

Socialist Challenge

Officials sell out BL workers again

Pat Hickey, TGWU shop steward, Rover Solihull.

AFTER the vote to return to work by 1,500 Longbridge strikers on Sunday it is being suggested that Michael Edwardes give his knighthood jointly to Moss Evans and Terry Duffy.

The Longbridge works committee deserves an OBE.

The victory for BL management was due entirely to the weak and vacillating leadership provided by these union leaders.

The strikers had been threatened with sacking and the closure of BL if they maintained their strike on the re-opening of the plant last Monday.

Violence

They were told that their jobs would be done by scab labour and that the victimised workers were ring-leaders in mob violence. But as they demonstrated in action, the strikers were prepared to face up to all of this. All they wanted was firm leadership.

What they got was ducking and diving from a leadership that has buckled before management's bullying every time.

In the face of all management's threats, the union leaders made no recommendation to Sunday's mass meeting. The Birmingham Evening Mail knows a weakness when it sees one: 'It's a free vote' ran the banner headline.

Inquiry

Grenville Hawley, the TGWU automotive leader, explained: 'Any other course would be irresponsible'.

In the mass meeting the alternatives given to the strikers were: go back to work while an inquiry takes place or stay out for an inquiry with an independent chairperson.

At the Longbridge joint shop stewards meeting, held on Sunday immediately before the mass meeting, a move to get the shop stewards to make a recommendation was ruled out of order. Less than a hundred of the 700 shop stewards attended the meeting.

Sacked

The attendance at the mass meeting was 5-600 of the strikers. The vote was 2-1 in favour of returning to work.

The inquiry will now take three to four weeks to examine the evidence. In the meantime the eight workers, including four shop stewards, will remain sacked, and it will be very difficult to re-start any action after the inquiry.

Management has therefore won an important victory in this fresh round of attacks on shopfloor organisation at BL. The already weakened shop stewards organisation in Longbridge has suffered another blow.

Fraud

Militants in Longbridge must see the construction of an alternative leadership as a crucial task in the coming months. Between now and the end of the inquiry we have to fight to retrieve the ground the leadership has lost us.

In the coming weeks every BL plant will be regularly leafleted by the Leyland Action Committee exposing the inquiry as a fraud and demanding that the leadership leads.

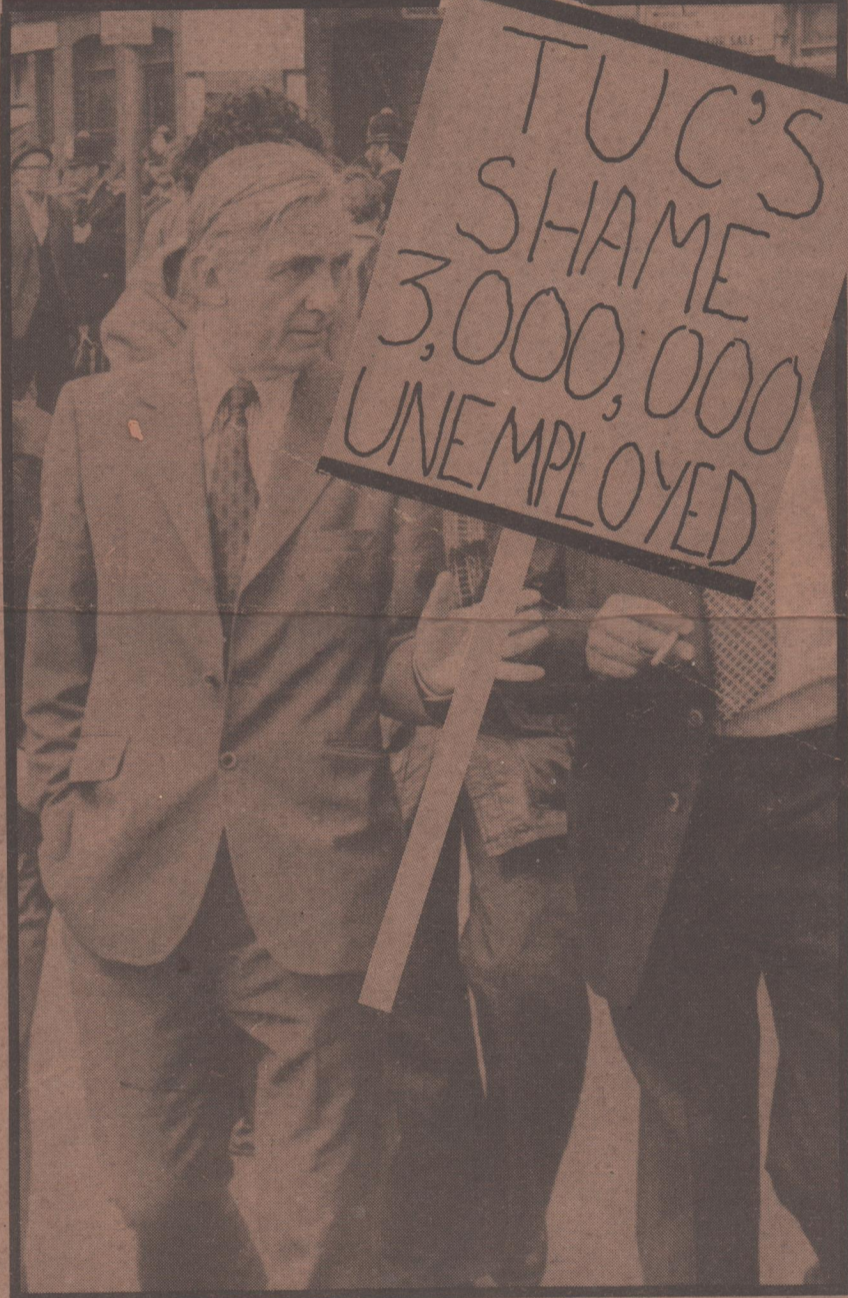
The committee will do everything possible to prepare for action.

JOBS SCANDAL

1971



1981



By John Parkinson, secretary of Preston Trades Council (in personal capacity)

THE economic pundits have predicted that in 1981 a further 800,000 people will join the dole queues.

Ten years ago 800,000 was the total number unemployed, and even that figure was described, at the time, as 'Britain's shame'.

If 800,000 was a cause for 'shame', just what the hell is 3,000,000? For that is how many are expected to be on the official unemployed register by the end of the year.

As each new set of statistics is announced

Len Murray is wheeled out to plead with the Tory government to change course.

Thatcher has no intention of doing that. Her Cabinet reshuffle has removed sources of embarrassing criticism of her policies and streng-

thened the right-wing monetarists.

Nor will reasoned discussion with Thatcher's new personal economic advisor, Professor Alan Walters, offer anything but cold comfort to workers in 1981.

In a recent radio interview Walters suggested that Britain might need a 'dose of medicine' of the sort administered by Dr. Hjalmar Schacht in Germany in 1923 or by General Pinochet in Chile in 1975. Schacht later became Hitler's economic and financial expert!

It was the Gardner's workers who showed the

way to fight back in 1980. The BPC journalists occupying against redundancies, and the National Union of Seamen members occupying the Ulster Queen to protect their jobs are showing the way for 1981.

The TUC Week of Action called for 4-11 April must be beefed up. The TUC leaders are more concerned with their public image than the misery and poverty of the jobless. They are trying to avoid any industrial action or demonstrations in work time during the Week of Action.

Regional demonstrations called during the week should be used to

build up fighting unity against the Tories like the massive Labour Party demonstration in Liverpool last November.

The next Labour Party demo is called for 21 February in Glasgow. It is expected to be a massive show of working class hostility to the Tories. Already support is coming in from outside Scotland. The North West TUC are sending up two train loads of supporters.

And the biggest event of all in 1981 will be a giant Liverpool to London march sponsored by the North West TUC, starting on May Day.

This will not be a Jar-row March pleading for no cuts in benefits, but a tidal wave of anti-Tory anger descending on London and passing through some of the worst hit areas of the country.

Every town on the route should set up the broadest possible support/reception committees based on trades councils, Labour parties and, most importantly, joint shop stewards committees. Industrial action and demonstrations on the route should be organised.

The demand of all this action must be for the TUC to stop talking and to organise to bring this government down.

Editorial

Socialist Challenge

Revolutionary socialist weekly
PO Box 50, London N1 2XP
Phone 01-269 8189/8180 (editorial and distribution)

New polarisation revealed by Tory shuffle

THE DROPPING of three senior Cabinet ministers by Thatcher is an essential stiffening of the government's ranks before the big class battles of 1981.

The need for such a purge started to become clear at the time of the Confederation of British Industry conference last year. CBI leader Terence Beckett called for a 'bare-knuckle' fight against the government. Britain's bosses began to doubt the capacity of the Tory administration to inflict a stinging defeat on the labour movement.

At that point the 'sacrifices' that the bosses had been willing to make for the higher aim of defeating the labour movement became more and more painful.

This realisation dawned with the failure of the Tories to inflict a rapid defeat on the steelworkers during the strike of last year.

Subsequent events in the docks, the resistance by the firefighters and the victory of Gardner's workers have confirmed that the Tories are finding the going rough.

Even the events of the last fortnight at British Leyland have proved that despite the appalling leadership which Leyland workers have laboured under they have been prepared to trade blow for blow with Tory glamour boy Michael Edwardes.

Capitalism

But perhaps the most dangerous development that has concerned Thatcher's backers in big business has been the leftward shift in the Labour Party. Thatcher's constant and open defence of capitalism and profits, whatever the human cost, has raised the stakes higher and higher for many thousands of working class people.

It was this danger that Leader of the House, Norman St John-Stevas, was referring to in his indirect attacks on Thatcher's type of rhetoric when he pleaded for a return to 'traditional Tory social concerns'. He was sacked.

The concern over the shift to the left in the Labour Party is not because big business expects that a future Labour government will act to abolish capitalism. But 'captains of industry' are aware of the expectations which are constantly being raised in the steel works, the mines and the railways that the Labour Party will support their resistance to the Tory attacks, and will introduce a programme in government to reverse the effects of the Tory ravages.

Desperate

That is why these developments inside the Labour Party are not separate from or counterposed to the struggle at the point of production; they boost them. This is why the ruling class is frightened of the developments inside the party and why it will go to desperate lengths to halt them. This includes backing campaigns by the right wing, from the Social Democratic Alliance to Roy Mason, to split the party.

While these manoeuvres are puny at present they contain a real threat for the future, particularly in the context of changes in the electoral system which some Tory leaders are said to be actively considering.

Those leaders of the labour movement who propose a strategy of pressurising the Tories to 'change their policies', can draw little encouragement from the Tory reshuffle.

Only the blind are incapable of seeing that the government, far from changing its policies, is preparing to implement them with renewed force.

That is why the aim of any defensive struggle against the Tories must be to remove the government.

The massive demonstration in Liverpool on 29 November last year revealed the power that can be harnessed by united action of the trade unions and the Labour Party. As the Tories try to mend their ways, that power should be used in a systematic way to kick the Tories out in 1981.



Sacked Longbridge steward says:

'If we lose, a lot of stewards will be frightened people'

By Mick Dale

'NONE of those dismissed,' says Jim Denham, one of the eight Longbridge workers sacked over the revolt on 21 November. 'has any illusions or enthusiasm about an inquiry of any sort, even though we are not afraid of an inquiry.'

Denham, who is a shop steward, was speaking just before the mass meeting which voted for a return to work last Sunday morning.

Riot

He added: 'We know that an inquiry could be a way of sabotaging the strike and of making sure that at the end of the day BL management will be able to get away with whatever it wants on this question.'

According to BL management, those dismissed were the ringleaders of a riot which took place when workers angered at lay-offs marched through parts of Longbridge, reputedly bringing production to a halt and causing damage to cars and equipment.

Revolt

That there was a spontaneous outburst of anger on 21 November is not in dispute. The reason for the revolt can be found in what is known as the Edwardes' plan, a 92-page document considered by the workforce to be a slaves' charter.

Jim Denham explains: 'There has been considerable resistance to the plan at Longbridge, particularly in CAB 1, the section that was on strike, where we have been having a running battle over man-

ning levels, mobility of labour, and the generally appalling conditions in that area.'

What has under-pinned the 30 per cent rise in productivity over the past year are the methods of the Edwardes' plan — the assault on living standards, working conditions, and union organisation. And management still wants more.

Even the national press, which fully backs Edwardes, has hinted at the causes of the episode at CAB 1. The *Daily Star*, for example, called it 'a riot born of frustration'.

The immediate causes of the revolt were lay-offs and fast disappearing bonus. When the workers first marched off the line they tried to see Jack Adams, the convenor, but he was at a meeting with management signing the 6.8 per cent pay rise which amounts to a 10 per cent cut in real wages.

Management has used impressive standards of justice in the inquiry which resulted in the sackings. Evidence was submitted by anonymous witnesses, all of them managers, super-



Jim Denham

visors, or foremen.

One of the stewards was dismissed for holding an unconstitutional meeting. He had in fact stood on a bench and tried to urge the workers not to cause unnecessary 'damage' and to behave in an orderly manner. The other stewards played the same role.

The response to the sackings by union officials at every level has been disastrous. Despite a spontaneous walkout by the nightshift in CAB 1, the works committee failed to call for section meetings and did not even bother to convene the joint shop stewards committee.

When the dismissals were confirmed on 15 December, CAB 1 again walked out and this was probably decisive in win-

ing official backing for the dispute from the TGWU.

Meanwhile management put its strike-breaking operation into top gear, and the media described how disastrous the strike was for the Metro.

Jim Denham says: 'BL management knows that if it takes certain union officials to what's been called the edge of the precipice and show them over the edge — what it would mean if they closed Leyland down — they know that those officials would be too frightened to make a fight of anything, while the members by now have had just about enough of that kind of treatment.'

Denham continues: 'If we lose this fight it will have a very demoralising effect on the fight over all the

other questions in BL.

'It will also be a blow to the shop stewards organisation. A lot of stewards will be frightened people. I suspect we'll find stewards resigning. You may find whole areas of the factory where no one is even willing to take a stewards job.'

'One of the reasons why the company dismissed us was to say to any shop steward: "If we can do these people on such flimsy evidence and trumped up charges, we can do you on almost anything we want when and wherever it pleases us, and get away with it".'

'They are throwing down the gauntlet to the whole shop stewards movement.'

A workers' plan for BL

The way to put Edwardes out of business

TIME and again BL boss Michael Edwardes has used the threat of closure to undermine resistance to his squeeze on jobs, pay, working conditions, and union organisation. Yet the plan for BL offered by the union leaders could not

hope to save jobs.

PAT HICKEY, a TGWU shop steward at Rover Solihull, looks at the worldwide crisis in the car industry and presents a workers' alternative to Edwardes' axe.

IN ORDER to 'Save BL for Britain', more than 50,000 jobs have been chopped in four years; traditional negotiating rights have been sacrificed; wages have been cut by 20 per cent, and massive speed-ups have been imposed.

In the latest round of attacks BL is preparing to destroy what remains of shopfloor organisation and control of working conditions. This is being pushed through under the banner of economic necessity. Every one of Michael Edwardes' attacks has been coupled with threats of closure and withdrawal of government money.

Viable

On the other hand, we are told, if Edwardes' plans are accepted BL will make a breakthrough and become viable. This is nonsense.

Ever since 1974, when BL became a public corporation, one version or another of this lie has been peddled. In '74 BL cars had 150,000 employees. Today there are 90,000. Ten thousand more jobs are due to go this year.

The successes of BL management against the unions have been noted by other employers. Lucas and GKN are now adopting a Michael Edwardes' approach: the steel industry has an Edwardes of its own.

