns in the process for a certain number of hours a day, a certain number of weeks in a year, however it may be allocated.

Or if some people prefer to live communally, as many have found it advantageous, they'll do that, and simplify things still more.

By this forecast I do not mean to draw a picture of regimentation. Just the opposite, for any kind of regimentation such as that imposed by the present social order will be utterly repugnant to the free and independent citizens of the socialist future. They will live the way they want to live, and each individual — within the limits of his general obligation to society — will decide for himself.

Better, in this case, say "herself" — for old-fashioned reactionaries who ignorantly think they know what "woman's place" is, will run up against the hard fact — for the first time since class society began — that women will have something to say about that, and what they will say will be plenty.

Tories and fascists the last time round

activity in the fringes of the
turn this week, with four lead-
-right Monday Club resigning
ism within the Club as their

West London has sent us this
round — the 1930s.

fundamental difference of outlook
parents, the Conservatives? For let us
centage . . . It, (the British Union of
the Conservative Party . . . Surely the
and more friendly”.

for Ayr Burghs, writing in praise of
ly Mail, 25 April 1934).

Sir Alfred Knox, previously
British Military Attache in
St. Petersburg in Tsarist days
and who went to Washington
to 'win over America to the
Allied policy of intervention',
was a member.

So were the Hon. W.W.
Astor, son of Lady Astor, and
Sir Robert Bird, Chairman of
Bird's, the custard makers,
both of whom were also Tory
MPs.

L.H. Boyce, Chairman of the
Gloucester Railway Carriage
Co. and director of seven other
companies, was a member.
So were Major A. Braithwaite,
director of Guardian Eastern
Insurance Co, Sir William
Brass, a fellow director and
Tory MP and Sir George
Broadbridge, Tory MP for the
City of London and former
Lord Mayor.

The list of members covered
every aspect of the British
Establishment. The Fellow-
ship was formed specifically
to strengthen the ties between
the Establishment and the
fascist dictators, to create an
aura of respectability for the
savagery of the Nazis, to form
commercially profitable links
with Nazi-controlled interests,
and particularly to assist in
Hitler's rearmament policy.

Among the first guests of
the Fellowship were Hitler's
Foreign Minister Ribbentrop;
Field Marshall von Blomberg,
Minister of War; and Freiherr
von Halden, SS Adjutant to
Himmler, head of the Gestapo.
The Fellowship reflected
close links between British and
German industry.

Connections

One example of the connec-
tions is the following. The
head of the powerful Cologne
banking house, Stein, one
Henrich von Stein, was also a
director of the Stollberg Co.,
which in turn was largely
controlled by the enormous
combine Frankfurt Metall-
gesellschaft, which again in
turn had on its board of direc-
tors men who were also chair-
men of I.G. Farben and of
Siemens.

Herr Bosch, chairman of
I.G. Farben was also a direc-
tor of the Nobel Dynamite
firm, in which the British firm,
ICI, had a heavy interest.

To complete the circle,
Lord McGowan, Chairman of
ICI, was a member of the
Fellowship.

Even more significantly,
Heinrich von Stein had as a
partner a certain Baron Kurt

THE mild exposures of fascist
'infiltration' into the Tory
Party will quite quickly be
forgotten as events more
immediately demanding of
our time and energies take
precedence.

I make no claim to an
intimate knowledge of the
fascist organisations today.
But I do know something
about the role of our own
ruling class in the rise of
fascism between the two
world wars, the results of
which I and millions of
other workers remember as
the descent into the abyss.

I do not truly believe
there are adequate words in
any language to describe the
years of the fascist dictators.
I only know that there is no
choice more descriptive of
our absolute necessity to
triumph than 'socialism or
barbarism'.

The Tory Party, the
fascists, the captains of indus-
try and commerce, the

bankers and landowners, all
marched together down that
road to barbarism sharing the
fruits of it and leaving a mem-
ory of such horror that we
who lived through that period
will never forget.

Our own ruling class began
their courtship with fascism
in the 1930s when they
recognised a kindred spirit in
the fascists' answer to the
'labour problem': smash the
unions and institute a State-
controlled Labour Front.

Today, the Tories' attacks
on the unions, the race laws,
the dictatorial posturing, the
war jingoism, the strengthen-
ing of State power, the
attacks on the unemployed,
the drive towards compul-
sion, are all designed to
create the dung heap on
which the germs of fascism
breed and grow strong.

Let us view with the
utmost alarm the knowledge
that the fascists have, once
again, returned to their
natural home.

von Schroeder — in whose
house was held the meeting
between von Papen and Hitler
which had 'legalised' the rise
of Nazism in Germany.



'Volunteer' women workers in Nazi Germany salute before starting the day's work. Fascist methods boosted profits.

The banking house of J.
Henry Schroeder was a
'corporate member' of the
Fellowship.

Of course the activities of
the Fellowship did not inaug-
urate the cartels and combines
in which ICI (for example)
was and still is so deeply
involved, but through the
political clout of high Tory
MPs and ministers a much
smoother path for profits was
obtained.

Monopoly

As S. Aaronovitch points
out in his book 'Monopoly'.
"These cartels were not
disrupted by Hitler's rise to
power or by his aggressive
policy. On the contrary their
number grew, their relation-
ship became more intimate
and ICI became a member of
the Anglo-German Fellow-
ship.

"Without the help of ICI
(as of Duponts), I.G. Farben
would not have been able to
build up its immensely power-
ful position which allowed it to
give such aid to the Nazis."

There were protests in
Britain against the export of
essential materials to the
Nazis immediately prior to the
war, but the hand of the
Fellowship can be seen in the
statement of government
spokesman, Sir Thomas
Inskip: "Such exports do help
Germany to re-arm, but, it is
a commercial matter, not
within the province of the
Government to interfere."

Two weeks before war was
declared, the Nazis ordered
and were supplied with one
third of all the rubber stocks
and one quarter of all the
nickel supplies in this country.
The Tory Minister, Mr Burgin,
had powers to ban those deals

but refused to do so.

British contracts which were
outstanding to Germany at
the outset of war were 'diver-
ted' to the American parent
companies, or to those com-
panies who had cartel arrange-
ments. Cotton, oil and all sorts
of goods suddenly began to
flood into Italy (then neutral),
to go from there into other
countries and finally to the
Nazi war factories.

Phillip Jordan, the News
Chronicle correspondent,
wrote of this profitable trade
as it went on in the midst of
the most dreadful massacre of
human beings this system had
ever visited upon a suffering
world.

Wolfram

"Until the very day of
liberation he (Franco) was
sending goods into France for
the use of the Germans.

On August 20, the day of
liberation here, a train load of
wolfram and other goods,
including at one time a num-
ber of United States aircraft
engines, came into Cerbere
for transshipment onto the
French gauge railways . . .
sixty trucks passed regularly
every Tuesday and Friday.

They brought quantities of
pure alcohol, coffee, cocoa,
fruit, wool and other commod-
ities for which the starving
people of Spain were crying
out. In many cases the Span-
iards had not even bothered to
take off the labels printed on
the crates by the British and
US consignors."

In 1941, the Nazis, no doubt
honouring pledges made, gave
to Unilever, who held through
their Dutch company a con-
trolling interest in 25 indus-
trial concerns inside Nazi
Germany, permission to pay
dividends to the British share-
holders. Unilever's operation

in Germany was under the
direct authority of the Nazis
and the workforce was largely
'recruited' from the mass
deportations of Jews and
others under the slave labour
policies of the Third Reich, a
fact well known to the British
government.

System

Such was the role played by
the 'names' recruited by the
Fellowship. That they all
belonged to the same class, all
supported or were members of
the same political party, and
all, without exception, were
active and vociferous in their
support for fascism, says a lot
about the deeply held beliefs
of those who own and control
the economic system in which
we live.

What is fascism?

By Colin Foster

FASCISM is a method of cap-
italist rule. In conditions of crisis
the big bourgeoisie will finance
and support mass movements,
based on ruined middle class
people and unemployed workers,
to crush any independent labour
movement.

To attract their mass support,
fascist movements proclaim them-
selves as being against both
Marxism and finance capital. But
their 'anti-capitalism' is directed
at false or diversionary targets —
the Nazis, for example, scape-
goated the Jews as the evil genius
behind both Bolshevism and the
big banks.

Their anti-Marxism is real
enough. Before they come to
power, fascists smash up labour
movement meetings, offices, and
picket lines. If they win state
power, they crush the trade
unions and working class political
parties, replacing them by state-
controlled 'Labour Fronts'.

As Hitler put it, the fascists
tell the bewildered 'little man'
that 'though a worm, he can still
be part of a mighty dragon'.

The many varieties of fascism
use all the traditional ideologies
of the right wing to rally their
forces: sexism, leader-cults, glori-
fication of war and violence, and,
especially, nationalism. In Britain
today, fascists base themselves on
anti-black racism.

Fascism is not always the best
form of rule for the bourgeoisie.
In prosperous times they prefer
the flexible methods of Parlia-
mentary democracy and compro-
mise with the trade union bureau-
crats to the violence and risk of
putting fascist gangsters in power.

There is a qualitative differ-
ence between bourgeois democ-
racy (even the Tory variety) and
fascism: it was disastrous for the
working class in the 1930s when
the Stalinists talked about all
those regimes as merely varieties
of fascism.

They saw Hitler's coming to
power as merely a routine change
of government, of no special
consequence, and refused to fight
for a united front with the so-
called 'social fascists' (Social
Democracy) against the Nazis.

But with the capitalists demo-
cratic principles always count for
less than profits. They will work
with, or support, fascism if it
seems the best way to boost their
privileges and power.

Liverpool still stands firm!

SINCE 1979 Liverpool has lost £120 million in Rate Support Grants. Liverpool Labour Party is still standing firm on a policy of no rate rises to cover this loss, no cuts in services and no redundancies.

More than 500 members attended a meeting of the District Labour Party on March 12 and unanimously endorsed the campaign building up to the City budget day on March 29.

This meeting followed the North West Regional Conference of the Party during the previous weekend, which had supported the Council's general policy and also the call for a one-day strike to coincide with the city budget.

The campaign for local strike action on March 29 is gaining plenty of support throughout the city. Mass meetings of both GMBATU and NALGO have voted to support the strike and at least two local NUPE branches have reversed a previous District Committee recommendation and voted to come out. NALGO in neighbouring Knowsley will also be striking. Further mass meetings are planned for numerous other groups of workers, including Merseyside bus drivers, Liverpool dock workers, Halewood Ford workers, and the Bird's Eye factory at Kirkby.

A city-wide petition in defence of the council is receiving good support around the shopping precincts and housing estates.

The campaign is clearly gaining rather than losing strength as budget day approaches but there

By Kevin Feintuck

THE Liverpool Liberals say they can devise a budget with no cuts in services and only a 9% rate rise.

But it's a fraud. They reckon to save £8 million by leaving job vacancies unfilled. But this would mean two thousand posts unfilled!

That is wildly unrealistic. If it were actually tried it would mean huge gaps in essential staffing in some departments.

The Liberal plan also includes £6 million of "unallocated reductions" - i.e. cuts coming they won't say where.

Their other tricks are to transfer a lot of basic housing repair work from current account to capital account, and to sell off a lot of assets.

Even the Liverpool Tories say that the Liberals are bluffing.

are two particular problems to be dealt with.

