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No Oscars for union leaders as curtain rises on

THE NON-STOP SELL-OUT SHOW!

By Harry Sloan

EXPOSED under the harsh glare of the spotlight during the current mini strike wave, the official leadership of the unions has once again exposed its talentless warts and wrinkles for all to see.

The eruption of strike action in the wake of the water workers' struggle offered the officials a command performance to show what they were made of.

Gone was the hoary old excuse that "we want to perform, but the members won't turn out" — since the struggles erupted for the most part from the rank and file.

Not only was there a full audience to watch the officials do their act, but it was already stamping and whistling in the theatre waiting for the show to begin.

First in the stalls were the South Wales miners: but while they hissed and booed the right wing villains, they had little to cheer from the left wing stars who badly fluffed their part, despite prompting from 1,000 Welsh pickets. The strike movement was halted — and the interval before the ballot gave the NCB and the Tory press their chance to perform.

Since then the audience has included steelworkers and print workers from Robert Maxwell's BPC empire.

They have witnessed a dismal display. In the case of Ford at Halewood, where the dispute erupted over the victimisation of one worker but centred on a wholesale management attack on manning levels, star negotiator Ron Todd managed to get the audience to listen to the oldest line in the book — suspension of the sacked man on full pay pending an inquiry. All eyes will be on his performance in the second act — as Ford demands sweeping changes in its 'After Japan' plan.

In the South Yorkshire steel stoppage, thousands walked out against compulsory redundancies and shift changes. ISTC General Secretary Bill Sirs seized the chance for a cameo role and declared the strike official — while simultaneously opposing any move to spread it.

In truly immortal words, he told his audience that if the strike lasted a week or two it might make MacGregor and the Steel Corporation more ready to consult the union. So while workers risked their jobs and sacrificed wages battling to defeat hard-nosed management, Sirs declared in advance that he saw it as no more than a fleeting show of protest.

While there was widespread sympathy for the Yorkshire strike throughout the union, and steel workers in every area face the same BSC offensive, Sirs insisted that it should not last, and should be confined to South Yorkshire.

Called off

To wind down the curtain, ISTC local and national leaders called off the strike and delivered a 'compromise' chorus in which they claimed to have saved six jobs and held off the shift changes. BSC management heckled from the back row that, "The terms they have agreed to go back on are exactly the same as those that were available before the strike".

But star turn of the officials must be SOGAT 82 General Secretary Bill Keys, whose stand-up 'left' patter normally goes down a storm at the TUC Palais.

Brought on stage by the strike action of his members who print the Radio Times at Maxwell's Park Royal works, and by the rapid spread of supporting blacking action to the sister East Kilbride plant, Keys knew the very routine that would win Maxwell's applause.

He started by calling off the action which had Maxwell by the throat — the blacking in the London area of all Maxwell's publications. From this weakened position he then went into 'negotiations' in which Keys managed to concede introduction of job flexibility and staffing cuts in Park Royal (under the threat of closure) and East Kilbride, and a no-strike clause (see page 14).

Common to all these performances have been:

□ The willingness of the rank and file to take action. (In the Tilbury dock strike this has even seen strikers vote down recommendations for a return to work by their officials and their own stewards).

□ The appalling weakness of the officials, and their determination



JOHN HARRIS

BL Cowley Assembly Plant workers are still fighting the bosses' moves to squeeze an extra six minutes' work a day

to restrict rather than extend the struggles that erupt, grasping for often illusory straws from the employers.

□ The obdurate refusal of the employers to concede any more than the most marginal trifles to union negotiators, for whom they have nothing but barely disguised contempt.

There is no denying that conditions are hard for the winning of major victories in a period where the entire ruling class is on the offensive.

But there is no way that victories can be won so long as struggles remain controlled by officials who see their job not as building upon

and strengthening the action of the rank and file but controlling it, containing it, and compromising on its objectives.

In this crisis-racked theatre of struggle, the role that remains unfilled is the crucial one of a principled leadership in the rank and file of the unions and wider labour movement.

The policies and perspectives of Socialist Organiser are designed to fill that role. As yet we are not drawing a mass audience: but as the existing leaders fall flat before packed houses and leave militants asking for their money back, we continue to fight for an audition.

EDITORIAL

IN THE centre pages of the Sunday Times on April 10 readers found an unusual article.

"The Police and Criminal Evidence Bill attempts to give new powers to the police. In doing so, it would destroy many of the liberties of England, and it would bring us nearer to becoming a police state".

The author is no radical or civil liberties campaigner, but a retired judge, Lord Salmon. The Bill he is denouncing was shaped decisively by the pressure on the government of police chiefs.

Likewise, the news that Manchester police chief James Anderton has established permanently armed patrols has called forth statements in the press against the arming of the police from police officers shot on duty and from their relatives.

Anderton's moves contradict Home Office guidelines that police should be armed only for specific tasks, and were undertaken without the knowledge of the local Police Committee which is supposed to have (very limited!) supervisory powers over him.

Already, as our centre page feature shows, the police's use of guns has increased massively.

Lord Salmon and his like are playing Canute to a powerful trend for the police more and more to become a vocal, independent, political force.

It goes back to the early '70s, when the Heath government beefed up the police against the big strike movements of that period. It came out into the open with the riots in summer 1981. It is paralleled by an increasingly political and autonomous stance from the Army, which for over ten years has had a large share in the direct administration of a whole province of the 'United Kingdom' — Ireland.

For those who think that Britain's state forces are so 'constitutional' that they could never act like Chile's did, here is evidence of the forces becoming more and more unconstitutional under our eyes. As the class struggle becomes more tense, might increasingly overshadows rights.

Britain is not going to become another Chile tomorrow. But what is going to happen tomorrow is that strikers, black people, and anyone else who falls foul of the cops, will face increasingly heavy repression.

What should the labour movement do?

We must fight to defend existing rights and existing controls over the police — and extend them.

Some police authorities have stopped their chief constables getting plastic bullets. Labour representatives on Police Committees should be pressed to use their position to the maximum — raising calls for the sacking of Anderton and others.

We must make sure that a new Labour government is held to the Campaign Document commitment to bring in elected Police Authorities everywhere (at present they are only partly elected, and there is no Authority at all for London), and gives them full powers.

The Labour GLC has been in the forefront of the fight for such accountability measures. GLC councillor Steve Bundred, interviewed in our centre pages this week, suggests that this fight makes black self-defence groups unnecessary and diversionary.

Not so — any more than winning procedures and mutuality clauses in a factory can contradict keeping the strike weapon ready! On the contrary, the increasingly strong-arm role of the police which sharpens the fight over accountability also makes self defence more often needed.

It will also mean that picket lines will have to look more seriously at organised self-defence; and united black/white workers' defence squads will be increasingly on the agenda.

And beyond that? The present police force — separated off from society, but a hot-house for all society's worst bigotries; rigidly hierarchical itself, but beyond control of the community — can only be an enemy for the working class. Through accountability measures we can perhaps restrain it, but never transform it. A socialist programme must replace it with community self-policing — organised labour movement/community patrols, drawn from the people of each area on the basis of universal training and rota service.



How radical is Labour's Campaign Document? Peter Tatchell spoke to Martin Thomas.

What's your assessment of the Campaign Document?

Weak, unsatisfactory, and disappointing. But it has got some positive elements worth fighting for.

What about the economic policy in it?

Reducing unemployment to one million is not an adequate objective, but I think in terms of the overall programme it's all that is feasible. There is no sense in which this is a really socialist programme. It's a social-reformist staging post. But because we have not done the groundwork to win public opinion to real radical socialist policies, it's all that we can hope for at the moment.

That's not to say that we should become fatalist, and accept a reformist halfway house — it means that we must redouble our efforts for that campaign to

Tatchell: 'It's not just a British crisis'

win the hearts and minds of millions of people up and down the country.

At the 'Socialists for a Labour Victory' meeting at LPYS conference, you said that Labour must couple withdrawal from the EEC with a more internationalist policy. What do you mean?

As much as some on the left deny it, there are very strongly nationalistic and jingoistic elements to the anti-EEC argument, and I think those who pretend that there could be a Fortress Britain solution are extremely naive.

Like it or not, Britain is inextricably bound up with West European capital. The links between big business in those countries are already solidly forged. If we're going to defeat them, we have to develop a similar unity among the working class, socialists, and trade unionists in the West European countries at least — to develop a common Alternative Economic Strategy, if you like.

It's not just a British crisis, it's a West European crisis — in fact, a world crisis, but in terms of a set of homogeneous, similar countries, it's particularly a West European crisis, and therefore we've got a common interest with other European workers to fight our way out of that crisis.

Some of us would argue that it follows that the whole campaign for British withdrawal from the EEC is a diversion. It's a 'capitalism in one country' solution, and capitalism can no longer exist in one country. If our opposition to the EEC is on a socialist basis, then the answer is not Britain getting out but a socialist Europe.

Of course the goal is a united socialist Europe. But in the interim, by withdrawing we can resolve some of the economic inequalities of membership, and we are freer to pursue interventionist government policies of our own choosing and to develop links with other countries outside the

EEC.

But the cost of campaigning for EEC withdrawal is that you encourage the false idea that problems come from Brussels, not from capitalism...

In a sense the Common Market is a bit of a straw man. In or out, we are still going to live in a society dominated by capital. But all the arguments about the Treaty of Rome and net payments impede getting on with the real issue, and I think we've got to get out so that all these arguments about the Brussels bureaucracy can be swept aside.

So you get out to prove that it's irrelevant to get out?

I wouldn't put it quite like that! Operating from outside the Common Market, in conjunction with other left governments and movements in Europe, some inside and some outside the EEC, is better than operating inside it.

Socialists for a Labour Victory

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

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

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

Manchester Councillors expelled

by cllr Pete Keenlyside



AS a result of voting against the 88p a week council house rent increases, 27 Labour councillors in Manchester have now been expelled from the Labour Group. A letter from the National Agent David Hughes, dated March 10 but only received by us on the 22nd, delivered the sentence.

"In view of your action in Council on March 2, 1983, I have now to inform you that the Secretary of the Labour Group has been instructed to withdraw the Labour Group Whip from you as of now."

There is no time limit to the expulsions, which is normally the case, so in theory some of us could be out for years. That might be what this present NEC want. By doing that and only re-admitting a few at a time they could insure a right wing majority in the Group for years to come. It is vital that constituencies

and district parties send resolutions to the NEC condemning this abuse of the rules and demanding our reinstatement. If they get away with this in Manchester then there's nothing to stop them doing the same in other parts of the country where there is a strong left wing on the council.

For our part, we are considering an appeal to the National Conference this year. That's the only avenue left open to us now. Normally, appeals against expulsion from a Labour Group go to the NEC, but in our case the court of appeal has already delivered the sentence.

In the meantime, while all this was going on the Group leadership managed to force through their fifth cuts budget in succession. They needed two attempts to do it, though, because the left voted against at the first budget meeting. With the Tories and Liberals also voting against it was

defeated, the only time this has ever happened in Manchester.

We voted against because although the cuts weren't as severe as in previous years, they were still cuts and therefore against Party policy and the manifesto we stood on. As well as the 88p rent rises, there was a cut of £1.8 million in committee budgets, and almost £7 million was removed from the repairs programme. The budget had not been drawn up in consultation with the Party and as far as we were concerned it wasn't a Labour budget.

In the end the right wing got it through because the pressure put on the councillors who voted against proved too strong. We even had the historic sight of the council union leaders and assorted full-time officials actually lobbying a Labour Group meeting. The pity is that they didn't do that four years ago instead of

trying to keep up the cosy pact they've had with successive group leaders.

The problem was that they saw the issue purely in terms of whether their members would get paid if the budget continued to get voted down. That, and the implied threat of the right to do a deal with the Tories which would have led the compulsory redundancies, meant that the very people who should have been our allies were against us.

When we met shortly before the second budget meeting the minority who were in favour of abstaining including the one Militant supporter on the council, had become the majority. Although five of us still thought we should stick it out and vote against, that wouldn't have been enough to affect the result. We didn't want to be completely isolated for no purpose, so we went along with the majority and abstained.

Careers at stake Right wing slows pace of witch-hunt

BOTH THE March Labour Party National Executive (NEC) meeting and the Organisation Sub-Committee on Monday 11th voted overwhelmingly to defer the three resolutions on their agenda dealing with the witch-hunt.

The 'official' reason was 'impending legal action' — but in fact Militant say that while they have not dropped their court action, they are not going to push it.

At the March NEC, there was much talk about the Darlington by-election the following day. Now there are the local elections in May.

The right wing was willing to sink Bermondsey; but if the same approach was repeated and generalised to other areas, it would directly affect them. The Labour leadership and right wing don't want Labour to lose the election. The Tories are attacking the rank and file in the first place; but they are also threatening the whole structure of the Labour Party and trade unions. A lot of careers are at stake.

The Right have not changed their minds about the witch-hunt. If there wasn't going to be a fight or 'trouble', then they would go ahead. This is why it is extremely important for the rank and file not to get complacent in the present apparent lull.

What about the five Militant EB members? Islington Central CLP refused to expel Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe; and now their ward is transferred to the new Islington South, all the indications are that the new CLP will have the same attitude.

Hammersmith North is also firm. Unaffected by the boundary changes, it has been continuing as normal with Keith Dickinson playing a full part, including on the GC.

The Campaign Group of MPs, meeting on March 23, agreed to send a message of solidarity to these two CLPs.

The exception is Norwood, which has accepted the expulsion of Clare Doyle and Lyn Walsh.

Although Ted Knight and the leading group in Norwood used procedure to avoid re-discussing the issue at their last GC, it will come up again when the CLP is reconstituted with the addition of a ward strongly in favour of defying expulsions. Other Labour Party organisations should send messages to Norwood urging them to close ranks with the other CLPs, and offer-

By John Bloxam

ing support for such a stand).

It was against this background that the third Labour Against the Witch hunt (LAW) National Council meeting took place last Saturday, 9th. CLP affiliation had increased by about 50% since the previous meeting, and now stands at 55.

Militant's Labour Steering Committee Against Witch-hunts is more willing to work closely with LAW. There have been large joint fringe meetings at a number of the Labour Party regional conference, and one at the Labour Party Young Socialists conference; and the new advert against expulsions is being jointly organised by the two campaigns. It has already got Tony Benn's signature.

The National Council meeting agreed to focus campaigning on the reinstatement of the expelled Militant EB members and on constitutional changes to establish the right of Party members to organise (the Greenwich amendment) and to reduce the disciplinary powers of the NEC. LAW will also support an anti witch-hunt slate for the NEC.

We decided to campaign for the 'Greenwich amendment' alone, rather than also for a simple reversal of the Register, because the Register is no longer central, Greenwich is a much more powerful weapon against the witch-hunt than simple reversal, and to have both on the agenda would give the centre a soft option.

John Bulaitis, reporting from the LSCAW, made the point that the right of the expelled Militant supporters to appeal directly to conference was not automatic, and we'll have to campaign for it.

The LAW National Council also heard reports on the expulsion of 29 Manchester councillors from the council Labour Group by the NEC; the situation with the Tower Hamlets councillors and the activities of the right wing there; and the fight in Brent East to be allowed to reselect their MP.

The next meeting of the LAW National Council was fixed for Saturday May 28.



Workers at Timex in Dundee are occupying to stop redundancies. "We all feel much stronger now we're doing something", one of them said.

Will NEC intervene in Brent reselection?

By Mick Woods

BRENT East Constituency Labour Party may be stopped from selecting its parliamentary candidate by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.

The General Committee decided in October 1981 to defer selection until after the 1982 local council elections. When our Executive Committee met in July of last year to agree a timetable with Regional Officer, Janice Muir, we didn't have the benefit of her company — merely a telephone call informing us that we were under

investigation from the National Party machine, along with the other Brent CLPs.

There followed three of the most bizarre meetings that any of us have ever attended, where people who had publicly called for a vote for the SDP were allowed to accuse leading members of the local Labour Parties of various misdemeanours.

The NEC decided to put the 3 local parties under supervision for 6 months. Brent North, which is a safe Tory seat, was allowed to go ahead with its selection soon after, but Brent East and Brent South, both Labour seats, have had their standing orders gone over with a fine toothcomb, their membership checked, and their GCs and ECs attended by a National Officer.

All of this has wasted a great deal of time and resources both at local and national level which could have been better employed in fighting the Tory government.

During this period, Reg Freeson (the sitting MP) turned out a 38 point letter, jam-packed with accusations about the left. Some right-wingers put their names to the 'gang of 7' document, which denounced the left for caucusing over the selection.

In short, the right wing have done everything in their declining power to stir the shit and delay the reselection.

Now Freeson has had the check to write a letter to the NEC quoting the guideline laid down at the Feb 25 1981 NEC that the selection procedure 'must be commenced not later than 36 months after the General Election'. With the present make up of the NEC it is possible that he might even get away with it.

At the March NEC it was decided to seek legal advice on the issue.

The National Officer's report

is due to go to the Organisa-tional Sub-committee on April 11, and we'll then know if the National Officer considers us to be properly run. If the Organising Sub-committee passes us as OK, then we have Freeson's letter to contend with. It's a bit like being a duck in a shooting gallery.

The possibility of the NEC supporting Freeson's challenge has less to do with any great love for Freeson than with desire to keep Ken Livingstone, the most hotly tipped of his rivals, out of parliament.

Freeson is on the left of the Parliamentary Labour Party, but over the years the steady leftward movement of the party has left him behind. He defends the Israeli state while the party supports the fight for a secular Palestinian state; he was largely responsible for the Criminal Trespass Law under the last Labour administration; and despite his verbal support for a united Ireland he condemns the Provos as fascists and defends Labour Party policy on Ireland.

In the deputy leadership election he voted for Healey against the overwhelming decision of the local party to support Benn, and he was one of those MPs who signed a statement to overturn the Wembley decision on the party electing the leader.

Given that Freeson is on the left of that wretched band of humanity known as the PLP, the threat of him being deselected

by a candidate to his left is, we believe, unique.

Brent East is a left-wing party and proud of it. During the summer our banner was on the picket lines during the Health Workers dispute, marching in solidarity with the people of Palestine; and on Irish solidarity demo last May. We have campaigned locally on job-loss in Brent, on Nuclear Disarmament, on cheap fares, women's right to work, Ireland, Palestine and for the defence of the Health Service. We regularly invite workers in dispute to our branches and GC and have an active membership and developing links with the local unions.

We have supported the fight for democracy in the Party from the beginning — we oppose the witch-hunt against Militant, defended Hornsey, and supported Bermondsey's right to select Peter Tatchell, and went down to campaign for him. We have affiliated to Labour Against the Witch-hunt.

The Organisation Sub-committee meeting on Monday 11th failed to give Brent East and Brent South the go-ahead to reselect. But Brent East's officers have received legal advice to proceed with reselection.

We also intend to call a lobby of the NEC at Walworth Road on Wednesday March 27th. More details next week.

Move to oust White

Pollok Constituency Labour Party on the South side of Glasgow, has voted overwhelmingly for a motion expressing no confidence in their MP, James White. The vote, by 28-9, was followed by another motion, passed by an equally large majority, asking White to resign his seat before the General Election.

After hearing reports of White's business affairs, particularly details of a recent dispute concerning the car collection company of which he is managing director, Pollok GMC supported the Executive resolution against White.

This was the last meeting of the old Pollok which will now be reconstituted under the boundary changes. Despite White's defiant contempt of the local Labour Party, the fight to get rid of him and select a more suitable candidate, will undoubtedly be pursued within the new Pollok constituency.

There is strong feeling in the constituency that White must go and that the NEC will have to respect that sentiment and allow reselection to take place.

The vote is an indication of the depth of feeling within Pollok and many other constituencies that the time is ripe to rid ourselves of right wing MPs such as White, whose politics and conduct bring the Party into disrepute.

LABOUR PARTY AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT!