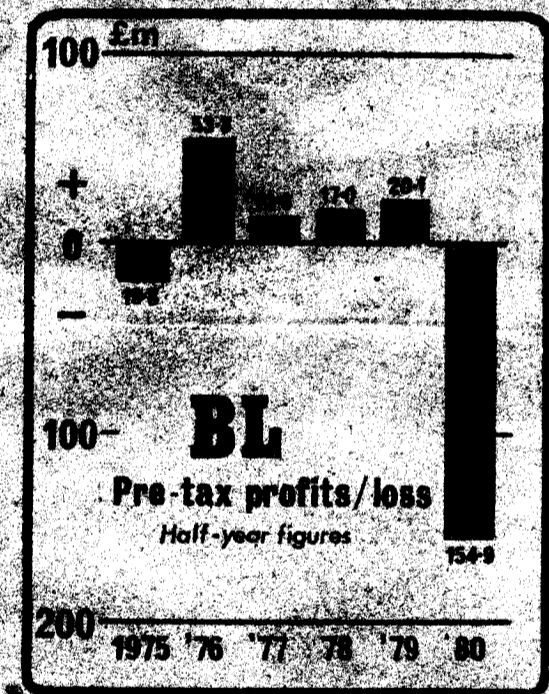
Every success by BL has been won at the expense of jobs and wages. Similarly, every loss by other car companies costs workers' jobs and wages. The 2.25m unemployed in Britain are the victims of this battle.

Collapse

The Tories and the employers claim that this is necessary; that the alternatives are even worse, and would lead to the complete collapse of BL. This argument was put forward by the last Labour government and it was accepted by the TUC in the guise of the social contract.

Yet there is an alternative, and developing and popularising it is crucial to the struggles of BL workers in the coming months.

The trade union leaders have put forward one alternative in a couple of recent pamphlets. The core of their



policy is the call for import controls. On the face of it import controls seem a viable option: if there are fewer imports, more British cars will be sold. But this won't work.

In a period of intensifying competition other countries will not stand by and let British companies get away with cornering markets through trade restrictions. They would inevitably retaliate, so whatever is gained on the swings would be lost on the roundabouts.

Policy

More importantly, a policy of import controls is aimed not at cutting unemployment but at exporting it. It sets the workers of Britain against those of other countries, and it does nothing to save jobs in the long run.

The uselessness of this kind of approach can be seen in the proposals of the TGWU to give cheap loans to workers who buy BL cars. Even if successful, this practice could only put Ford, Vauxhall, and Talbot employees out of work. And unemployed workers, in Britain or elsewhere, don't buy cars, even at cheaper interest rates.

In any case an import control policy openly calls for workers to try to win the support of employers and for the TUC to ally with the CBI to approach the government. According to this view, Moss Evans

should hold hands with Michael Edwardes, who has savagely attacked BL workers.

Plan

There is no future for BL workers down this road. Any policy for BL has to be part of a plan which looks at the whole of the car industry in Britain, otherwise saving BL means undermining Talbot, Vauxhall, and Ford.

Only by breaking with the capitalist market can jobs be saved in the long run. Therefore the whole of the car industry has to be part of a national plan which organises production geared to socially useful products.

Price

Nationalisation without compensation, under workers' control is essential to accomplish this. Of course, such a step is a long way from present reality, but socialists must point to an alternative in order to strengthen the immediate struggle. When Michael Edwardes says there is no alternative we must be able to explain that there is. That is why we say no redundancies and call for work-sharing with no loss of pay.

If the bosses' system cannot maintain jobs then let them pay the price, not



Multiple injuries for car workers in the world trade war

IN THE late 1960s when the profits were rolling in, Henry Ford said that the car was 'God's gift to the 20th century'. Not many of the capitalist class whose wealth depends on the car industry would agree with that today.

Since the early '70s the world car industry has been hit by crisis after crisis. Even in the best years profits have not recovered to the levels of the '60s.

The profits generated throughout the 1970s have fallen far short of the money needed to finance further development. BL

is not alone in facing this problem. The mighty Chrysler Corporation now depends on aid from the US government to remain in business.

Ford plans massive redundancies and is calling for government aid in the USA and West Europe, including Britain.

The picture is the same for all the major West European car companies, and the problems are spreading to Japan. These problems will intensify in 1981 and can mean only one thing for car workers throughout the West: redundancies, wage cuts, and speed-ups.

The car industry is at the sharp end of the capitalist crisis because it is the world's largest manufacturing industry. The 24 biggest car makers employ over 2m people with at least 3m more employed in making components.

The cost of developing new models, tools, and plants is colossal. The American car industry will spend \$70bn in the next six years — more than twice as much as the American government spent on the moon-shot programme.

In West Europe and Japan the car companies will also invest billions. They will all be seeking to cut their workforce, increase productivity, and grab a larger share of the market which was growing at 12-13 per cent a year in the boom years.

The more optimistic estimates put growth in the early 1980s at 2-3 per cent, yet with the impact of the recession it is more likely that the market will shrink. Cut-throat competition between the employers will inevitably intensify as they seek to drive each other out of business.

It would be pleasant indeed if we could watch the employers slaughter each other. But in this battle the armies are the working class and it is our jobs, working conditions, and living standards which will suffer. The employers will fight to the last drop of our blood.



The call for import controls to solve unemployment is a recipe for exporting unemployment to workers abroad. In the pictures above American auto workers demonstrate against Japanese workers and smash up Japanese cars. So much for international workers' solidarity.

us. From the union leaders we want full backing for every fight against redundancies, including occupation of plants.

If Edwardes goes ahead with closure threats, all of BL should be occupied and support should be sought from the rest of the working class.

We also need the leadership to implement union conference policies and fight for a 35-hour week now. Such a policy would give a fighting lead to workers all over the country. Of course, this would unleash a massive economic

crisis as employers allow machines to lie idle rather than produce without profit.

Yet plant and machinery are largely the surplus from decades of labour by the working class. Hence nationalisation without compensation is just and necessary.

Detail

In BL we also need to know in detail the company's forward plans and the links with the banks and finance houses which cream off any surplus that BL generates. So linked to these

policies must be the demand to open the books so that we can use this information to help the struggle.

Bombs

Finally when Thatcher and Joseph threaten to withhold finance from BL if the workers misbehave, we should raise the demand for jobs not bombs. The Tories propose to spend £5bn on Trident. That money should be part of the programme of public works to provide jobs and raise living standards.

A fighting programme such as this could reach out to workers in other sections

of industry and to those in steel, transport, and mining who are facing similar problems to BL. The present course of the trade union leadership is disastrous for the working class. Every fight they duck strengthens the employers and the employers always come back for more.

The only road that will defend the working class is that of class struggle, and as the crisis deepens the socialist alternative will be increasingly vital to a successful struggle.

Labour Party

Roy Mason, a suitable candidate for reselection

By Tom Marlowe

ROY Mason, MP for Barnsley, Labour's spokesperson on agriculture, and megalomaniac, gave Labour's political pot a right-wing stir last weekend.

He declared that if some Labour MPs weren't reselected by their constituency parties they would join together and fight the official Labour Party candidates at the next election.

"I hope I have spoken out in time," said Mason, a remark interpreted as a threat: that if, as is possible, Mason is not re-elected he would contest the election as an independent.

Mason's warning should be taken seriously. The man has such a high opinion of himself that he probably believes that not only could he defeat a Labour can-

didate in the next election, but he could also go on to be elected Archbishop of Canterbury, become Mastermind champion and win the Eurovision Song Contest.

If that sounds like an exaggeration, Mason's career suggests otherwise. For him, its highlight was his job as Northern Ireland Secretary of State, during

the last three years of the Labour government.

Not many observers thought that Mason particularly distinguished himself in this job. The moderate *Irish Times*, for instance, described him two months before Labour's election defeat, as 'shallow, grossly misleading and insulting'.

The newspaper concluded, 'Mr Mason may not be around for much longer. When he finally departs he will leave behind the sorry record of a bankrupt approach to Irish politics.'

Mild

Such a judgement was, if anything, too mild. It was Roy Mason who oversaw the running of the H Blocks, who approved the police torture at Castlereagh police barracks exposed by

Amnesty International, and who generally achieved the reputation as the most hated English person in Ireland since Oliver Cromwell.

Office

There was only one unequivocal dissenter from this view — Roy Mason himself. Just after he left office he claimed that his term of office in Northern Ireland had made him 'internationally respected and admired'. Just where, internationally, it could be asked. Chile? South Africa?

Certainly Mason has his international links. He is a member of the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding, the vast bulk of whose finances come directly from NATO. When Mason was Minister of Defence under Harold Wilson, he served his NATO paymasters well by

defending the defence budget from the more stringent public spending cuts.

Sadly, Mason's political career has declined somewhat lately. His appointment as spokesperson on agriculture was rather a demotion, so much so that Mason is now looking around for a more prestigious position to fit his 'many talents'.

Coal

If Labour had won the last election Mason would have been given the chairpersonship of the National Coal Board, and the Tories may still make such an appointment.

Not that Mason worries which side of industry he is on. In March last year the *Sun* reported he was considering challenging Arthur Scargill for the upcoming presidency of the National Union of Miners.

Mason was reported as saying that he would consider the job, with the condition that he would be allowed to retain his parliamentary seat. Indeed Roy Mason has an unlimited vision of his own horizon.

While Northern Ireland Secretary he approved the visit of the queen to the land he ruled. He was later to boast in a style reminiscent of a prospective dictator: 'I was alone with the Queen, and I was able to take the decision. I did not appeal to the Prime Minister or to the cabinet. I decided the visit was on.'

With such a record of self-glorification it is hardly surprising that Mason should consider himself more important than the labour movement; that he should threaten to quit if he did not get his own way.

But although Mason may droop on that 'there is a great deal of concern and worry about the future of the Labour Party', there would be no concern if Roy Mason decided his future was outside that party.



ROY MASON — Mastermind next?

'Take the decisive say out of MPs' hands'

The special conference on electing the party leader takes place on 24 January. What would be the most democratic way of deciding the party leader?

In my view the most practical democratic method of electing the party leader would be for the party conference to decide. After all, conference is supposed to decide party policy, so why can't it elect the leader as well? But this ideal method is not being put before conference.

So what's the best option to advance the left's fight for democracy?

The way the conference is structured there are numerous possible variants, so it's impossible to say that there's one best option. But if we ignore the 'one person, one vote' position of the right wing, there are three main sorts of proposals to the conference. The first type of option, for example that put forward by the AUEW, would give the MPs a majority in any electoral college.

The second type of option would give the trade unions and the constituencies together a larger share of the votes than the Labour MPs, but would not give the unions more votes than the constituency parties; and the third option gives around 40 per cent to the unions and 30 per cent each to the constituencies and the MPs.

Obviously I'm opposed to the first variant because it would still give the decisive say to the MPs. The second variant is also a problem because it gives equal weight to the constituencies and the unions. In my view any electoral college must reflect the decisive organisational strength of the labour movement — its industrial wing. So of the basic options, the

THE Labour Party's special rules revision conference on the election of the party leader takes place on 24 January. Since last October's Labour conference decided that the method of electing the party leader should be changed, the right wing of the party have stiffened their resistance, determined to roll back the left's advance.

Not only did the Parliamentary Labour Party vote Eric Heffer and Tony Benn out of the shadow cabinet, but from Roy Mason, the 'Gang of Three', and other right wingers there have been not very subtle hints at the possibility of a right-wing split from the party if the left's advance continues.

In this situation it is vital that the left should not be lulled by Michael Foot's election as party leader into letting up in the fight for democracy. Socialist Challenge talked to Dulwich Labour councillor Carol Turner about the prospects for the conference.

'40-30-30' position is the best.

The position being put forward by the right wing — 'one person, one vote' — seems on the surface to be the most democratic system being put forward. After all, it would offer every Labour Party member a say in how things were decided. Why are the left opposed to this proposal?

You have to look below the surface to see what's really involved. Democracy isn't just a question of abstract forms, but of real content. I see the following objections to this proposal.

First, who is putting this proposal forward — the right wing, the people who are opposed to any change. That should make us suspicious to begin with.

Second, there are many practical problems — it would be a very long-winded and expensive system. But the important objections involve the possible abuses of such a system. It would invite an

'American' primary-style system. People could join the Labour Party, be registered Labour Party members, not to be active but just to vote on who was the leader.

All kinds of people hostile to the basic aims of the labour movement could get involved in such an operation. Moreover, the 'one person, one vote' system has problems akin to those of the secret ballot in the unions. Instead of the decision being made by an active, informed membership, it will be made by a broader but less active membership.

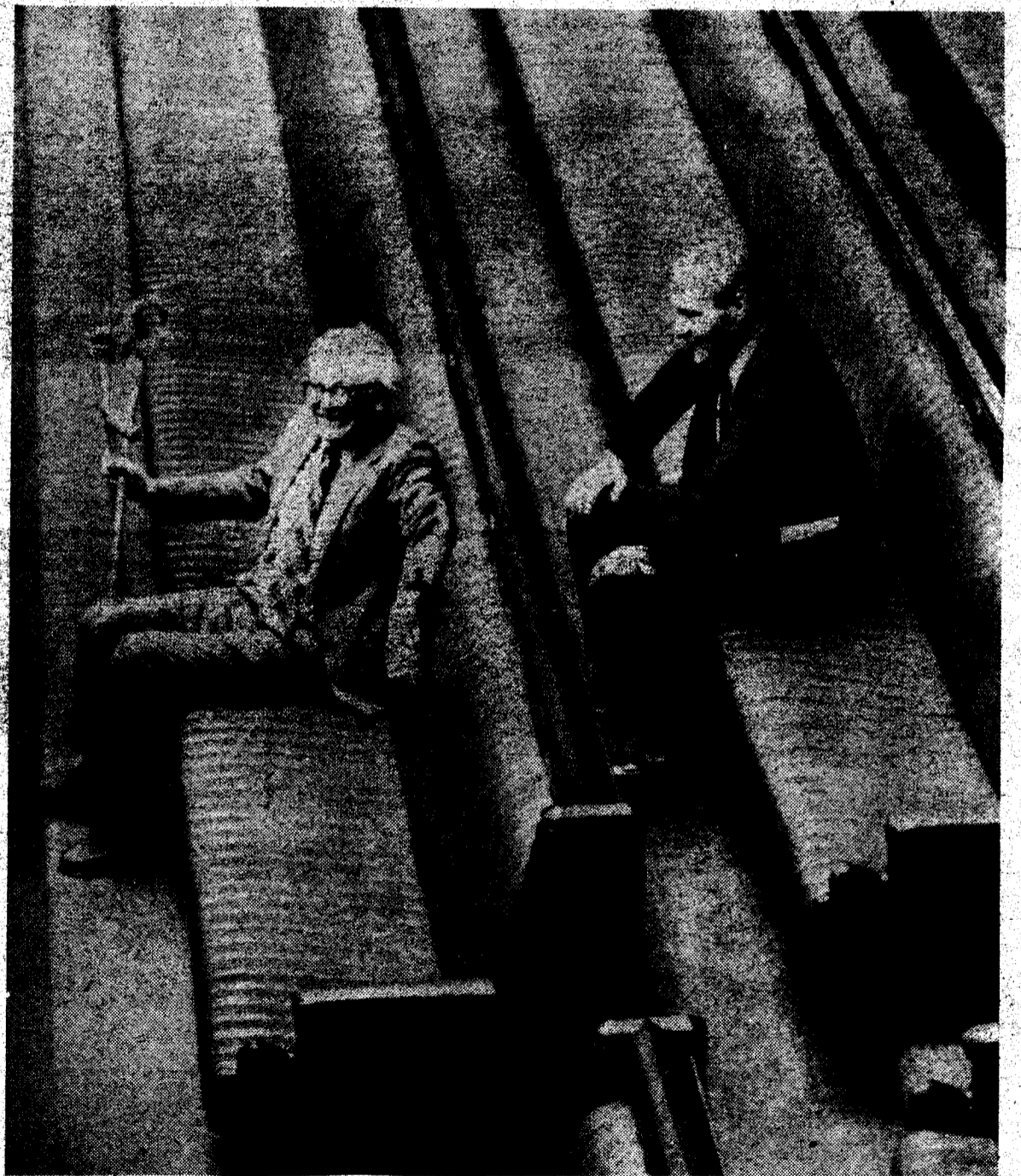
They will be open to all the pressures of the media. We've seen in some union elections which have the secret ballot just how effective the press are at promoting right-wing candidates.