Six councillors representing the rump of the right wing old guard have signed a document declaring their intention not to vote for an illegal budget. This statement was later endorsed by one more councillor.

The other problem lies in the attitude of the Parliamentary leadership. John Cunningham from the Shadow Cabinet was

widely reported as referring to the seven potential traitors as "brave and sensible". Another of Kinnock's lieutenants, Jack Straw, was sent to Liverpool with his pocket calculator, to correct the councillors' sums.

Unconfirmed rumours are circulating that Straw has put forward a 60% rate increase as his suggested solution.

All the evidence is that Kinnock and his cronies have done their utmost to persuade Liverpool Labour leaders to betray their election pledges. This is likely to become even clearer after March 13/14 when Kinnock is due to meet the Liverpool Labour MPs and Council leaders.

The mood in the Liverpool Party is determined. We understand that if we are defeated, this will be a serious setback for the whole of the working class. The movement locally will either persuade our seven traitors to mend their ways or will deal with them accordingly. It is up to the Party nationally to make sure that the Party leaders are also shown the difference between leadership and betrayal.

The build-up to the council budget is:

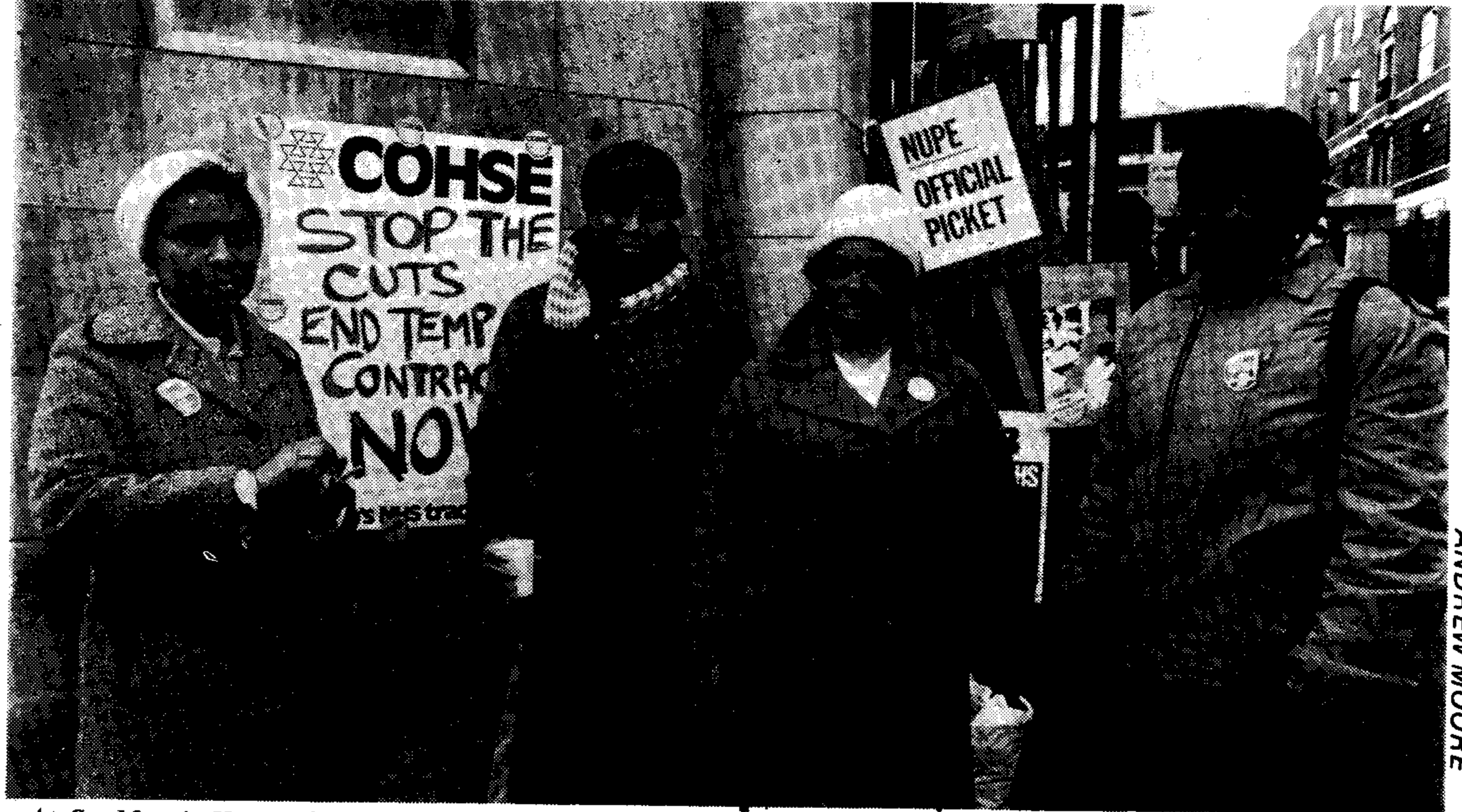
*Saturday March 17. Mass canvass of city, starting from Victoria St., at 10.30am.

*Sunday March 18. Municipal policy conference at NUR Club, Dean Road.

*Thursday March 22. Lobby of Parliament.

*Friday 23 March. Full discussion and ratification of budget proposals by the Labour Group.

*Monday 26 March. Mass rally at St George's Hall.



At St. Mary's Hospital in West London, three workers have been sacked for refusing to sign new contracts. Far left: Mrs S. Samaroo; second left, Mrs. M. Cato; on the right, Rita Maxim.

Nottingham cuts thwarted

AT ITS full council meeting on March 12, the 1984-5 budget of Nottingham's Labour-controlled City Council, fell by 27 votes to 28 against.

The budget, which included cuts of £1.8 million from the initial estimated expenditure of £24.1 million, was proposed by the predominantly right wing Labour Group, despite the local District Labour Party's opposition.

Unfortunately, only one left councillor, Richard McCance was prepared to break the whip in defence of the Party's policy.

But as the Labour council only has a majority of one, this

was sufficient to force the Labour Group to redraft its budget.

The rejected cuts budget was part of a four-year strategy of implementing cuts in line with government demands. The main result of the cuts proposed this year would have been an austere regime from council offices to the public and local government employees.

Over the whole four years this strategy would have entailed cuts of nearly £8 million, with devastating consequences.

Other councillors used various excuses to side with the right in the council chamber - that the proposed cuts were cutbacks in expansion only, were cuts in wastage, did not involve cuts in existing services or jobs which were conveniently and narrowly defined.

What was predictable was that the discoveries of wastage, etc., only came to light after the budget had been formulated.

The alarming but predictable feature of the events in Nottingham have been the rapidity with which soft left councillors with quite commendable records of fighting cuts when outside the council chamber, have moved rightwards since taking office.

Six councillors were prepared to break the Labour whip in opposition to rent rises only two months ago. But with the budget only one of those six was still prepared to stand by the principle of accountability to the Party's policy. With a strongly right-wing Labour Group on the Council, breaking the Party whip in defence of accountability is clearly the way to try and promote a credible fight against the Tories' cuts.

Councillor McCance's stand this year will ensure that opponents of the cuts outside the council chamber will know that they have an important ally inside.

Richard McCance told Socialist Organiser that "the fight against the rent rises was a start. We must continue the momentum, otherwise all we will be doing is managing the crisis of the Tories in the name of socialism."

Hounslow vote

BUDGET proposals made by Hounslow Council's ruling Labour group were defeated at the Council meeting on March 6, with six Labour councillors voting against.

The proposals included rent rises [an average increase of £1.50 a week], 12.8% rate rises and net cuts of £1.8 million, and the loss of about 100 jobs.

The six councillors supported an amendment to refer back the proposals, moved by Councillor John Connolly and seconded by Socialist Organiser supporter, Councillor Chris Hickey.

Opposition to cuts has grown since Councillors Enda Donnelly and Heather Wetzel were expelled from the Labour group in the Council's last term of office for voting against cuts.

This year the borough Labour Parties voted overwhelmingly to reject cuts.

Local government unions put out a joint leaflet against the cuts and organised a demonstration of more than 200.

At the borough Labour Parties meeting, councillors speaking in support of the budget laid great store by a separate proposal to launch a campaign against cuts next year. But last year a similar proposal for a 'Make the Government Pay' campaign prompted a walk-out from the council meeting by many of the right wing Labour councillors!

The council leadership are now organising another council meeting in a new attempt to get their budget through.

The GLC and the Queen

WHAT is happening to the GLC Labour Group? At their last meeting on Monday 5 March, a furious row erupted, and the leader, Ken Livingstone, made an astonishingly vituperative attack on some of his colleagues.

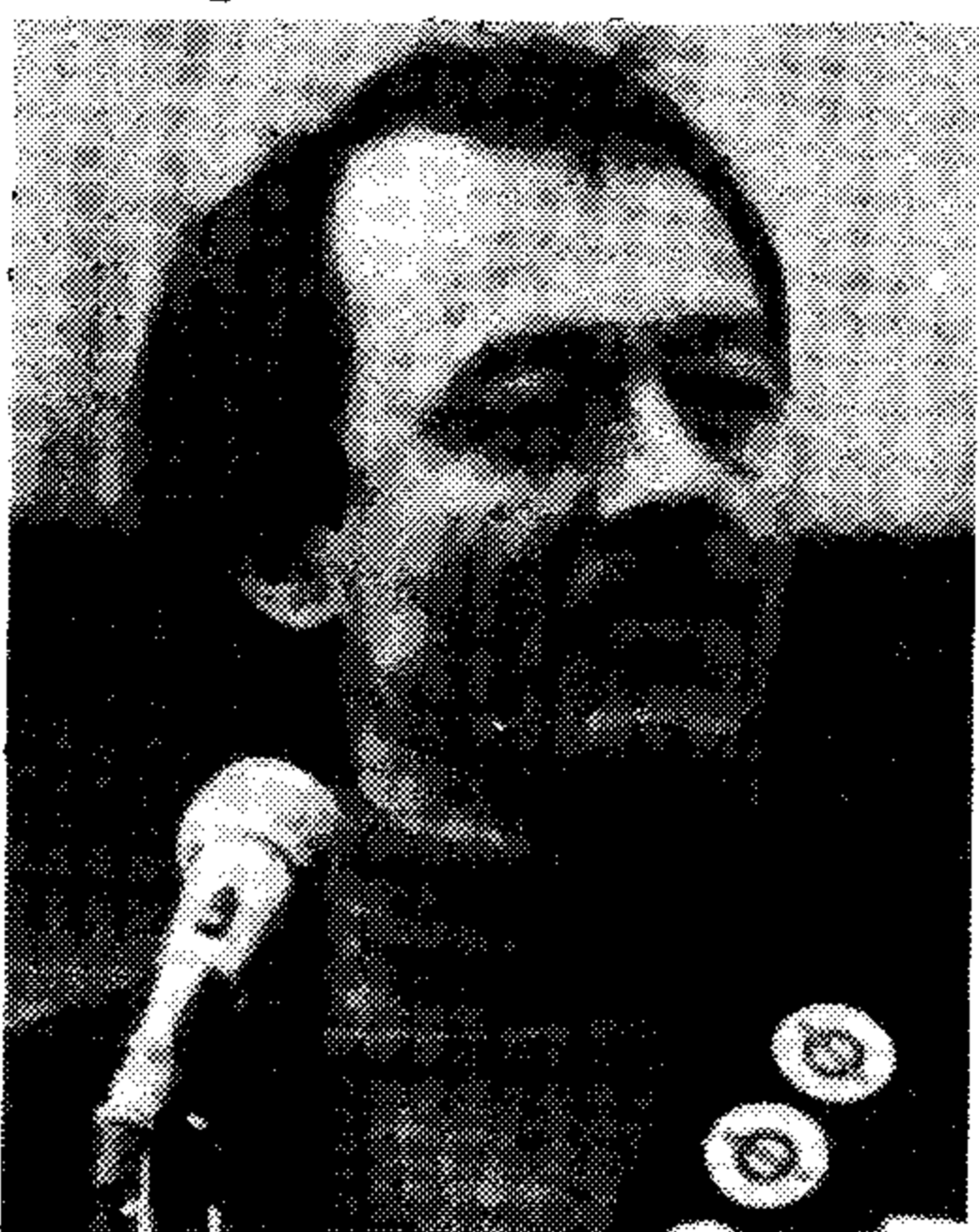
The dispute was over the cost of the ceremony for opening the Thames barrier. Having taken the (to my mind) unfortunate decision to invite the Queen to perform the opening, the Labour Group has agreed to lash out £240,000, with a further £100,000 being contributed by the private contractor. Quite a tidy sum.