Join LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCHHUNT
Memberships open to Constituency Labour Parties, trade union organisations, Labour Party affiliates, and individuals.
Fee. CLPs and unions £10, wards £5, individuals and other organisations £3. Write to-
LAW, 11 Wilderton Road, London N16.

Josephine Thomas faces deportation because — to look after her sick mother — she stayed five months longer in Grenada than the Two Year Returning Resident Rule allows.
Contact: Josephine Thomas Support Committee, 4 Deighton Rd, Huddersfield.

Horwich fights closure

"We will fight tooth and nail"



By Noel Hibbert

VIRTUALLY before the ink has dried on the Serpell Report on BR finances, Thatcher is proceeding to destroy the rail network. Another 3,700 jobs are to go in the BR engineering workshops in Horwich (closure - 1,500 sacked), Shildon (2,000 sacked) and Temple Mills.

The closure of the Horwich Loco Works, scheduled now for August this year, will inflict untold misery on a working class community that has built and refurbished locos and rolling stock for decades. One in four families in Horwich has someone in the works and will be directly affected by the closure.

Unemployment in nearby Bolton stands at 16% (17,300) and will soar to well over 20% if the Horwich closure goes ahead, and the expected 800 redundancies take place at the BAC Lostock works in the town.

Ironically, this process of decimation is taking place on the railways at the same time as Britain's EEC counterparts are expanding investment on railway infrastructure at a phenomenal rate. Even the "monetarist" Kohl regime in West Germany is committed to carrying through the SPD's expansion programme for rail.

Yet Thatcher wishes to return Britain to pre-Disraeli times in more than just the ideological sense. She aims to create two nations of rail and non-rail users: those who travel on the lucrative south-eastern routes, and the rest of Britain's passengers who will be forced to give up rail for bus transport.

New stock

Dennis Green, chair of the Horwich Joint Action Committee, argued the case. "Britain needs new rolling stock simply to keep BR functioning at its present level. The demand is there not just to keep the workshops open but to increase orders for new stock."

"If the Thatcher government are allowed to carry out these closures, it will lead to total devastation for working people in Horwich and Shildon."

"The Horwich JAC are determined to stop this closure. We will fight these attacks on our families' tooth and nail, and by

whatever means necessary, including industrial action."

It is now clear that the workshops are in the front line of the Tory offensive, and that if they succeed in closing the plants - it will be the signalmen, guards, drivers and maintenance staff who will be next in line for Thatcher's meat grinder.

So what is the Tories' thinking behind smashing up the railways?

In essence they want to install the US "Amtrack system" into Britain. In the US, there are a small number of east coast-west coast rail routes that connect industrial centres but which predominantly carry freight.

The transportation of people is handled through the Greyhound bus system, a large number of aircraft companies, and extensive multi-lane freeways.

Most of this activity, of course, is carried on by private enterprise.

In an overcrowded island like Britain this system would just not work. And, moreover, to transfer existing rail traffic to private coach firms would lead to a ludicrous level of over-crowding of Britain's roads.

But if you live in Sunbury on Thames and travel to work in a Rolls Royce, do you need to bother about railways?

Surely those esteemed gentlemen who sat on the Serpell Inquiry were men of distinction and impartiality?

The facts show a different story.

Take Leslie Bond for example. A personnel director of the Rank Organisation, Mr Bond has recently negotiated a new 50 year lease with the Ministry of Transport for a chain of motorway service areas.

According to Labour Research "a reduced rent was agreed... which improved the profits for the year" and "the more favourable terms provided under the new leases open up a greater range



The jobs are already being axed

and bridges. Alfred has hated railways for years.

The Minority Report states "Railways are a means of transport. Though each form of transport has throughout history created cultural and social change - and railways particularly so - each has been overtaken in some or all respects, by successors" (Serpell Report, page 106).

Interestingly, Rank has contributed £140,000 to the Conservative Party, £3,000 to the Centre for Policy Studies and £8,500 to Aims for Industry. And "personnel director" Bond has cut Rank employees by 17% in five years.

Hated railways

But maybe Mr Bond is the exception on the inquiry? Not so. Alfred Goldstein, author of the Minority Report is a senior partner in Travers Morgan who just happen to specialise in roads

A test for Knapp

DESPITE all Sid Weighell's mud-slinging, during the recent election, the post of General Secretary has been taken by Jimmy Knapp who was elected by 63% of the votes cast.

This result is a rejection of Sid Weighell-type leadership, represented by Charlie Turnock.

Knapp has been described in the media as a left. But compared to the other three candidates, who isn't?

He is in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament, against incomes policy, and for building unity with ASLEF.

An encouraging sign that democracy is on its way is Jimmy Knapp's willingness to stand for re-election every five years and a recent proposal put forward by the national executive, that delegates to the annual general meeting should be chosen on political grounds and not because "so-and-

so is a nice person and deserves a fortnight's holiday, all expenses paid" as is the case now. Let's hope they both materialise.

We will have to wait and see what he actually does in practice. Already he has said he wants to build unity with the right (collaborating with management). That can only mean not doing what we need to do to defend our jobs, wages and conditions.

The first test for Knapp will be the closure threat to the BR workshops. And what about the Serpell Report. Will we just have a paper protest with leaflets and a petition, and then watch them tear the railways apart? Or will we have action? What about the death by a thousand cuts that is already happening to lines around the country? And what about our pay claim to be lodged this April? Are we going to have the same farce as last year?

The only way to put a stop to this malevolent attack on working people will be through combined industrial action involving all BR engineering workshops. On February 18 this year, Russell Tuck (Acting General Secretary of the NUR), told the Financial Times. "We shall maintain our policy of no compulsory redundancies and no workshop closures."

These fine sentiments now need to be transformed into a reality. The members of the Horwich Joint Action Committee are now working to this end by doing the following:

*Building solidarity between Horwich, Shildon and Temple Mills. Co-ordinated industrial action is our priority.

*Solidarity between all major rail unions - NUR, TSSA, ASLEF and CSEU in the workshops.

*Solidarity between the rail unions and other trade unionists, in particular through the Triple Alliance with steel and mine-workers.

*Solidarity between the local councils directly affected and the working people - young and old - that they represent. Bolton Council have already put their resources at our disposal.

What can you do?

*Help with mass leafletting of the community.

*Raise a resolution opposing closure in your rail/CSEU/Labour Party branch.

*Send messages of support to Horwich and Shildon.

*Organise meetings in your area: invite a speaker to your union/Labour Party branch from the Horwich JAC.

In the summer of 1982 the Horwich rail workers and their families showed that a redundancy threat can be blocked through mobilising mass working class and community support. In 1983 they can stop a total closure - with your support.

*Action lines: Terry Banks, Wigan 832366; Ronnie Hardman, Horwich 691310; Harold Hartley, Horwich 693420.



LCGR AGM

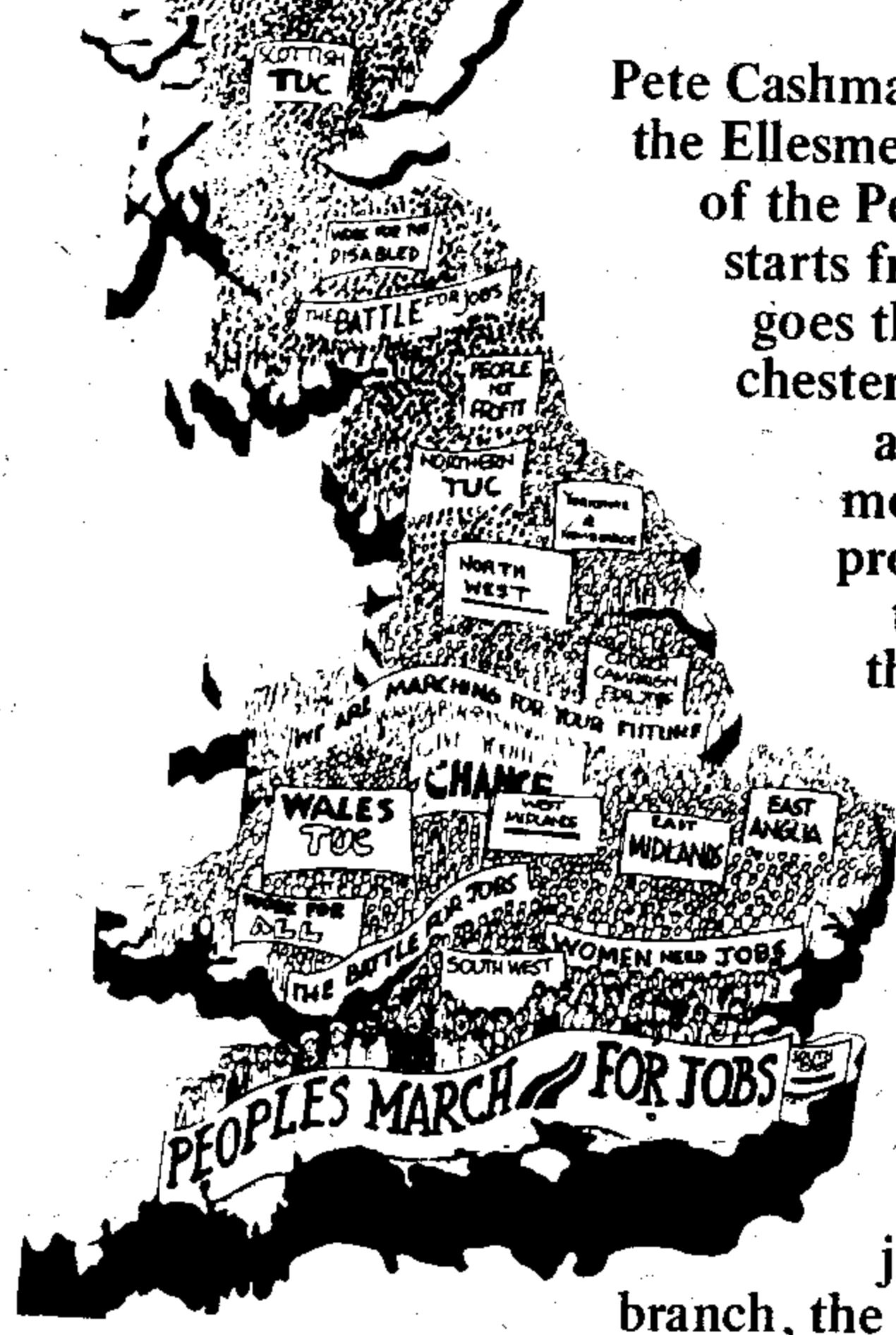
THE LACK of any serious commitment to gay rights in the Labour Party Campaign Document was heavily criticised at the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights national conference and AGM.

The event, staged in Bristol on Saturday April 9, was attended by over 70 members who met to discuss the key elements of the group's activities in the following year, which will include a general election.

The conference was also disappointed at the failure of the recently formed Socialists for a Labour Victory campaign to place gay rights on its election agenda, or to invite LCGR to its foundation meeting. We intend to urge SLV to reconsider its position and to campaign with us for a manifesto commitment to full equality.

LCGR is planning major campaigns at both this year's Labour Party conference in Brighton, and the Trades Union Congress in Blackpool.

LIVERPOOL ON THE MARCH



Pete Cashman is march coordinator for the Ellesmere Port/Birkenhead stretch of the People's March feeder which starts from Shotton on May 7 and goes through Merseyside to Manchester. He told us: "As far as we

are concerned, it is a labour movement march. We are approaching the clergy only for the use of church halls. On the Sunday we'll be holding a Festival, with a speaker on the platform from Cammell Lairds shipyard, where redundancies are threatened, so we're trying to link up the march with the direct struggle for jobs. Also, every marcher will get a form to join the TGWU. Our union branch, the 6/88, is centrally involved in organising the march. And we want the marchers to elect their own stewards".

TROOPS OUT NOW!

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

Tory hands off our Health Service!

WOMEN - a majority of the population, living longer than men, and facing the burden of caring for relatives for whom there are no hospital beds - have many reasons to be especially concerned at the new round of health cuts now biting home in every area.

But women who expect the official union leadership to spearhead real action to oppose the cuts and defend jobs and services will often be sorely disappointed. Time and again up to now union officials have held back, isolated and defused struggles against the cuts: and have only been forced into action by initiatives at rank and file level.

One cuts campaign setting out to give such a lead is that of the Manchester Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, which has just published a free bulletin spelling out the dangers of cuts planned by the North West Regional Health Authority, to create the basis for a coordinated fight back.

During last year's campaign many health workers were saying that much more than pay was at stake. The future of the NHS was at risk.

Hospitals would close; jobs would go; private contractors would take over services; profitable parts of the NHS would go to private hospitals.

Health workers were afraid for their future, and for ours too. That's one reason why they fought so hard for their just claim, why they found so much public support, and why other workers were willing to strike in solidarity.

The future has come. As the pay campaign was ending, the

Service!

By Anna Lunts

North-West Regional Health Authority put plans for cutting 250 beds from St Mary's, the Manchester Royal Infirmary, and the Eye Hospital. And now catering, domestic and laundry services are under threat of privatisation. It's happening on the Wirral, in Leeds, Oxfordshire...

Deterioration

Women's health care will certainly deteriorate with the loss of 48 gynaecological beds at St Mary's. Already women in the Manchester area are having to wait months for d&c's and hysterectomies.

Central Manchester has a large black population, whose health needs are already neglected by the NHS - as even government studies have confirmed.

As usual, women and black people bear the brunt of the cuts.

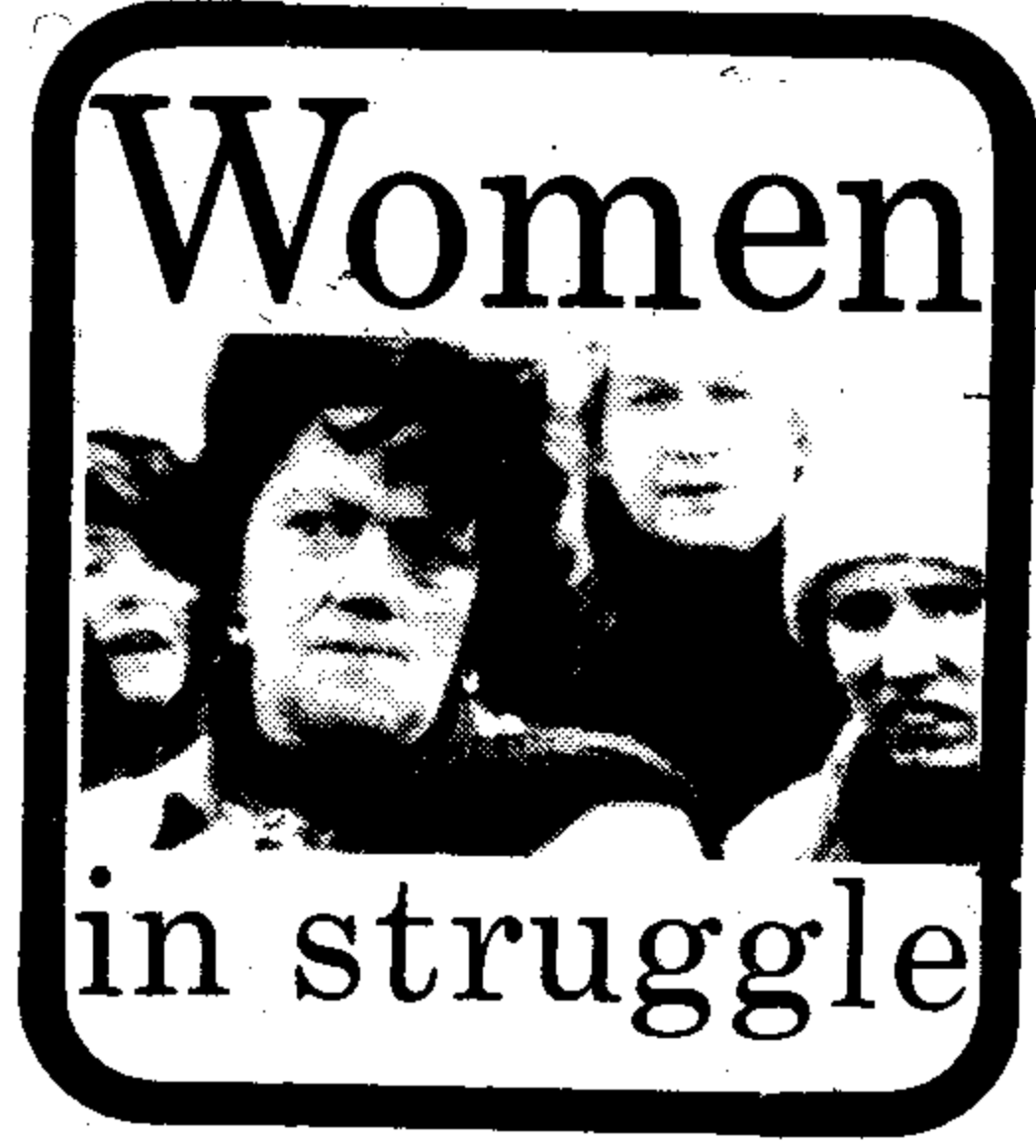


But health workers in central Manchester want to resist the government's plans, and they want our help. Last year's pay claim was defeated. This time, defeat would be fatal. And if Central District are left isolated, they will lose.

We have to make the cuts a live issue in housing estates, factories, union branches and stewards' committees, and in other hospitals throughout the region. In the end, we have to be ready to demonstrate, occupy threatened wards, and to strike in defence of the NHS.

That way, we can win!

THE Regional Health Authority's plan was originally leaked to the press by a consultant whose beds were threatened. Immediately the Central District Joint Shop Stewards Committee (JSSC, involving stewards from all the unions) tried to call a mass meeting.



"The JSSC was one of the few things we got out of the pay dispute. We didn't really have time to sit back and worry ourselves sick over the defeat, it just happened so quickly. We were ready to go, and I think we had a fair amount of experience then gained from our three or four months."

We tried to get a mass meeting, something we'd done throughout the dispute to keep our members informed about forthcoming actions. One of the ideas we had was to go down and picket Gateway House, the Regional HQ, when they were going to take the final decision on bed closures. Anyway it's important to keep members informed.

We approached management and management turned around and said, 'oh well, we don't recognise you. Why do you think you represent staff?' This was kind of surprising, because all the way through the dispute, over sectional action, they'd been talking to members of the JSSC.

So, we still haven't had our mass meeting. What we have had are a couple of public meetings, organised by the Community Health Council. I think the CHC have got a tremendous amount of resources we can use, and perhaps closer links than the JSSC with community groups and also people within the Health Service, officials.

But as far as we trade unionists are concerned, it's a political issue and a political fight. The cuts are directly or indirectly coming about because of government cuts, and just how restricted the CHC will be in joining us in a political fight, I don't know!"