The fight for democracy in the Labour Party is fundamentally a fight about accountability to the membership. But the leadership can only be made accountable to a membership which participates in the life of the movement.

Should Tony Benn challenge Michael Foot for the leadership of the party when the electoral college is established?

Definitely. Michael Foot is leader because of the shift to the left in the party, but he doesn't represent the left — look how he's retreating on unilateral nuclear disarmament for example. Foot was elected as leader because some right-wing and 'centre' MPs decided he was the best bet for heading off Benn and the left.

Now the left needs to resume the fight for its policies, and that means



Benn should definitely challenge Foot for the Labour leadership, says Dulwich councillor Carol Turner

fighting for a leader who really represents the gains of last year's party conference — Tony Benn.

Some people on the left oppose a system for electing the leader which gives the biggest say to the unions. What's your view of the block vote?

The huge strength of the unions is a basic fact of life that the left will ignore at its peril. I'll give you an example from my own experience in Dulwich. Here, a right-wing couple — Bob and

Helen Eadie — have organised to get local unions to send delegates to the general management committee of the constituency party.

Many of these have turned out to be right wingers from the EPTU of which Bob Eadie is an official. As a result the political complexion of the GMC is moving to the right. The left has to organise its forces in the unions, or the right will always use their strength here.

It's no good trying to

break the links between the Labour Party and the unions, you've got to fight the right wing in the unions. There's another problem the left faces here. Some of our left-wing activists are in white collar unions that aren't even affiliated to the Labour Party, so they can't send delegates to the general committee.

Far from breaking the links between the unions and the Labour Party, I think that the left should positively fight in NALGO and in the NUT for affilia-

tion to the Labour Party. Democracy and the left can only gain.

What do you think will be the outcome of the conference?

It is difficult to see the exact outcome. The left must continue to keep up the pressure to make sure that the spirit of the party conference decision is carried out — and that means taking the decisive say on the leadership out of the hands of the MPs.

Rank and File Mobilising Committee Rally

(also sponsored by 'Tribune')
Friday 23 January 7.30pm
(Doors open 7pm)
Central Hall, Westminster
Tickets 50p

Speakers: Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Arthur Scargill, Ian Mikardo, Reg Race.

Council unions fight to stop Heseltine

Turning off the tap to the town hall

MICHAEL Heseltine's XMAS lead a national fightback. present to working people was another vicious package of cuts in local government spending. Labour councils who avoided making cuts in 1980 face an impossible situation in 1981.

The only choices now open to them are to attack working class living standards or to

lead a national fightback. The recall Lambeth conference against the cuts on 17 January will be the next national focus for opposition to the Tory cuts. Below we take a look at the effects of the latest cuts package and speak to militants from Lambeth on the fightback they are leading.

'We have to let the Tories know that the working class have had enough'

ALF SHERWOOD, convenor, Lambeth direct labour unions:

WHAT we want to see on 17 January is a broad conference. It's a question of what action people are willing to take, and whether we put up a fight.

The cuts and the conference have the same effect of bringing people together. Both the well-organised sections in this department — the dustcart workers and the building crafts — are now together.

This is the first time in Lambeth that we've all joined up together. We're hoping that the conference will help the same thing to happen across the country.

I watched a Tory councillor from Kent on TV last night and you would have thought he was talking about cattle rather than working people. He wanted everything turned over to private enterprise.

When the interviewer asked him: 'What about the public sector workers?' he said he didn't care, he only wanted to save money!

Drain

They want to bring in contractors, supposedly to save money. But the cuts place a drain on all services. Now there are no homes being built, the Tories want to close down our direct labour organisation. That would 'save' them around one million pounds a year, but would put 1,500 building workers on the dole.

They would end up having to pay more money through social security and unemployment payments. So the whole thing doesn't make sense.

We decided to organise a

week of action after the 1 November conference which passed a resolution stating that trade unions should 'take industrial action if necessary' to fight the cuts.

Support

Nowadays working class people can't afford to be out indefinitely. With a week of action, we'll start and finish when we decide, and no one will be able to say that the Tory government drove us back to work.

If Thatcher can see that enough people are incensed at the situation, then she'll have to change her policies. With a week of action the Tories will not be able to make out that there's no support for a fightback.

Our members are 100 per cent behind us. One of the reasons is that we went out and asked them to support us, and they know that we don't ask them to take action unless it's serious.

Local Government in Crisis Conference

**Central Hall, Westminster
Saturday 17 January
Open to all labour movement organisations
Credentials from: Steering Committee, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, Brixton, London SW2**



Lambeth conference

The direct labour has never been on strike before, apart from days of action.

We've had individual meetings in every section of the department and we've honestly explained the situation. There's nothing to be achieved by telling workers lies — you always get caught out in the end. So we told them all the facts about the

implications of Tory cuts. Not one member has voted against the week of action.

During the week of action we'll be picketing everywhere and having a demonstration. The press always ignore demonstrations or make out that there are only a few thousand people on them so they can say you've not got any support. But if there's no services for a week, everyone will realise that we've got the support and the government will be forced to intervene.

Ordinary people blame the unions and they say, because of the press, that the stewards are out of touch with their members. But what they don't tell you is that it's the members themselves that have to agree before there can be any action.

Council-house sales are



Where Heseltine's axe falls

THE latest round of Tory cuts take the form of a reduction in central government support for local authority spending. There are four main aspects:

★ A one per cent cut in the total government contribution to local authority spending.

★ A huge redistribution of the government rate support grant away from poor inner city areas towards the wealthier cities and rural areas.

★ A cut averaging 15 per cent in the government contribution to the Housing Investment Programme.

★ The imposition of a six per cent limit on local authority wages at a time of 15 per cent inflation.

By redistributing money from the poorer areas, the Tories have shown the real aim of their cutbacks — to attack and demoralise working people. *Tribune* has estimated that this measure will lead to an eventual cut of £12m from the inner London borough of Southwark and an increase of £1.6m for Tory-controlled Bournemouth.

The wage limits will force local authorities to impose wage cuts in real terms for their employees or levy the extra money from yet more rate and rent rises. This will put extra pressure on councils to look to redundancies to balance their books.

Perhaps the most sinister measure is the cut in government support for the Housing Investment Programme. This will almost certainly mean that the moratorium on new council house building will continue at least until 1982. It will also lead to repairs and improvements being delayed and projects already begun being abandoned.

For Lambeth council the HIP allowance has been cut from £53m for 1980 to under £40m for 1981/2 before inflation. Rate rises would need to be 100 per cent to cover that sort of loss, and the council has already 'overspent' this year by £9.5m.

Sheffield council face an even worse situation. They face a loss of £13m in housing subsidies and a further £10m in the redistribution of resources. It will also lose the rate support grant under Heseltine's penalties for councils who refuse to cut.

There has been no serious response as yet from the Parliamentary Labour Party or Labour's national executive. The official Labour Party conference on cuts held last autumn produced nothing but hot air.

The only national lead for an organised fightback of the labour movement against the Tories' cuts has come from the Lambeth conference held last November.

Every trade union and Labour party branch should be represented at the recall conference on 17 January.

Solidarity needed

Joe Church, Lambeth Direct Labour Organisation and secretary of the largest building workers' union branch in England, UCATT PG 056.

THE main thing that I want to see from the conference is solidarity action against the cuts. There's so much happening in January that can turn the tide. I've heard people from all over the country say that they want to fight back, so why not fight. That's what we're doing.

Over the last couple of months we've seen that if you have a go at the government they will gradually back down. So what we want to do is have a bash at them. In the end we'll win or lose depending on the assistance that we get. That's the aim of the conference.

Surely this is the time for the TUC to come along to the meeting and take a bit of notice of the feelings of the people there. They can use the conference as a platform for themselves, and to start to get the unions moving against the cuts.

Photo: Joanne O'Brien

Week of action planned

VANESSA Wiseman, a member of the Lambeth conference steering committee, told us: 'Support for the conference is building up.'

'The Transport and General Workers Union region number one are backing the conference, as well as all the local authority unions in Lambeth — TGWU, AUEW, NUPE, NALGO, UCATT and the GMWU.

'The recall conference will take a resolution from the Lambeth council workers calling for support for their week of action starting on 2 February.

'The conference will also be asked to build support for a demonstration planned for Clapham Common, South London at 1pm on Wednesday 4 February.

'The week of action is one of the first direct political strikes by workers against the Tory government and adds a new dimension to the fight against redundancies and cuts.

'Lambeth council workers are setting an example which deserves the support of every other public employee.

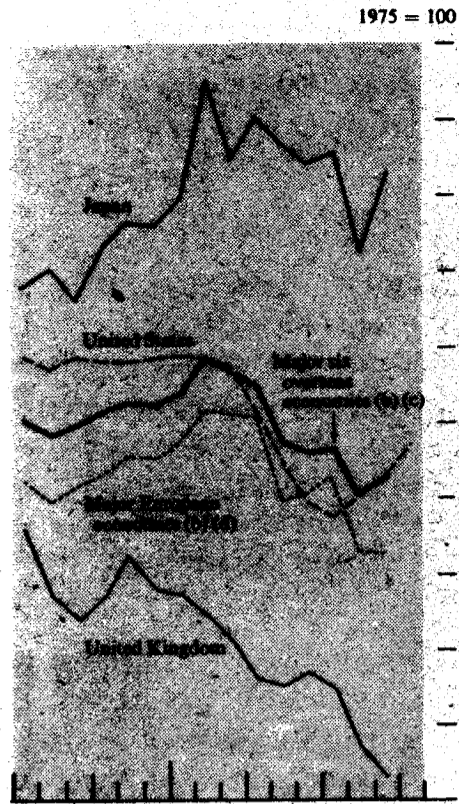
'The conference will also have sessions with speakers from other working class struggles like British Leyland and the steel industry.'

disgusting. Thousands of people are living in sub-standard housing and the Tories are giving grants of £11,500 to private contractors to renovate old houses and then sell them to private landlords who will charge extortionate rents.

The DLO — which they want to close down — could do the same job for the same amount of money and provide accommodation for

three separate families. All that the system does is make more money for those who've already got it.

All that we're saying is that we want to fight and that people should support the stand that we're taking. We have to let the Tories know that the working class have had enough.



Prospects for the British economy in 1981

By Brian Grogan
MARGARET Thatcher chose New Year's Eve to try to revive flagging confidence in her policies. Contrary to all the evidence, she pretended to see signs of economic recovery.

Britain has gone deeper into recession than the Tories originally planned or the bosses anticipated. But this punishment is likely to continue until either the working class is broken or the resistance turns her government out of office.

1980 saw an increase of 1 million in official unemployment figures which now stand at 2.25 million. And the unemployment rate shows no sign of slowing down. The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported after close consultation with

the Treasury that 1981 is likely to see another million people thrown out of work. By mid 1982, three million people or 12 per cent of the working population will be unemployed.

Manufacturing output fell by 10 per cent in 1980, a drop unknown since 1930. The core sectors of the economy fared worse; metal manufacturing output, for example, fell by 19 per cent in the third quarter compared with the preceding three months.

This situation has been deliberately provoked by the Tories. Of course there

is the background of the world recession; but in none of the other advanced capitalist countries apart from the US has there been an actual decline, merely a slow down. The recession in the US has been dubbed 'the shortest on record'.

So different is the international situation that British exports have actually maintained their position in world markets — despite the high pound which has dramatically worsened competitiveness. In November Britain's overseas trade showed a surplus of £455m. Britain's balance of payments for 1980 will be over £2 billions in credit.

The decline in economic activity in the major overseas countries as a whole should have come to an end by early this year. In general the present recession will be much less severe than

1974-75.

Yet Britain's slump shows no signs of bottoming out. Both the Bank of England and the OECD estimate that things will not start to improve until after the second quarter of 1981 at the earliest. The OECD further projects a decline in economic activity in 1981 by as much again as in 1980 — a 10 per cent drop in manufacturing output.

The facts are that the economy is in danger of spinning out of control: the present slump threatens to turn into a depression — but before the strength of the working class has been sufficiently weakened.

It is this background which is encouraging the chorus of Thatcher critics. In December an all-party Commons Committee led by leading Tory backbencher Edward Du Cann completely undermined the credibility of the government's medium-term financial strategy.

This situation is reflected in a serious decline in the bosses' confidence. In her New Year message, Thatcher tried to use to her advantage the announcement by the Industrial and Commercial Finance Corporation that it had financ-

ed more new companies in 1980 than in the previous four years. It had paid out £350m in new investment.

This is chicken feed. In order to compete on an international level British Leyland alone needs £1.5 billion — General Motors plans to invest 30 billion dollars over the same period!

In 1980 investment in manufacturing declined by 6 per cent as firms undertook an orgy of de-stocking. The Department of Industry predicts that next year the volume of capital spending will be slashed by a further 15 to 20 per cent.

The flagging confidence of the bosses will not be turned around by optimistic speeches from Mrs Thatcher; they are not at all convinced that the conditions for producing a profit are getting better. For this, the working class has to be ground down.

But if 2.5 m unemployed hasn't achieved this, what level of unemployment will do so? And how long will it be before there is an explosion? It is these considerations that determine government policy not how to get the economy moving again. And they will determine how much more punishment we get in 1981.

Scotland: Fight for jobs in '81

By Des Tierney

A CALL to make 1981 the 'Year of the Fightback' was made by Jimmy Milne, general secretary of the Scottish TUC, in a New Year message to Scottish trade unionists.

The call came as latest unemployment figures for Scotland show that there are 261,767 or 11.6 per cent unemployed in the region. Comparable figures for the beginning of 1979 were 180,300 or 8 per cent unemployed — a rise of almost 45 per cent in two years.

The Scottish Council of the Labour Party has called for a mass demonstration in Glasgow on Saturday 21 February to protest the jobs slaughter. The demonstration will march to the centre of Glasgow to rally in Queens Park where they will be addressed by Michael Foot, Tony Benn and trade union leaders. Expectations are that the demonstration will be the largest in the city since the Second World War.

But the trade union and Labour Party leaders have done little in the past year to inspire the fightback they are calling for in 1981. Their main concern has been to present Scottish workers as moderate and reasonable in vain efforts to get the Tories to change their policies.

The culmination of this strategy was the Scottish Convention on Unemployment held at the beginning of December last year. The Convention assembled representatives from unions alongside Scottish Tories, the Scottish Nationalist Party and the Churches to try and evolve a common strategy to put pressure on the Tory government.

While this charade was going on Scottish workers were inspired by the example of the victory of the Gardner's workers occupation and the massive 29 November Liverpool demonstration called by the Labour Party. The 'Year of the Fightback' needs to start with this sort of actions and strategy. The march on 21 February could be the first step.

Steel militants attack MacGregor ballot

By Paul Highfield

SOUTH Wales steel militants have attacked Steel Corporation boss Ian MacGregor's corporate plan for the industry.

The 15 December bulletin of the Llanwern and Port Talbot action

groups, *Steel Sheet*, explained:

'The tactics and policies now being practised by BSC may appear familiar; they are those of Michael Edwardes. It is no accident that MacGregor was on the British Leyland board before his £2m transfer to BSC.'

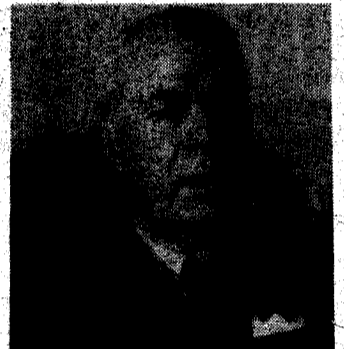
The truth of this remark is shown by MacGregor's latest ploy, modelled on

Edwardes' successful tactic last year, of balloting the whole BSC workforce over the heads of the unions on the six month pay freeze and the corporate plan.