Motion

Eight of the Group, having consulted their constituencies and General Committees, have put down a motion to be debated in full council. "That this Council rejects the proposal to authorise expenditure of £240,000 on the official opening of the Thames Barrier on 8 May 1984."

The motion is in the name of Andy Harris and was signed by Deirdre Wood, Bryn Davies, Jenni Fletcher, Leslie Hammond, Steve Bundred, Charlie Rossi and Ashley Bramall.

By Paula Watson, Westminster South CLP observer to GLC Labour Group.



Ken Livingstone

Ken Livingstone clearly found this move a source of much vexation and embarrassment. He appealed to the rebels to withdraw their motion, urging them to put loyalty to the group before their personal principles. Above all, he seemed to dread any publicity.

What is he so afraid of, I wonder, the Tory press or the Labour activists?

Andy Harris, Leslie Hammond and Bryn Davies replied to their leader's appeal by stressing three points.

First, that their own GCs were genuinely concerned at the cost of the ceremony. Secondly, that democratic accountability required all the group members to consult their constituencies before reaching a final decision and that had not been done. And finally, that they were being true to the spirit of the manifesto by refusing to acquiesce in the spending of large sums of public money on junkets and ceremonial.

Livingstone, angry and red faced, launched a fierce counter-attack, calling the motion's supporters "left careerists".

He argued that anyone who held office in the Group must support the Group's decisions. If they wanted to oppose, they should resign and do so from the back benches.

Turning to Bryn Davies, he said "I supported you, Bryn, on things like school closures, which were utterly against the manifesto. I did so out of loyalty to you and to the Group, when I privately disagreed very strongly."

"We could all build our careers by striking left attitudes and by writing articles for Labour Briefing. I could do that, but I have not because of my loyalty to the Group."

Their stand, he claimed, was "sheer hypocrisy", since they had all acquiesced in compromises on much more important matters.

Deirdre Wood rebutted the charges, saying, "I am a working class woman. I come from a working class background and I represent a working class constituency. If the GLC goes I shall have nothing. For you, Ken, to call me a careerist is a joke."

"You are the careerist in this group, Ken. There have been far too many compromises, too many questionable decisions, too many broken promises. Maybe I was wrong to support them, but this time I am going to fight."

Compromise

Eventually John McDonnell put forward a compromise. Explaining that the cost of the ceremony could possibly be reduced to £175,000, he suggested that the group could vote for the motion if it was amended to read that the cost would be reviewed and a larger subsidy would be sought from the private contractor.

This was passed, though Deirdre Wood, Leslie Hammond, Andy Harris, Jenni Fletcher and Bryn Davies refused to accept the amendment.

The whole incident revealed a lot about what has gone wrong with Labour groups on the GLC and other councils - and Labour Cabinets.

Loyalty only belongs to such a group so long as that group stays true to its manifesto commitments and democratically decided party policy. Once it starts to deviate or go in the opposite direction, it is the duty of any individual member, whether in office or not, to oppose such changes.

Livingstone's admission that he has frequently supported policies which were against the manifesto and which he believed to be wrong shows an incorrect sense of priorities. His first loyalty should be to his socialist principles.

Foot

He sounded much like Michael Foot, who betrayed most of his principles out of mistaken loyalty to the Wilson and Callaghan cabinets.


Livingstone seemed to be putting group loyalty not only above principle but above democratic accountability. The supporters of the motion had consulted with their GCs, the rest of the group had not.

What of the rebels? Are they sincere? Probably. In their speeches I detected a sense of regret that they had been party to so many surrenders and a desire to make a stand, if somewhat belatedly, on a point of principle.

And, finally, what of Livingstone's accusations of careerism and hypocrisy?

I think Livingstone, like most of us, sees and judges other people, their motives and actions, in the light of his own. He believes they are as he is. The world is a mirror showing his own reflection.


When he accuses others of striking left wing postures to further their ambitions, I think he is describing himself more than them.



Join the Labour Party.
Write to: The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.
Subscription is £7 per year, £2 unwaged, 50p OAPs.

Diary of a People's Marcher 50p
and
"How politics were kept out of the People's March"

50p for a single copy, 40p per copy for 5 or more, and 30p per copy for 20 or more, from SUPA, 83 Peckham High Street, London SE15. Please add an amount for postage.



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

Mist over Chesterfield?



Victory day for Benn: a "tame return to Parliament"?

NOW the Chesterfield by-election is safely won, perhaps it's time to consider how Socialist Organiser covered Benn's performance.

I personally felt we didn't adequately cover what the campaign showed about the Labour left. It was as if a red mist descended over people's eyes at the mention of the name Tony Benn, including ours perhaps.

We published, without remark, pictures of Benn holding hands with the Welsh windbag himself, in a gesture of "unity". We published uncritically, Tony Benn's election addresses in two different editions.

The highpoint of all this "parliamentary cretinism" was seeing Tony Benn singing "My Old Man" in a pub with Denis Healy, on the TV, in a desperate attempt to garner votes.

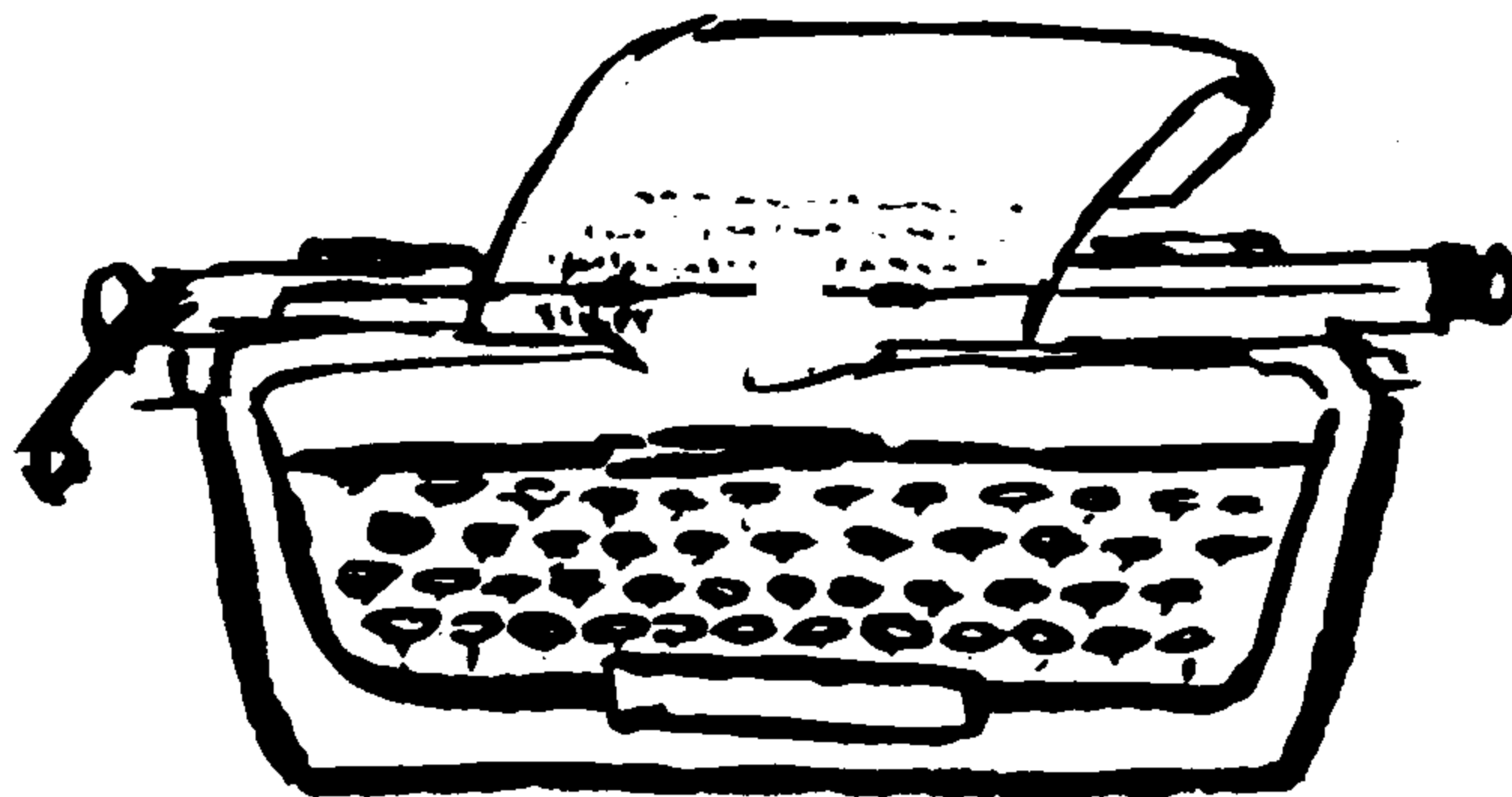
We have a duty to tell the truth to workers: can we honestly say that in terms of concrete gains, this by-election was a triumph for the left?

Of course we'll go on fighting, but when elements of the left desert the fight, we should say so.

Perhaps Benn's tame return to Parliament can allow us to say that "Bennism" if not dead, is a declining force for left wing struggles within the Labour Party.

RICHARD BAYLEY,
York.

WRITEBACK



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

What was Bolshevism?

A RECENT study ('The Bolshevik Party in Revolution, 1917-23', by Robert Service) backs up, I think, Clive Bradley's reply to Ian McCalman on Lenin (Socialist Organiser last week).

Ian's argument, if I have understood it correctly, is that rigid centralism within the Bolshevik party led to rigid centralism within the Soviet state, and thus eventually to the horrors of Stalinism.

Service (who is no Leninist) shows that on the contrary, it was rigid state centralism (initially evoked by the Civil War) which generated rigid party centralism.

As late as 1918 the Bolshevik party had the most minimal central apparatus — a Secretariat with a staff of no more than a dozen, for a party with hundreds of thousands of members. Far from being a tidy, centralised phalanx, it was a rather ramshackle, anarchic, highly argumentative party.

For most of its history before 1917 any rigid centralism had been physically impossible because transport and communication links between different areas of the party were so poor.