(George McLean, secretary Central District JSSC)

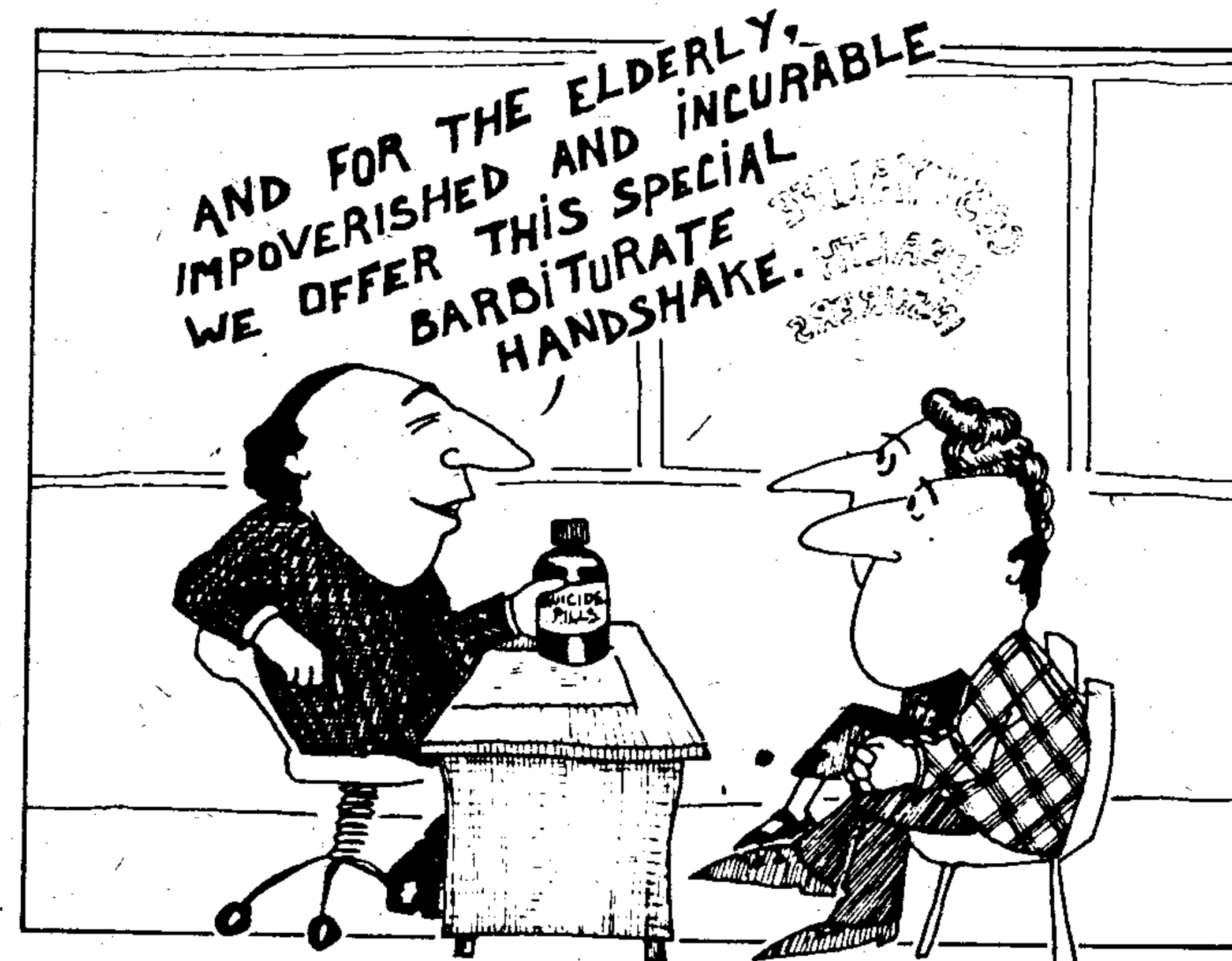
Another problem to be tackled is the potential division between Central District and other health workers, who may believe that cutting the Manchester Royal Infirmary will save their hospital from the axe. We want to fight every cut, but Central District is a good place to start because the attack is so blatant.

"In my authority the cuts have consisted of not filling vacancies, of freezing posts, of saving bits and pieces here, running down departments. It's very difficult to point to what's happening, even the stewards often don't know what's going on except perhaps in their own ward or own unit.

If we can't generate a fight in Central, it's going to be very difficult to fight over the number of telephone calls you can make, freezing for three months a staff nurse vacancy somewhere in Tameside on a surgical ward."

(Member of Greater Manchester Area JSSC)

Huge job losses are on the cards, possibly involving up to 600 members of staff. Although some doctors and nurses may be redeployed, many would join technical, ancillary and clerical staff on the dole queue. Already most of the wards and departments are chronically understaffed and these cuts can only



cause further loss of morale, frustration, and increased pressure of work for the remaining staff.

The cuts in Central District can't be fought by health workers alone, they need support from other workers who use the health service. During the pay claim, Central District were 'adopted' by their local Telecom depot, and made many other contacts:

"Dockers, miners, engineering, transport, the buses; we seemed to get a really good response off mainly the other nationalised industries. If they show us the same sort of response they did in the pay negotiations and we get a bit of a better response off nurses and staff actually in the NHS - it's their fight - then I think we should do better than we did last time". (Porter, St Mary's)

'ON DUTY' is a play, produced by the Black Angels Theatre Project, based on the experiences of a black woman shop steward in a London hospital fighting closure.

It opens on April 18 at the Carlton Centre, Carlton Vale, Kilburn, and will also be appearing as follows:

- April 19: Carlton Centre.
- April 20 & 21: Factory Community Centre, 107 Mathias Rd, Islington.
- April 27: St Matthews, Brixton.
- April 28: Tottenham Community Project, 628 High Rd, N17.
- April 30/May 1: The Factory, Chippenham Mews.

May 24 : strike against missiles!



The cops won't be able to cart away May 24's protest.

What you can do:

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

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK 10p

MAY 24 LET'S STRIKE OUT THE MISSILES

April issue out now!

FROM: 10b Landseer Rd, London N19

Power of women's Labour Movement Fightback for Women's Rights

Take the tools from the fools

ACUJ, the television already been set in motion... (Small text describing the publication's history and mission)

International news

Are we sectarian to criticise Castro?

JACK BARNES is National Secretary of the Socialist Workers' Party of the US — once the key organisation supporting the politics of Leon Trotsky, supporting his fight to build a new revolutionary international that would uphold the principles and programme of Marxism against the Stalinist bureaucracy that had risen to the head of the degenerated 'Communist' International, and (in the initial post-war period) a major component of the attempt to continue Trotskyism after the death of Trotsky.

Barnes, however, has now formed the view that this struggle was unnecessary.

He and the SWP leadership have drawn the conclusion that Cuba is a healthy workers' state — and that in Nicaragua and Grenada there are workers' and farmers' governments. The leaderships in each case, they conclude, are revolutionary leaderships — in the case of Cuba, 'proletarian internationalists'.

In consequence of this, those Trotskyists who are critical of these regimes, and fight for *direct* workers' rule through workers' councils, must be condemned as 'sectarians' with no understanding of the 'real' world.

The way forward for Barnes is not through the development of Trotskyist parties; and — since governments are involved — the SWP rejects any notion of recruiting their new-found comrades to the banner of the Trotskyist international. But if the mountain won't come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain; so Barnes gamely declares the SWP's availability for 'fusion, discussion and collaboration' with Castro and co in some new regroupment.

As his speech reported on this page points out, Barnes writes off those Trotskyists who reject this course. Singling out Socialist Organiser for special mention, he describes 80-90% of Trotskyists as "hopeless, irreformable sectarians". Barnes also tries to discredit Trotskyism in general by throwing in a parallel reference to Gerry Healy's totally degenerated Work-

By Harry Sloan

ers' Revolutionary Party.

All this must come as strange news to some of Barnes' co-thinkers in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International — the British section of which is the Socialist League (formerly IMG). Presumably the bulk of the USFI membership falls into Barnes' 'sectarian' bag.

Where, then, does Barnes see the future? His speech, focusing on the changing views of the leadership of the Salvadoran CP (PCS) and praising the Castro regime in Cuba, makes this clear.

It is towards the 'left' talking, populist forms of *Stalinism* — parties backed by the material power of the Kremlin bureaucracy — that the SWP is turning for international links... "a new world movement".

The PCS has indeed (under pressure from groups to its left) spelled out political criticisms of the reformist 'peaceful roads' to socialism which have been advocated with disastrous results by most Latin American CPs — most catastrophically in Chile.

Marxists obviously welcome any break by Stalinist leaders from the politics of the 'peaceful road' — and should seek wherever possible to develop debates and dialogues designed to capitalise on such divisions. We should press for a decisive break from the political methods and international machinery of the Stalinist apparatus in the Kremlin.

But the SWP position is quite the opposite. Taking every 'left' statement by Handal and by Castro as good coin, they have simply thrown aside Trotskyist politics and adapted to those of the Kremlin's Caribbean and Central American proteges.

In Barnes' speech we see the ways in which the SWP leadership is busily devaluing and discarding its Trotskyist heritage. 'Trotsky-



Castro with Grenada's Bishop

ism', he tells us, was an invention of Stalin — designed to mask Stalin's own opposition to Lenin's politics.

But the whole matter is reduced in this way to an ideological debate between two individuals. What was really at stake was the struggle against the bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian Revolution, and against the subsequent misleadership and sabotage of revolution on a world scale by the Stalinist-led Communist International.

Liquidated

The Trotskyist opposition was the material challenge to this — brutally liquidated wherever possible by the secret police of Stalin and his heirs, but constantly re-emerging as a threat because it represents the independent revolutionary strength of the international working class.

Trotskyists are critical of Castro precisely because however 'left' his rhetoric, the Cuban regime does not rest on independent workers' councils or soviets on the pattern of the October Revolution: rather — with huge economic subsidies from the Kremlin — it has consolidated itself as a privileged, unaccountable bureaucracy above the working class.

This is not a 'model' of the type of revolution Marxists

should fight for: it is a model for left-talking — and possibly less repressive — replicas of the bureaucratic regimes of the Stalinist countries. And it is a 'model' which also depends upon the largesse of the Kremlin leaders.

By seeking to turn back the clock, and to focus study on the works of Lenin — all completed before the emergence of Stalinism as a virulent counter-revolutionary force in the workers' movement — Barnes is disarming Marxists in the face of Stalinism, and reducing Trotskyism from a life and death struggle to a set of 'rich political writings', the kernel of which, Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, is according to Barnes "not correct and not useful".

Central to permanent revolution is the insistence that the working class needs its own revolutionary political leadership, programme and perspective if it is to lead the peasant masses in the underdeveloped countries beyond national liberation and democratic demands to the completion of the socialist revolution.

Barnes does not agree: he feels that a leadership sponsored by the Kremlin bureaucracy, and a 'model' based on Stalinist regimes, are adequate for the working class. This is why he belittles Trotsky and attacks his theory.



Extracts from Barnes' speech

Reprinted from Forum magazine (USA)

MANY OF you had the opportunity to read several weeks ago in *Intercontinental Press* an article entitled, 'Power, the Character and Path of the Revolution, and Unity of the Left', by Shafik Jorge Handal, the general secretary of the Communist Party of El Salvador. Handal is one of the leaders of the FMLN, one of the leaders of the revolution in El Salvador...

He's come to the conclusion that Cuba was not a peculiar exception. He says that for almost two decades that was his view, and he implies that was the view of other Communists — that Cuba was peculiar. He says it's not clear exactly how it was peculiar. What was peculiar was they took power!

He's now come to different conclusion... Building a leadership deeply involved in the mass struggles, organising the workers, and determined to recognise that there is no peaceful road to power and there is no road to power that depends on any wing of the bourgeoisie... but only the working people organised by a revolutionary party which leads politically and militarily, leading the popular masses themselves, can take power...

The perspectives [of the Cuban and Salvadoran Communist Party leaderships] of the fusion of the forces that are struggling for this goal, to build new vanguard parties, is the source, in our opinion, of a new world movement...

It's important to understand that literally eighty per cent — I can't prove this; maybe it's 70, maybe it's 90 — 80% of those on a world scale who call themselves Trotskyists, consider themselves Trotskyists... sincerely... are hopeless, irreformable sectarians.

What is done in the name of Trotsky and Trotskyism is horrendous... Let me give you a couple of examples.

A substantial Trotskyist organisation in Britain, the Workers' Revolutionary Party, which has certain peculiarities that I won't go into... [said that] in 1982 Castro heads a bonapartist regime based on capitalist state foundations.

Another British group — these are the people who put out a paper called *Socialist Organiser* — [say that]... Fidel Castro leads a Stalinist bureaucracy that rules Cuba against the workers and peasants. The beginning of the decline of the Socialist Workers' Party of the United States began with their attempt to describe this as a workers' and farmers' government and this was continued by describing Nicaragua as such...

... We are not Trotskyists; we are not that... any more than Trotsky ever said he was. We are communists. Our roots go back as a proletarian political current, back to the Manifesto itself and back to the Comintern, and that's the convergence that's taking place on a world scale.

Blurring

... In defending himself [against the Stalinists] Trotsky had to explain the revolutionary character of his ideas before 1917. In so doing a process begins of blurring, what revolutionary continuity is... Then at the end of the [20s]... battling the horrible disaster in China, which the Comintern dominated by Stalin and Bukharin led to, Trotsky in explaining the permanent revolution and its necessary character, said this:

"We are sure that the third Chinese revolution... will not have a democratic period, not even such a six-month period as the October revolution had between November 1917 and July 1918. The Chinese revolution will be compelled from the very outset to effect the most decisive shake-up and the abolition of bourgeois property from the city to the village".

Well, of course, this was not to be Trotsky's view later. Of course,

the idea that the abolition of bourgeois property from the city to the countryside in China was immediately possible when the workers and peasants took power is unthinkable. Of course they had a period like from November 1917 to July 1918, which extended much longer than they actually expected it to.

In attempting to fight the opportunist direction that Stalin had taken, Trotsky bent the stick to the left...

He also, as part of this counter attack, insisted on the weakness of Lenin's basic idea on the working class and the peasantry vis-a-vis governmental power. He says the weak point of Lenin's conception was the internally contradictory idea of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, the political bloc of two classes whose interests only partially coincide...

It may have been in Trotsky's view Lenin's weak point, but Lenin was completely aware of this point; he considered it exactly the transitional algebraic thing needed for this transition.

Trotsky then goes on and says Lenin had been influenced by historical experience and had acknowledged this idea, this formula, to be without value.

It's the only thing that I can remember Trotsky ever writing which I believe was factually false. I have yet to find anyone showing anywhere, anything that Lenin wrote where he ever said this...

Why Trotsky believed this to be the case I have no way of knowing...

Each time a party fuses with other forces, it itself changes and advances. That's its road forward. The Fourth International has a historic role to play in this process... because there are now revolutionaries worthy of the name outside of ourselves, on a world scale, playing a mighty historical role.

We should never forget that we must show ourselves worthy of the name. It's okay to recognise their existence; that's good, because without it we can't do anything. But unless we ourselves, prove what we are capable of, we cannot advance. We must prove this, we must consciously... move to carry it out, toward a goal of fusion, discussion, collaboration, and carry out parallel processes in the United States that are being raised by the real revolutionaries in the centre of the world revolution.

... We will get much, much more by reducing the permanent revolution, by pointing out, in my opinion, that it is not correct and not useful as a general term for our programme; we will rediscover Trotsky, more richly and more aptly, as the continuation of the battle which decides the victory of the Russian revolution.

Another point. Communism will be the common name, will be the name of the parties that are going to be formed, will be, for the same reason it was with the Communist Manifesto, for the same reason the Bolsheviks changed their name, for the same reason that the Cubans chose the name, that will be the name. It will be a common heritage, which the great revolutionists will fit into and which everyone coming from every point of view will find them and their value. Trotskyism, that term itself, I predict, none of us will call ourselves before this decade's out...

Documents
Trotskyism and the Socialist Workers Party

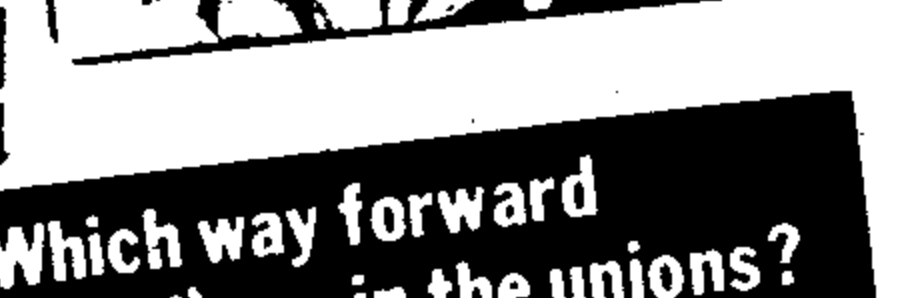
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Advertisement



Trotskyism or Castroism?

An analysis of the political evolution of the American SWP



Which way forward in the unions?



Workers Socialist Review 3

70p plus postage from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

International news

Crackdown in Sri Lanka

From leaflets published by the Campaign for the Release of Eelam Political Prisoners

DEATH sentences hang over two Tamil youths in Sri Lanka, while the indiscriminate arrest of a number of people including Christian priests by the army and the police at the end of last year, coupled with sensational reports in the government and pro-government news media, designed to whip up anti-Tamil hysteria, have thrown the spotlight on President Jaywardene's reactionary regime.

The new wave of repression began with a raid on the residence of the Catholic clergy in Jaffna by a large contingent of soldiers and policemen on November 13. They were looking for Father Singarayar, who was at the time in Colombo.

The police searched and ransacked the residence until 3.30am, and arrested Fr Paul Jeeva and Fr Paul Natchethiram, who were taken to the army camp at Guru Nagar and detained. Five more Anglican and Catholic priests were also detained for up to four days before being released without charge.

In the next few days the army and the police rounded up and arrested several others, detaining them under the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act.

All these persons were held in custody and even lawyers were not permitted to see them.

This callous disregard for



Jayawardene

human rights, and particularly the harassment of the clergy, sparked off a massive movement of protests. The Bishop of Jaffna has written to President Jayawardene condemning these arrests and the subjection of the priests to 'mental pressure, intimidation, and other questionable methods to extract confessions from them'.

A number of trade unions, political parties and religious organisations have also condemned this latest violation of human rights.

The mass response was unprecedented. Christians, Hindus and Muslims have joined these actions and expressed their solidarity.

Over 15 organisations, including the Movement for Interracial Justice and Equality (MIRJE) branch in Jaffna set up a campaign committee to co-ordinate these protest actions.

TWO Tamil youths, Kuttimani and Jegan, have been sentenced to death. This is the latest in a series of attacks upon the Tamil-speaking people by successive governments of Sri Lanka.

The oppression of the Tamil-speaking people over several decades resulted in the gradual development of a campaign calling for a separate sovereign Tamil state of Eelam in their traditional homelands.

Kuttimani and Jegan have become the victims of a regime which is determined to crush the Tamil nation

The Campaign for the Release of Eelam Political Prisoners in Sri Lanka is appealing for support.

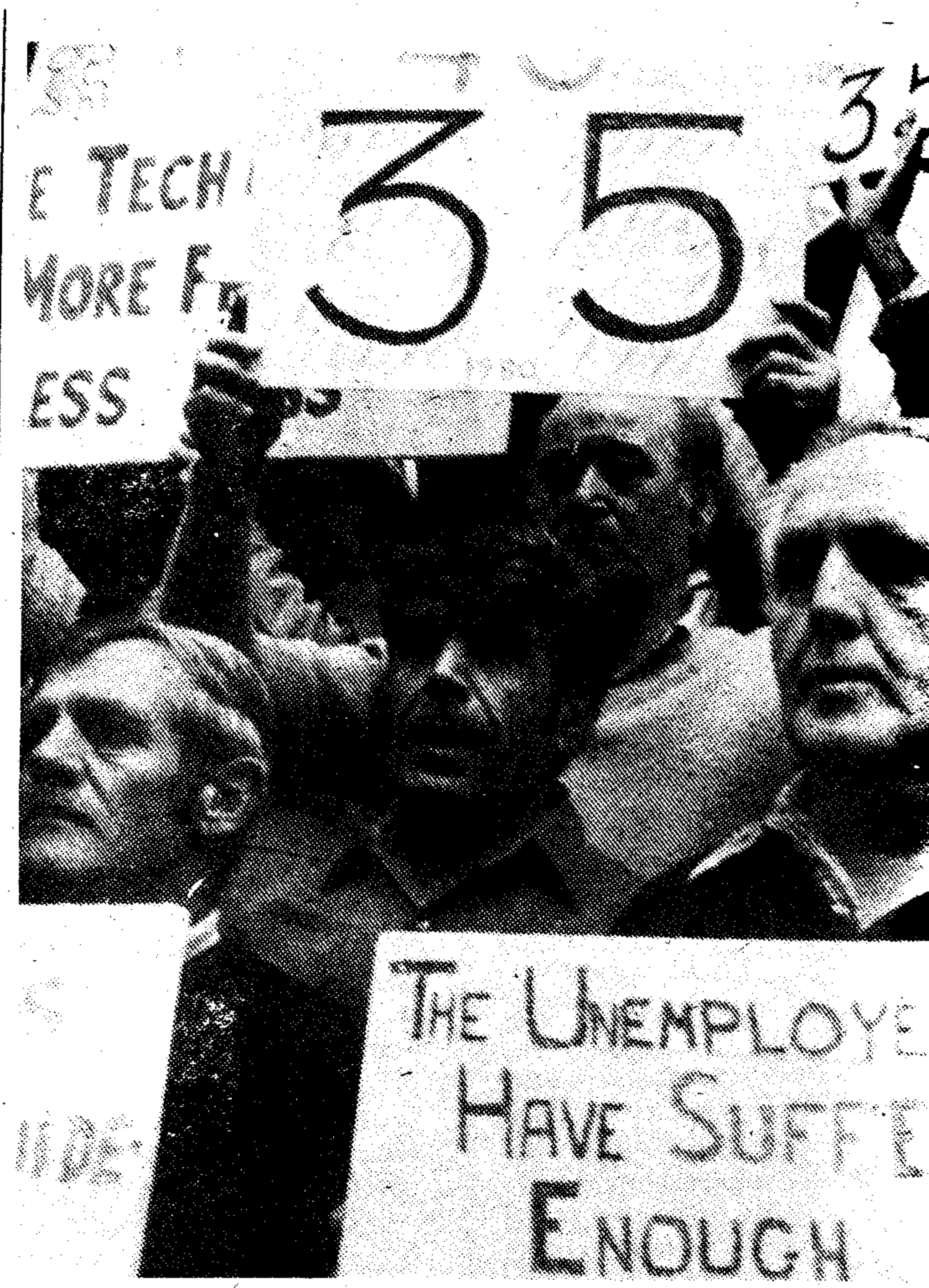
Send telegrams or write to the President of Sri Lanka at the Janadhipathi Mandiraya, Colombo 1, calling upon him to stop the execution of Kuttimani and Jegan.