This plan involves over 4,500 more redundancies in South Wales, including 1,096 at the Velindre (Swansea) tinplate works, 1,003 at the Ebbw Vale tinplate works, and 700

more at the giant Port Talbot plant.

MacGregor's action is in response to the ISTC's own ballot which recommends rejection of the plan and pay freeze, but offers no positive lead or action. The South Wales action groups have already produced a special leaflet against the plan and are vigorously campaigning for outright rejection.



STEEL boss MacGregor — employing Edwardes' methods

In particular they explain why unity of all steelworkers throughout the British plants is vital. The actions of the Velindre works council in South Wales is an example of how not to fight redundancies.

They have decided to fight them by proving their profitability — just what the now closed Corby and Shotton sections did. They've even suggested sharing redundancies with the other two tinplate works at Llanelli and Ebbw Vale!

The action groups totally reject this approach. They have seen plant after plant closed before with no regard to how much they were making or losing. They argue instead for national industrial action by all unions in steel, linking up with the miners and railworkers, to fight for a workers' plan for steel, involving increasing steel production to meet social need.

Risk

This time though the Blastfurnacemen's union (NUB) has accepted the corporate plan, arguing that their jobs aren't at risk — this time.

But as Ray Davies, chairperson of the Llanwern action group says: 'This is a totally blinkered approach. MacGregor hasn't finished yet.'

'If all the unions in steel don't fight back against this plan, he'll make the most of our dismissive attitude and go ahead with further cuts in six months' time. That's why a no-vote in the ballot is so vital.'



Stop the missiles

By Mike Picken,
Oxford CLP and
Labour CND

TAKING forward the fight against the missiles in the Labour Party was the theme of a meeting in the House of Commons just before Christmas.

The meeting, called by Labour CND, brought together MPs and campaigning groups in the Labour Party — the Labour and trade union sections of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Labour Action for Peace and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.

It discussed coordinating and uniting the activities of these groups, possibly by launching a

Labour disarmament campaign stepped up

'Labour Disarmament Action Committee' in the period up to the next Labour Party conference in October.

The decisions of last year's Labour conference to oppose Cruise and Trident missiles and to support unilateral nuclear disarmament represented a massive step forward for the campaign. Combined with the decisions that were taken to increase Labour democracy through mandatory re-election of MPs and the widening of the franchise for the election of the leader, the possibility of the next Labour government implementing conference decisions opens up.

However speakers at the House of Commons meeting pointed out that this was not the first such victory. The historic 1960 conference had passed similar policies, only to see them overturned by the right wing just one year later. In 1973 a unilateralist resolution was carried, but like so many other conference resolutions was ignored by the 1974-1979 Labour government.

A further problem is that the 1980 conference resolutions were not passed by the necessary two-thirds majority on a card vote to get them automatically included in the Labour manifesto. Left-wing MP

Jo Richardson, a member of the Labour NEC, indicated that if this was not achieved the right wing in the parliamentary party would manoeuvre to dump these policies.

Despite the stand taken by Michael Foot in his election for Labour leader, the new shadow spokesperson on defence replacing William Rodgers is Brynmor John, a supporter of Cruise missiles. Furthermore the importance of a campaign in the trade unions was emphasised, especially given the weak resolution passed by the TUC last September.

A major intervention into the special Labour Party conference on 24 January is

planned by the four groups. The main focus for this will be a campaign to get a unilateralist resolution passed at the 1981 conference, with a majority on a card vote.

These useful initiatives in the fight against the missiles should link the campaign around the programme of a future Labour government to the growing mass movement. Most importantly the campaign should be taken into the trade unions, especially those like the AUEW whose leadership supports Cruise missiles.

The labour movement conference against the missiles in Manchester on 28 March provides an ideal opportunity for taking this up. Socialist Challenge and its supporters will be in the forefront of building this conference and in supporting the initiatives of Labour CND in the coming months.

To do a crook's job, employ one

Or how Haig got on in the world

Bob Pennington takes a look at the career of Reagan's new Secretary of State

ALTHOUGH he only graduated number 214 in a class of 310 at West Point — an institution not exactly noted for its intellectual excellence, General Alexander Meigs Haig makes up in deviousness and single-minded ruthlessness what he lacks in brainpower.

And for ex-B movie cowboy Ronald Reagan these are the kind of qualities needed in an American Secretary of State. What is more he knows Haig hates 'pinkos', 'peaceniks', and 'reds' with a burning fanaticism.

Haig has a record of service to the Republican party. He pulled every trick in the book, and then some, to save the regime of former Republican president Richard Nixon, although he knew that Nixon was guilty of all the crimes he was accused of.

Haig and White House press secretary Ron Zeigler were informed that Nixon should resign at a meeting with two Nixon aides, Buzhardt and Garment, both conservative and right-wing lawyers, at the Key Biscayne Hotel on 3 November 1973.

Bribes

The aides explained that there was proof that Nixon had taken bribes from the International Telephone and Telegraph Company and the dairy industry, that he had cheated on his income tax, and that he had been mixed up in numerous other illegal dealings involving vast sums of money.

Hardly any of this was news to Haig. For months he had been engaged in an operation to cover up Nixon's crimes. The sacked Watergate prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, reports in his memoirs that Haig did everything he could to keep vital tape recordings from the investigators.

In true Mafia style, Haig threatened Jaworski by suggesting that if he carried on against Nixon things were going to 'get bloody', and then made him an offer he could not refuse by dangling a judgeship in front of his face.

Haig was practised at such methods. He had previously been the hit man in the 'Saturday Massacre' when, acting for his Godfather Richard Nixon, he had sacked Jaworski's predecessor, Archibald Cox, and precipitated the resignations of the US Attorney General and his deputy because they would not bend the legal rules far enough for Nixon.

Rotten

Almost to the very end Haig defended and even encouraged Nixon. One Watergate tape records how Haig told the President to lie his way out of a situation by saying: 'You can't recall — it was in a meeting.' It was only when the whole rotten edifice began to fall apart that Haig changed tactics.

Then he became the principal force in persuading Nixon to resign and is thought to have negotiated Nixon's pardon with incoming President Gerald Ford. This stopped any court proceedings against the disgraced president and legally buried Haig's role in the whole sordid affair.

To cover his own arse as the presidency tottered towards its final inglorious end, Haig leaked information to Woodward and Bernstein, the two *Washington Post* reporters who had exposed the scandal. In return Haig came out as the nice guy in their account of the Nixon-Ford transition.

Survive

It is a lack of any real scruples that has enabled Haig to claw his way to the top and survive there. On Nixon's instructions he gave the FBI a list of 14 names, many of them his closest



'Alexander Haig, willing to lie, bribe and blackmail'

colleagues, for wire-tapping. He told people afterwards that this illegal and covert action never gave him any 'gas pains'.

And now to get back to the White House he has ditched his old friend and mentor Henry Kissinger. At a secret meeting on 13 November last year he assured Republican superhawk Richard Helms, that he would have no truck with Kissinger and his suspect policies of detente.

Haig went all the way with Nixon and Kissinger when they by-passed the Senate and illegally invaded

Cambodia. He brusquely told those who queried this decision: 'This is an order from your Commander-in-Chief.' When questioned about this afterwards he said: 'My steps would have been even more drastic.'

As NATO supreme commander Haig's sinister hand was behind secret document DPC/D/74/30 which states: 'The Alliance should plan to maintain an adequate conventional defence system as long as is necessary to negotiate an acceptable peace. If not successful in achieving its ends with conventional forces, NATO will employ nuclear

weapons as necessary.'

Haig is exactly the kind of Secretary of State Reagan wants. He is willing to lie, bribe and blackmail. If need be he will press the nuclear button. His hatred of communists and liberals, and his racism — in Korea and Vietnam the words 'chinks' and 'gooks' slipped easily from his lips — makes sure he will serve the white establishment.

In the personality of Alexander Meigs Haig is reflected all the degeneracy and corruption of American capitalism. That is why he is wanted back at the White House.



Clem Attlee

1950 Cabinet papers reveal war danger

By Jeff King

IN 1950 the world teetered on the brink of a nuclear war. In Korea the troops of the United Nations had been sent reeling from the Chinese border as the revolutionary soldiers of the Chinese People's Republic went to the aid of the North Koreans.

General MacArthur, the UN commander in Korea, urged that the air war be taken into China, and the US President, Harry Truman, told a press conference that the choice of weapons was a matter for the commander in the field.

Panic swept through the ranks of the Labour government in Britain as they contemplated the consequences of dropping an atom bomb on China. They pointed out to Truman that the NATO forces in Europe were unprepared for war facing as they did the USSR, the East European states and the mass Communist parties of France and Italy.

In Asia imperialism confronted a victorious Chinese revolution, while in Malaya and Vietnam the people were taking up arms against their imperialist oppressors. Heeding the advice of the British, Truman beat a retreat, claiming he had been misunderstood at the press conference. MacArthur was left holding the baby.

Neither Truman nor the Labour premier Clem Attlee were against using nuclear weapons on humanitarian grounds. Five years before Truman had cheerfully murdered over half a million people at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Attlee had justified this mass homicide. They drew back from nuclear war because of the power of the Chinese revolution, and because they were not confident that they could crush the Red Army and deal with the mass Communist parties in Europe.

The lessons of 1950 remain equally true today. The victory of the colonial revolution and the extension of the revolution into the metropolitan countries is still the best guarantee against nuclear war.

Dutch doctors warn against the Bomb

A FULL-PAGE advert appeared in several Dutch newspapers on 30 December signed by 800 doctors and other members of the medical profession. It took the form of an open letter to the government and parliament warning of the total inadequacy of medical facilities to handle any nuclear attack.

The total capacity of all burns in the Netherlands is 100 people whereas tens of thousands would need such treatment if a nuclear bomb was dropped on Holland. The Dutch parliament has until May to decide whether to accept Cruise missiles on its territory.

Women workers defend the revolution

Reprinted from Kargar Socialist (newspaper of HKS, sympathising organisation of the Fourth International in Iran)

TO CONFRONT the military aggression of the Iraqi regime, the militant women of Iran who are conscious of their important and decisive role in defending the Iranian revolution, have succeeded in organising armed nuclei and defence committees in many factories. These are giving military and first aid training to women in the factories.

Naznakh factory is one of the factories in which the task of military defence and preparedness has developed considerably. It has 1,300 workers and following the struggles of the workers, it has been nationalised and is now run by a workers shora which has organised extensive military training in the factory.

Using those workers familiar with military affairs and the arms given to them by the pastoran in their industrial centre, they now have a programme of military training in the factory: three times a week for about three hours.

The military committee has also built an obstacle course to teach the art of military warfare. Workers at Naznakh believe that

every worker should receive military training and they say they will do all they can to help workers in other factories.

Women workers in the factory have also organised themselves for participation in this military training. An independent women's committee has been formed to defend the factory and using examples of the men's committee they are organising training for the women workers.

As a first step the committee has organised 'keep-fit' exercises every morning for one hour. They have also organised a course of elementary first aid and are teaching the women to give injections, bandaging and the care of the wounded.

As regards military training with the aid of the men's commit-

tee the women's committee is learning how to work with arms. At the moment women also have military training three times a week. Many women in the factory now know how to use G-3's (German machine guns) and they are going to have military exercises.

Many brothers and sisters in the factory who are receiving this training feel that they must transfer their experience to people in their neighbourhoods. Some of the workers are also involved in building neighbourhood committees and giving military training to the people.

The militant women in the factory believe that to prevent speculation and over-pricing of foodstuffs, and to ensure better

distribution of oil products they must be active in their neighbourhoods and in particular in the neighbourhood committees.

The activities of our brothers and sisters at Naznakh show that the first steps in the task of defending the revolution have been taken in the factories. These must be encouraged and more important steps taken.

If these factory defence committees link up with each other and with the neighbourhood committees, the tasks of general military training, arming the people and controlling distribution of foodstuffs would become possible. The existing united workers shoras who have members in many factories should lead this task.

Women in Iran

THE WAR with Iraq has involved many women in political and military activities, particularly the neighbourhood shoras. Many women have also joined organisations like the Mujahadeen guerillas and the HKS (Socialist Workers Party).

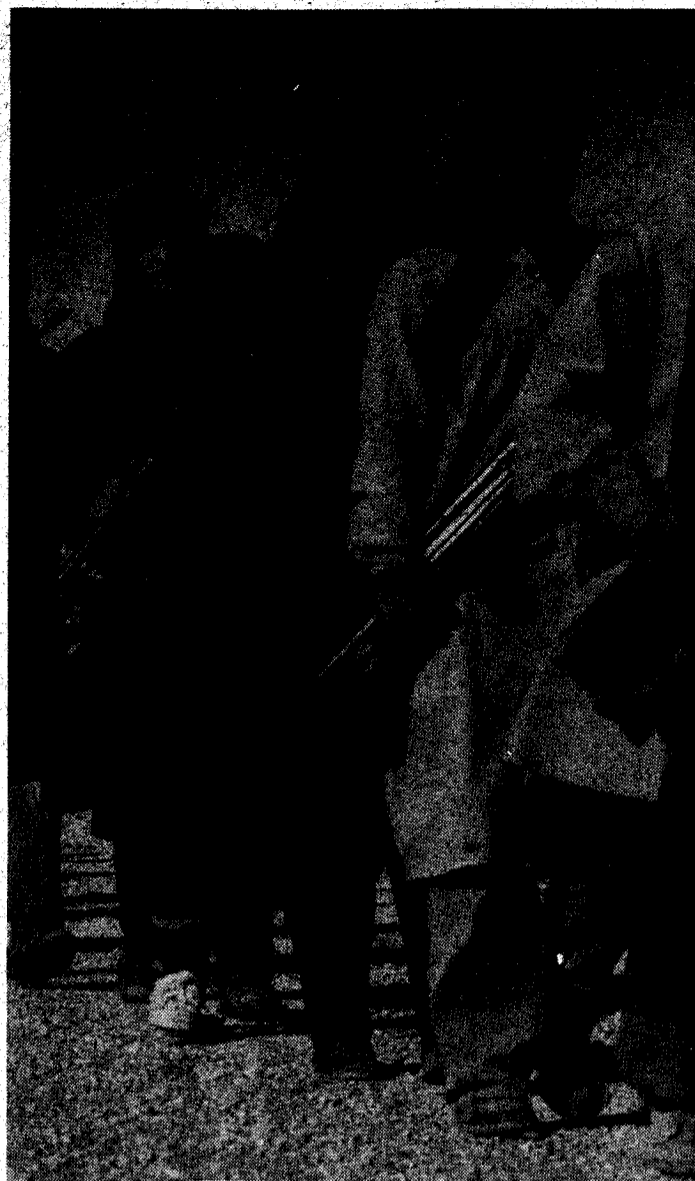
But the situation is contradictory. Repression against women is still severe. In particular the clergy is still trying to enforce the wearing of the veil. Leila Aziz told us the following story.

A woman called Fasineh was working at the Melli bank. Since being divorced she was the sole supporter of her 11-year-old daughter. She wore the veil because she couldn't afford to lose her job.

An Islamic government official came to her bank to inspect the women to see if they were wearing the veil. He said: "I'm glad to see Islamic sisters properly dressed. We know you support the regime." Fasineh indignantly replied that she only wore the Shador in order to keep her job.

Three days later she got a letter from the government telling her to report to Qasr prison. She was detained there without being told the charges and later transferred to Evin prison where she was tied and severely beaten.

Meanwhile posters went up in the bank calling her a bitch and a prostitute. After one month her family found her and she was released. This is not an isolated incident. It happens to hundreds of women.