Of course it is arguable that errors by the Bolsheviks played a role in the growth of a bureaucratic oligarchy in the USSR, supplementing the pressures due to the isolation of the revolution in backward Russia. But those errors were not in the area of concepts of party organisation.

Political

It was not organisational rigidity which distinguished the Bolshevik party in the pre-World War 1 socialist movement. It was political qualities. It was the drive of the Bolshevik leadership always to argue issues through, to pose questions sharply, to draw out the logic of ideas to practical conclusions.

Other parties — notably the German Social Democracy — were less ramshackle, but had a political regime of consensus and muddling through. In those parties, the role of the leadership was not to fight for political clarity, but to provide a sort of "chair's summing up" on political issues.

Lenin was prepared, again and again, to come out as a minority of one, even among the Bolsheviks, and to fight hard (and usually successfully) for bold ideas.

Even the best leaders of the German Social Democracy, like August Bebel, could not imagine themselves doing likewise. To them Lenin seemed to be an insane factionalist, an intolerant dogmatist, a doctrinaire splitter.

In short, what was distinctive about Bolshevism, and Lenin's method in particular, was precisely what Ian des-

cribes as "the positive side of Leninism":

"The devotion to Marxist analysis, the revolutionary élan, the self-sacrifice, the unyielding striving for working class power."

There was no special Bolshevik technique of organisation, other than the drive to make political ideas clear and concrete by drawing organisational conclusions from them.

I think Ian looks at Bolshevism from the wrong end of the telescope.

While rigidifying, bureaucratizing and finally crushing the Bolshevik party, the emergent state bureaucracy in the USSR also falsified the history of the Bolshevik party. In books such as Zinoviev's history of the Bolshevik Party, and even more so in later Stalinist works, it depicted a Bolshevik party in the mould of the civil-war state or (later) the Stalinist dictatorship — a party whose main distinguishing mark was organisational rigidity.

Healy

This picture of Bolshevism has been accepted, or partly accepted, by many would-be Trotskyists. For Gerry Healy's Socialist Labour League/Workers Revolutionary Party, in the years when it was still a serious political organisation, it was translated into a concept of the Bolshevik party as first and foremost a hard organisational machine. Politics were not determined by Marxist reasoning, but by the needs of the machine-against-machine combat of the 'alternative leadership' with the labour bureaucracy.

I suspect that Ian's picture of Lenin's Bolshevik party is too much influenced by the model of the SLL/WRP. There is some logic, then, in him seeing Stalinism as partly caused by Bolshevism: but the truth, I would submit, is the reverse. His picture of Bolshevism is partly moulded by Stalinism.

COLIN FOSTER
Islington

Not a workers' state?

MAY I remind Mike McNair that in the same year that Trotsky defined the USSR as a degenerated workers' state, surgeons were still dealing with gangrenous limbs by reaching for the hacksaw blade. Needless to say, penicillinised anaesthetics have today replaced the guillotine but for comrade McNair the only anaesthetic in operation seems to be the one that is impairing his grasp of political realities.

We live not in 1938 but 1984 and like the rest of the organisms on this planet, the USSR has developed and moved on. Trotsky was amply adept at

recognising this process.

In 1925 he had argued that the Soviet leadership had been blown off course and that a sharp tendency battle was necessary to restore a revolutionary policy. By 1930 he saw that a "Thermidorean reaction" had taken place and a factional struggle was central to reforming the Party, state and Comintern.

By 1940 he was saying that an alien, parasitical caste had usurped power and only a wholesale political uprising could destroy it and recreate soviet democracy. Like tracing

the evolution of a cancer from a micro-cell to an ubiquitous tumour, Trotsky's political position changed under the impact of the growth of an expanding soviet bureaucracy. Unlike McNair, he critically scrutinised the organically developing social caste, advancing his political position, rather like a chess grand master responds to the movements of his opponent.

For Trotsky, Stalin did not represent a capitalist class, but his social support was rapidly taking on many of its characteristics. He qualified his analysis by stating that the Second World War would either end up destroying the bureaucracy in the flames of counter-revolution or a socialist revolution or, and this he thought most unlikely, it would emerge in a stronger condition. If the latter happened, and it did, Trotsky maintained that the whole analysis of the "degenerated workers' state" would have to be reassessed.

Commodity

Yes, of course, the Soviet economy is not strictly capitalist in that it is not based on generalised commodity production. But is this that important? Is it not merely an ethereal difference? Does not the bureaucracy move just as decisively to crush revolution as any capitalist class? Of course it does.

The term 'bureaucracy' rather than 'class' was applied to the Soviet elite supposedly because it had no role in the mode of production and therefore no historical mission. But who would deny that the Soviet establishment is just as secure in its domain as any capitalist class in Europe, and more secure than quite a number?

It's here to stay so why not admit the fact. The "degenerated workers' state" thesis was

predicated on the existence of a tremulous social layer, frantically balancing above a cauldron of potential proletarian upheaval. Yet for all the factors stated by Martin Thomas in SO 165, the situation of the bureaucracy vis-a-vis the masses has drastically changed over the last fifty years.

Large scale social and economic stratification and differentiation, the growth of a broad-based "middle class" doped on consumerism, the shift from a 30% to 70% demographic mix in 1930 to a 70% to 30% mix in favour of industrial workers today, surely point to the fact that the bureaucracy has beefed-out its roots within Soviet society. Many millions must identify their real progress in living standards with the policy of the bureaucracy. This is the basis of the "stability" of the bureaucracy's rule. The influence of genuine revolutionary Marxism or even misplaced illusions in Stalinism must be a slight factor for the vast mass of the population.

Moreover, to dismiss such developments as "revisionism" has nothing in common with Trotsky's own career for he continually related, adapted and revised the concepts of Marxism as the class struggle itself developed.

So what are we saying about the USSR? That it is neither a capitalist or socialist state is certainly true. But it certainly cannot be classified as a workers state either.

Surely the developments within and without the USSR since Trotsky's death have rendered his 1940 classification of the Soviet state redundant?

We need to bring our analysis of the USSR up to date and in line with what it actually does at home and in the world, which certainly has nothing to do with "workers states".

GERRY HOFFA,
Bournemouth

Join the Labour Party

Socialist ORGANISER

Scargill gets it right

BREAK LINKS WITH TORIES!

By Harry Sheen

Join the Labour Party

Socialist ORGANISER

Fight the witch-hunt

JOBLESS KEY TO WAGE-CUT PLAN

By Harry Sheen

Inside

TGWU

Cuts

Women

Tebbit

Heffer

Kent's appeal to

Subscribe!

Get SOCIALIST ORGANISER each week delivered to your door by post!

RATES: £5 for 3 months; £8.50 for 6 months; and £16 for a year.

Name

Address

Please send me months' sub, I enclose £

To: Socialist Organiser, 28, Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

NO ROOM FOR ROCK MUSIC

ZHORES MEDVEDEV ON ANDROPOV'S COURSE

Box 23, 136 Kingsland High St., London E8

Socialist ORGANISER

Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Freeze rent and rates.

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

*The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, M15 etc), public accountability, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

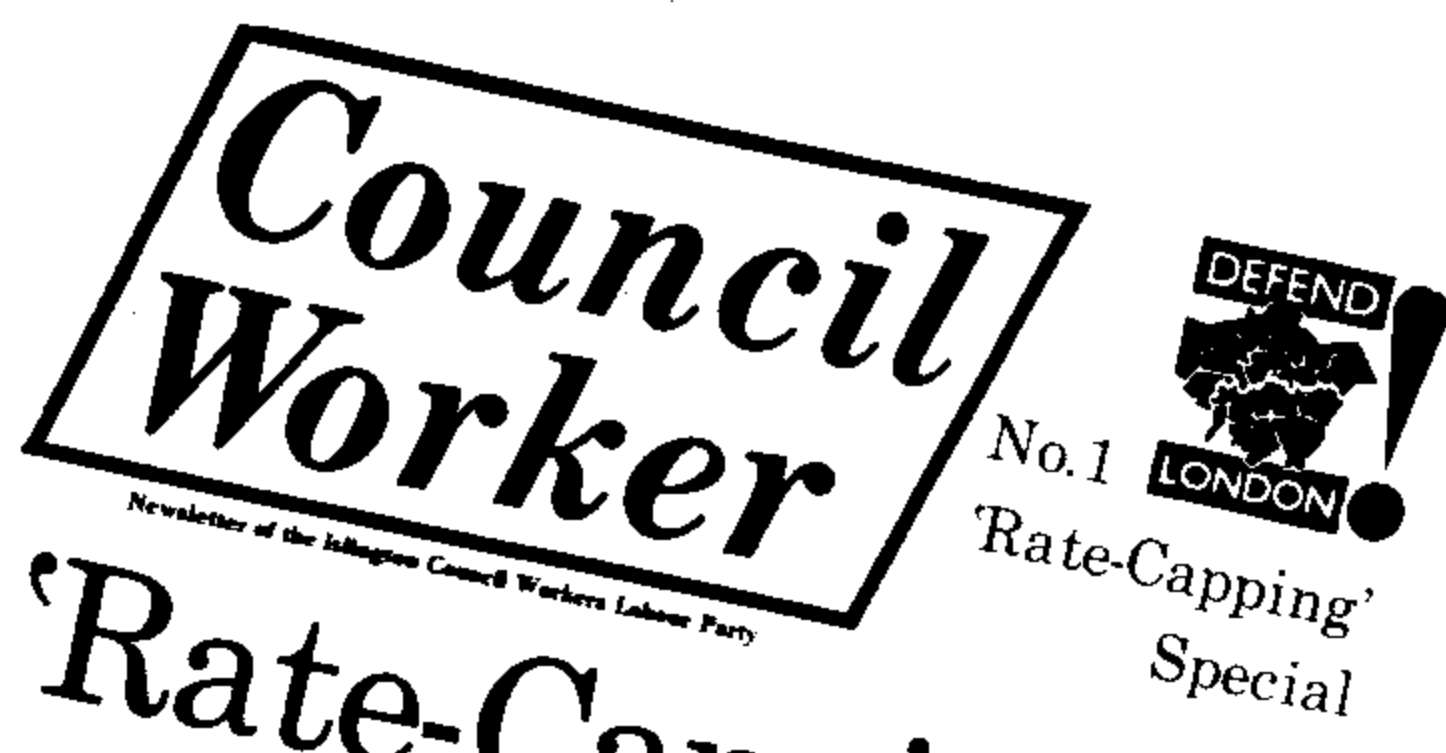
Sheffield Socialist Organiser day school. Saturday March 31, 10.30 am to 3 pm, at Mount Pleasant Community Centre, Sharrow Lane, off London Rd.

With workshops on the peace movement, gay rights, racism, women in the labour movement, videos.



Build workplace branches

By Nik Barstow (Secretary, Islington Council Workers' Labour Party workplace branch)



'Rate-Capping': the Tory threat to our jobs!

DLO manual workers: NO TO BONUS



AT LAST the Labour Party is starting to realise that its workplace branches exist.

The Greater London Labour Party plans to begin "sending regular bulletins and information" to branches - though this announcement is also an admission that for the last two years, in London as elsewhere, workplace branches have received no information or help from Labour Party officials.

Lack of central help has not stopped workplace branches growing. Branches have been built round the country. They have recruited new members and begun to campaign.