On November 30 there was a mass demonstration in Jaffna attended by over 10,000 people.

This is not by any means the only violation of human rights by the right wing Jayawardene government. Repression has been particularly heavy-handed against the Tamil minority, who are concentrated in the north and east of the island.

Get your trade union or Labour Party to adopt a resolution calling for the release of all political prisoners in Sri Lanka, the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and the halting of the execution of Kuttimani and Jegan.

Join the campaign or send a donation - to 87 Gower St, London WC1.



Australian workers demand shorter working week

Hawke on wages - a dove on profits

From Socialist Fight

WHAT I'M about is trying to get a fairer, more equitable, juster society within which everyone, irrespective of their socio-economic origin, is going to have the opportunity to develop talents, capacities that lie within that person.

That's Bob Hawke's goal as Prime Minister. And who could argue with such noble sentiments?

The problem is that his cross-class appeal for 'national reconciliation' to 'all Australians' provides no solution to the 746,000 registered unemployed (or the additional half million or so hidden jobless).

Hawke's pro-business Inner Cabinet has added its voice to the bosses' refrain that wage rises cause unemployment. Yet even the doctored figures show that real wages have risen by less than 20% since 1972 - yet the worth of the produce has grown vastly more.

Not content with supporting Fraser's pay freeze till after the elections and the 'Summit', he now wants to extend it to at least the end of 1983. This can only mean further sharp losses in terms of real purchasing power to wage earners. It will save jobs no more than Fraser's attacks on wages did.

Meanwhile, 'soggy lefts', such as the new Minister for Defence Support Brian Howe, caution us not to focus on 'one aspect' of the 'Prices and Incomes' Accord (for example wage restraint!), but to take into account compensatory factors in the 'policy as a whole', such as the promised prices controls and tax reform. Yet, every indication from Hawke is that he has no intention of going ahead with these promises.

For all his gratuitous talk of 'equality of sacrifice', it's quite clear who are going to do all the sacrificing under his scheme. Like under Fraser, it'll be the only useful, productive group in this country. Once again the working class will be the victims.

Not one single group of employers has stated they are willing to make 'sacrifices'; the bosses are united with the catch cry that real wages must be even further depressed.

Yet the Australian Labour Party and Australian Congress of Trade Unions tops are bleating all the way to the Summit that working people will have to exercise restraint, and have absolutely no plans to avert the 5,000 jobs due to disappear shortly at GM-H or the latest six hundred odd jobs to go at BHP.

The course plotted for us by our leaders means disaster. We have every right to expect the ALP to govern in the interests of the working class. But for that to happen, a movement must coalesce from within the ranks of both the trade unions and the Labour Party, demanding Hawke abandon the danger-

ous folly of 'national reconciliation', and break with the bankers and the bosses.

The ALP and ACTU leaders must be made to support the immediate resumption of the aborted ACTU wages campaign. And we must not allow our class to once again be forced to foot the bill of the capitalists' return to profitability.

The millions of working class people who voted Labour, with the expectation that the attacks on their conditions and basic rights would cease under an ALP government, have a right to see the real culprits of this economic crisis dealt with. It's time we made the rich pay!

Reagan rushes arms to Thai generals

By Harry Sloan

NOT wanting to be left out when communists are being killed, the Reagan government has found the time in the midst of all its other warmongering activities to rush supplies of arms and ammunition to the bloodthirsty military regime in Thailand.

They will be used to supplement the artillery and aircraft already being used across the border into Kampuchea in savage strikes against forces of the Vietnamese army.

The Vietnamese are seeking to flush out the motley and reactionary gangs of guerilla fighters that have been brought together with the backing of the Pentagon and the Peking Stalinists.

They are grouped around Prince Sihanouk and Pol Pot -

the former butcher of Kampuchea, whom the imperialists find preferable to the Heng Samrin regime installed after the Vietnamese invasion in 1978.

The clashes between Thai and Vietnamese troops are a consequence of the tactics of the renegade Kampuchean guerillas, whose camps are sited next

to, or on the Thai side of, the border, and whose response to the vast strength of the Vietnamese advance is to retreat behind the protection of the Thai army.

Apparently 'hot pursuit' raids by Vietnamese across the border have led to sharp exchanges and to retaliatory Thai air strikes - some using napalm - against Vietnamese positions.

The latest shipments of heavy artillery, missiles and ammunition will equip the Thai forces to further escalate these attacks - thus applying military pressure on Vietnam and indirectly on Moscow.

Once again the US determination to inflict setbacks on the power and influence of the Kremlin - and its supporters in Hanoi, who dealt such a humiliating defeat to US imperialism in 1975 - has lined them up with some of the dregs of the earth.

The Thai regime of Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanouda holds power in the face of opposition from civilian politicians and even a group of nationalist and populist army officers known as the 'Young Turks'.

He is bolstered up by the fascist and extreme right wing, by the monarchy, and by massive US aid. In addition his successful cementing of relations with the Chinese bureaucracy has effectively split and confused the Peking-influenced Communist Party and the 10,000 armed anti-government Thai guerillas.

Now he is using the 'border emergency' with the vietnamese as a pretext to retain and extend the power of the military high command inside Thailand, while demonstrating to his American sponsors in the Pentagon that he is worthy of his hire.



MAY 7

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

LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON EL SALVADOR
 COUNTY HALL LONDON MAY 14

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

DELEGATES invited from Trade Union & Political Party branches

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

Fighting for control over the police



You use the slogan "taxation without representation" to illustrate the relation of Londoners to the police. Why?

London has the only police force in the country with no kind of local, democratic control. And yet London has the same basis of payment as elsewhere. London Boroughs raise almost half of the Met's budget (31% through the rates and the rest through block-grants). In 1982/3 that means £323 million in all.

We have no say over the size of our contribution or over the ways in which the money is spent. What we want is democratic control over financing and over the uses to which the money is put.

Do you favour the boroughs refusing to pay the police precept?

Some time ago Lewisham threatened not to hand over the policing bill and the police responded positively by doing some of the things Lewisham council wanted: for example, getting officers out of their cars and onto the streets. However, it has limited value as a political strategy.

The Home Office will fund the police directly and deduct the cost from the block grant. If there is no block grant, then they will send the commissioners in. However, it shows how bad relations are between the police and the community. That's why Hackney are threatening to withhold the precept in connection with the death of Colin Roach.

What sort of democratic, local control are you seeking?

We want London to have a police authority composed of elected representatives of the GLC and the boroughs. This authority should have powers to determine a) how much money is to be spent on the police, b) how that money is to be allocated, c) the hiring and firing of all officers of the rank of superintendent and

Steve Bundred is chairperson of the Greater London Council Police Committee, and a leading figure of the Labour GLC's campaign for police accountability. He spoke to Bob Fine.

above (including the Commissioner), d) the general guidelines respecting police policy, like whether the police are armed and whether there should be special units, like the SPG, and e) how these general guidelines are put into operational practice.

All police powers are to be delegated from the Authority. The Authority should be able to decide to stop swamp tactics in Brixton, for example. We want a two tier system in which the GLC police committee would be responsible for central services, administration, finance, recruitment and training and Borough committees responsible for all local policing matters.

There should be established a National Police Authority to control the national aspects of

London policing. It should be composed of representatives from all the local police authorities.

There is a huge gulf between what exists now and what you want. How do you intend to bridge this gap?

First, the GLC Police Committee is seeking to raise the general level of awareness of these issues, for example, through its monthly bulletin "Policing London" and through its special reports on Scarman, the Police Bill and so forth.

Second, we are just beginning a wide consultation process, in which we shall meet with representatives from the boroughs and from special interest groups like the NCCL, Black People's Associations and so forth. We will be holding 20 public meetings in London over the next six months in local areas. At the end of this process, we will make a draft bill to establish a Police Authority in London.

Third, we have got a clear commitment from the Labour Party conference, from the NEC and from the Front Bench for a Police Authority for London. However, they are vague about what kind of authority. We must insure that it is far more democratic and that it possesses far more powers than the police authorities which already exist outside London. In this way, London will serve as a catalyst for change throughout the country.

The immediate issue is to get wide publicity for and involvement in the consultation meetings.

What practical steps are you taking now?

We have supported monitoring groups set up by volunteers in different localities, concerned especially with the ways in which the police treat suspects in police stations and "non-suspects" in the streets. Their purpose is to monitor what's happening, to publicise any abuse of police powers or abuses resulting from the normal exercise of police powers and to assist individuals who have suffered such abuses; for instance, by helping them through Complaints Procedures.

These Monitoring Groups work closely with Borough Police Committees. Where there is a large black population, they check that the Borough committees reflect the interests of blacks. In Hackney, where there is no Monitoring Group, we work with the Hackney Black People's Association and the Borough Police Committee and we have given a grant to the Roach Family Support Committee.

What are you able to do now to combat the arming of the police?

We have published a report showing the extent to which the police are already armed (based on a thesis by a Met officer). It showed that while the incidence of armed crime has fallen both in London and the country as a whole, and the issue of firearms to the police has remained stable outside London, the issue of firearms to the Met has escalated rapidly between 1976 and 1981. This shows the lie behind the usual Met justifications for arming the police.

We have called for a full and independent public inquiry into the Waldorf shooting - one which is independent not only of the police, but also of the judiciary.

What are you doing about the Police Bill currently in Committee stage in Parliament?

The Bill is dreadful. We have put out publicity on the new police powers it seeks to create: for instance the power to stop and search you on the streets if the police think you look suspicious, to set up road blocks, to search the homes of people not suspected of committing an

offence, to detain suspects in police stations for up to four days without charge, to deny suspects access to solicitors for up to two days, to get access to confidential medical and social welfare files and so forth.

Despite some superficial changes, the police complaints system will still mean that the police investigate themselves. We have called on Londoners to pressure their MPs to oppose this Bill and we have had our own meetings with the London MPs.

Given the Bill seems to be going through, we are promoting amendments to introduce some kind of safeguards. We are pushing

"In London we have the most inefficient, most expensive, and most corrupt police force in the country. We cannot wait for socialism before we do something about it"

some powers. There is no requirement that the police should consult with or listen to them. They are accountable to no-one and consist of self-appointed "community leaders".

In Lambeth, for instance, the liaison committee was not consulted before the destruction of houses on Railton Road. It is no different from the Consultative Committee which collapsed in 1980 and was cited by Scarman as a contributing cause of the riots. There are about 50 people on it, Uncle Tom Cobbley and all. It was set up by the Tories but continues to be supported by the Labour Council under Ted Knight who sends representatives to it.

The Labour Council should withdraw all support from the Liaison Committee and set up a Borough Police Committee composed of elected representatives. Ted's got himself in a mess over this.

I understand that the GLC Police Committee is intending to do something about the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Yes. This is a matter of clear relevance to Londoners. We have a large Irish population. Many who are active in legitimate political activity feel intimidated by it. It is used against them and used generally to trawl through

ing for instance for evidence which the police improperly obtain to be made statutorily inadmissible in court.

What is your view of Police-Community Liaison Committees? They are pointless. They have

DEFEND THE NEWHAM 8!

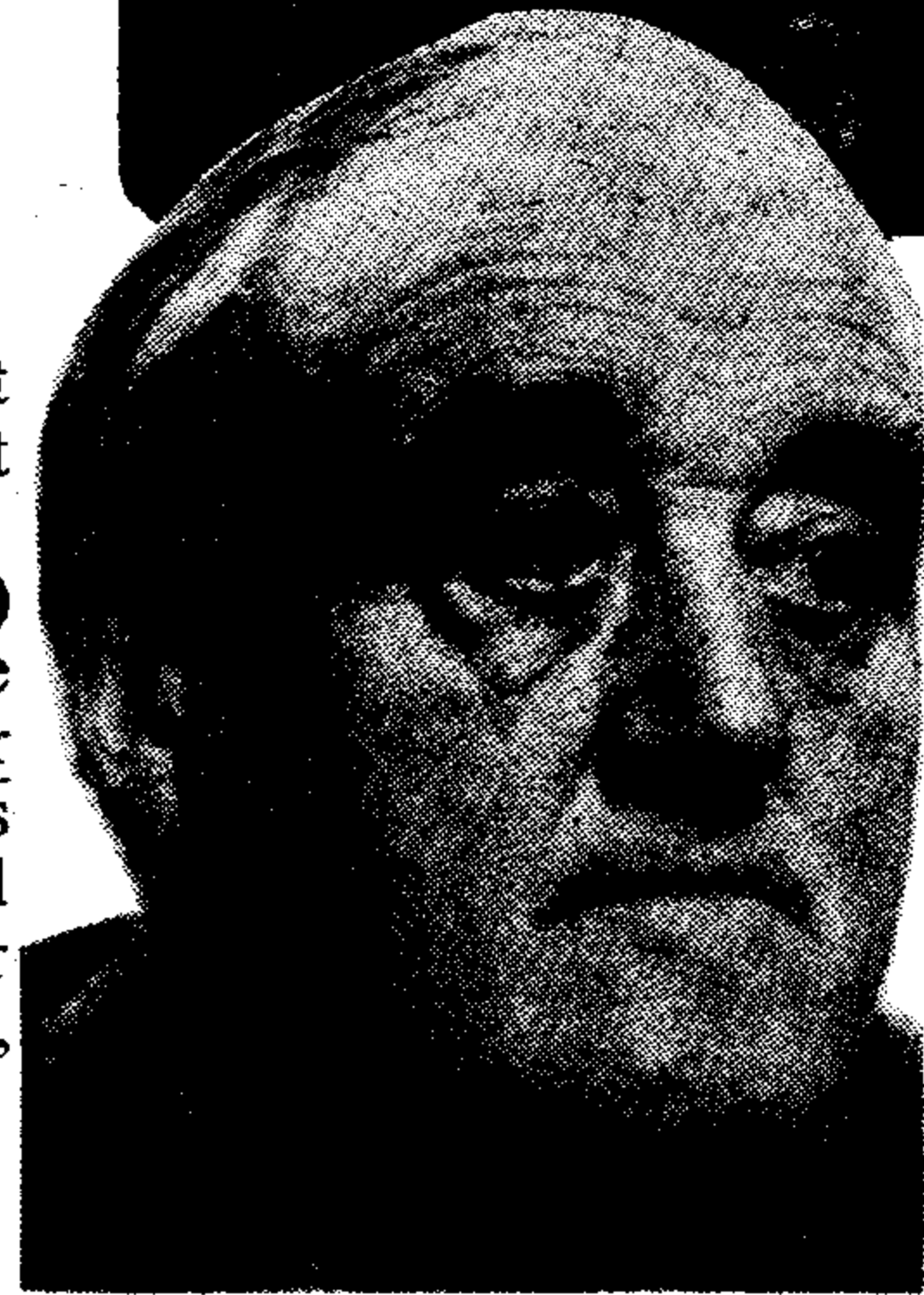
The Newham 8 - Asian youths aged between 15 and 21 - face charges of conspiracy as well as threatening behaviour and actual bodily harm.

They were arrested on September 24 1982 after an incident with plain-clothes police officers. In the previous week there had been three major racist attacks on Asian schoolchildren at Little Ilford School, in Newham, and an incident where 60 or 70 white youth with iron bars and sticks went on the rampage in East Ham and Manor Park.

Send invitations for speakers or resolutions of support to Newham 8 Defence Campaign c/o PO Box 273 London E7 9JN.



'Shooting to kill' Taking slow, precise and deadly aim



"Police marksmen are taught to fire a pair of bullets at the widest part of the human target, the chest. As one instructor put it 'They are taught to kill.'"

(Sunday Telegraph, January 16)

Unfortunately for Stephen Waldorf, they tried to kill the wrong man. Scotland Yard has expressed its 'deep regret' over this. Apparently they would not have felt any need to express regret if the victim had been the 'right man', even though he had offered no resistance, and had been attacked without warning, or any opportunity to surrender . . . a point already made by many, including several Labour MPs.

One point that has not been made requires a closer look at the history of police shootings over the last ten or so years. The newspaper excerpt above tells us that police are trained to fire two shots at the chest of a human target, i.e. to shoot at that part of the target easiest to hit without taking precise - and therefore slow - aim. The official reason for this is that the police will only be firing in defence of themselves or others, and will therefore have to disable the opponent as quickly as possible. But the same excerpt tells us that they are trained to 'shoot to kill.' The puzzling thing here is that this is a direct contradiction.

The British police draw their official tactical doctrine on gunfighting from the United States. For the same reason their regulation-issue handgun is, almost always, the .38 Special Smith & Wesson - US-made, and a standard weapon of the American police.

Yet, generally (and perhaps surprisingly), US police doctrine is *not* one of 'shooting to kill' but of 'the instant knock-down' - because what is crucial in a real gunfight is to instantly incapacitate an opponent, not to kill him, and these two objectives tend to actually conflict. For a hit which is fatal may not instantly 'stop' an opponent, while a hit which does may well not be fatal - which is why, of people shot down by the US police, 80% in fact survive. The two chest-hits of the official doctrine will usually not kill, if they are delivered from a .38 Special.

Does this mean that the above-quoted police instructor is confused, and that the British police do not in fact shoot to kill? Unfortunately not . . . for while only one in five people shot by US police die from their wounds, six of the 11 people shot by the British police between 1970 and 1979 were killed.

Two Pakistani youths were shot dead by the Special Patrol Group at India House in 1973. One was shot once - through the heart. The other was shot once - through the head. No shots had been fired except by the police - the youths were 'armed' with toy guns (not even with the 'replica' guns about which MPs and the bourgeois press raised such an outcry as their response to the shooting). An armed robber was shot dead in South East London in 1978. Again, the main was shot once, through the head.

What this suggests is that the police gunmen have not had to fire 'under extreme pressure' and 'in defence of human life' but have had the time to take slow, precise - and deadly - aim.

Stephen Waldorf was not struck by such accurately-placed

By Dewi Lewis

shots, perhaps because he was in a car and therefore a more difficult target. Instead he has a so far unexplained fracture of the skull.