Women workers are also participating in military training

IMPERIALIST HANDS OFF



Iranian workers are increasingly dissatisfied with the Khomeini regime's inability to defend the revolution

THERE is now open speculation in the press that US president-elect Reagan may be planning further military action against Iran using the American hostages as the pretext. Certainly the present US administration is stalling on the return to the Iranian people of the Shah's assets.

In Iran itself President Bani-Sadr has launched a demagogic campaign against the mullahs' handling of the war and of the hostage crisis. He is suspected of preparing for a link-up with the army hierarchy against the Khomeini regime. All these moves are in response to the deepening revolutionary process in Iran.

As Leila Aziz's eyewitness report explains, the masses are increasingly dissatisfied with the Khomeini regime's inability to defend the revolution. As Leila concludes: 'Now more than ever we need to be fighting for imperialist hands off Iran.'

Eyewitness

By Leila Aziz

THE FIRST time we realised we were broken out was when the Iraqis bombed Mehrabad airport in the immediate reaction of the masses to the revolution against the Iraqi aggression, and so they queued up to be taken into the army and to fight.

The Hesbe Kargar Socialist (HKS, sympathising organisation of the FI) immediately called on the Khomeini government for a general armed mobilisation of the masses as the only way to defend the revolution. But from the very beginning of the war the government deliberately dragged its feet.

Failure

Workers were turned away from the army and told they weren't needed. Many of those taken into the army were sent straight to Kurdistan to shoot the Kurdish peasants. Others remained in barracks in the towns away from the war zone. In Khuzestan workers and peasants demanded arms in order to defend their cities but the regime claimed it did not have the ammunition.

While they were refusing to give arms to the people the Iraqi planes destroyed a huge ammunition depot in Ahvaz. The reason for the government's failure to arm the masses is that any regime which defends capitalism fears the armed mobilisation of the masses more than imperialist military aggression.

Consequently cities were left virtually undefended against the bombardment and shelling from the Iraqis, killing thousands of Iranians and making more than a million people homeless. Refugees fleeing from the war

Letter from an army volunteer to Kargaran Socialist

COMRADES of the Socialist Worker, I am a welder recently married, working in a factory in Tehran. When the war began, like many other ex-conscripts re-called to the army I went willingly to introduce myself to the nearest barracks to go to the war front.

It is now 25 days since I went to the barracks and put on a soldier's uniform. The majority of the soldiers here are workers and farmers. Most of the soldiers who had also come here willingly to die are now demoralised because of the absence of any real plans, and by what seems to be the deliberate designs of the officers.

It is now noon and the barracks is in a sorry state of affairs. Whatever discipline there must have been here before is now completely lost with our presence. This is really bothering the officers, but what we are saying is that these officers do not want to fight.

Rumours

In the 25 days that we have been here, three times there has been a rumour that in the next few days we are going to the front. These rumours are only to keep up the morale, but this only lasts for a few days. Now even these rumours don't work.

The officers whenever they get the chance, surely but shyly defend Taghouti (the old regime). The censorship of the news from the war front has resulted in a bad situation in the barracks. Soldiers are simply listening to the foreign radios. It seems the conditions at the war front are really terrible.

Even the announcer of radio Tehran, although he did his best to cover up the fall of Khorramshahr, could say no more than the BBC. Neither said anything about these Taghouti officers who are not sending us to the war.

IRAN

Report from Iran

that war had attacked and Iran. The imperialist aggressors thousands to the front

reated as criminals by who told people in not to give shelter to rs'. How can you ex- mined people with no lies to remain in their face certain death?

ime did not want the the war zones and in- dal strategy and in- to reach the rest of y day it was suppressed ppapers and on televi- ource we were given a hat the regime wanted to see, but this often tch up to the reality of on, like the fall of hahr.

hile, the workers in the were told they would rk harder as part of the t'. In many factories ng day was extended to twelve hours. wages were taken and to the war, although in s workers voluntarily y's wages to the war families going without et the sacrifice.

cases workers were ey would not be get- all 'because of the this money has not ay to the needy in the nor have all the pro- supplies been sent. ssentials like petrol, oking oil, sugar and ow 'rationed' but as only hits the poor as es can be 'bought pons for a price. The at has trebled since the ons so the profiteers n the money as part of

the 'war effort'. In some areas where the neighbourhood committees and shoras have been revitalised or reformed workers have seen to the fair distribution of essential provisions.

Largely because of the government's disastrous policies throughout the war, in particular its inability to defend the revolution, dissension has grown loud and clear. At the rally of President Bani Sadr, on the day of Ashura, a million people came to support him in one of the biggest demonstrations since the insurrection against the Shah.

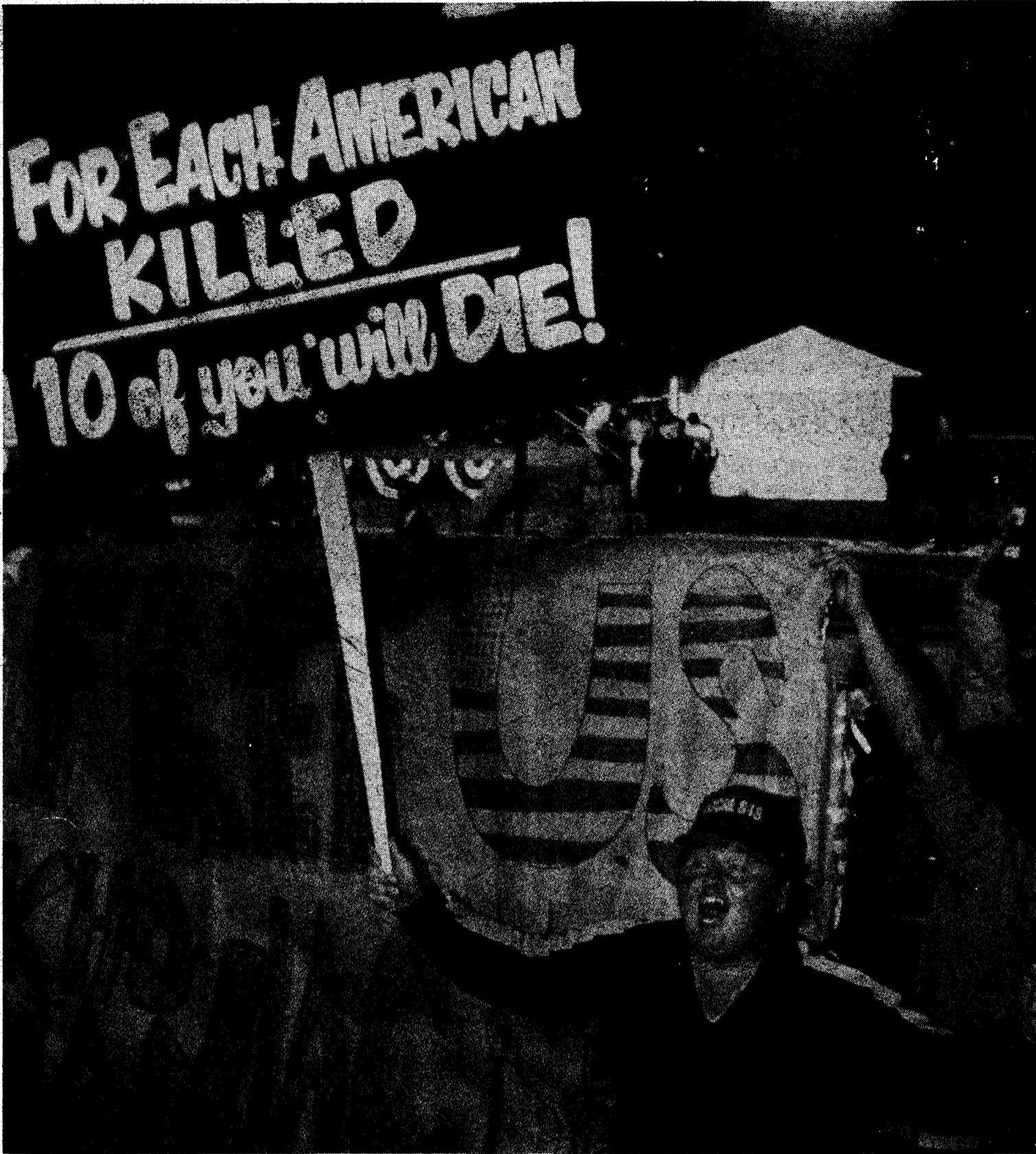
Many people realise that he is a dangerous liberal making noises about democracy, but at the moment he is a focus for this dissension. A week later at a rally of half a million people addressed by Majlis deputy, Salamatian, there were chants of 'Death to Beheshti, Khalkhali and Khomeini'.

Lynch

When Ayatollah Khalkhali went to visit the town of Dezful in Khuzestan, which has been almost destroyed by Iraqi shelling, he was forced to leave in a hurry as the townspeople were ready to lynch him. At the beginning of December the Mujahadeen guerillas took over a town in the north of Iran called Amoul and hundreds of the regime's thugs were killed by the Mujahadeen and townspeople.

In mid-December there were large demonstrations in Mashad, Qom, Isfahan and Tehran when Khomeini's picture was torn up publicly. The mullahs immediately called for a massive counter-demonstration last Friday in support of Imam, but two days before Khomeini called it off, saying that they didn't need such a demonstration. Perhaps they were afraid nobody would come!

The workers and peasants of Iran need solidarity in the defence of their revolution and in their struggle with the regime to win back their rights. Now more than ever we need to be fighting for imperialist hands off Iran.



A Barbarian

Reagan and the real 'barbarians'

By Davy Jones

'BARBARIANS' was how President-elect Ronald Reagan described the Iranians holding the American hostages. Throughout Xmas and New Year the Western media was saturated with the plight of the prisoners held in Iran.

The response of the Iranian leaders to Reagan's jibe was swift and to the point. Iranian Speaker Rafsanjani told a Tehran rally: 'Every day somewhere in the world the blood of militant people runs from the claws and teeth of the United States.'

'For 30 years you (Americans) have taken all our resources and sucked our blood. There is no one in human history more savage than you, especially the Republican leaders.'

'I don't know how you can call uncivilised and barbarous the capture of 52 spies who had turned the place that the Islamic republican government provided for them into a centre for espionage and who were busy plotting against the government.' He added that the Iranians were anxious to resolve the hostage issue but

that the US government were continually making excuses.

Reagan charging the Iranians with 'barbarism' is the height of hypocrisy. It was the CIA which organised the coup which brought the despotic Shah to power in Iran in 1953. At the time the capitalist media-denied US involvement but the central role of the CIA in the coup is now a matter of public record.

To show his appreciation the Shah denationalised the oil industry in 1954 and handed it back to five American oil companies and British Petroleum (BP).

In 1957 the infamous SAVAK secret police was formed. Former CIA agent Jesse Leaf told the *New York Times* in 1979 how the CIA helped instruct SAVAK in Nazi torture techniques. SAVAK organised massive repression of the Iranian people. Amnesty International

reported in 1975 that 'No country in the world has a worse record in human rights than Iran.'

An estimated 100,000 political prisoners were held in the Shah's jails, which were built at a faster rate than schools. Many thousands of those imprisoned were tortured. Thousands more died at the hands of the Shah's army which brutally put down all opposition.

Support

Throughout this period American (and British) imperialism gave full support to the Shah's regime. Huge military supplies were despatched to Iran from the US and Britain, making Iran the largest importer of arms in the world. In return for arms to repress the people the Shah policed the Gulf region for imperialism.

When this hated dictator was finally driven out of his country by the masses it was US imperialism which took charge of his welfare. When the Shah left the country 54 per cent of the people were living below the poverty line and 63 per cent of the population were illiterate. The Shah and his clique meanwhile had amassed from the country's oil wealth huge fortunes in

banks and investments abroad.

The Iranian masses had one simple demand -- the return of the Shah and his stolen billions to the Iranian people so he could stand trial for his crimes. To the Iranians, allowing the Shah to remain in the United States was like offering asylum to Hitler.

The response of US imperialism to requests for the legal extradition of the Shah was the seizure of Iranian assets, sending of US warships to the Arabian sea, ordering a halt to all imports from Iran, and deporting Iranian students from the US.

And on 24 April last year came the abortive US commando raid on Iran. Supposedly to free the American hostages the real aim of the raid was to help undermine the Khomeini government and install a regime more conducive to American imperialism. The CIA also tried to organise a coup by former officials of the Shah to reinstall the Shah's last premier, Shahpur Bakhtiar.

Supplies

With the Shah deposed American imperialism gave massive aid and arms supplies to the Iraqi government whose human rights record is almost as notorious as the Shah's regime in Iran. It was no surprise when the Iraqi regime launched an invasion

of Iran last September.

Since the Iranian revolution began the gains of the masses have been enormous.

*The monarchy was abolished and a republic set up.

*The SAVAK and secret police were abolished and the Shah's former torturers tried and punished.

*Imperialism's control over Iran's oil assets was eliminated and oil supplies cut off to South Africa.

*All banks and insurance companies, and seventy to eighty per cent of industry, was nationalised.

*Wages for most industrial workers were doubled and the working week reduced from 48 to 40 hours.

*The people won the right to vote, demonstrate and organise political parties, all of which were denied under the Shah.

*Factory and neighbourhood committees (shoras) have been established throughout the country.

The record of American imperialism during the same period is one of propping up reactionary and brutal regimes around the world as in El Salvador, just as they propped up the Shah in Iran for 26 years. Judge for yourself who are the real 'barbarians'.

Socialist Challenge News

SC Sales

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring Colin, 574060.
BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.
BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.
BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.
BRIGHTON: SC sales regularly every Sat outside Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.
BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info from Box 2, c/o Fulmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.
BURNLEY: SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.
CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.
CHESTERFIELD: SC supporters sell outside Boots, Marketplace, Saturdays 11.30am-12.30pm.
COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.
DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.
EDINBURGH: SC sales every Thursday 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square; Saturday 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.
ENFIELD: SC available from Nelsons newsgents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

HACKNEY: supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market E8.
HAMILTON: SC on sale 8-11 every Sat. outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Eliot St, Hamilton.
HUDDERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.
KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square.
LAMBETH: SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tetric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.
NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Petricks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. For more info ring Phil or Pete on Newcastle 737507.
MANCHESTER: SC supporters sell 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4903 for further info.
NEWHAM: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.
OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.

OXFORD: SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.
STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly: phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).
SWANSEA: SC sales outside Co-op, Oxford St, 11am-1pm, Saturdays.
SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).
TEESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.
WOLVERHAMPTON: SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; on Saturday near Beatties, town centre from 11am-2pm.

Is your town or city mentioned above? If not, send in details to this sales column.

International Marxist Group notices

ENGINEERING: National fraction Sat 7 February.
MISSILES: National fraction Sun 25 January.
POSITIVE ACTION: Day school Sat 31 January.
WOMEN'S LIBERATION: National fraction Sat 7 February.
TGWU: National fraction, Sat 17 Jan, 11-5pm, Caxton House, 129 St. John's Way, N19. Nearest tube Acton.
NUT: commission, Sat 24 Jan, 11-5pm. To discuss: Tasks, turn, women's oppression, education 16-19, conference. Venue next week.
NAC: caucus for cdes going to next national planning meeting, 16 Jan 8pm, National centre.
IMG MEMBERS: We urgently need you to fill vacancies in a variety of technical posts in National Centre. Any cdes interested ring Penny on 01-359 8371.
FOR SALE: Back copies of IP/1 for SC Fund Drive, Vols 16/17/18 (1978, 1979, 1980). Offers to Fed, Camden IMG, c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

SC Events

CAMDEN: SC Party, Sat 17 Jan, 8pm. Cheap booze, free food, raffle. £1 waged, 50p unwaged. 16 Belsize Square, NW3.
LAMBETH: recall conference caucus for all SC supporters. Sat 10 Jan, 2-5pm. Waterloo Action Centre, 14 Bayliss Rd, SE1. Nearest tube Waterloo.
SOCIALIST CHALLENGE: National fraction for all SC organisers. Sat 17 January. Venue: ring 01-359 8371.