These new branches are often the most lively and interesting labour organisation workers can join - because they are the least bureaucratic.

Many of them now produce regular bulletins. Liverpool Postal Workers' branch's 'Labour News' is now up to its 14th issue. Islington Council Workers' branch has started to produce 'Council Worker', a four-page monthly newsletter which has carried our arguments on rate-capping, Liverpool council's fight and the need to scrap bonus schemes into every department.

Newsletters like these can stir a real interest in the

Party at work. Experience round the country shows that workplace branches can easily double, treble or quadruple Party membership in a workplace within months.

Our branch is pressing for Regional Offices to start sending information to branches on campaigns and policies, and also to agree to distribute material produced by individual branches.

We want regional officials - who have often been unhelpful to groups of Party members wanting to form a workplace branch and invented arbitrary rules on what the definition of a 'workplace' is - to receive a clear instruction: Do what the members want.

We are also calling for Regional Officers to give help in setting up meetings between workplace branches in a region or industry.

I urge Socialist Organiser supporters to build workplace branches where they can - and even if they can't, to help by pressing their Constituency Labour Parties to encourage the formation of branches in their area and by fighting for Labour Party regional organisations to help these branches rather than obstructing them.

* If you want more information about setting up workplace branches, contact Nik Barstow, 165 Liverpool Road, London N1 (01-278 1341).



Workplace branches have been built among many different groups of workers

SOCIALIST ORGANISER Day School, Sheffield, Saturday March 31. Mount Pleasant Community Centre, Sharrow Lane, off London Road. Workshops, videos, plus social. Tickets for day school £1 (unwaged 20p) and for social, £1 unwaged 50p.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK public meeting, North Staffs Poly, College Road, Stoke. Speaker: Gerry Byrne. For more details contact Jill Mountford, 64 Nelson St., Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent or ring Stoke 84170.

GLASGOW Labour Campaign for Gay Rights meets in the AUEW Halls, 7.30, second Thursday of every month. Contact Box 35, 488 Great Western Rd, Kelvinsbridge, Glasgow.

SCOTLAND EDINBURGH. Contact Dave 229-4591. SO is sold at Muirhouse (Sat 10.30-12.30) and at the First of May bookshop, Candlemaker Row.

GLASGOW. Contact Stan Crooke, 63 Dixon Ave, G42. Paper sales, Friday lunch-time, Springburn shopping arcade; Saturday morning, Coatbridge shopping arcade; Tuesday morning, Maryhill UBO; also West End bookshop.

NORTH-WEST HYNDBURN. Contact Accrington 395753.

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

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

ROCHDALE. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

STOKE: Contact Arthur Bough, 23 Russell Road, Sandyford. SO is sold at Kermaise Books, The Market

What's on

DEFEND London Democracy. Public meeting with speakers John McDonnell (GLC Finance Chair), Phil Turner (Leader, Camden Council), and others, plus discussion. Thursday 22 March, 8.00 p.m. Kingsgate Community Centre, 107 Kingsgate Road, London NW6. Organised by Hampstead and Highgate Labour Party (Kilburn Branch).

CHILD Poverty Action Group fringe meeting at East Midlands Labour Party regional conference: Saturday March 17, 1pm at Manhattan Room, Parade Hotel 'Unfair Welfare is no fun-fair'.

'DRILL Hall', 16 Chenies St, London WC1 (01-631 1353). Theatre workshops led by actress Effie Arestides, Fridays 6.30-8.30pm, Rehearsal Room 1, until September 28 1984. 'Should interest those who seek an alternative to the usual drama school training'. Fee: £2 per session (£1.50 concessions).

WHY We Need a Socialist Health Service. Discussion meeting. 21 March at 7.30 p.m. at the May St. Institute, May Street, Cathays. Speakers: Anne Delaney, S. Glamorgan AHA; Martin Barclay, NUPE Cardiff No. 3 Branch (both in personal capacity).

STOCKPORT. Contact 40 Fox St, Edgley (429 6359).

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

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

HALIFAX. Contact: 52156. SO is sold at Hebden Bridge Books.

HARROGATE. Contact Dan 69640. SO is sold at Harrogate Market, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday lunch-times.

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

HULL. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

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

NEWCASTLE - ON - TYNE. SO is sold at the Days of

SUNDERLAND. Contact c/o Durham.

YORK. Contact Richard Bailey, 1 Gordon Street, York. SO is sold at the University (Friday mornings), Coney St (Saturday mornings), the dole office (most mornings), and at the Community Bookshop.

BRADFORD. Contact Richard Moore, 6 Ashgrove, Bradford.

WALES AND WEST BRISTOL. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

CARDIFF. Contact 492988.

MIDLANDS BIRMINGHAM. Contact Godfrey Webster, 169 Barclay Road, Bearswood, Smethwick. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop.

COVENTRY. Contact Keith, 75623. SO is sold at the Wedge Bookshop.

SHEFFIELD. Contact Rob, 589307. SO is sold at Boots in Fargate (Saturday 12 to 1) and at the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Rd.

SOUTH BASINGSTOKE. Contact 75 Freemantle Close. SO is sold at Good News bookshop, London Rd.

OXFORD. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8. SO is sold at EOA Books, Cowley Road.

LONDON BRENT/ NORTH-WEST. Contact Mick, 624 1931.

CAMDEN. Mike, 267 4806.

HACKNEY. Andrew Hornung, 76 Carysfort Rd, N16.

HARINGEY & ISLINGTON. NIK, 278 1341.

HOUNSLOW. Chris, 898 6961.

CRITIQUE public meeting. Friday April 6: The Limits of Local Council Socialism. Speakers Robin Murray, Chief economic advisor to Ken Livingstone and Scott Meikle, author of Essentialism in the Thought of Marx. All meetings at 7.30pm, University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1.

THE THORN in the Rose - the Politics of Clause Four, A Revolutionary Marxist Critique. By Brian McKenna. Produced by Socialist Student (Glasgow). 30p. Rates (including postage): 1 copy: 50p; 2 copies 80p; 3 copies: £1.25, 5 copies: £2.00, 10 copies: £3.95. Special rates for larger orders. Write for details. Available from Socialist Student (Glasgow) c/o 29 Bowmont Place, Halfway, Cambuslang, Glasgow.

LABOUR Briefing conference on 'Labour and NATO'. Saturday March 24, from 10.30am at County Hall, London SE1.

'IRELAND - the issue facing Labour'. Southampton Labour Committee on Ireland meeting, Thursday March 22, 7.30 at the Labour Club, Queensway. Speaker: Don Flynn.

ACTION Group on Immigration and Nationality conference. Saturday March 24, 10 am to 4.30 pm, at AUEW House, 43 The Crescent, Salford.

NEXT Socialist Organiser delegate meeting. April 14, in Nottingham.

PUTNEY. Tom, 789 7587.

RICHMOND. Nick 876 6715

S.E. LONDON. Siu Ming, 691 1141.

SOUTHWARK/ LAMBETH. Jeff, 635 8468.

TOWER HAMLETS. Susan, 377 1328.

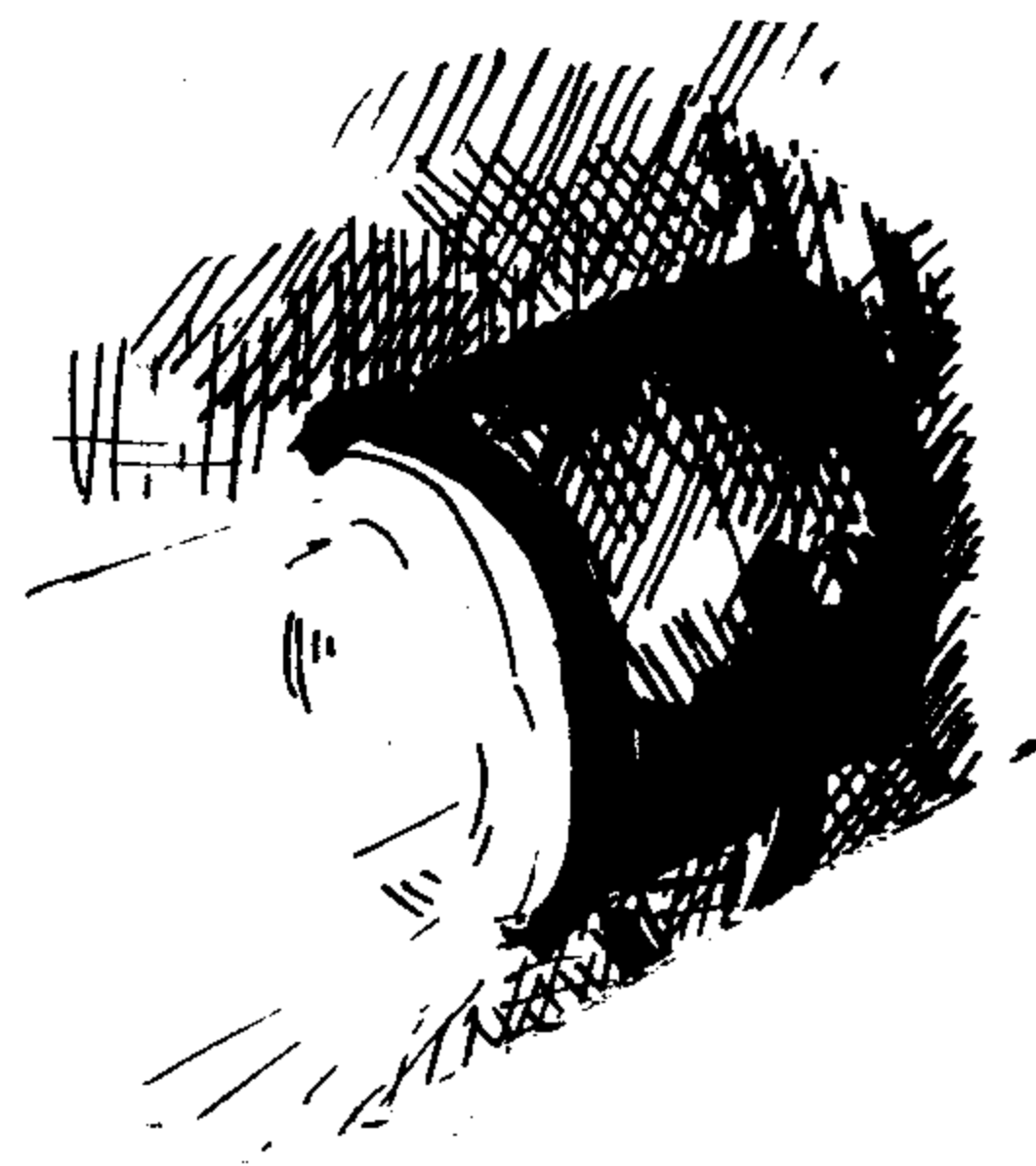
Socialist Organiser is sold at the following bookshops in London: Central Books, Colletts, The Other Bookshop, Bookmarks, Bookplace (Peckham Rd, SE15), Kilburn Books, Reading Matters (Wood Green shopping centre).

JOHN O'Brien, a South London comrade, is in Twining ward, Kings College hospital, Denmark Hill, SE5.

John fractured his spine in a car accident on Sunday 11th. He is likely to be in hospital for a few weeks - so write to him and say what we're saying: "Get better soon, John" - or, "It's a hell of a way to get off a YTS scheme".