The US police have not won themselves a reputation for exemplary restraint in the use of force. What conclusion are we to draw about the behaviour of the British armed police?

Shooting to kill is not the act of one attempting 'to defend human life', but of the assassin . . . or executioner.

The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Kenneth Newman, in a feeble attempt to somehow, anyhow, place the Kensington shooting in a more favourable light, drew attention to the many occasions on which unarmed police have 'tackled armed suspects' and successfully arrested them.

Far from getting the Metropolitan Police off the hook, this only underlines the fact that, in the overwhelming majority of cases in which police confront these supposedly dangerous suspects, they do not meet any serious resistance.

At the end of the '60s the News of the World devoted its front page to a story which it obviously considered alarming and sensational. The story was . . . that the Glasgow police were considering the purchase of half a dozen US riot-guns (short-barrelled repeating shotguns which, at close range, are devastating).

The article quoted a Metropolitan Police spokesman's words, to the effect 'Heaven forbid that we should ever consider acquiring a weapon of this kind.' In 1975, during the Balcombe St. siege, a policeman appeared on the balcony adjacent to the besieged flat. He was armed with a riot gun.

It was also at Balcombe St. that men of D11 - Scotland Yard's elite unit which has no duties except training in, and the use of firearms - made their first open appearance, wearing military berets and flak jackets.

They were at first assumed, by television viewers, and by the media, to be members of the Army, called in to support the police. The revelation that they were, in fact, members of the Metropolitan Police, was the first public knowledge of the creation of a purely military unit within the London force.

It is clear that the transformation in State policy on the use of armed force by the police took place in the period 1969-75.

make the arrests, when asked if he wanted his men issued with pistols, is said to have replied "No, if we don't take guns I don't think the Micks will use theirs" (from 'Fabian of the Yard' by R. Fabian).

Of course, there were exceptions - then and now. The most conspicuous exception in the last thirty years was the shooting dead of three unarmed detectives at Shepherds Bush, in the mid-'60s by some small-time thieves.

If the transformation of the police from 'virtually an unarmed service' to a heavily-armed one began as a response to this incident then it was a response mysteriously delayed by years. To go back much further, the shooting of several policemen in the events leading up to the 'Siege of Sidney Street' in 1910 did not lead to any dramatic increase in the arming of the police.

This demands a question as to how often 'armed criminals' - armed in most cases with dummy guns, or with firearms loaded with blanks or 'reduced' ammunition, and generally offering no resistance - would have been shot dead if they had been unfortunate enough to run into armed police.

And the figures released by Scotland Yard, under pressure following the attack on Stephen Waldorf, show how the chances that the 'armed criminal' - or some 'law-abiding person' - will find themselves suddenly confronted, or shot without warning, by armed police, are continuously increasing.

The Metropolitan Police figures state that, in the first nine months of 1982 they issued guns on 4,346 occasions. Official figures for the year 1970, for the whole of England and Wales were . . . 1,072 occasions!

Even this comparison does not convey the extent of the increase, for the figures presumably do not include the permanently-armed units - such as D11, the Diplomatic Protection Group, the Special Patrol Group - which either came into existence or were expanded during the '70s.

The 1982 figure, we have been told, does not include arms issued to the Special Branch (which is not, in practice, under Metropolitan Police control) - a somewhat sinister omission. Neither figure takes account of the issue of guns for 'protection duties', which, as the police admit, are becoming increasingly common.

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



the Irish community to get information about friends of friends. Londoners are unjustifiably detained and excluded under its provisions.

Do you support the establishment of black and other self-defence groups?

It is thoroughly understandable that, for example, in the East London Asians and Blacks should set up groups of this kind. But in themselves they offer no definitive solution. We support certain measures they take, but not everything they do.

The important point is to put pressure on the police - like the demonstrations outside the police station in Hackney - and not go off into ghettos and organise independently. This is a recipe for ghettoisation.

Pressure on the police and self-defence are not counterposed to each other necessarily and we would not try and persuade them to disband, but we see them as symptoms not as a solution to the problem. They may be useful for Asians in particular housing estates or for workers on picket lines, but they are not good at all for women threatened with assault on the streets or in tubes.

The campaigns for police accountability have been attacked from the left as utopian and reformist.

What is your view?

As someone who has been burgled four times in eight months, I am not prepared to wait for socialism to get protection. We want a police service that will protect the community rather than a police force over the community. We need a police which will protect Asians and Blacks from racist attacks, women from assault, ordinary working class people from having their houses burgled.

At present the police are failing to do this and wasting their resources on political surveillance, preparing for demonstrations and the like. There is a great crisis in policing now.

In London, we have the most inefficient, most expensive and most corrupt police force in the country. We cannot wait for socialism before we do something about it.

*For details of local contact groups, copies of 'Policing London' and special reports, write to Police Committee Support Unit, Room 567, County Hall, SE1.

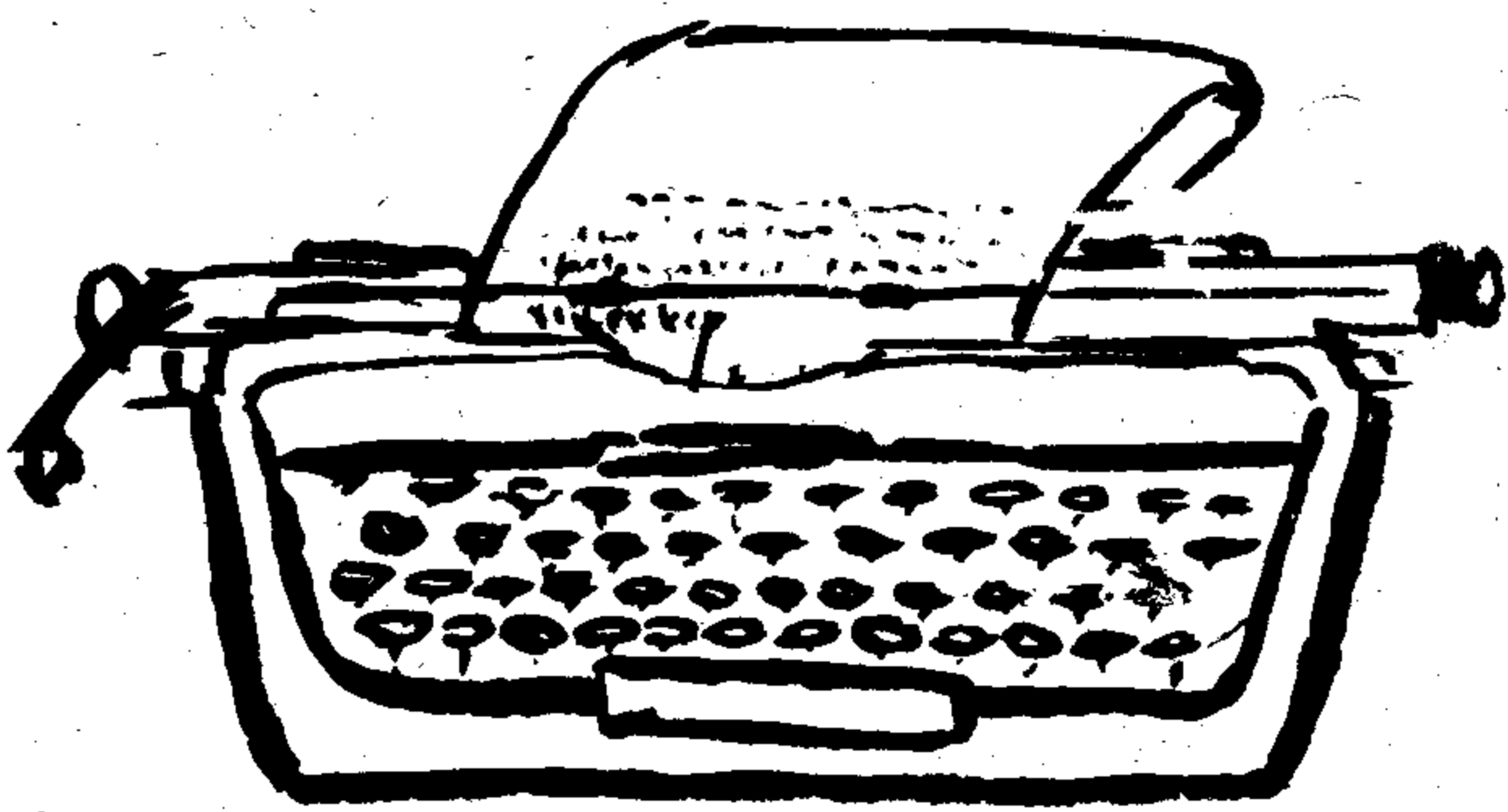
Other useful addresses:

*Gay London Police Monitoring Group, 5 Caledonian Rd., London N1 9DX.

*Community Alliance for Police Accountability, Oxford House, Derbyshire St., London E2. (729-2652).



Writeback



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

CLPD and the 'right wing reality'

VICTOR Schonfield's letter (SO 125) is clearly aimed at boosting the Manchester Withington 'fall back' position at the expense of the constitutional amendment from Greenwich CLP. He should have made clear that the policy of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, of which he is Treasurer, is the opposite.

The following composite, drafted by Nigel Williamson, Reg Race and myself, was carried at the last CLPD AGM.

"This AGM reaffirms its support for the democratic rights of Party members to organise with other members in order to advocate their views more effectively.

"We believe that such members should only have to comply with the conditions laid down for all Party members, and that it would be mistaken and dangerous to incorporate into the Labour Party constitution the restrictions and requirements placed upon groups contained in the Manchester Withington amendment submitted to the 1982 Conference.

"Accordingly, this AGM believes that the CLPD should not support such proposals, but instead should campaign for and support only those proposals which seek to completely reverse the 1982 decision, or which seek to establish and safeguard the positive right of groups of Party members to organise without being subject to extra and special membership conditions (e.g. the constitutional amendment from Greenwich CLP)."

The same AGM also defeated a resolution (number 9) of support for Manchester Withington (as in Victor Schonfield's letter, and as supported also by the majority of the new CLPD EC.)

Victor Schonfield and others regarded these votes as 'issues of confidence' before the AGM. Now they are denying they ever really happened.

The successful composite makes clear why the Manchester

Withington proposal was defeated at the CLPD AGM. The proposal accepts that Party members should be restricted in their right to organise - as the NEC's Register does. It is difficult to see why Victor Schonfield now regards this point as a "smear", because he and others used to regard it as the main merit of the proposals.

They first argued for it in the following terms: we couldn't win outright opposition to the Register, because the trade union leaders wanted restrictions on the groups organising in the Party; therefore the CLPD had to support the idea of the Register to win at Conference, but make it as innocuous as possible.

The 'radical' nature of the Manchester Withington proposal is an argument for the letter's page of SO only. In the London Labour Party Regional Conference in March the proposal was motivated thus: "You cannot have complete anarchy in the Labour Party" (Tony Maries, CLPD EC member, proposing the motion).

The constitutional amendment from Greenwich CLP would provide, for the first time, a clear constitutional basis for groups of Party members to organise and campaign. Under rule, it has to be voted on at this year's Party Conference. The CLPD AGM clearly voted to support it, and indeed subsequent CLPD literature has made it a 1983 'priority' and a leaflet has called for "full support".

Yet the main speeches criticising Greenwich at the London Labour Party Conference were from CLPD officers; and Victor Schonfield now talks about its "right wing reality".

This constitutional amendment (a) writes into the Labour Party constitution, for the first time, the right of Party members to organise; (b) it does this without placing any extra or special conditions on such members and is clearly in direct opposition to the Register; (c) it deletes the clause which the right wing have regularly used to witch-hunt socialists, and which is being used now to proscribe Militant; and (d) it enshrines the right of groups and/or individual Party members to appeal to Party Conference against the NEC.

The Greenwich amendment has a real weakness - lack of a 'status quo' clause after NEC disciplinary action and before the subsequent Party Conference. But Greenwich can be strengthened - after it has been carried.

Instead of concentrating on criticising the Greenwich amendment and boosting their discredited and rejected alternative, Victor Schonfield and the other CLPD officers should be using their experience and resources in campaigning to get Greenwich carried at this year's Party Conference.

Fraternally,
JOHN BLOXAM

What a puzzling reply!

READERS of SO may have been puzzled that in reply to an Open Letter from 15 Brighton and other Briefing supporters, Chris Knight wrote a personal letter to one of the signatories, Dave Lewney, applying pressure on the basis of personal ties. "Dave, please tell me, is this letter really yours?..."

It is in fact symptomatic of the whole approach we criticise. Accountability is on the basis of personal ties rather than political agreement - so when erstwhile comrades are elected to councils, you find with few exceptions that your appeal to them is on a personal basis.

Chris portrays the disagreement between Brighton and London as being due to "personal incompatibility between Greenstein and Bash". If there is one thing Graham Bash and I

agree on, it is that this is not so. The personalisation of political disputes is a hallmark of the Right.

Chris begins his letter by stating without example that I refuse to accept Graham's role as impartial chair. He then shifts this to Briefing itself being the impartial chair - a nuclear fusion chamber holding SO and Socialist Challenge together long enough for them to fuse.

Chris's article attacks points in the Open Letter which are not there and severely distorts the rest. E.g. he says we accuse London Briefing of going down the "road to oblivion", whereas the original letter reads, "if the left in the Labour Party is not to continue to retreat down the road to oblivion".

Chris states that "I want to make sure that your joint Open

Letter to Briefing is published by us", yet when an amended version of the letter was resubmitted, Chris Knight voted with the rest of the Editorial Board not to publish the letter.

Chris alleges that "the two factions in this dispute are really SO on the one hand and Socialist Challenge on the other. That's what it is really about". Which is strange, since not one of those who signed the Open Letter is an SO supporter - though the majority are closer to SO than Socialist Challenge, as Chris himself admits he is.

Our letter complains about the arbitrary decisions made by the editor of London Briefing, e.g. over the Labour Committee on Palestine. Although Chris admits the substance of the charges is true, never does he see any problem in the method by which

decisions to change previously agreed statements are made. For Chris the 'secret' of Briefing is its 'formal relative impartiality'.

Although this particular form of organisation may work when there is agreement, e.g. over the need to campaign for Benn in the Deputy Leader campaign, when times change and the left is on the retreat, impartiality becomes an obstacle. It means tailing and not criticising those such as Ted Knight who has done to the campaign against the witch-hunt what even John Golding could not do, i.e. disrupt it from the inside. Even when he threatens to sue Briefing itself, no mention is made of this fact. It means being neutral when the WRP wrecks a Labour Committee on Palestine conference.

There are many inaccuracies and distortions in Chris's letter which space doesn't permit me to take up. All I wish to say is that the Open Letter from Brighton was written in a comradely spirit and as a means of beginning a debate with London. It is a great pity that the Editorial Board of Briefing should have been afraid of such a debate on account of jeopardising their relationship with Socialist Challenge supporters. Even Chris admits to Briefing being politically directionless.

TONY GREENSTEIN,
Brighton



JOHN HARRIS

SL/WSL talks

Is there a basis for unity?

I HAVE no wish to pre-empt the discussions - which are still at a rudimentary planning stage - between the Socialist League and the Workers Socialist League. But it is important to raise a couple of points from David Biggs' letter in Writeback last week.

Biggs - National Secretary of the SL - tells readers that his organisation (formerly the IMG) has "long" been of the view that "the differences between ourselves and the WSL are not sufficient to justify the existence of separate organisations."

The statement is doubly evasive. It does not tell us for how long this view has been held - in other words it gives us no chance to assess the scope of the differences on political and programmatic questions at national and international level the SL regard as containable within a single organisation. Are there in fact any disagreements on anything which the SL might argue justify the existence of separate organisations?

Secondly, the statement - in common with Biggs' whole letter, fails to mention any of the present differences which in the SL's view mark them out from the WSL.

This coyness is particularly unhelpful when his letter is supposedly in answer to an interview with myself in which I set out as clearly and objectively as possible the issues which the WSL believes must be addressed if discussions are to be seriously pursued.

Of course we agree that organisations should reject the quest for monolithism, and facilitate 'lively internal debates' on various questions.

Yours fraternally,
JOHN LISTER

Where was SO?

FOR thousands of active socialists and tens of thousands of other militants in the labour and disarmament movements, the Easter weekend was a time of intense political activity. Whether, like me, they were involved in a union conference, or in disarmament demonstrations, as were many, many more, it was an important period of debate and practical political education.

So where was Socialist Organiser? On holiday!

Of course SO supporters were active in these events, but by not publishing that weekend we were effectively abstaining as a tendency in the labour movement.

TONY GARD,
Lewisham.

Like the cocooned caterpillar awaiting the time to emerge as a bright new butterfly, SO was not on holiday but preparing the 'new look' paper for the week after.

Dissident on hunger strike

OLEG Raozinsky, a 26 year old philologist, has been committed to the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry and the appalling conditions that exist in this type of institution may soon cause his death.

The only reason for all his suffering is his membership of the dissident peace group in Moscow.

Two of Raozinsky's comrades have been on hunger strike in solidarity since March 1. Neither of these two is presently being detained by the Soviet authorities, but both have suffered arrest and detention in the past few months.

It only costs 20½p to send a letter or postcard to Moscow. Send one to the director of the Serbsky Institute demanding the immediate discharge of Raozinsky. Stress that you are a genuine Western peace campaigner and hold no cold war hostility towards the Soviet Union.

Write to: OR Georgy V. Morozov, Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry, Kropotkinsky Pereulok, 1.9, Moscow, USSR.

ALEX SIMPSON,
Cambridge

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Debate on miners' strike ballot

Why we should criticise Scargill's role

THE RUSH to defend Arthur Scargill in the letters page of SO 125 and 126 against my rather mild criticism in the lead article of SO 123 requires some comment.

Not so much on Martin Hoare and Mark Starr, who simply present the arguments of Trevor Bell and the right wing of the NUM — "a national ballot was desired by many members and the NEC was correct to grant this democratic demand"; or, as Mark Starr puts it, "Scargill was correct to accept the position of those on the executive calling for a national ballot", but on Martin Thomas.

He accepts that the decision for a national ballot was wrong, but questions both whether it was within the powers of NUM President Arthur Scargill to avoid it, and further whether the miners were in the end prepared to strike given the slump and the size of coal stocks.

The discussion is useful since it involves our assessment of the most militant and important left reformist trade union leader in Britain and his performance during the first major strike of his presidency. So what happened?

There is little doubt that Scargill influenced the way the Welsh strike developed by telling the South Wales executive (doubtless influenced by the October blunder) that if they wanted to defend Lewis Merthyr a lead would have to come from Wales itself. He would then support this and seek to generate support. Thus in the first few days he was predicting that the strike would "spread like wildfire".

From the first day the driving force of the strike was the Welsh miners themselves, organised by the Joint Lodges Committee. They travelled the country in their hundreds, arguing that the strike should be spread area by area.

The decision of the Yorkshire area executive, lobbied by Welsh miners on the first day of the strike, to call their members out, was very strong and was a major escalation of the strike. Their decision, however, to delay the starting date for one week was a ser-

By Alan Thornett

ious weakness since it inevitably led to similar decisions in Scotland and Kent.

Scargill's public statements on the Wednesday (day three of the strike) were excellent. He answered sections of the media who were calling for a national ballot by giving full support to the strike movement as it was developing and quoting rule 42 and conference policy as the authority for area by-area strikes. He announced that he had decided to call a National Executive Committee for Thursday in order to seek an unanimous vote in support of the strikes. (By this time some Derbyshire pits were out with Wales).

At this time there were no public calls for a national ballot from within the NUM, although some areas had decided to ballot on an area basis, as Wales had. The only public voice calling for a national ballot was Trevor Bell of COSA. Even in right wing areas, where area ballots were called, the recommendation was to support the strike. The media at this time were scouring the coalfields looking for any anti-strike moves to latch onto and exaggerate into an anti-strike movement, as they did at Grimethorpe.

Ballot

But even they could not detect any significant moves for a national ballot from within the NUM.