Revolution Youth notices

WOMEN'S liberation fraction on 7/8 Feb. All women members welcome. Venue/details of agenda available from Ann/Alix at national office, 01-359 8301.

By Pierre Imhof A TROTSKYIST has been elected to a local parliament for the first time in Swiss history.

Sylviane Zulauf, a member of the Socialist Workers Party (Swiss section of the Fourth International) won a seat on the legislative body of the Bienne parliament.

An MP for socialist revolution!

The result came as part of a general shift to the left in the region. The labour movement won 44 per cent of the votes securing the Socialist Party an absolute majority on the executive. This move to the left reflects the increasing polarisation between the

working class and bourgeois parties. The Socialist Party as the majority will be put on the spot by working class actions which have increased over recent months: demonstrations of workers in the watch factories demanding inflation-linked wage increases and no redundancies, and

movements of school students like those organised against sexist-domestic science courses. The vote also shows that these workers will continue to press their parties to change their current policies and organise action.

electorate who voted for Sylviane Zulauf show that for a limited number of workers revolutionary solutions are being adopted as an alternative to the class collaboration of social democracy.

Sylviane Zulauf will allow those workers to have a voice — the first in a long, long time in a Swiss parliament.

Socialist Challenge and Socialist Press sellers under attack

By Brian Grogan

THE right wing in Oxford Labour Party received another blow against their attempt to witch-hunt the left last month. Ted Heslin, refused membership of the local party on the grounds that he is a supporter of *Socialist Press*, was again backed by the Labour Party national executive committee in his fight to join the Labour Party.

In an unprecedented move, the NEC reconsidered his case for a second time on 15 December. The right wing had refused to implement a previous NEC ruling to uphold his membership application under the guise of demanding a full explanation for the NEC's decision. Now the NEC has 'reaffirmed to uphold' the appeal of Heslin.

This by no means signals the end of the matter. On the strength of the precedents set in the Heslin case, the right wing has moved against other *Socialist Press* supporters. Then at the end of last year they began to move against *Socialist Challenge* supporters. This clearly demonstrates that this is a political move against the whole left in Oxford.

'This is a blatant attack on the democratic rights of all Labour Party members to read and propagate any views within the labour movement'

to read and propagate any views within the labour movement they wish. It is nothing more than an attempt at political censorship. This approach has a certain irony since a prominent member of the right wing in Oxford is one Robert Maxwell, present bidder for *The Times*, a newspaper which openly supports the views of the ruling class!

NATO

All Labour Party members, not only those in Oxford, have a vital interest in defeating this witch-hunt. Interrogating Labour Party applicants on their membership or support of other organisations is of course only aimed at socialist organisations like the IMG and the WSL. No enquiry is conducted into the sup-

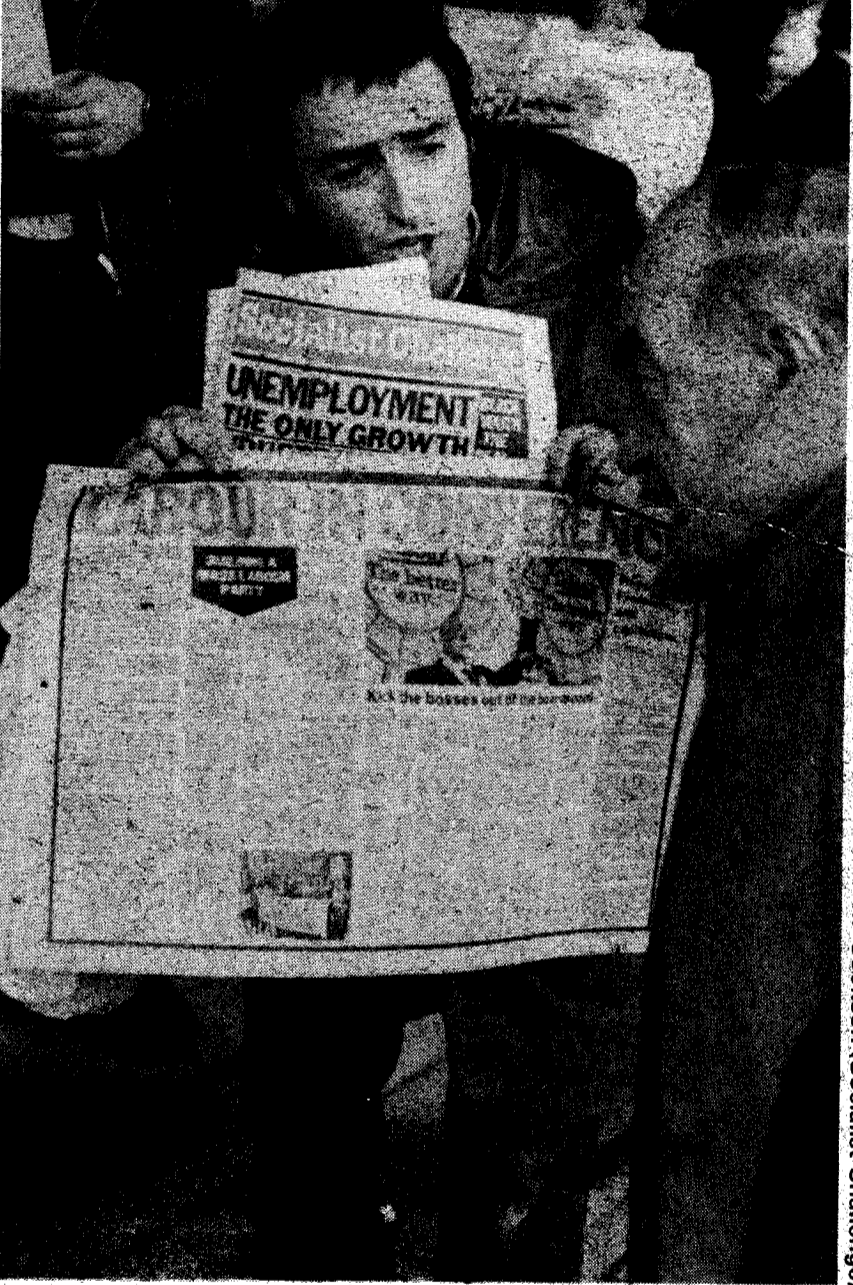


Photo: G M Cookson (Socialist Challenge)

porters of the Committee for Transatlantic Understanding, openly funded by NATO.

The right wing would never dream of submitting the whole membership of

the party to such vettings. It is a way of hitting the left. The Oxford Labour Party is an active party. It is backing rent strikers in Banbury, the occupation of a local hospital against the cuts, and some of the ward

branches have come out in support of political status for the H Block men and Armagh women. It is this left wing development which is at the root of the witch-hunt and why it must be fought.

Socialist Challenge London Day School
 Sat 24 January 10.30-4.30pm
East Europe and Poland
 Speaker: Oliver MacDonald
 Open to Socialist Challenge supporters Admission £1. Venue: St. Matthews, Brixton (2 minutes Brixton Tube station)

JOHN LENNON
 1940-1980

Exclusive John Lennon poster!
 Just £1. Bulk orders (over 5) are post free, otherwise send 30p p&p.
 Orders and money to: The Other Printshop, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Appeal

The appeal of the right wing to the constitution is just a smokescreen for a witch-hunt. They claim that those refused membership or threatened with expulsion are members of either the International Marxist Group or the Workers Socialist League. No serious evidence has been produced to justify such allegations. The most recent victim is Peter Grant. He was deemed 'ineligible to be a member of the Labour Party, the main reason being that he could not give an undertaking to stop selling the newspaper *Socialist Challenge*, supporting an organisation which is ineligible for affiliation to the Labour Party'.

Logic

The convoluted logic of this 'deduction' was the following: 'If you sell the newspaper *Socialist Challenge*, you must be a supporter of an organisation which is ineligible for affiliation to the Labour Party, because if you are selling the newspaper, you are receiving money which supports this organisation, and you could be regarded as a supporter/member of this organisation.'

This is a blatant attack on the democratic rights of all Labour Party members

National sales drive planned

ALL readers should make a note in their diaries of Saturday 21 February. That's when *Socialist Challenge* plans to hold its first national sales day of 1981.

On that day, we want our supporters everywhere to be out on the streets, selling the paper to new readers. We are organising sales in all the major shopping centres we can

reach, in the railway, bus and tube stations; at football matches; in the pubs and laundrettes — in fact anywhere that people come together to relax or to work at the weekend.

As ever, we need your support to make the national sales day a success. Make sure that local *Socialist Challenge* supporters begin to think now about where it could organise sales throughout the day. We want to publish a comprehensive guide to sales pitches in the paper so that other SC readers can go along and help. We will be increasing the number of papers printed for

the sales day, so you can order any number of extra copies! And there will be special posters and leaflets available in advance to help promote the event.

Today a growing number of people, who are suffering at the Tories' hands are prepared to listen to socialist solutions. The policies that *Socialist Challenge* has always stood for can be the key for many militants to an explanation of unemployment, poverty and oppression. Make sure they have the opportunity to read about them in your area! Join the *Socialist Challenge* National Sales Day!

Class Struggle in South London, 1850-1900 by Dave Russell and Mike Tichelar, Southwark-Lambeth History Workshop, £1

'THE last half of the nineteenth century saw for the first time the birth of continuous trade union and working class political organisation in Britain.'

'The period began with the decline of the Chartist struggles and the channelling of revolutionary politics into relatively peaceful political reform.'

The workers' South Bank Show

So begins this collection of 15 documents which chronicle the increased participation of the working class in various forms of political activity as seen in microcosm in South London.

Conditions

Many of the social conditions described in the pamphlet apply generally to nineteenth century capitalism: the endemic alcoholism among the poor; the sweated trades — graphically described in a

document on the shirtmakers of Southwark; and the poor hygiene at home and at work.

But these descriptions, combined with the experiences of the working people who organised and agitated to overcome these evils, give social and political perspective to the specific industries and skills of the South London working class.

The growing sophistication of the skilled workers is illustrated through the descriptions of the great events of the period:

*The 'monster meeting' on Kennington Common, which was the last big Chartist march and petition and which defied police warnings not to march on Parliament.

*The Deptford bread riots of 1867 which involved large-scale civil disobedience through the ransacking of shops and which led to increased pressure for working men to receive the vote.

*The 1889 dock strike in Southwark when labourers organised for the first time, coming out in their thousands

to discuss the promotion of their cause by boycotting hostile newspapers and pubs.

Meetings

The early working class parties and organisations are also documented. The pamphlet describes the first meetings of South London branches of the Social Democratic Federation — Britain's first Marxist group — which pioneered the political character that South London was later to develop

as a base for radical clubs and organisations.

And early trade unions are of course recorded: the development of Lambeth Trades Council; the pleas of Bermondsey's Unemployed Committee; and the formation of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in Southwark.

An interesting and readable collection of documents, this booklet is worthy of reading beyond South London. Its history serves to remind us not only of the background to today's labour movement, but also of the lessons and tactics to be employed.

Graham Norwood

Prostitute : a film for 1981 — or any year



Marshall McLuhan needs a new medium

IF YOU have sat in a meeting and had to strain to hear the speaker, then according to the late Marshall McLuhan — one-time guru on the media and messages — you would have been 'participating'.

Thus television is 'cool'. It is supposedly low in information and the viewer has to participate by compensating for the low definition of the image on the screen.

Such an abstract, technical assessment of media led McLuhan and his followers to all sorts of political absurdities.

Television has shrunk the world to a global village, said the guru. By implication, we could not only know our neighbours on planet Earth, but learn to love them.

That someone controls the images on the screen was irrelevant. The form of media — whether manuscript, book, radio, TV — was all important in determining the message that is communicated.

The fact that in the West the 'global village' resembles Peyton Place or Dallas, rather than Nevsky Prospect or Tbilisi, was by the by.

Socialists do consider that form carries messages, but form is itself shaped by ideological forces.

Take the novel, for example. It emerged as a literary form at the time when the bourgeoisie began to assert their view of the world. The individual was broken from the bonds of feudal society, and the newly-won freedoms found expression in the decisions and actions of characters in novels.

Yet for McLuhan all printed texts were reduced to the physiological function of the eye, scanning the page in a linear way. This ahistorical, apolitical analysis of media contributed nothing to understanding the forces that determine form or content; still less to challenging them.

Now McLuhan, who died on 31 December, will only be able to get his message to us via a medium.



Scenes from Prostitute

By Geoff Bell

ONE of the few things worth remembering from the 1980 film world was the campaign of disruption against films depicting violence against women.

Movies such as *Dressed to Kill*, *Monster* and *When a Stranger Calls* attracted angry demonstrations which received massive publicity, including generally sympathetic centre-spreads in a couple of popular daily papers.

At first glance a film called 'Prostitute' might seem destined for the same type of treatment — especially when the film contains scenes of rather gruesome violence against women, as well as sexual encounters which leave little to the imagination.

But *Prostitute* is no cheap exploitation movie. On the contrary it is feminist, working class, and revolutionary. It is also brilliantly made,

which makes it not only worth going to see politically but in every other way as well.

It had its premier at the London Film Festival in November and goes on limited release in London and Birmingham shortly. If you have to travel the length of the country to see it, do so.

The film's director is Tony Garnett, famous for his partnership with Ken Loach. Together they have produced and directed such classics as *Cathy Come Home*, *Days of Hope* and *Kes*. The style of *Prostitute* is similar to these earlier efforts: 'naturalistic' is the film buff's terminology which means a fiction/documentary in which the actors seem not to act but appear to be the real people they are playing.

The people in *Prostitute* are, by and large, working class women from Birmingham who work in what has been romantically termed 'the oldest profession'.

But there is no romance in *Prostitute*, the film is about exploitation: how the women are

degraded and humiliated by those who use them, by their bosses, and by the police. In other words, an everyday story of life under capitalism.

That might sound rather squalid, not the sort of movie to be entertained by. Certainly some of the scenes are stomach turning, especially the sex acts. But yet there is a warmth and humour in the film which gives it a remarkable tender quality.

This is achieved by the contrasts the film offers. The awareness of the police, the honesty of the prostitutes, the ordinariness of the prostitutes, the mental and physical perversion of their clients: the commonsense of the prostitutes, the silliness of those trying to 'help' them.

What comes through above all else is a message of class, how rotten and corrupt the class system is, but also how those at the bottom end of the social scale have a sense of dignity and humanity which, in the end, allows them to at least survive.



H-block and Armagh — not over yet

By Geoff Bell

THE struggle of Irish Republican prisoners to win conditions compatible with political status is far from over.

This is the message which is now coming loud and clear from the prisoners themselves and from the National H Block/Armagh Committee in Ireland.

Although the possibility of a new hunger strike has now diminished there is no doubt that the prisoners feel that the British government has broken the promises made when the 53-day hunger strike in the H

Blocks of Long Kesh and Armagh ended just before Xmas.

In a statement smuggled out of Long Kesh last week the prisoners accused the prison authorities of failing to carry out the prison

reforms publicly promised by Tory Secretary of State, Humphrey Atkins. The statement warns that should Britain 'remain intransigent' the prisoners 'will be forced to fall back upon our own resources'.

This implies that the prisoners are considering stepping up their campaign, but last week's warning by the Derry branch of the National H Block/Armagh Committee, that a new hunger strike would start within two weeks, has now been withdrawn.

Yet there is no doubt that many of the prisoners are bitter about the whole situation. A statement

issued at the weekend by the National H Block/Armagh Committee reported that 'tension and frustration grow daily in the prisons', and there are reports that some of the 450 'Blanket' prisoners in Long Kesh are unclear about whether to carry on with their 'no wash' protest.

It appears that three issues remain unresolved.

First, Britain insists that the Republican prisoners end their protest before prison reforms are introduced. The Republicans argue that Britain should honour its promises immediately.