Southwark SO.

Anti-climax and the assassin



LIAM O'Flaherty's 1928 novel, 'The Assassin', now reprinted, is about the assassination of the Irish government minister Kevin O'Higgins in 1927.

O'Higgins was gunned down on his way to 11 o'clock Mass. His killers were never caught.

It was a killing that gladdened the hearts of an awful lot of people in Ireland. For O'Higgins was the hated 'strong man' of the Free State government which, with English backing, had defeated the Republicans in the bloody Civil War which came to a ragged end in 1923.

Civil war

It was the most bitter civil war, that war between two factions of Sinn Fein, with former comrades pitted against former comrades, regarding each other as traitors or incorrigible lunatic incendiaries.

It was the worst of civil wars also because it was fought on clear policies. It is astounding, but nevertheless true, that it was not fought on Partition.

The nearest thing to a clearly defined issue was the choice between the Free State (in the Commonwealth, and with the King of England as the King of Ireland), and De Valera's formula of 'external association': Ireland in the Commonwealth and recognising the King not as King of Ireland, as such, but as King of the Commonwealth of which Ireland was part.

The Republicans lined up behind De Valera's plan.

In the course of the war, 77 men, prisoners, were executed in captivity by the Free State government. Atrocious deeds were done as the Free State fought to reconquer heavily Republican areas like Kerry.

O'Higgins was the minister most associated in people's minds with the repressions of the Civil War. He was the 'strong man'. But the reputation outstripped the reality.

He was the man known to have said, 'Take them out and shoot them' when in December 1922 the Cabinet discussed the retaliatory shooting of

Mick Ackersley reviews Liam O'Flaherty's novel 'The Assassin', recently reprinted.

four prisoners, including Republican leader Rory O'Connor, who had been best man at O'Higgins' wedding a year earlier. And they had taken O'Connor out and shot him together with the three others, in retaliation for the shooting of a Free State deputy, Sean Hayles, by the Republicans.

Terrible deeds, and a terrible reputation to have.

In fact O'Higgins had strongly opposed shooting the hostages, and was the last member of the Cabinet to agree — with the weary brutal words that would haunt him to his grave. You can still feel the hatred in the words of the fierce song about the shooting of O'Connor, Mellows, Barratt and McKelvie:

"Take it down from the mast, Irish traitors,

It's the song we Republicans claim,

It can never belong to Free Staters,

You've brought out nothing but shame,

And you've murdered our brave Liam and Rory,

You've murdered young Richard and Joe,

Your hands with their blood are still gory,

Fulfilling the work of the foe"

'Fanatical'

It finally caught up with O'Higgins that Sunday morning in 1927 on his way to Mass.

O'Flaherty's version of the O'Higgins assassination tells about the return from America to Ireland of a cynical and embittered, 'fanatical' and ultimately despairing, revolutionary, Michael MacDora, to kill O'Higgins.

It follows him from his arrival in Dublin until he leaves Ireland 'forever', the deed done.

It goes with him through the terrible world of the Dublin poor, lodging houses, betting shops and so on. It is a world dominated by the ebbing back of the vast national revolutionary movement into its channels, unsatisfied.

O'Flaherty takes MacDora through this world where leaders of the newly bureaucratized Irish unions hob-nob in hotels with hard-faced capitalists. (O'Flaherty was a socialist, and his brother Tom O'Flaherty was in the American Trotskyist movement in the 1930s).

The terrible disillusionment and the internecine splits and squabbles of the defeated clandestine Republican underground are encountered as he seeks collaborators for his job of revenge. One of them talks about his plan of 'a year ago' to set off bombs in England during the General Strike and thus foment civil war, which would be to Ireland's advantage.



Republican protest demonstration

The book powerfully suggests to me the atmosphere of anti-climax and of disappointment with the long revolutionary exertions and struggles which had led to nothing better than the bourgeois Free State. It was one stage further on from the indignation with which the poet Yeats upbraided the Irish bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie for having let all the traditions of revolutionary opposition and aspirations fall back before a society dominated by miserably money-grubbing. Yeats is responding to the general lockout the Dublin employers declared against members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union in 1913.

Romantic

What need you, being come to sense,
But fumble in a greasy till,
And add the halfpence to the pence,
And prayer to shivering prayer,
until
You have dried the marrow from the bone?
For men were born to pray and save:
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Yet they were of a different kind
The names that stilled your childish play.
They have gone about the world
like wind,

But little time had they to pray
For whom the hangman's rope was spun.
And what, God help us, could they save?
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

(O'Leary was a Fenian leader)

Duckling

Somebody once described O'Flaherty as an 'inverted romantic'. In any case, he paints society with great realism.

But O'Flaherty's book seems to me overwritten in places, and the mental feverishness and even frenzy with which MacDora sets about his task is unnecessary.

He is presented as a zealot and fanatic acting alone, the classic terrorist acting apart from any mass movement and as substitute for it.

But you didn't need to be a refugee from Dostoevsky to want to kill O'Higgins, and the people who did it most probably weren't.

Artistically the effect of this is to highlight the true general picture of social defeat and prostration which is the backcloth for Michael MacDora's activities in Dublin — as small bourgeois Ireland blinks in the light of day, having broken out of its shell. It is the picture of the revolutionary swan finding itself a small bourgeois duckling.

Coming up on TV

Saturday March 17. Channel 4. 10.30. The Comic Strip Presents . . . The Beat Generation, where part time hipster Desmond invites angry young men and underground armed poets round to his dad's place.

Sunday March 18 ITV. 10.00pm. Spitting Images. Talk is that the caricature show might be banned — it's a little irreverent with its puppets of Reagan and Thatcher.

Sunday March 18. BBC2. One Pair of eyes: Nationality, Uncertain. About exiled Czech writer Zdena Tomin. Tomin came to Britain in 1980 with her husband Julius and their two sons. In Czechoslovakia, she had been a spokeswoman for the human rights movement Charter 77.

Nine months later the government of Czechoslovakia stripped the family of their citizenship. The documentary contains unique clandestine film of Prague during the Russian invasion of 1968, smuggled out of the country.

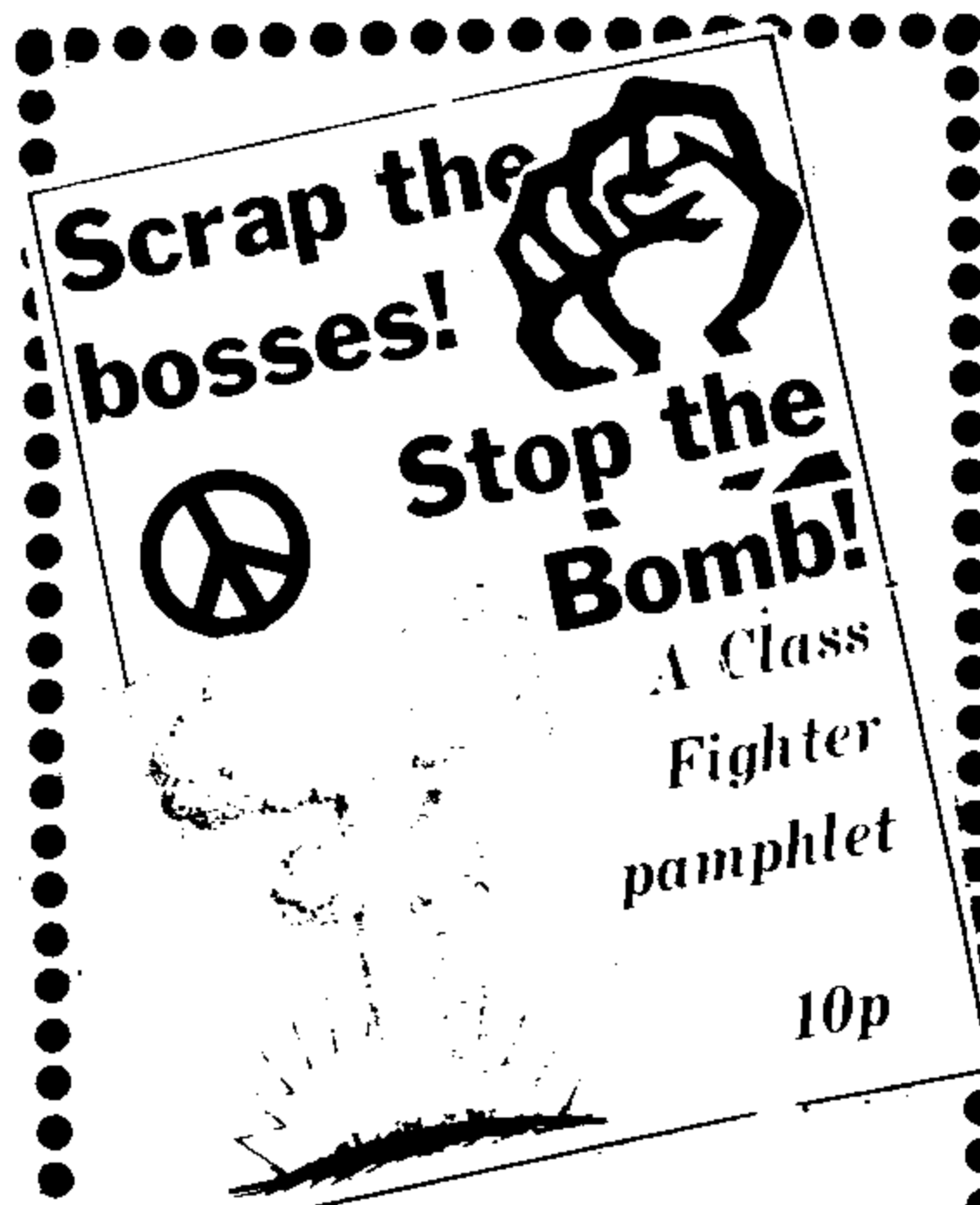
Sunday March 18: BBC2. Wales! Wales? The years leading up to the miners' lockout of 1926 and the decade of depression which followed are examined in 'Bitter, Broken Bread', the fourth film in the series which takes its title from the pen of miner-poet Idris Davies.

Monday March 19. BBC2: Horizon: Prisoners of Incest. About the research of a team at the Hospital for Sick Children at Great Ormond Street.

Monday March 19, BBC1. Panorama: America's other election. Panorama reporter Jeremy Paxman looks at El Salvador. Salvadoreans go to the polls next weekend to elect a new president against a background of a civil war which has now claimed 30,000 lives. Reagan plans to give El Salvador's bloody regime \$8 billion in economic aid. The purpose of the election is to try to justify US policy as a "defence of democracy".

Monday March 19. BBC2 The Stateless Nations: Belgim's Warring Tribes. Not so long ago the Flemings were the poorer community — Dutch-speaking peasants. The French-speaking Walloons dominated bourgeois Brussels and the industrial towns along the River Meuse.

Since the last war there has been a complete transformation.



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

Industrial

NUJ backs down



Demonstration in Richmond — 6 March 1984

By Peter McIntyre

Dimbleby sacked NGA members and transferred production of the Richmond and Twickenham Times to TBF (Printers) at Nottingham — a firm ruled by the House of Lords to be a separate entity from T Bailey Foreman Publishers, the union-busting newspaper firm.