It is arguable that there could have been a widespread campaign for a national ballot inside the NUM that was not detectable from outside (although none of the letters argue that). But if that was the case, why did Scargill call the EC meeting for the Thursday and allow the right wing to take over before the strikes had even begun? Were the supposed moves for a national ballot unknown even to him, as president of the NUM?

He could have called the NEC a few days later, and Yorkshire,



JOHN HARRIS

Scotland, and Kent would have been out with Wales. There would have been a different dynamic to the situation. It is more difficult to stop strikes which have already begun, than to prevent them before they get off the ground.

Mark Starr argues that we should be realists and recognise that the feeling for a national strike just simply was not there, as proven by the October ballot, that we should recognise reality and get on with an education job. But that is not leadership.

(A similar weakness seems to have been reflected among the left on the Yorkshire area executive, who, as far as I can see, supported the delay of the strike for a week on the ground that more 'education' was needed among the membership. Unfortunately education doesn't come that formal way. The development of militancy is linked crucially to the momentum and dynamic with which the strike develops.

No-one holds the position

characterised by Martin Thomas that: "correct leadership can automatically, always and at will, generate and win struggles".

As Marxists we say that it is the job of leaders to develop a struggle when the potential for it is there. We say this to the TUC and the union leaders about the Tory government.

Not that every section of workers has been simply waiting to walk out against the Tories, but that the potential was there, shown by the numerous major strikes of the past four years, to develop a mass struggle. The job of the leaders was to grasp that potential and develop it.

The development of the strike in South Wales is a good example of this. Would a coldly conducted ballot with no strike action to raise militancy have produced a strike majority? I doubt it (despite previous votes against closures when a strike was not posed).

The militancy which produced the strike vote was developed

from the underground sit-in at Lewis Merthyr, and by the supporting strikes which followed at some pits. This produced a slim majority in the ballot. After the strike started, there was a very rapid development of militancy which was reflected in a huge South Wales majority for strike action in the national ballot. The process is obvious.

My view during the strike, and I thought it was the view of SO, was that the national strike would have developed in a similar way had Scargill and the left stuck to their guns, i.e. South Wales out first followed by Yorkshire, Kent and Scotland along with at least individual pits in other areas. Those on strike would then picket out the pits still working in a period during which the general level of militancy among miners would have been rising with the momentum and dynamic of the strike.

Mark Starr argues that support

for this kind of development could endanger the unity of the NUM — which, he says, is contained in the national ballot tradition. But, important as it is, such unity cannot be placed above the development of mass struggle and therefore unity in action — particularly in a situation which was undoubtedly the crucial turning point in resistance to mass closures in the coal industry.

Now unless last month's serious setback can be reversed — which is not impossible, but very difficult — the labour force in the coal industry will be cut in half, and many miners will face the 'unity' of the dole queue.

No-one, of course, disputes that Scargill wants to stop pit closures, but that is hardly the point. What I am arguing is that he began by supporting — even promoting to some extent — the spreading of a strike throughout the coalfields but he failed to carry the fight against the right wing on the NEC at the crucial meeting which he himself had called.

No-one, as far as I know, before the NEC meeting was predicting even the remotest possibility that the decision would be for a national ballot. Yet the dramatic turn around happened — on a motion from a tiny right-wing area, Leicestershire.

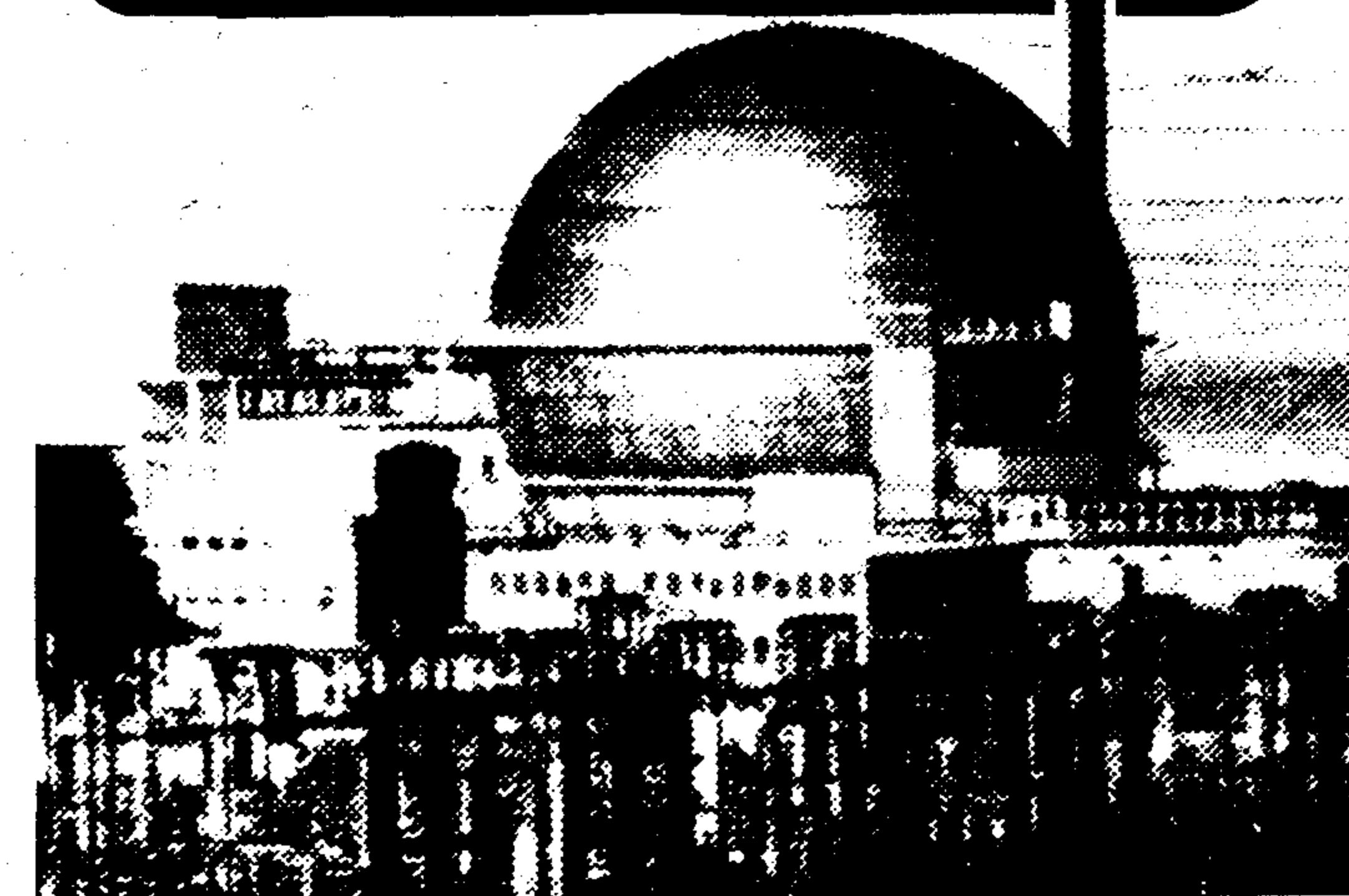
From his confident statements the day before that he wanted a unanimous decision supporting the strikes he emerged to tell the media that he had personally supported the motion calling for a ballot (which also declared null and void the strike decision in Scotland, Yorkshire and Kent). Afterwards he told the Morning Star "We did not pick Lewis Merthyr. But the unofficial action to save it was a fact of life. Accepting that the strike had taken place, the only sensible thing to do was to go for a national ballot."

That is not the language of someone forced into the position after a fight and making a formal statement to the press and TV. It implies that Lewis Merthyr was not the right battle ground and defends the ballot as the "only sensible thing".

It overwhelmingly suggests to me that concessions were made to the right wing at the crucial point of struggle.

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn



all these requirements. Nevertheless it said that the I-131 was still quite dangerous, because a lot of it was released and because it was concentrated by the body into one small gland, the thyroid,

being chemically identical to normal iodine, I-127.

But there was one substance that satisfied all four requirements which was released, but which the NRPB forgot about —

polonium-210 (Po-210).

Polonium was made at Windscale in the reactor cores ('pile') for use in atomic bombs, and it was released as a gas when one of these piles caught fire. Its long half-life of 140 days meant that there was still half of it left after 140 days, when virtually all of the I-131 had broken down. The radiation it produced was more dangerous than that of the iodine as well, particularly when absorbed in the body, either by breathing it in or by eating plants or animals with it in.

Most worryingly, fish and shell fish can concentrate polonium by a factor of 1000 or more!

John Urquhart tries to use such figures as are available to work out a more realistic estimate of the health effects.

He estimates that the Po-210 released increased the total dose to the UK population by a factor of five, giving about 1000 cancer deaths (with several dozen deaths on the continent). And there are various factors (such as rainfall, age-distribution of population)

which could increase that figure.

Alternatively, looking at deaths from leukemia in 16 English counties, Urquhart estimates that some 1200 extra deaths could be due to the Windscale fire.

Leukemia

Unfortunately (or fortunately?) most cancer deaths caused by radiation would be lost among the far greater numbers caused by smoking, diet, etc. Leukemia rates are more sensitive to radiation levels, and leukemias are thought to account for some 15% of cancers due to nuclear accidents. So the total number of cancer deaths from Windscale may be as high as 8000!

A final point for CND supporters. Both British and American atom bombs used Po-210, so the hundreds of A-bomb tests in the '40s, '50s, and '60s could have caused between 5000 and 50,000 extra deaths worldwide. As many as a medium-scale war.

ONLY a few years ago, the nuclear industry was confidently stating that no-one had ever been killed by nuclear power. Nowadays, hardly a month goes by without an increase in the estimates!

In SO 125, I wrote of the possible 260 cases (and 13 deaths) of thyroid cancer caused by the release of radioactive iodine (I-131) from the Windscale fire in 1957. I wrote too soon!

According to John Urquhart, in New Scientist (March 31), the National Radiological Protection Board's (NRPB's) report missed out the most serious element of the escape of radioactivity when coming up with its figures.

Now, all radioactive substances can have effects on health under the wrong circumstances, but several conditions must be satisfied before a release of a radioactive substance can have ser-

ious health effects.

1. There must be a large quantity released, otherwise the radioactivity may be so spread out that it has little effect.

2. The substance must have a high mobility in the environment. If it all falls straight to the ground and stays there, it will not cause much damage to the general public (unless they all visit the fields round Windscale). But if it floats easily in the air, dissolves in the rain, and is easily absorbed by plants and animals, then it will quickly spread.

3. It must be easily absorbed by the human body — it must be the same as or similar to substances that we normally take in from our diet.

4. It must have a long radioactive and biological half-life. In other words, it must remain radioactive for a long time and it must stay in the body for a long time.

The NRPB study decided that none of the radioactive substances released from Windscale satisfied

Monday	4	11	18	25
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WHAT'S ON

PAID ads 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send copy to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8, to arrive by Saturday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

EL SALVADOR Solidarity Campaign: Labour Movement conference, Saturday May 14, 10am to 5pm, County Hall, London SE1. Credentials £2 from ESSC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

HARINGEY Labour Committee on Ireland. Public meeting "Why Labour needs to speak to Sinn Fein". Speaker: Steve Bundred (GLC) and Geoff Bell (LCI). 7.30pm on Thursday 14 April at Brabant Road Trade Union and Community Centre, off Station Rd., N22.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland Annual General Meeting: Saturday April 23, 10am to 5pm at County Hall, London SE1. Resolutions to be submitted by April 8. Contact: LCI, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

BLACK Trade Unionists Solidarity Movement Conference. June 4 & 5 at County Hall, London SE1. International Black speakers. Credentials from Neville Adams, 115 Neville Road, London N16.

NEWHAM 8 Defence Campaign. Details of activities, speakers and model resolutions from PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7 9JN

WHAT future the Homeless in Tower Hamlets? Public meeting with Jack Dash; Chris Holmes; Jock Stallard MP and Jim Lawrie. 7pm, Saturday 16 April at Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road, E1. Organised by Tower House Residents Association.

Bermondsey workers' social: with our comrades who worked so hard for Labour in the by-election. Railway Club, Dunton Rd, SE16. Friday April 15, 8pm.

Chile Solidarity Campaign presents: In Concert for Chile, 'Quilapayun' and 'The Boys of the Lough'. Sunday May 1, 7pm, Dominion Theatre, Tottenham Court Rd. Tickets from Chile Solidarity Campaign [272 4298], £6, £5, £4 and £2 unwaged.

TROTSKYISM or Castroism: a pamphlet analysing the move away from the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution by the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA. Published by the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee: 40p plus postage from PO Box 135, London N10DD.

ROCK the BOMB!

Youth CND Festival Saturday May 7

ASSEMBLE 11am at the Embankment. March to Brockwell Park for Rock the Bomb Festival with Paul Weller and more



Where to find Socialist Organiser

Socialist Organiser is not just a paper. We fight to organise workers in the struggle for a new leadership in the labour movement. If you agree with what we have to say, you can help.

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

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

• NORTH-WEST
Wirral. Contact Colin Johnstone, 1 Wellington Road, Wallasey. Next meeting: Thursday April 14, 8pm, at the Labour Club, Church Rd, Seacombe: 'SO's role in the local and general elections'.

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

Manchester. SO is sold at Grass Roots Books, Newton St., Piccadilly. Contact: 273 6654.

Stockport. Contact c/o 38 Broadhurst St. Meetings every Sunday, 7.30pm: phone 429 6359 for details. SO is sold at Stockport market every Saturday, 11 to 12.30.

Rochdale. Meets on second Monday of the month, 7.30 at Castle Inn. April 11: open meeting on privatisation, with speaker from Campaign to Save Bury's Bins.

Hyndburn. Contact Accrington 395753. Meetings weekly - see SO sellers for details. SO is sold at Broadway, Accrington, Saturdays 11.30 to 1pm.

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

• YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

Durham. SO is sold at the Community Co-op, New Elvet.

York. Contact: 796027. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, and outside the dole office most mornings.

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

Bradford. Contact Barry Turner 636994. SO is sold at the Starry Plough bookshop.

Sheffield. Meets every other Wednesday, 7.30pm at the Brown Cow, The Wick-er. SO is sold outside

Boots, Foregate (Saturday 12 to 1) and at the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Rd. Contact: Rob, 589307.

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

Halifax. Contact 52156. SO is sold at Halifax Whole-food, Gibbet St, and at Tower Books, Hebden Bridge.

York. Contact: 796027. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, outside the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings.

• WALES
Cardiff. Contact 492988.

• MIDLANDS
Birmingham. Meets alter-

Next Socialist Organiser delegate meeting: Sunday April 24, in London. Please make plans now to choose and mandate your group's delegate.

nate Fridays, 7.30pm, the Hen and Chickens, Constitution Hill. April 22: Tebbit's Democracy or Workers' Democracy? Speaker: John McIlroy. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop, Digbeth High St.

Coventry. Contact Keith White, 75623. SO is sold at the Wedge Co-op, High St. Meets on first and last Thursday of the month, 7.30 at the 'Queen', Primrose Hill St, Hillfields.

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

Northampton. Meets every other Monday. Next meeting April 18. For details contact 713606.

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

• SOUTH
Oxford. SO is sold at the Cornmarket (Saturday 11 to 1) and outside Tesco, Cowley Rd, Friday 5 to 7. Also at EOA Books, Cowley Road.

Basingstoke. Business meeting April 8. Public meeting May 16: Is a Socialist Revolution possible in Britain? All meetings 7.30 Chute House.

• LONDON
North-West London. Readers' meetings first Sunday of month. Phone Mick, 624 1931, for details. SO is sold at Kilburn Books.

Islington. Next meeting: Sunday April 10, 8pm, Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Rd/Copenhagen St. Bob Sutcliffe on 'Marx's 'Capital' and capitalism today'. For childcare phone Nik, 278 1341.

Haringey. Contact 802 0771 or 348 5941. Meets every other Thursday, 7.30,

Trade Union Centre, Brabant Road.

Tower Hamlets. Meets fortnightly on Fridays, 6.30 to 8.30pm. Contact 377 1328 for details.

Southwark/Lambeth. Meets every other Wednesday at Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, SE5. Business meeting 7.30pm, open forum discussion 8.30 p.m. Next meeting, April 27: Jane Stockton, editor of London Labour Briefing Streetlife supplement on women's liberation and the labour movement.

Hounslow. SO is sold outside All Saints Church, Hounslow High St, Saturdays 10.30 to 12. Next meeting: Sunday April 10, 'The Transitional Programme'. Ask sellers for details.

Hackney. Contact Andrew Horning, 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd, N16.

SO is sold at the following London bookshops: Collets, Central Books, The Other Bookshop, Bookmarks, Bookplace (Peckham Rd, SE15), Kilburn Books, and Reading Matters (Wood Green Shopping Centre).

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 price 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 rents 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! Repeal 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 the bosses.

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Gerry Healy discovers World Jewish Conspiracy

Newsline has continued its ridiculous campaign of bluff and bluster against the BBC Money Programme's allegation that it receives Libyan subsidies. But still -- litigious though it is -- it has not got round to suing the BBC.

Many - solicited - letters from members and supporters have been printed. The campaign continues against Socialist Organiser, linked with the BBC according to the well-tried Stalinist technique of the 'amalgam'. Example from a piece by long-standing member Alex McLarty: "Trade unionists! Members of the labour movement! Be warned! Depending on its substance a small dose of poison can do a lot of harm. What is the substance of Matgamna and 'Socialist Organiser'? We know enough now. Time may tell even more". Much of the denunciation of Socialist Organiser is extremely shrill and hysterical, lynch mob stuff.

It is also extremely sad. People write expressing their faith in the charlatans who put out Newsline. Letter after letter testifies to real sacrifices and devotion. People who couldn't possibly know the secrets of the autocratic and conspiratorial leaders of the organisation write to testify from their own experience of struggling to raise money for the paper that it could have no financial link with Libya. Playwright Tom Kempinski writes in ringing tones, "We are not bought" - rhetoric that rings pathetic and false in the circumstances.

As false has always been the hopes and wishes of the many fine revolutionaries who have devoted themselves to Healy's 'machine for maiming militants'.

We reproduce the editorial in which they responded to our comment last week.

NEWSLINE's editorial uses the code word 'Zionists', but in fact it is talking about a conspiracy of Jews which runs, they say, from 'the centre' of Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet to the commanding heights of the BBC, all the way through to... Socialist Organiser. If a Jew becomes 'the youngest-ever chairman' of the BBC, what else can it be but a 'Zionist' conspiracy?

Pre World War 2 anti-semites explained communism and finance capital alike as different aspects of a single World Jewish Conspiracy. So now do these petro-dollar anti-Zionists of Newsline depict 'the centre' of Thatcher's government and Socialist Organiser as secretly linked and bonded - despite ocean-wide class and political differences - by a hidden network of 'Zionists'.

'Zionism' here is not a political reference meaning those who support the right of Israel, or a modified Israel, to exist. That would include the overwhelming majority of the people of Britain.

There are Zionists and... Zionists: there are Zionists and Jews. It is the latter who are the conspirators. Even an 'anti-Zionist' Jew, this racist logic says, will have ineradicable loyalties and allegiances more basic than politics: some people are congenital 'Zionists'.

SO is opposed to Zionism? It supports the national rights of the Palestinians? SO advocates a secular democratic state in Palestine within which Jewish and Arab Palestinians could live as equals? Though rejecting with contempt the 'socialism' of the 'Green Book', it would support Libya against an imperialist invasion?

Forgery

That's just a front. Don't the communists pretend to denounce the 'finance capitalists' and the 'finance capitalists' make war on communism so as to fool those on both sides who don't know there is an International Jewish Conspiracy?

Thus Gerry Healy in his dotage seems to have rediscovered the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' - that forgery of the Okhrana, the Tsarist political police, which became a warrant for genocide against the Jews of Europe. Newsline in effect defines Jews as 'agents of Zionist

By Sean Matgamna

imperialism' - which must be the very heart of imperialism if, as they say, its controlling tentacles reach secretly right into 'the centre' of Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet. The Jews, it would seem, are now the international janissaries of imperialism.