Second, the prisoners

demand that the various verbal promises made by the British government be made public. These promises may be concerned with the third contentious issue, the wearing of prison uniforms.

In the statement that ended the hunger strike Humphrey Atkins said that the prisoners could wear their own clothes 'during recreation, association and visits', but that 'civilian-type clothing' issued by the prison authorities would be worn 'during the working day'. This meant, said Atkins, that 'denim prison uniform becomes a thing of the past for all prisoners'.

But at the moment the

authorities are telling the prisoners that they must first wear prison uniform before permission to wear their own clothes will be given.

Even if this problem is sorted out it is possible that some of the Republicans feel that when they are asked to wear the prison-issue 'civilian-style' clothing, they would continue to refuse.

The other issues that led to the hunger strike appear to have been resolved. The government has agreed that the definition of prison 'work' will be so broad as to allow the prisoners to decide what 'work' they undertake

— and this would include 'educational training'.

The prisoners will also be allowed to associate together to such an extent that they will be able to organise themselves politically. Full remission of sentence has also been promised by the British government and 60 'blanket' prisoners could be freed soon.

But all this is dependent on Britain honouring the promises made at the end of the hunger strike. It was originally agreed that the reforms should be carried out within a fortnight. That period has now elapsed, and the prisoners and their supporters are still waiting.

THE TROUBLES



British invaders: Cromwell (above), and the British Army in 1798 (below)



By Tom Marlowe

THE first episode of ITV's *The Troubles* was shown on Monday evening. Thus began a series which has been awaited eagerly for two years by those in the know.

The personnel responsible for the series have, in other roles, produced some of the best and most radical television documentaries ever to have hit the small screen.

These include an excellent historical series on Palestine and some of the more honest 'This Week' programmes on Ireland.

Omissions

Bearing that in mind the first episode of *The Troubles* was disappointing. Perhaps this was because the filmmakers tried to cram in too much in one episode — almost 300 years in just over an hour. And, because of that, there were omissions: not even a mention of the 1867 Fenian Rising to which Robert Kee's rival series on BBC devoted a whole episode.

There are, however, compensations in this whistle-stop journey through three centuries of Irish history. More time is available for dealing with recent times, and certainly the second and third episodes, which have already been screened privately are riveting.

Factual

Back though to episode one, entitled 'Conquest', which catalogued all sorts of British nastiness towards the Irish. On that the programme was excellent and factual. The difficulty arose when 'Conquest' began to deal with the Irish themselves.

It is unfortunate that within ten minutes of the series beginning the commonest film cliché about Ireland is employed — the picture of the Catholic priest saying mass. Other predictable shots followed — Orangemen marching, Republicans marching, and a Protestant minister doing his religious bit.

What all this tends to suggest, and it is re-inforced by



Twentieth century invaders: Black and Tans (above) and the British Army in 1969 (below)

the commentary, is that religion is the cause of all the divisions in Ireland. Thus Oliver Cromwell's expedition to Ireland, while rightly condemned and exposed, is described at one point as 'a Protestant Crusade'.

In fact while Cromwell did indeed justify his actions in religious terms, his attempt to 'settle' the Irish question had behind it a much deeper political motivation.

Class

Nevertheless 'Conquest' did get the main story-line right: that the basis of 'what Irish people call the troubles', as the commentary puts it, is the insistence of English kings, queens, generals and prime ministers that they should be master in the Irish house.

It is also excellent that English interference in Ireland is explained, for the most part, in terms of colonial exploitation: the word 'class' pops up time and time



again in *The Troubles*.

The second episode, dealing with partition and viewable next Monday, should not be missed. It demands attention in a way which the first episode did not. Possibly this is because it covers only 30 years.

But what really brings it alive is the old newsreel

footage and the interviews with a wide range of participants in the events from 1916 to 1921. One interview, in which a veteran of the IRA who fought in the War of Independence, describes how he threw grenades at passing British Army vehicles is worth staying up until midnight to see.

Decent

There is no denying that, judging by what has been seen so far, *The Troubles* is moving relentlessly towards the conclusion that if Britain were to leave Ireland it would be the only decent thing this country's rulers have ever done for the Irish.

So tell your friends to turn on ITV every Monday at 10.30pm. And watch out especially for the third episode, dealing with the Northern state, and which stars one Michael Farrell, revolutionary Marxist, historian and member of Peoples Democracy.

By George Reynolds

AN immigrant hostel in the Paris working class suburb of Vitry was the target of a commando-style assault over Xmas.

The attackers came with one purpose in mind — to flatten the hostel to the ground so that the immigrants who lived there would be driven out of the area. To this purpose the goon squads used bulldozers, wire-cutters and clubs.

But this was no ordinary racist attack. It was led by the 'lord mayor of the suburb, Paul Mercieca, a member of the French Communist Party. He was joined in his attack on the hostel by 50 other members of the Communist Party, and the French CP has officially supported his action.

The scandal of the CP's new 'militancy' towards immigrant workers has been denounced by many on the French left. Jean Le Garre, an executive member of the Socialist Party, said the attack on the hostel was 'unworthy of a party which proclaims workers' solidarity and internationalism'.

Last week 6,000 Muslim immigrants, prompted by the attack, decided to call a special conference to deal with

French Communist Party leads racist assault

'problems of racialism, xenophobia and aggression' against the Muslim community.

But the French CP remains unrepentant. It has attempted to justify the bulldozing by saying that there were already too many immigrants living in Vitry, and that immigrants should be located in other, less working class areas. One of Mercieca's CP helpers has been quoted as saying: 'The people of Vitry are fed up. Out of every 10 inhabitants, two are immigrants.'

Municipal

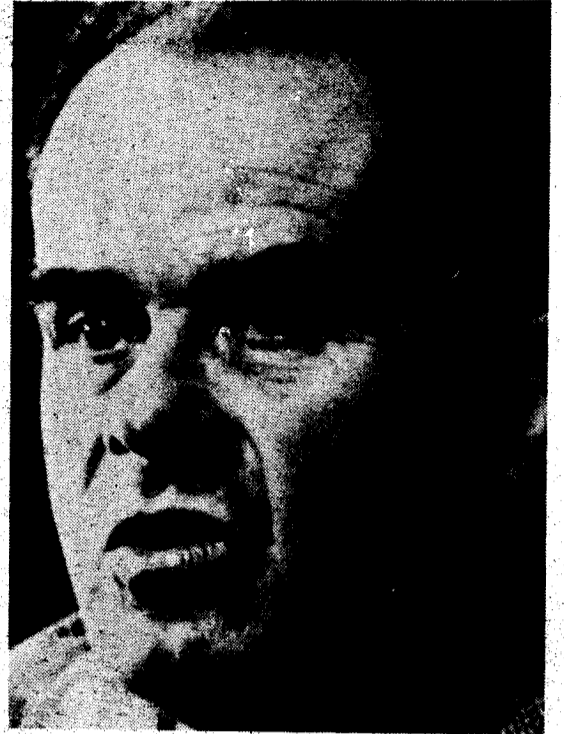
The same theme was recently echoed by another Communist municipal government in the Paris working class suburb of Ivry. 'Ivry is 20 per cent immigrants,' complained the Communists. 'In certain areas they reach 50 per cent. We say frankly "That's enough".'

The excuse offered by the CP — that immigrants should move to other areas

— is pathetically weak. Immigrant workers, being the lowest paid in the country, are bound to live in working class areas because that is all they can afford.

All statistics recently released give the lie to the view, which is also peddled by the CP, that immigrant workers are taking the jobs of French workers. A survey found that only one job in three left vacant by an immigrant was filled by a French national. This is because the jobs in question — in the building industry, in road construction and even in car assembly plants — are so low paid that French nationals won't consider taking them.

Despite such facts, French CP leader Georges Marchais has gone on record as saying he is in favour of stricter immigration controls. His party members in Vitry have obviously decided to put this policy into practice.



GEORGES MARCHAIS, French CP leader who favours stricter immigration controls

EL SALVADOR GUERRILLAS ADVANCE

By Megan Martin

EL Salvadoran freedom fighters of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) have made striking advances in the last week. Their guerilla campaign against the US-backed junta is expected to reach a climax shortly.

In the meantime, the FDR and the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN) have established a provisional government. For its part the ruling right-wing junta continues to receive aid from the Carter administration, despite the killing of two more US citizens by junta supporters last weekend.

Fronts

The new guerilla offensive was launched in the closing days of 1980. It consists of three 'movable fronts' in the north of El Salvador around the towns of Morasan, Chalatenango and Santa Ana.

According to FDR sources, the guerillas liberated over a quarter of the country in the first week of the offensive. Among the towns taken by the guerillas was Aguilares, which is just 30 miles from San Salvador, the country's capital.

Government representatives have claimed to have pushed back the offensive. In fact all that has happened is that once towns or areas are liberated the 'movable fronts' retreat and advance elsewhere. But these guerilla tactics are expected to culminate shortly in a general and final offensive.

Speaking in San Salvador on Sunday a guerilla commander, 'Anna Maria', told the *New York Times*: 'I cannot give you the exact date or hour, but we are very close to our final battles.'

The military offensive is expected to coincide with a general strike in San Salvador. On New Year's Eve, El Salvador's army surrounded the capital whose population responded by erecting barricades.

Typical

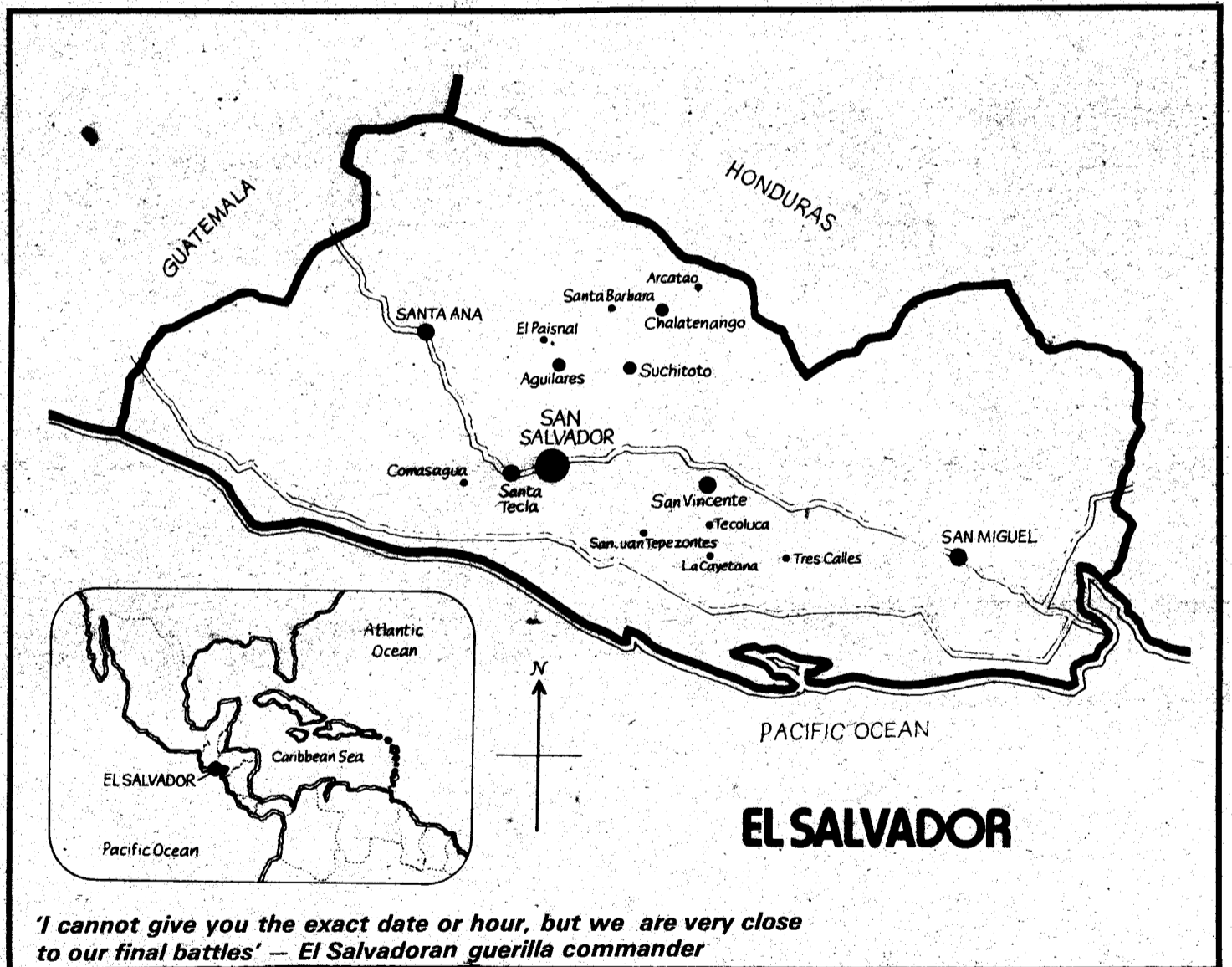
The killing of two US citizens on Sunday was a typical right-wing exercise. The two, Michael Hammer and Mark Pearlman, were drinking coffee in a hotel in San Salvador when the area was surrounded by



Murdered by right-wing forces: Jose Rodolfo Viera (above), Michael Hammer (below), and Mark Pearlman (bottom)



uniformed members of the junta's National Guard. Plain clothes men then entered the hotel and within minutes the two were shot dead, along with El Salvadoran Jose Rodolfo



'I cannot give you the exact date or hour, but we are very close to our final battles' — El Salvadoran guerilla commander

Viera. All three were working on land reform.

But there is no sign that the US government will react to these killings as they did to the murder of four US missionaries a month ago, when the US suspended economic aid. This has now been restored and the US continues to throw its weight behind the junta.

Research

The barbarity of the junta was recently confirmed by the US human rights group, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

The council, a private research group composed of trade unionists, members of Congress, religious leaders and liberal political ac-

tivists, has just issued its annual report which says that the El Salvadoran junta was the worst violator of human rights in South and Central America in 1980.

Squads

The report says that more people died in El Salvador in 1980, largely as a result of 'government-condoned right-wing death squads', than in all the other nations of Latin America combined.

Despite such repression it's now clear that the El Salvador opposition is looking forward to the next few weeks with growing confidence. In the words of Anna Maria, 'We are now in our final phase'.

Basque leader assassinated

By Frank McBride

JOSE SAGARDIA, a leading member of the Basque separatist group ETA was blown up by a car bomb on 30 December, bringing the death toll of Basques killed by fascists in 1980 to over 20.

Unusually, this time the victim was a member of the nationalist left. More often those killed by the fascists have simply lived in a militant Basque town. In July, for example a pregnant woman, her brother and a road sweeper died when a bomb went off outside a Bilbao nursery run by a left-winger.

The left wing town of Hernani has also suffered several attacks. In November two middle-aged

occupants and instead released them later that evening. The car had burst the barricades because of 'mechanical failure', claimed the Spanish authorities.

Eventually the Spanish Minister of the Interior, Juan Roson, admitted that those in the car had been government secret agents. He claimed they had been fleeing from ETA militants, and that it was pure coincidence that their flight came minutes after the assassination.

Not a single detention was made by the Spanish authorities in connection with any of the fascist killings. Yet in 1980 hundreds were detained for their supposed links with ETA.

Leicester Women's Festival

WOMEN in Leicester are organising a two-day Women's Festival for the end of this month.

The festival aims to show how women can organise and fight for a future in which they can live their lives as they wish. It will bring together women from all walks of life and promote local women's work, art and other skills.

The following groups have agreed to take part: Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Group, National Abortion Campaign, the women's subcommittee of Leicester Trades Council, and other women's groups. Food and child-care facilities will be provided on both days.

The provisional programme for the festival, which is being held at Moat Community College, Maynard Rd, is:

Sat 31 Jan Open to all. Workshops, films, dance groups, theatre, art displays, discussions. Rally with Anwar Ditta and speakers from Child Poverty Action Group and IC-CAS. Evening social with 'Mistakes' and disco.