The NUJ issued its blacking instruction after Lime Grove TV members twice voted not to back Dimbleby. Members concerned had then voted to accept the instruction.

The BBC may have been embarrassed by the instruction, but not unduly alarmed. The NUJ National Executive last week collapsed in the face of the House of Lords ruling and refused to defy the courts to make the strike official again.

Carousel still out

ANTHROPOLOGISTS can make a name for themselves by discovering a long-lost tribe on a South Pacific island. Perhaps a TGWU full-timer will one day make a discovery of equal stature by stumbling across the long-lost Carousel dispute in the East End of Glasgow.

For the time being, however, TGWU officials seem more concerned with ensuring that the strikers are left to their own devices in their battle for survival.

The strike, for union recognition, reinstatement and better working conditions, began in July of last year. At first the TGWU Record, the union's national newspaper, did carry reports of the dispute.

By January, the size of the article in the Record had sunk to a mere 28 words. Since then, not a word.

In the earlier days of the dispute, the strikers received invitations from a broad range of union and Labour Party branches to

speak at meetings. These have tailed off too.

The only work now being done by the TGWU full-timers is defending themselves against justified accusations that they have now practically abandoned the strikers.

Three weeks after their appearance before the TGWU Scottish Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting which discussed the future of the dispute, the strikers have yet to be informed of the meeting's decision.

Receiving no coverage in the trade union press, no speaking invitations from labour movement bodies, and no support from their own officials, the seven strikers continue nonetheless to picket the factory daily.

Rank and file solidarity is more vital than ever.

Address for donations/speakers: Carol Rodger, 47 Cuthelton Terrace, Parkhead, Glasgow.

Scott Lithgow

THE TWO competitors left in the running to take over Scott Lithgow (Trafalgar House and Howard Doris) suddenly announced last week that they planned a joint takeover, 75% Trafalgar House and 25% Howard Doris.

By the time this issue of Socialist Organiser appears, the deal to hive off the shipyards on the Lower Clyde may be signed, sealed and delivered.

The terms of the takeover are due to be finalised this week.

But what it will mean for the Scott Lithgow workers themselves is far from clear. Rumours of the planned size of the new workforce vary from 1,250 to over 2,000.

It is even unclear what the present size of the workforce is. Officially, it is 2,900 (compared with 5,400 a year ago), but other estimates put the figure at close to 2,000.

Trafalgar House and Howard Doris are demanding that the

whole affair be concluded by Friday March 16, or else the deal will fall through. This ultimatum will be used to browbeat the workforce into accepting the deal, maybe including compulsory redundancies.

Howard Doris has also stressed that the new Scott Lithgow would not be involved in any negotiations with the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU). At present, the workforce is covered by national agreements between the CSEU and British Shipbuilders.

However weak the CSEU may be, the removal of the Scott Lithgow workforce from it, together with the end of the closed shop, will amount to a further weakening of trade union organisation at the yard.

But the public statements from shop stewards' convenor Duncan McNeil have been concerned only with the size of the workforce after privatisation. And the shop stewards' committee continues to play a spectator's role, as it has done throughout the last three months.

Weir's pumps

SINCE Friday, 2 March, 1,000 shopfloor workers at the Weir's Pumps factory in Glasgow have been on strike for an across-the-board wage increase of £15 a week.

Management's offer to the workforce, who are mostly AUEW members, was 5% plus continuation of the productivity deal which has been running in the factory for the past two years. Management has claimed that the productivity deal can bring in £600 a year for each worker.

Last year it brought in just £13.

The workers staged a 24 hour strike on Friday February 24 against the offer. But management struck firm, and on the Wednesday of the following week the workforce decided to strike indefinitely from Monday March 5.

The strike actually started on Friday 2nd because management withdrew all clock cards after workers refused to lift an embargo on goods entering or leaving the factory.

As one of the shop stewards pointed out when moving a resolution of support for the dispute at the local Labour Party (Cathcart CLP), the dispute promises to be a drawn-out one. Strike headquarters have been set up in a local scout hut, and a picketing rota organised from 7.30 am to 11.00 pm each day.

The picketing has stopped goods entering and leaving the factory, though nothing is being produced anyway. However, the clerical staff, who are members of AUEW-TASS, are continuing to work during the dispute, on the grounds that they are not covered by this pay claim

Build for mass pickets

By Helen Rigby

A MASS picket has been maintained at Willan Metals, Catcliffe, New Rotherham, since Monday this week.

On that day a non-union lorry driver with a police escort entered the strike-bound plant and took out seven tons of titanium.

The workers are in the fourth week of their strike over a management 'bonus scheme' which will effectively cut their wages by between £70 and £40 a week.

This is the first strike at the factory in 25 years, and support amongst the 79 shop-floor workers is high.

They haven't had a pay rise since 1979, won't take a drop now, and are staying out indefinitely if necessary, until management agrees to take them back on pre-"bonus scheme" terms.

At first management were un-

willing to negotiate, but broke their silence last Wednesday (7th) when the first meeting with shop stewards took place. It seems that the 24 hour picket of the gates is having its effect.

There is a meeting between officials of the strikers' union, the AUEW, and Engineering Employers' Federation representatives, on Wednesday 14th. And on Thursday the Willan Metals shop stewards are meeting with shop stewards from the other factories in the group of which it is part, the Aurora group.

Now is not the time for complacency. Pressure must be stepped up if the workers' demands are to be met. In particular workers at Willan Metals

should be calling for support strike action amongst the other local firms in the Aurora group.

Willan Metals is only the first of the group's factories to be faced with the new scheme and it is vital that this battle is won now.

Financial support and boycott action has already been pledged by the other plants. This must now be turned into concrete action if wages and conditions in the Aurora group as a whole are to be defended.

Links with the local labour movement must also be pursued, and recent representations to the Trades Council built upon.

Donations to and information from: Len Wilkinson, 11 Hilltop Close, Brinsworth, Rotherham, South Yorks. (tel: Rotherham 78687).



FACTS & FIGURES

By Martin Thomas

A NOTE on import controls. The US steel industry, like the British, is in acute decline. And the US steel unions, like the British, have responded by demanding import controls.

This week they won a 'victory' — or rather, the US steel bosses, who also favour protectionist measures, did.

Brazilian steel is now likely to be barred from the US.

Negotiations over a quota on imports broke down after Brazil refused to accept a US offer of a quota at one quarter the level of its 1983 trade.

Although Brazil's exports to the US are only 5% of total US steel imports, the US is Brazil's largest steel market.

The ban will mean further calamities for Brazil's steel workers, who suffer much worse conditions than in the US.

While the US government thus squeezes Brazil's exports, simultaneously the IMF is demanding that Brazil runs a big excess of exports over imports to finance its debt repayments. The answer? Further drastic cuts in Brazil's imports, and industries shutting down for lack of raw materials and spare parts.

Roll on the recovery? 395 businesses went bust in February — 13.2% more than in February 1983, which was already one of the highest monthly figures on record.

A second footnote to the recent item about Third World-based multinationals: this time, on 'multinationals' based in the Stalinist states.

The term is a bit misleading, because there is only one company which can really be described as a multinational based in a Stalinist state. That is Tungram, the Hungarian light bulb company.

Tungram is now closing down its plant in Ireland, but still has factories in the US and Austria.

Apart from Tungram, however, there are reckoned to be some 400 companies in advanced capitalist countries which are partly owned by the USSR or East European states.

The total amount of investment involved is estimated at \$550 million, about two-thirds of it in 100%-owned or majority-owned concerns.

If the Stalinist states were capitalist, rather than based on nationalised industry, then of course they would have massively more multinationals. But these figures show that the bureaucrats relish a bit of capitalism on the side.

And another footnote. The Kuwaiti Petroleum Company has already bought Gulf Oil's chain of petrol stations in Europe. Now, according to the Sunday Times Business News (11 March), it is planning to buy its US chain, through a front company.

Capitalism on the side part 2: private enterprise in China is now estimated [by the Financial Times, March 6] to be about as widespread as it was before the Cultural Revolution.

Private businesses employ about 7½ million people — as against only 140,000 immediately after the Cultural Revolution.

DAVID Dimbleby's BBC Budget television programme went ahead on Tuesday this week without Labour Party or TUC representation, and to the accompaniment of an angry picket.

The BBC obtained an injunction against the National Union of Journalists to allow Dimbleby to present the programme. The latest in a long series of injunctions, it instructed the union to lift its boycott on the country's most famous scab of the day.

Two pamphlets summing up the ideas of Socialist Organiser. 'Where We Stand' - 20p plus 16p postage. 'How to fight the Tories' - 10p plus 16p postage. Or the two together, for 45p including postage. From Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8





Vote Todd and fight

By Jim Denham

THE battle to succeed Moss Evans as general secretary of the TGWU must be almost incomprehensible to many union members.

Ron Todd, hailed by the Morning Star as a consistent supporter of "left wing policies" denies being the candidate of the left. Meanwhile, George Wright, the Welsh regional secretary, generally considered a right-winger, boasts of his CND membership and claims he is no different from Todd politically!

Underlying this confusion surrounding the two serious candidates in the election, is a major crisis in Britain's biggest union. The TGWU's membership has fallen from two million in 1979 (remember the badges 'Join the Two Million?') to 1.5 million today.

A special one-day Rules Revision Conference earlier this year had only one item on its agenda - to raise the dues by 25p a week in order to ward off financial disaster.

And the crisis is not just financial. The Evans leadership likes to present itself as the left face of British trade unionism. During the NGA dispute last year, Evans was the leader of the "Friends" of the NGA within the TUC General Council and was one of the few union leaders to publicly condemn Murray's sell-out.

But at the same time, Evans used his hold over the NGA to dissuade them from fighting for a recall TUC conference and to hold fire until the scheduled TUC in September.

More importantly, neither Evans nor any other "left" TGWU leader made any call for solidarity action with the NGA.

The current dispute at Carousel in Glasgow shows just how much the TGWU's left image is worth in practice. Local TGWU officials have been actively undermining support for the strike.

Behind these local officials stands Hugh Wyper, Scottish Secretary of the TGWU, and a prominent CP member.

Meanwhile, the Carousel strikers, fighting for union recognition and reinstatement, are left isolated on the picket lines without the secondary action needed to win the dispute.

Wyper, along with Evans and Deputy General Secretary Alex Kitson, publicly backed Roy Hattersley for Labour Party Deputy Leader after the Executive voted for Meacher.

Similarly, in Region 5 (the Midlands area), regional secretary Brian Mathers was until quite

recently generally considered to be part of the "broad left" and had very close links with the Communist Party. That did not prevent him blatantly sabotaging the 1981 Ansell's strike and actively opposing the recruitment of the unemployed to the union.

Ron Todd, who enjoys Evans' personal support, stands entirely within the present leadership's fake left traditions. He has built his reputation as a "tough" no-nonsense negotiator, around his record of handling Ford pay claims - exactly as Evans did.

Under the pressure of a militant rank and file, he gave a degree of leadership to the 1978 Ford strike that succeeded in squeezing 10-16% rises out of the company and helped finish the Labour government's 5% pay ceiling.

But in January 1981 he unilaterally abandoned a national Ford pay strike after secret talks with the company over the Christmas holidays.

His handling of Ford's proposed foundry closure has been an object lesson in how to confuse and demoralise the membership: after the closure announcement he swiftly sanctioned strike action, only to defer it when the company offered talks!