How can the mutant remnants of what was once the most serious revolutionary organisation in Britain have come to this?

For the last nine or ten years, the WRP has seen the world, and especially the international Trotskyist movement, mainly in terms of police 'conspiracies' and the operations of 'agents' and counter-agents.

Vast amounts of newsprint, time and money have been given over to the search for the 'conspirators' and 'agents' who are the root of all evil in the world, and whose subterranean combats and manoeuvres seem in the WRP's eyes to have replaced the struggle of classes as the locomotive of history.

Add to this paranoid obsession Mr Healy's present 'cup-board love' politics which put Zionism and anti-Zionism at the centre of world politics - because, to judge by all the circumstantial evidence, Libyan gold is at the centre of the WRP's survival - and the scenario more or less writes itself. The inbuilt logic of such 'politics' takes over and takes off.

It easily becomes a matter of Jews - 'Zionists' - against all the rest.

The racist logic breaks through in their account of the Money Programme's 'witch-hunt'. Why is this the work of 'Zionists'? Because a Jew is appointed chairman of the BBC? Because only 'Zionists' are concerned with the Middle East? Because the Jewish Chronicle showed interest in an expose of people it must regard as at least potential pogromists. Of course, if the Jewish Chronicle was tipped off in advance, that is proof positive that 'Zionists' were in control!

Or it is that all 'witch-hunters' are Zionists?

PAGE 8 The News Line Saturday April 9, 1983

From 'Socialist Organiser' to Thatcher & Reagan

SAURDAY April 9, 1983 This morning...

The Zionist connection

A POWERFUL Zionist connection runs from the so-called left of the Labour Party right into the centre of Thatcher's government in Downing Street. There is no difficulty whatever in proving this.

Top of the list, we have the most recent appointment of Mr Stuart Young, a director of the 'Jewish Chronicle', as youngest-ever chairman of the BBC, having been a governor only since 1981. He is the brother of Mr David Young, another Thatcher appointee who is chairman of the Manpower Services Commission.

This is the key organisation which the Tories are transforming into a 'corporatist front', behind which they seek to mobilise jobless youth from 14 years upwards into a 'slave labour body to break trade union wages, safety procedures and working conditions... Thatcher has rolled out these appointments with magisterial arrogance while the Labour Party and TUC chiefs have accepted them without a murmur of protest'. (News Line, March 28, 1983).

The Tories know they can rely totally upon Zionist imperialism to produce the most hated reactionaries, in order to transform the situation at a later date into a pro-fascist, anti-Semitic pogrom against all the Jews in general.

Zionism made it possible for a number of rich Jews to leave Nazi Germany with the agreement of the Fuhrer provided they agreed to become Zionists. The Tories know too they have a powerful anti-Semitic trump card up their sleeves, to replay once again as the most reactionary manifestation of racialism, which is anti-Semitism.

From the support and advance publicity which the 'Jewish Chronicle' gave the BBC 2 'Money Programme' on March 20, the reactionary Zionist link was clear for all to see. But it also stretches through Downing Street channels right into the White House and President Reagan.

The latest Reagan military provocation against Libya early in March raises in its sharpest form the central political question. Do Trotskyists defend the Libyan regime of Gaddafi against US imperialism as a matter of principle, or do they

denounce it as 'the reactionary Islamic government of Libya' and seek a 'neutrality' between US imperialism and Gaddafi? This is the position of 'Socialist Organiser', claiming to speak for 'lefts' in the Labour Party.

The same organ supported the Zionist-sponsored 'Money Programme' on March 20. They wrote: 'We (Socialist Organiser) didn't wait for the BBC to tell us about the WRP's probable links with Libya. The fact that the BBC now says it doesn't make it any less likely to be true.' (April 7, 1983) (Our emphasis).

Here is unqualified support for the work of Thatcher's appointee as chairman of the BBC, who is also a director of British Caledonian Airways and the British Overseas Trade Group for Israel. 'Socialist Organiser' has landed itself right bang in the middle of Thatcher's hand-picked Zionists as an outright supporter of their policies of witch-hunting the WRP and the News Line for our principled stand against imperialism and in support of the Libyan masses under their leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The question of the hour, we repeat, is the pro-Zionist policies of the Reagan and Thatcher administrations and their hatred of the Palestinians and Libyans alike.

In the background of the 'Socialist Organiser' one can detect a powerful current of anti-Arab racism - also shared by Reagan and Thatcher. This is the substance of their support for the 'Money Programme' and their lying affirmation that Gaddafi finances the WRP with a '£1.5 million subsidy', claimed by the faceless person on the BBC 2 programme.

This is a lie from start to finish. Because the WRP unhesitatingly supports the Libyan and Palestinian people and its leadership against the nuclear war plans of Reagan, Thatcher and the Zionists in their campaign to destroy all national liberation movements in the Middle East, 'Socialist Organiser' has joined the class enemy.

The Zionist connection between these so-called 'lefts' in the Labour Party right through to Thatcher and Reagan's White House is there for all to see in its unprincipled nakedness.

No: it is that a view of the world in which the Palestinian question is the central pivot of the struggle of two basic camps, the imperialist and the 'anti-imperialist', decrees that within the imperialist countries, 'Zionists', linked by ineradicable ties to the arch-imperialism - Zionist imperialism - are the main enemy, everywhere.

Faced with an earlier left-wing flirtation with anti-Semitism dressed up as anti-capitalism, Frederick Engels said that: 'anti-semitism is the socialism of idiots'. WRP-style anti-Zionism is the anti-imperialism of idiots. And it is indistinguishable from anti-semitism.

All Jews other than certain religious anti-Zionists and some revolutionary socialists do support Israel - that is, they are Zionists.

They are a people scattered through all segments of society. Seek 'evidence' that there may be a conspiratorial network of Jews, and you will find it - red Jews and Rothschilds, members of Mrs Thatcher's (or Ronald Reagan's) cabinet and writers

easily be spun.

But the only possible 'rational' common denominator on which to base such a 'theory' is 'race' (whatever that may be).

The leaders of the WRP are people whose history must make them ashamed in some part of their minds about what they have become. So, cheaply, they warn that Mrs Thatcher, who now (they say) has Zionist conspirators at 'the centre' of her government, may engage in anti-semitic agitation. But they can't even disavow anti-semitism without linking the Zionists to Hitler, saying that Hitler consciously and deliberately made forcible conversions to Zionism.

Morally outraged by Israel - and rightly outraged - the more emotional or 'third worldist' left in Britain has sometimes tried to brand all Zionists, that is, the vast majority of Jews, as racists, and (especially during the ultra-left heyday of the early '70s) proposed to treat them accordingly. The slogan 'drive the Zionists out of the labour movement' has been raised - it can only mean: drive the Jews out of the labour movement.

Hysterical

There is simply no way that this sort of anti-Zionism can avoid shading over - despite the best 'anti-racist' intentions - into anti-semitism.

Even if it were true that Jews who support Israel are racists, the evil consequences of 'left wing' anti-semitism would far outweigh any help it would give the oppressed Palestinians. But in fact it is hysterical and stupid to think that all Jews who support Israel are racists.

Most of them have the haziest notion of the history of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine. They do have an understandably vivid awareness that six million Jews were murdered in mid 20th century Europe. Naturally they give instinctive support to Israel and are inclined to believe its official spokesmen.

Yet the recent outcry against the Begin government by millions of non-Israeli (Zionist) Jews and the vast demonstrations within Israel itself when the facts about Israel's treatment of Lebanon were made known, and it became impossible to shut out knowledge of Israeli complicity in the massacres, prove how far millions of Zionists are from being conscious racists. Most of them can be got to understand that the

treatment of the Palestinian Arabs by the Palestinian Jews is a betrayal of the best traditions of the Jewish people.

But idiotic attempts to treat them all as part of a 'Zionist conspiracy' can only convince the Jews that in parallel to what they see as the Arab threat to wipe out the Jews of Palestine, those in Britain who talk of justice for the Palestinian Arabs are a crowd of loony future pogromists. And that won't help the Palestinian Arabs either.

Zionist plot

The state of the left on this question is indicated by the fact that Ken Livingstone, in the same issue of Newsline, chattily adds his support to the idea that the Money Programme expose on the WRP was a Zionist plot. He hadn't then read the anti-semitic editorial printed on the same page. What does he think of the editorial? Does he think we should just shrug and accept anti-semitism as a feature of the far left?

Perhaps what the Ayatollah Healy has discovered in his political dotage is not the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' but the last will and testament of Joseph Stalin, who during his last years infected much of the Stalinist and quasi-Stalinist left with his own ingrained anti-semitism. At the time of his death in 1953 Stalin had set the stage for a purge trial of five 'Jewish doctors' from the Kremlin's own hospital, accused of plots, poisonings, etc.

It was to have been the signal for a final act in the vast anti-Jewish campaign, legitimised as 'anti-Zionism', which had raged in most of Eastern Europe and the USSR since 1948 - which, for example, was a prominent feature of purge trials like that of Rudolf Slansky in Czechoslovakia in 1952. The trial of the doctors would have been the signal for the mass deportation of the USSR's Jews - and possibly for their annihilation.

Stalin's successors cancelled the trial, but anti-semitism remains rampant in the Stalinist states.

When the WRP (then SLL) went Maoist for a year back in 1967, Mr Banda, now the WRP's General Secretary, wrote that they would 'march' even under the portrait of Stalin. Once again he is 'marching' under the portrait of Stalin.

He won't write about it, but he is also uncomfortably close to marching under the portrait of Adolf Hitler.

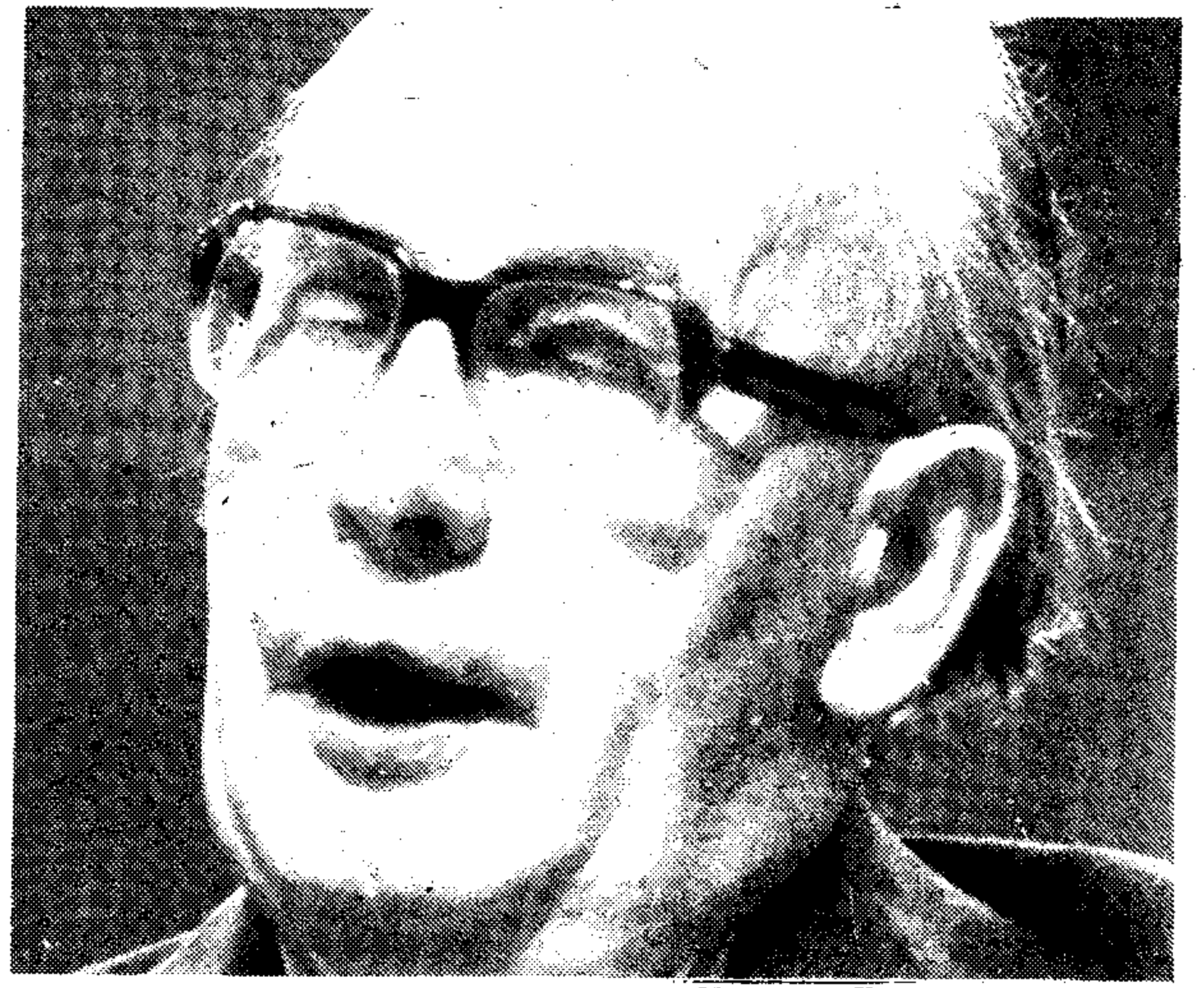
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Save South London Hospital Campaign meets every Thursday at Balham Food & Book Co-op, High Street, Balham at 8.00 p.m.



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Maxwell profits from Keys' sell-out



Keys: called off blacking

By Stan Crooke

THE SAME week that Pergamon Press was being praised in the pages of Soviet Weekly for having published an English translation of 'Serving The Country: A Communist Cause', by the present chief of the Soviet Defence Ministry, Pergamon boss Robert Maxwell was pre-occupied with serving his own profits by breaking strike action by workers at his printing plant in Park Royal, London, and East Kilbride, Glasgow.

The dispute began in mid-March, when workers at the London plant struck in protest at the withholding of back pay. The Scottish workers joined the dispute after Maxwell had attempted to get them to work with printing plates produced by scabs.

Over Easter weekend Maxwell and Bill Keys (General Secretary of SOGAT 82, the main union involved in the dispute) met and agreed between themselves a return to work

formula.

Maxwell certainly had every reason to agree to the formula, which included the following points:

*Immediate resumption of work at Park Royal.

*Introduction of a new house agreement at East Kilbride, including acceptance of cuts in the size of the workforce.

*Acceptance of job flexibility and "reduction of unit costs" at Park Royal (i.e. cutbacks in the workforce).

*Closure of Park Royal within 60 days of 5 April if no agreement is reached on flexibility and cuts in staffing levels.

*During negotiations on any modernisation of the Park Royal plant, "no restriction will be placed on the production of the Radio Times and the Listener at East Kilbride or, as far as essential, elsewhere within the British Printing and Communications Corporation group of companies."

*All points in the document are legally binding.

But for workers at both the plants in dispute, especially Park Royal, the document represents a defeat. Despite this, Keys not only put his signature

to the document, but also committed the National Executive Council of SOGAT to agree to the conditions laid down in the document.

So the NEC voted by 17 votes to 9 to accept it.

Blacking

Keys had already called off the all-important blacking in the London area of Maxwell's other publications prior to the return to work formula being agreed upon. He now turned his attention to foisting the formula onto the union members themselves.

Union officials recommended

acceptance of the formula to the East Kilbride workers on the grounds that it involved withdrawal of the dismissal notices which Maxwell had issued, retrospective payments for time lost, and no transference of work from Park Royal to East Kilbride without the union's agreement.

On 17 April a mass meeting of East Kilbride workers voted to accept the formula. The following Monday, the formula was put before a mass meeting at Park Royal, but Danny Beagan (SOGAT branch secretary at the East Kilbride plant) doubted that it would be accepted: "We're not too happy about it ourselves, and we can't see it

being acceptable to Park Royal. We have given them a guarantee that we won't do any of the work that they normally do. I can imagine there is going to be a lot of heated words at the meeting in London.

Square one

"If they throw it out then we are back to square one again. We have already had full support from East Kilbride Trades Council and Glasgow Trades Council, and if the situation blows up again then we'll appeal to the Trades Councils and the Scottish TUC for support from all over the country."

Telecoms black Bank of England

POEU engineers in the City of London area are at present taking selective industrial action in the Bank of England as part of the British Telecoms unions' campaign against the privatisation of British Telecoms.

Telecommunications maintenance cover was withdrawn from the Bank a fortnight ago, along with the beginning of picketing of the building. This was quickly increased to the withdrawal of fitting work in the Bank, when BT management suspended some fitting engineers for refusing to cross the picket lines.

The action may escalate soon, when instructions to connect Project Mercury into the BT network are given to POEU members of another London branch. The POEU policy is to black all Project Mercury lines, a policy which was reaffirmed by the London branch when they were told that their members would be

instructed to connect the lines.

Project Mercury is a profit-skimming consortium of Barclays Bank, E&T, and BT, which was set up as a result of the ending of BT's telecommunications monopoly in the 1981 British Telecoms Act.

The members of the London branch have already been told that they will be suspended if they refuse to connect the lines, but the threat has only led to an increase in their resolve.

The London branch involved are linking the blacking of Project Mercury, which is being posed as a fight against liberalisation solely by both BT management and the POEU leadership, with the ongoing fight against the privatisation of BT, as part of the fight against the privatisation of the telecoms network throughout Britain and the fight to extend the public ownership of telecommunications services.

Putting the lid on plans to privatise

By David Ford

In November 1981 the Tories pushed through full council a plan to engage Waste Management Ltd to produce a detailed specification and cost survey for the privatisation of the refuse collection service, street cleansing and associated services, at a cost to the Bury ratepayers of £15,000.

In December 1981, NALGO members voted for a policy of non-cooperation with Waste Management Ltd or the council in its move to privatise the service.

In March 1982, delayed by the NALGO action, the council asked for a meeting with the joint unions, and found themselves under threat of full strike action with the prospect of refuse on the streets before the May elections.

They agreed to a compromise: the council will go no further than drawing up of a list of tenders and in turn the union side will withdraw from its threatened action and undertake to enter into discussions on any improvements that would be proposed in the service.

Privatise

But after the May elections left the Tories in control, they saw Labour's defeat as their mandate to privatise.

In October 1982, the joint unions were informed by council leader Little of the council's intention to invite the firms on the select list to tender for refuse collection and other services.

Faced with a unilateral breach of the March 1982 agreement, the unions replied that a state of

dispute would exist. Last December, the unions' case was taken before the North West Provincial Council, the arbitrators in such cases, who found the unions' case established and expressed the hope that local discussions and consultations would take place.

In the wake of this finding the council was forced to inform firms on the select list not to tender, and establish a joint working party to look into possible cost savings.

The working party was formed in January. It soon became clear that the council side wanted to wreck the meeting and force a walk out by the unions. However after several meetings, and fifteen systems had been looked at, the joint working party recommended two systems to the public service committee.

One of these systems was the revolutionary wheeled bin system



that could be phased in over three to four years. This would have led to minimal job loss and long term savings of £450,000.

But in February the public services committee considered the joint working party recommendations and decided that they must invite the firms on the select list to re-tender.

The unions' action was swift; on the day the full council met to accept the public services committee recommendation over 2,000 staff and manual workers stopped work in a tremendous response to a call from the action committee for a day of action.

This was followed by a 300-strong lobby of the council in the evening.

The joint union action committee now await the special meeting of the public services committee on April 12 which will consider the contractors' tenders.

In the meantime, the action committee have not been idle. We have stepped up our public campaign to bring the issue over to the public by promoting a public meeting with Frank White MP as main speaker.

We have involved the local Labour Group and local Labour Party branches; petitioned the public by going into the town precincts and toured estates and outlying areas in a decorated van asking people to support their local binmen and a much appre-

ciated service. We feel our fight must continue if we are to stop the carve up of public services.