At the moment Wright appears



Ron Todd

to be marginally ahead in terms of branch nominations, (although these are not always a reliable guide to final voting) and there is no doubt that although he is the "outsider" in the sense that he is not based at the union's London headquarters, his impressive campaign organisation has given him a clear lead over Todd and the ramshackle official "broad left" organisation.

So why should left wingers support Todd - the "left-winger" who denies being a left-wing candidate?

Because, whether he likes it or not, Todd has become the candidate of the left in the union and can only win on the basis of support from members who want

to fight the government and the treachery of the TUC.

Because Wright, as secretary of the Welsh TUC, was the man who pushed the document 'A Social Plan' advocating incomes policy and cooperation with the employers.

Because a victory for Todd will strengthen those forces who want to build a serious, fighting left current in the TGWU, based upon rank and file militancy, democracy, (presently only the general secretary is elected) and resistance to social contract-type deals with a future Labour government.

We should place no reliance on Todd, but his election will help build such a current.

THE three Water Board Authority unions - the General and Municipal Workers, National Union of Public Employees, and the Transport and General Workers - representing 28,000 manual workers have rejected the 4% pay rise offer made to them this week as being totally unrealistic.

The unions are looking for a substantial increase related to earnings in gas and electricity, though when talks resume next week with management they expect a revised offer of around 4.5%, similar to the deal accepted by council manual workers, to be put.

A MAJORITY of the 900,000 local authority manual workers have voted to accept the latest offer of a 4.5% pay increase - half as much again as the 3% pay limit set by the government on public service pay - made by the Conservative-dominated council employers. The rise is to be backdated to November 4, 1983.

This is the first important pay rise negotiation to be concluded in the public service pay round, which should set a target for the other 1.5 million public servants, including 500,000 white collar workers, and the 250,000 health ancillary workers, who are now involved in pay talks.

A RECENT survey conducted by the European Commission on regional, social and economic disparities shows that the UK's most economically hard-pressed regions are among the worst off in terms of income and unemployment in the entire EEC.

According to the index, Merseyside, Dumfries and Galloway, Strathclyde, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Cleveland, Durham, Gwent, most of Glamorgan, Cornwall, Devon, and the West Midlands, are the most depressed areas in the UK - generally confirming that those regions furthest away from the Community's heartland tend to be the most economically hard-hit. Few British regions, in fact, come above the statistical averages on which the basis of the index has been developed.

ON Friday March 9, union leaders representing 60,000 London Transport workers of all categories called on all members to strike on the TUC's 'democracy day', in protest against cuts in local government powers.

This recommendation will now be put to individual union section, shop and depot meetings, bringing the possibility of all public transport coming to a halt in London on March 29.

THE Northern Ireland committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions last week discussed the possibility of holding a People's March for Jobs in the region this summer.

This follows the announcement that despite the region having the highest rate of youth unemployment, the government is cutting back on funding for youth unemployment schemes by £4.5 million.

BLOC Conference

THE Broad Lefts Organising Committee conference in Sheffield is only a few days away now - on March 24 - and clearly it is going to be very big.

BLOC was set up in 1981 as a coordinating committee of trade union Broad Lefts, but so far it has had a very low profile. This conference could change that.

Socialist Organiser supporters are pressing for the conference to launch a campaign on anti-union laws. TGWU 5/833 branch has passed the following resolution.

"We call on the BLOC

conference to initiate a broad labour movement campaign against the Tory anti-union laws.

The major demands of this campaign should be:

1. For the TUC to break collaboration with the Tories and end all talks with the Tories on new anti-union laws,
2. For all unions to commit themselves to defiance of the anti-union laws,
3. Solidarity strike action in the event of any union being penalised under the anti union laws.

The campaign should be organised through democratic

delegate committees at national and at local level".

The problem is that BLOC is dominated by the Militant tendency, who seem to want to use the Sheffield conference as a rally rather than as a forum for debate and for organising.

In some areas, like Manchester, they have already set up local BLOCs - ensuring that they have firm Militant majorities, although Militant is not in fact dominant in the local trade union Left.

It is important that others on the Left get to Sheffield and make sure there is some real discussion.

Sandal Nursery Occupation

By Malcolm Sullivan

WAKEFIELD Labour Council leader Jack Smart has resigned as leader of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, and will retire from the council as from May 1985.

He said that the reason for his decision was his wife's poor health - and the difficulties he faced with the local Labour Party.

Wakefield District Labour Party has voted no confidence in the council Labour group over its decision to cut services and in particular to close two

nurseries.

The recent Yorkshire Labour Party regional conference backed up the DLP by voting 766,000 to 32,000 to keep the nurseries open.

And the council meeting this Wednesday, 14th, will be lobbied by NUPE and NALGO, who have called on all their members to stop work for an hour and demonstrate outside the Town Hall.

Sandal nursery is still being

kept open by parents and supporters who have occupied it. The Council is going to Wakefield County Court on April 5 to try to get an eviction order, and the nursery campaigners are calling for a demonstration outside the court.

Active trade union, Labour Party and community support can save this nursery.

Donations and messages to Sam Steward, 'Save Our Nurseries Appeal Fund', c/o Labour Club, Vicarage St., Wakefield.

Hull NUT strike

ABOUT 1,000 NUT members struck in Hull last Thursday afternoon. The strike represents a significant step in the fight against the Labour-controlled County Council's reorganisation plan.

This plan, if implemented, would go a long way to destroying what moves have been made towards comprehensive education in Hull.

Middle Schools (9 to 13) would be abolished and 16-18 education hived off into Sixth Form Colleges (for the academic) and FE Colleges for the non-academic.

37 school buildings would be closed and either mothballed or sold off to the Manpower Services Commission.

"Neighbourhood" schools would be established, drawing on a specific catchment area - with no guarantee of additional cash or facilities in areas of social deprivation.

Any attempt at a balanced intake into Hull schools - one

of the touchstones of comprehensive education - would be stone dead.

A large number of redundancies amongst the teaching force would also have to be pushed through. Judging from the predicted in-service training figures, job loss amongst teachers would be in the region of 600.

The signs are that ancillary staff will be equally hard hit.

About 1,000 teachers, parents and others packed Hull City Hall last Thursday to listen to speeches condemning the plan. This condemnation is not enough. Hull NUT policy - argued for by Socialist Teachers Alliance members and won - is to build a broadly-based schools defence committee, drawing on the massive opposition to the plan from teachers, parents, City Councillors, and trade unionists.

The task now is to build maximum support for that committee and extend the fight through the entire Hull labour movement.

Get ORGANISED!

Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance - groups are established in most large towns. We ask £1.50 a month minimum (20p unwaged) contribution from supporters.

I want to become a Socialist Organiser supporter/ I want more information.

Name

Address

.....

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

BUSINESS AS USUAL



The Peace Camp is still strong

Socialist ORGANISER

Greenham: support needed now!

By Judith Bonner

THE Ministry of Defence, it seems, are resolute about smashing Greenham.

Following the latest round of evictions, the MoD have declared an all-out battle.

Newbury council have consistently failed in their efforts to evict the camp. As fast as benders have been pulled down, they have been built again.

But bailiffs and police have been particularly resolute this time to destroy the camp.

Evictions continue every day. Most of the women have no benders left. Gone too are kitchens.

Sleeping bags, the hardy Arctic type, are definitely in at Greenham. Thank goodness spring is in sight!

Life there is certainly not comfortable, but then life at Greenham never has been.

Next to the elements, survival also means resisting constant harassment and often physical attacks.

We have faced violence from the police and soldiers, fascist vigilantes, and un-

friendly locals.

Other irritants have been other assorted types of the male gender, from Sun reporters to paper sellers telling Greenham how 'divisive' the camp is.

But despite the latest attacks and evictions, Greenham won't give up. Morale is high and the women there at the moment are determined. The problem appears to be outside.

In the past week the media have been particularly virulent against Greenham. A particularly nasty and reactionary tirade of opposition has been reported locally.

And who has leapt out to defend Greenham? To express solidarity with the struggle or organise support?

A press release from CND? Nothing from the Labour Party, Labour Party Young

Socialists, or any trade union.

On Tuesday 13th, another convoy came out of Greenham. This time no launchers were in sight. Obviously the MoD is out to win, and wants us to think that there is no opposition.

It's very important that we out here show that there is!

Those on the telephone tree for alerting sympathisers to what's happening at Greenham should use it properly. If you're not on one, get in touch.

In the meantime, here's what to be doing.

- Mobilise at work, in your branch etc, for women to go to Greenham.

- Raise money for or send outdoor sleeping bags, and dustbin containers (for food etc.)

- Send messages of support
- Send lots of quids to the Greenham women.

For further information ring the London Greenham office, 144 Caledonian Road, N1 (01-833 2831).

Watch out for details of further action and agitation...

JOHN HARRIS (I/F/L)

A Budget for the rich

TEN pence on 20 cigarettes, 15p on a £1 take-away meal, 2p on a pint of beer, and 4p on petrol. That's what the Budget will mean for most people. Income tax has been cut, but the increased taxes on consumption will more than cancel that out for most of us. Meanwhile, the tax cuts are paid for by cuts in the public services that we depend on. The rich will benefit from cuts in company taxation, as well as gaining proportionately more from the income tax cuts and losing proportionately less through the increased taxes on consumption.

BROAD LEFTS ORGANISING COMMITTEE
Conference. Saturday March 24, 10am to 5.30 at the Octagon Centre, Western Bank, Sheffield.
Credentials for up to 5 delegates per trade union body from George Williamson, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6EH.



PREPARE FOR JUNE 9 ACTION Out against Reagan!

By Judith Bonner

Why the possible change of heart by CND, to demonstrate against Reagan? Pressure has come from within CND itself.

On the weekend of February 18-19, meetings of Youth CND, CND executive, Projects Committee and Action 84 all passed resolutions for some event on Reagan. The latter three were all meeting at the same time in the same building.

Projects Committee is a sub-committee of CND Council, and the primary body that suggests and organises major CND events.

Action 84 is a newly-formed group of 'peace movement activists', a little like the 1960s Committee of 100. Its main aim is Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA).

Despite its anti-leftist attitude and its focus on NVDA by small groups rather than mass agitation, Action 84 has been the major force behind a Reagan demo.

Whether or not CND was to organise an event, Action 84 seemed determined to have NVDA.

So what will be happening on June 9? It depends on negotiations between Jimmy Johns of Action 84 and James Hinton of Projects Committee. Their proposals will be forwarded to council.

The most likely outcome is two major actions on the Saturday. The NVDA event will be organised by Action 84 around the talks in the morning. Some form of rally or demo, but I doubt a march, will be organised by CND.

In the meantime, here's what to do.

- Organise transport now for June 9.
 - Organise a big meeting on the Reagan demo. Invite me!
 - Get Labour Party wards, Constituency Labour Parties, trade unions etc. to support it.
 - For the Euro-elections, get your Labour MEP candidate to support the demo. Organise a campaign meeting on Cruise.
- Contact Action 84 c/o Jimmy Johns, 17 St Johns Green, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex.

FUND

£81.50 received this week, making a total of £276.70 so far this month. Thanks to: Humberside CC supporters, £40; Martin Barclay, £20; Basingstoke supporters, £21; Roger Fitzhugh, 50p. We need £1,000 a month to keep on an even keel. Send donations to: 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.