Please support the fighting fund - donations to Save Bury's Bins Fighting Fund, NALGO office, Town Hall, Bury.

(Unions involved: AUEW, EETPU, GMBATU, NALGO, NUPE, TGWU, UCATT).

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Fight at NOLS

THE National Organisation of Labour Students conference last week took 2½ sessions and a suspension of proceedings to get through the credentials report from Labour Party student organiser John Dennis.

What lay behind the fracas was who controls Labour's student wing, students or the NEC — and, more immediately, who was going to have a majority, Clause 4 or the left?

More than 20 delegates were ruled out of order, and the absolute majority for the Clause 4 faction was only about 17.

To understand the whole saga of disbanded clubs requires fairly intimate knowledge of the constitution, but two examples should illustrate.

Birmingham University Labour club elected four delegates. Two were Socialist Students in NOLS (SSIN) supporters. Clause 4 supporter Dave Mason — a runner-up, and therefore 'reserve' if those delegates were ruled out) — volunteered to send the NOLS membership card stubs to Labour Party HQ at Walworth Road.

This he did — but he did not include the two SSIN delegates' cards. Abdul Sheir and Phil Davidson were therefore not members of NOLS and not delegates.

Then their cards were produced — but Abdul's NUS number, a necessary detail, was missing, so he was still out of order.

Only the returned stub did not match Abdul's own card. Dave Mason admitted forgery and went home.

The membership cards for SSIN delegates from Manchester University simply disappeared — but only after John Mann (the Clause 4 new chair of NOLS) said he'd seen them and John Dennis had offered to send us a photocopy proving they were all incomplete. Finally, a lot of red faces voted these comrades into membership at an emergency NC.

There was little time left for policy debate. Only Poland, Ireland, and the economy were discussed. There was a slight shift to the left: the Polish state student union was de-recognised, and a republican position was adopted on Ireland.

Even though Clause 4 retained control of the NC — with the same opposition as last year, one SSIN and one Militant — the story has not ended. A dossier is being produced and the matter is being taken to the NEC. SSIN (together with Militant, we hope) will be circulating the evidence to Labour clubs.



JOHN HARRIS

Tommy Shepherd: nearly sunk by the credit NOLS gave to Left Alliance

Student soft left scrapes to victory

by Jane Ashworth

IN THE Executive elections at the National Union of Students conference before Easter, Tommy Shepherd, previously presumed darling of the NUS soft left, only scraped in by the skin of his teeth. Three votes separated him from Jan Mellor of the Left Alliance (a bloc of the Communist Party, Liberals, and supporters) for Deputy President Education.

Why? Although the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) have not definitively stamped their mark on NUS since winning the leadership from the Left Alliance, or developed a clear labour movement orientation, they have certainly had a more campaigning approach — away from the total concentration on the committee room that the Left Alliance leadership gave NUS, towards more local and national activity by students themselves.

Although dreadfully inadequate, a NOLS leadership is substantially better than the Left Alliance.

Tommy was almost defeated because of the floor work of NOLS. Its decision to back a Left Alliance candidate for national secretary against a popular Socialist Student Alliance candidate meant that NOLS spent a lot of time whipping their delegates and rebuilding the credibility of the Left Alliance. It's not surprising, then, that there was little canvassing done for Tommy,

nor that the Left Alliance have found a space again in NUS. NOLS gave them back the credibility they had lost.

Despite the Socialist Student Alliance getting two people elected to the Executive, showing there is still support for an independent far left group inside NUS, it was clear from the whole conference that the far left is now very weak in the union.

Socialist students should now get together and form a united organisation. Such an organisation would be firmly rooted inside NOLS, committed to developing its labour movement links, fighting for political control, but we should be flexible about forms of organisation.

There would be little point in tying ourselves to the NOLS line when there is still clearly the potential for electing far left candidates and carrying out left wing campaigns in the colleges.

It would be equally pointless to deny ourselves possible openings in colleges by remaining trapped inside a right wing Labour Club. In these colleges an independent presence, perhaps organised as a left caucus of NOLS, could be organised, always with the intention of winning control of the Labour Club, but building itself through its own activities.

We need a united group to fight for the leadership of NOLS which will not be bound by NOLS practices. We need to be organised inside NOLS and have our own profile outside it until the time when we control it.

Grave danger to workers

AFTER THE collapse last autumn of the 'Operation Hard Rock' civil defence exercise, and many Labour councils' response of setting up 'nuclear free zones', the government has turned to compulsion.

In effect local administrations and their workforce are to be conscripted.

Consultation with local authorities and the unions affected has been next to nil. While the details of the proposed legislation remain murky, the government's low-profile approach is readily understood on examining the little that is known about the new regulations.

Councils will come under the direct control of the Home Secretary. Whitelaw will be able to give individual councils specific directions on how they are to carry out civil defence duties.

These will include providing suitable war headquarters and equipping them, and training a

civil defence volunteer force.

Councils will also be in charge of organising and training their own workforces in civil defence. Training will include such things as the Parks and Gardens Department digging mass graves, building workers converting underground car parks into bunkers, and schools being turned into supply dumps.

All such training will have to be done outside of working hours, probably at weekends, and without pay. The overall cost of developing such 'defence' will fall on the local authorities.

On their past record, the Tories may well tuck and turn, watering down or conceding certain points of the plan, to break up and minimise opposition. However, that all depends on the opposition.

So far, opposition has been limited to the official response of various local authority associations and the TUC. The TUC is

arranging a meeting with the nuclear free zone authorities to coordinate opposition, and has also expressed concern over the failure of the government to consult with the TUC and the industrial relations implications of conscription.

Such protests are important: but the decisive opposition would be for local authority workers to refuse to cooperate. Given the widespread hostility to the war machine and support for CND, a firm response from the unions, linked where possible to a stand by councils, could throw the whole idea back in the face of the Tories.

It is of the utmost importance that coordinated resistance is organised. The first job is to convince people — many simply do not believe that even this government would go so far as to get local authority workers practising digging mass graves for a post-war world.

Few gains for NUT left

THE Left seem to have made few concrete gains at this Easter's NUT conference in Jersey, apart from the considerable impact made on the gay rights question.

The President, Don Winters, ruled out of order key clauses in the first motion on disarmament. All references to Cruise, Trident and nuclear bases were ruled to be matters outside of the aims and objects of the union.

Last year's conference successfully challenged a similar ruling. But this year it was narrowly lost. After a further delay of three days, the gutted motion was eventually carried. An amendment to affiliate to CND was lost. The union has retreated from its disarmament policy of last year.

However, these and other issues which went the executive's way, did reflect a solid opposition. Attempts to call for action to win this year's 15% claim and to call for a flat rate increase in next year's salaries, were only narrowly lost. The latter went to



a card vote with 120,000 against and 100,000 for.

Only a couple of years ago the demand for a flat rate increase would not even have commanded enough votes to go to such a division.

The Executive's control of conference time and abuse of conference procedure eventually caused the conference to react against them later in the week. The Executive Memorandum on

Two fringe meetings were organised, one by the Broad Left on peace and disarmament, and the other by women in the NUT which featured a speaker from Greenham Common, Susan Mann.

A packed meeting of about 300 on the Sunday evening heard how she had become involved in the peace camp, having marched with a Cardiff delegation the 150 miles to Greenham.

education cuts was thrown out.

The Executive's attempts to bring emergency matters to the conference were also rejected.

Conference passed a motion calling for an end to fixed term contracts, with some exceptions by 1984.

It also voted to suspend standing orders twice to debate left

motions. Helen Flack, delegate from Leicester, moved one of these motions to back the May 24 Greenham Common day of action. Although this was lost the mood in conference was very strong.

During the conference the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA) showed that it had become the major pole of opposition to the Executive, holding successful fringe meetings and its stand to make gay rights an issue at this conference has been fully vindicated.

Overall this conference reflects a stalemate. The left has not yet gained control of the conference, but it has enough power to act as a veto against the executive on several key issues.

The task for socialists is now to stand left candidates against the national executive in as many areas of the country as possible, based on the policies of the STA. The election results in Inner London have encouraged many delegates in other parts of the country to seriously consider standing against NEC members, many of whom have often been returned unopposed.

The final STA meeting at conference, attended by over 100 delegates, launched its campaign to raise the question of the NUT's affiliation to the Labour Party.

Daleside betrayal

"THE union has really sold us out" commented a very emotional Pete Burton, a leading activist during the dispute by Daleside workers. The strike had lasted for over ten weeks after, 63 workers were sacked for refusing to work new continental shifts involving seven day working.

The firm, Daleside Hadden is typical of hosiery firms in the East Midlands and this defeat will echo throughout those firms with a traditional lack of militant fighting leadership in the Hosiery and Knitwear Union.

This defeat will unfortunately set a precedent for the introduction of continental shifts in all hosiery firms.

The strikers had been campaigning to win back their jobs from the onset of the dispute; but the union bureaucrats at regional level have had their eyes set on a pay-off as a way out of a dispute that showed up their weakness as union leaders.

The pay-off was £500 and £85 for every year worked. This came a couple of weeks after the strikers had rejected a similar "offer". This won't even make up for the money lost by the strike.

Pay-off

The union president Lambert argued at the mass meeting that the strikers should accept the feeble pay-off — the vote went 44 to 14 to accept.

There are two significant reasons for the failure of this dispute:

1) The role of the Hosiery and Knitwear Union full time bureaucrats.

Their organisation left a lot to be desired — they managed to secure a hut for the strikers to sit in but put no effort into organising a continuous district levy to boost the strike dispute fund.

Union members in other parts of Nottingham didn't even know there was a dispute on at Daleside.

They didn't hold to the strikers' wishes of fighting for reinstatement; instead they open-

ly manoeuvred for a pay-off deal from Managing Director Keith Fry.

They gladly jumped into ACAS negotiations, selling out the jobs and then driving back to Leicester without telling the strikers what had happened during the meeting! This leadership has now been exposed at the strikers' expense.

2) The failure of the Nottingham labour movement to mobilise sufficiently for the mass pickets — which when successful meant so much to the workers on the

picket line.

The trades council strike support committee tried, and to a point was successful in bolstering up the dispute. However it must be said that the majority of trade unionists in Nottingham were not mobilised by branch and full time officials behind the dispute.

The strikers came to the Trades Council meetings and saw tub-thumping speeches by activists. But where were they on the picket line where it really mattered?

Union members face deportation



Nesat Tolunay is a Turkish clothing worker and member of the NUTGW in Hackney. The Home Office wants to deport him — which for Nesat, a member of the socialist organisation Dev-Yol, would mean almost certain death at the hands of the Turkish military regime. Nesat is seeking political asylum.

The Friends of Nesat Tolu-

may are asking supporters to send resolutions to the Home Office, c/o David Waddington MP, Secretary of State, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1. Contact: c/o South Islington Law Centre, 131-2 Upper St, London N1 1QP.

Muhammad Idrish, a Bengali social worker and member of NALGO in West Bromwich, faces deportation following the breakdown of his marriage.

The Defence Campaign and his NALGO branch call on supporters to affiliate to the campaign (£5 organisations, £1 individuals); to write to the Home Secretary, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1, and to your MP; and to pass resolutions of support.

Contact the Defence Campaign c/o Barry Lovejoy, 30 Antrobus Rd, Birmingham 21, or c/o Graham Reid, 62 Bedminster Parade, Bristol 3.

Tories call up jobless youth

4,000 lucky young unemployed workers will get a unique opportunity from September. At a staggering wage of £25 per week — less their board and lodging costs — they will be able to join Margaret Thatcher's armed forces.

They will get all the square-bashing, ear-bashing and haircutting that goes with army discipline: but it is not clear whether — like the regular army — they will actually get the chance to kill workers and youth on the streets of Ulster, or patrol the Antarctic wastes in defence of Tory imperialist grandeur.

It is certain that none will be allowed anywhere near the military High Command or its nerve centres in bunkers deep below the countryside, where the decisions on launching a nuclear holocaust would be taken.

But this does not mean that the Tory move is insignificant. In seeking to drag unemployed youth into their war machine, and school them in military discipline, Thatcher plainly hopes the reactionary environment will shape their later attitudes. Many, they hope, will decide to join the professional gangsters in the armed forces — others return with new or reinforced racist and pro-imperialist prejudices.

Already, too many young people have been forced through 'economic conscription' into the desperate "solution" of a career in the forces. The labour movement must step up propaganda and other campaigning to prevent more being drafted in.



THE political back-up for management, who have been fighting strikes over the past few weeks, was reemphasised yesterday by Tory Chancellor Geoffrey Howe, when he said that despite the advances which have been made in productivity, there is still a lot of "inefficiency" to be "rooted-out".

The message is very clear. The offensive against the working class on the shop floor and against the shop stewards' movement is to be pressed forward, despite the current fightback by thousands of workers.

Despite this determination by both government and employers it appears that the AUEW EC at its meeting on Tuesday made no moves to make the strike at the Cowley assembly plant official — a situation which could influence the TGWU which meets

Socialist ORGANISER



JOHN HARRIS

Howe backs up Cowley bosses

By Bill
Peters

on Thursday to consider official backing.

This creates a dangerous situation. Although official sanction is not the most important factor in the strike, decisions for official support would demonstrate that the TGWU and AUEW are serious in their support for the strikers and would give them confidence to continue.

Like other strikes at the present time, the main danger is isolation in front of determined employers. The Joint Shop Stewards Committee at the Cowley Assembly Plant will be meeting at 11 am on Thursday, two hours

before the next mass meeting, to consider the outcome of negotiations held last Monday.

The stewards are certain to recommend rejection of the latest "offer" by BL which is merely to postpone the introduction of bell-to-bell running for an extra week. At the moment it appears that the full time officials, who for the first time ever at the Cowley assembly plant are claiming to be leading the strike, will support such a recommendation.

The officials, particularly David Buckle of the TGWU, are using conditions created by management under which convenors who speak publicly in support of the strike face disciplinary action, to become the public spokesmen for the strike.

The shop stewards meeting on Monday took the important decision to elect a strike committee, and charged it to administer the strike between shop stewards meetings and to take part in negotiations if necessary with BL

management.

There is little doubt that short of a complete reversal by the officials before Thursday's mass meeting, that the vote will be to continue the strike, which is seen by the workers not just as opposition to bell-to-bell working, but as a fightback against hardline management.

Initiatives

BL, however, are unlikely to sit back and see the strike continue without taking initiatives to try to smash it. Up to now they have held back from their usual tactics of sacking threats because of the sheer strength of the strike. But they are now in a very difficult position. Four important models have been paralysed for three weeks, including the new Maestro, the most important new model since BL was formed in 1968.

They will therefore be forced to make some move to try to break the strike. Workers and shop stewards must be ready for that move when it comes.

TGWU must fight wage control

by Alan Thornett

THE TGWU Biennial Delegate Conference could become an important battleground over the new social contract or "National Economic Assessment" recently agreed between the TUC and Labour Party leadership in the event of Labour returning to power.

Current policy of the 1.8 million strong union is for free collective bargaining and against any form of wage constraint. That has been the policy since Jack Jones was defeated on the social contract issue at the Isle of Man conference in 1977.

The conference is back to the Isle of Man again this year, with Moss Evans having equivocated over the last year, on the wage policy issue.

As usual there are a number of resolutions on the agenda against any form of wage control. This year there are 11 resolutions calling for free collective bargaining with three in favour of a social contract. My own branch, the 5/293 has a resolution along the following lines: "That this conference is opposed to all incomes policies and all controls of wages by any government and will defend the principle of free collective bargaining."

The significance however is not in the fact that there are more resolutions against the social contract than in favour. The most significant thing is that the General Executive Council have no resolution on the agenda on wage policy, whilst at each conference since 1977 there has been a clear (though inadequate) GEC resolution against wage controls, which did at least declare their position.

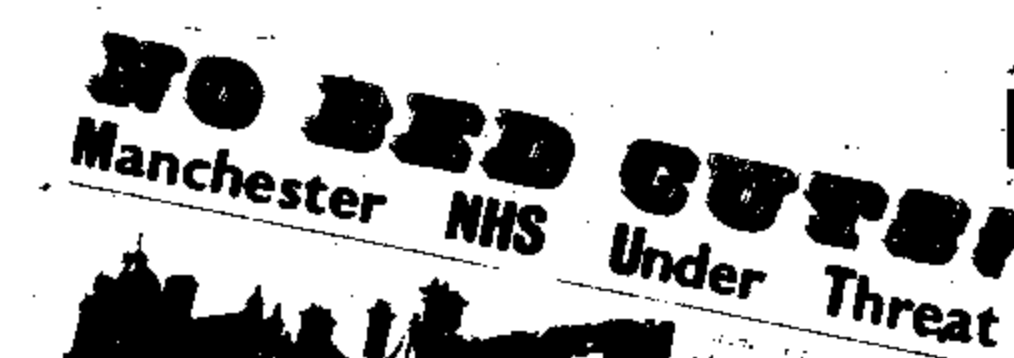
This year there is ominously no GEC resolution at all on the subject. Delegates to the conference should therefore be prepared for a possible battle on the issue since the pressures on the TGWU leadership to fall into line with Michael Foot and the TUC as an election approaches are very strong.

Cuts warning

AT LEAST fifty hospitals in London face the threat of closure. In the coming financial year, funds for London's health service are to be cut by £27 million. That is equivalent to the jobs of over 2,000 nurses and 2,000 ancillary staff.

The real cuts could be even worse than these figures indicate. The government's budget assumes an inflation rate of only 5.6%. If prices rise faster, the difference will have to be made up through further cuts.

The recently-established London Health Services Campaign, with support from the Labour GLC, has been collating information about these cuts, and on Tuesday April 12 it presented a



Cuts bulletin — available for SAE from 25 East Park Close, Manchester 13

detailed report at a press conference in County Hall.

Representatives were there from the Hackney Health Emergency Campaign, St Mary's W9, the campaign against closure of two clinics in Hammersmith, the Greenwich Health Campaign, South London Hospital, St Leonard's, Barnet Health Authority, and Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital.

Contact: Lucy de Groot, c/o 34 Dalston Lane, London E8.

Sheffield return

by John Cunningham

ISTC leaders yesterday called off the 9-day strike against redundancies by Sheffield steelworkers.

The dispute, the biggest in the steel industry since the national strike of 1980, started when BSC arbitrarily announced that 90 jobs were to go at Aldwarke and Templeborough works in Rotherham. On top of this BSC also said it was going to cut shift patterns, again without consultation.

The response was solid, and ISTC members at the two plants walked out on the Monday when the redundancies were due to start. By Wednesday April 6 all eight BSC plants in South Yorkshire were at a virtual standstill.

On Thursday April 7 ISTC members at BSC Scunthorpe came out in support for 24 hours.

By the weekend, however, cracks were beginning to appear. Other unions, such as ASTMS and

TGWU, were still working normally at most plants. A group of steel workers' wives at the Stocksbridge plant distributed a leaflet urging the men to return to work, and BSC locally sent a 'personal letter' to all steelworkers urging a return to work.

The response from the craftsmen, crucial to the success of any strike, has been patchy, and ISTC members at Stocksbridge began to return to work.

Bill Sirs, the ISTC's right wing leader, held the strike to South Yorkshire, when it is patently obvious that only a national strike could win the dispute.

Without a national struggle, BSC will be able to play off one plant against another as they have done so often in the past.

Fund

WE thought things were looking up when we read about that £7 million bank raid in East London over Easter. At last! Our supporters had found a practical way of fund-raising! But it was not to be. The post brought us a miserable £45 this week instead.

That's bad news. £161 so far, in the middle of April, when we should have had £500 by now.

After the £500 shortfall on our March fund, we can't afford not to reach our £1,000 target for April. We need a massive flood of donations this week! Send donations to: The Treasurer, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Thanks this week to: Andrew Hornung, £25; Nottingham SO supporters, £10; Hyndburn SO supporters, £5; and £5 from extra paper sales from SO supporters in Hounslow and Richmond.