Sun 1 Feb Women only. Frankie Armstrong on training in self-assertion; Sue Townsend on women writing for the media; Di Livingstone reading her poetry; one hour all women swimming session.

For further information contact: Leicester Women's Festival Planning Group, PO Box 118, Leicester.

Anti-Nazi demo planned

RACIST violence continued through the Christmas holiday. On 20 December some 200 racist thugs attacked the mosque in Luton bombarding worshippers with beer bottles and bricks.

Several of those in the mosque were injured and had to be treated in hospital later.

In condemning the violence in Luton the Anti Nazi League appealed for support for a counter-demonstration organised by local anti-fascists in Wolverhampton against a march organised by the National Front.

The rally starts at noon at the Civic Centre, Wolverhampton.

Watch out - there's an anti-abortionist about

By Joan Twelves, secretary, City Poly NALGO

ANTI-abortionists are beginning to organise within the unions. The failure of the Corrie Bill last year has forced them to reassess their tactics.

Firstly they realised that any parliamentary restrictions to the '67 Abortion Act needed to be simple, one-clause affairs — like the legislation on reducing time-limits that Timothy Sainsbury is being asked to put as a Private Members Bill.

Secondly they recognised that press lies and propaganda in schools are not enough. The key to the fight for abortion rights lies with the trade union movement.

Over the past few years the National Abortion

Campaign (NAC) and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign (LARC) have continually fought and gained support within the labour movement for the belief that women should have the right to control their own fertility.

The success of this approach was demonstrated when the TUC called the anti-Corrie demonstration in October 1979 and NALGO nationally supported strike action against Corrie in February 1980.

Not surprisingly this had an impact on the anti-abortionists. They have always been present in the unions, opposing on an individual basis pro-abortion resolutions in union branches. But now they are clearly organising to attempt to win back the ground they have lost.

Initially they focussed on the National Union of Journalists, encouraging a sudden rush of resignations by Irish journalists, in opposition to the union's position of supporting free

abortion on demand which was established in 1976 and reaffirmed in 1979. Now they are switching their attentions to other unions, in particular those affiliated to NAC.

At last year's NALGO conference a motion calling for disaffiliation from NAC led to more delegates wanting to speak against it even being debated than any other topic. This year, the anti-abortionists are being more subtle — their motion simply says that NALGO should only involve itself with pay and service conditions and not take up 'political' issues.

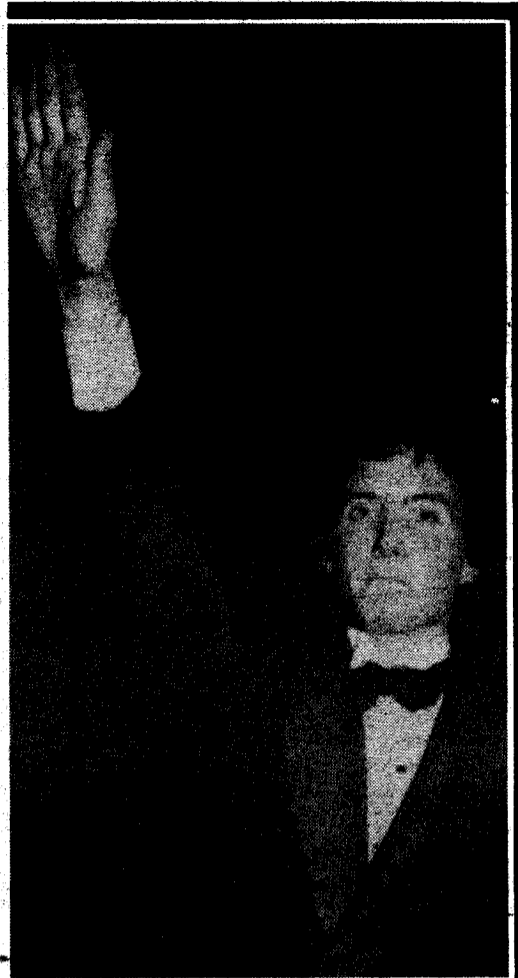
This would lead not just to disaffiliation from NAC but from a whole range of other campaigns such as the Chile Solidarity Campaign and Amnesty International. It is likely that similar motions will be put in other unions. The National Union of Public Employees, also affiliated to NAC, would seem an obvious target.

The activities of the anti-

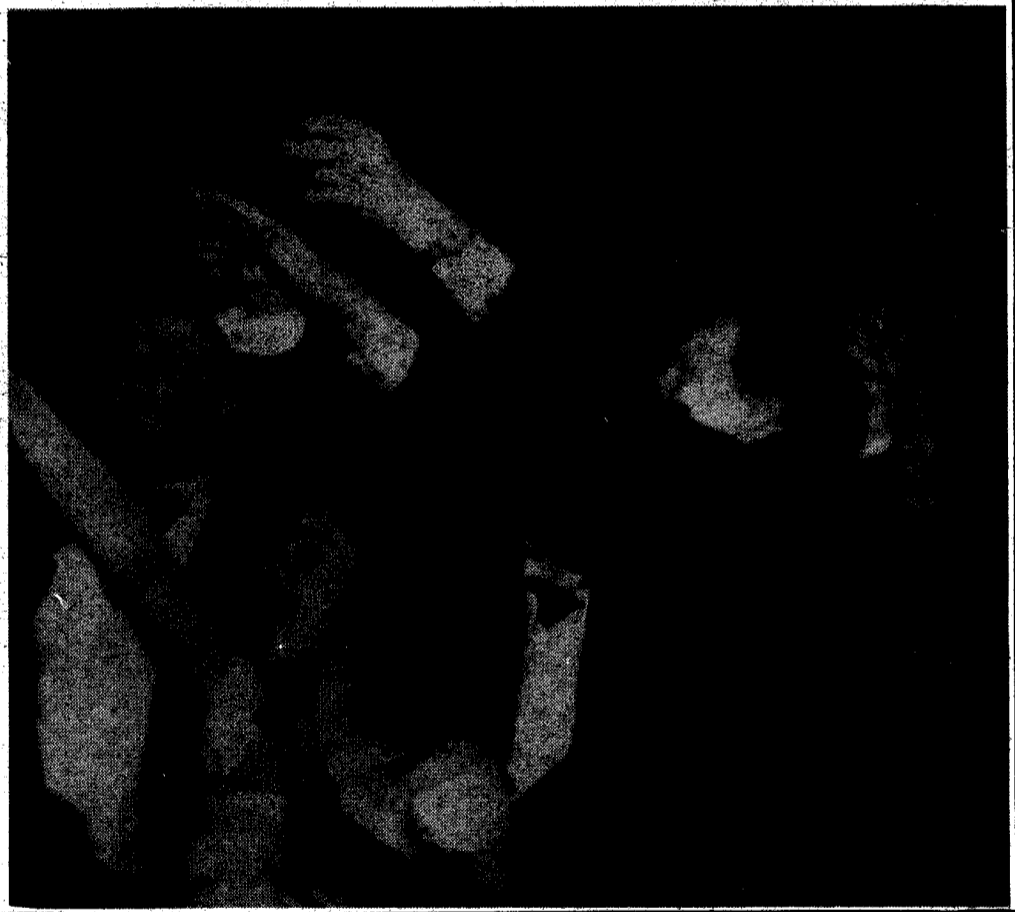
abortionists in the unions have to be countered. In NALGO there will be a conference motion reaffirming affiliation to NAC and calling for support for legislation to give women a positive right to choose whether or not to have children.

The first stage of such legislation, in the form of a Bill stating that sufficient abortion facilities must be made available on the NHS, may be introduced into Parliament this session. The labour movement conference organised by NAC and LARC on 14 March to discuss positive legislation provides a useful focus for countering the activities of the anti-abortionists. It also aims to win support within the labour movement for a woman's right to choose.

Resolutions supporting this conference should be moved in every union branch — and the 'no politics' brigade exposed for what they really are: anti-abortionists.



Happy scenes from Oxford University Monday Club's Xmas dinner where Nazi salutes were given during toasts to the Queen. Special mention should be made of Upper-class Twit of the Year, James Sainsbury (above right, giving Nazi salute), a director of the family supermarket firm. The Twit's father is planning an anti-abortion bill in the next parliamentary session. Sainsbury shoppers take note!



Attlee's racism revealed

By Davy Jones

RECENTLY-released 1950 Cabinet papers show that Attlee's Labour government was seriously concerned about 'coloured immigration'. The Cabinet minutes record that discussion centred on 'the means of preventing any further increase in the coloured population in this country.'

The Cabinet discussion followed complaints of racial discrimination from a deputation led by Leary Constantine. There in a nutshell you have the racist argument: the way to deal with discrimination is to reduce the number of black people in the country.

Successive governments — Tory and Labour — have used this argument to justify tougher anti-immigration legislation aimed at keeping out black people.

Now the Thatcher government want to bring the nationality law into line with the racist immigration laws. The Tories' nationality proposals figure prominently in their plans for the next parliamentary session.

On Saturday 10 January the Campaign Against Racist Laws is holding a national conference to organise against these proposals. For further details write to: CARL, c/o Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5.

What's Left

RATES for What's Left ads. 5p per word or £4 per col. inch. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance.

LITERATURE Teaching Politics Conference. Literary Studies: The Practice of Teaching. New Hall, Cambridge. April 3-5. Details from: H. Glen, New Hall, Cambridge.

IRELAND and the British. A Labour Conference organised by Battersea Labour Party. Sat 17 Jan, 11.30am-5.30pm. 177 Lavender Hill, Battersea SW11. Speakers include: J Stallard MP; A Dubs MP; Geoff Bell, Mike Biggs (Ex Army Capt), Charter 88.

Socialist Challenge

public meeting

'Revolution in the Caribbean'

Wed 21 Jan, 7.30pm
Brixton Town Hall,
(Lower Hall)

Speakers: Pat Kane (Socialist Challenge); Representative of the 'New Jewel' Movement of Grenada (the government party); Representative from the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign

'We have to make a stand!'

By Dominic Johnson (NUPE, Oxon NHS)

IT'S been a month since staff members at Longworth Hospital declared an occupation against the proposed closure of their 50-bed geriatric hospital. Now a 24-hour picket has been organised to prevent patients being removed in the first stage of Oxford Area Health Authority's shut-down due this month.

Bernie Silas, a COHSE shop steward at the hospital, says: 'We felt that the partial closure of Longworth would only be the first step to complete closure. The health service has been cut back so much that if people don't make a stand soon, we won't have a service left.'

'All the staff are against closure,' says Bernie 'but to begin with not all were fully for the occupation. Nobody quite knew what an occupation was and that frightened some of them. But now that the occupation has been going on for a month, the staff

can see that the hospital is carrying on its service as usual. The occupation is growing stronger every day and we've been getting more and more support.'

Trying to weaken the occupation, the AHA have cancelled plans to open another hospital in Whitney, ten miles away, which has been lying empty for two years. The AHA say that they will not open Whitney until the Longworth occupation ends.

'It's a load of poppycock,' explains Bernie.

'Whitney isn't a geriatric hospital it's a community hospital. We need Longworth and Whitney. It's the AHA who are stopping the opening of Whitney not us.'

Trade union support for the Longworth workers has flooded in from health-service unions and the Oxford Trade Council. In a significant move Oxford City Labour Party has also declared for the occupation. AHA chairperson, Lady McCarthy, is a prominent member of the executive of the party.

The Longworth staff are determined to continue their occupation until the threat to remove patients and reduce the number of beds is lifted.

Donations and messages of support to: Barbara Russell, Weybread Cottage, Faringdon Road, Longworth, Oxfordshire.

Campaign Against Racist Laws
National delegate conference
Saturday 10 January
Discussion on building a mass campaign against the Tories' new nationality proposals

Send for details to: CARL, c/o Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5

By Zadoc Nava,
Youth TV

YOUTH TV is a group of young people who want to see more youth participation in the media. Young people's interests are mainly ignored by TV and we're fed up with the crap that goes on.

There are a few programmes which take young people seriously, up to a point. There is Thames TV's *White Light*, for example, which deals with subjects like contraception, school, and the police, but then after a 7½-minute discussion they throw in a pop group in case we get bored.

Our experience presenting a series of *Help* programmes for Thames — the last one of which was banned — shows both the need for youth participation and the limitations of what the TV companies will allow.

Thames offered Youth TV the chance to present nine five-minute programmes, and Sarah Kogan and I — both of us sixth-formers at North London comprehensives — were selected as presenters.

The programmes ranged over a variety of subjects: Amnesty International and the events leading to the arrest and beating up of two black school students in Soweto; Islington Grapevine, which is

Why they banned a youth TV programme

a counselling service for young people, dealing mainly with sex problems; Radio Lollipop, which is run by and for disabled young people in Carshalton, Surrey.

Two programmes dealt with young people's rights, and an invitation to viewers to ring in for a leaflet resulted in 20 phones being jammed with calls for 1½ hours.

Transmit

The last programme was due to be shown just before Xmas. It was about Schools Against the Bomb, which is a group of young people fighting for nuclear disarmament.

In the three minutes available to them, SAB presented their views. They called on the BBC to transmit the banned *War Game* film and raised the issue of Cruise missiles being sited in Britain.

We believe it was these points which caused the programme to be banned.

The controller of features at Thames, Ian Martin, said the programme contravened the Television Act because it was biased. The idea seemed to be that we would need to include school students in favour of the bomb. There might be one or two, I suppose.

Thames asked Sarah and I to do a replacement programme on STOP, the organisation which is against caning in schools. Together with the researchers on the programme, we refused to do this — as a matter of principle. We then contacted the press about the censorship.

Token

What happened with the last programme summed up the exercise. It was a token gift from Thames. It felt like they were cashing in on another section of the population.

There are all sorts of programmes which could be made by youth — plays



HOW the TV companies promote youth programmes. The headline was 'Kids' stuff'

written, directed, and acted by young people are one example. None of us in Youth TV knows exactly what we want. We had hoped to invite young people to write in and say what they would like to see, but this was part of the last *Help* programme which was never broadcast.

Youth TV can be contacted c/o Theo Turner, 89 Fitzjohns Avenue, London NW3. Schools Against the Bomb, c/o 29 Gt James St, London WC1.

ITV goes into the '80s

The same old crew



TWO of the unfamiliar faces behind the new TV-AM — Esther Rantzen (above) and Angela Rippon



By Geoffrey Sheridan

THERE are parts of Scotland where there was no dancing in the streets at the announcement of the new ITV franchise holders. These are parts which commercial television transmissions still do not reach, although it is 25 years since the second channel was created.

It is a tribute to the motive force behind the channel: the packaging of programmes that will attract the largest number of viewers. Rural Scotland does not qualify.

As ever, the loudest noise over the franchise decisions was the sound of champagne corks popping in the boardrooms of the successful bidders, and for all but two of the TV companies it proved to be business as usual.

The Independent Broadcasting Authority deserves some marks for building up the suspense. Having gone in for re-selection only once before, back in 1967, perhaps that was to be expected. This time round the IBA was to be setting the style for the '80s.

In the event it was a side-

show. Westward TV, wracked by a boardroom power struggle, bows out to Television South West, with a similar mix of business people and assorted dignitaries. Southern was the other sacrificial lamb.

While the big five companies, which make programmes for the whole network, could more or less bank on their laurels, the IBA had to give the appearance of being something more than a benevolent godfather allowing the existing companies to go on collecting £50m a year.

Southern fell foul of the authority's chosen theme for the '80s: localism. The IBA said that the main complaint it had detected at public consultations around the country was that too little attention is paid to local

affairs.

Lord Boston, chairperson of Television South, which takes over from Southern in 1982, played that one to the hilt. He promised to make TVS 'the local station of every town and village from the Thames and the Medway to the Hamble'. Possibly *Crossroads* will now have to vie with *The Orsons of Tunbridge Wells* or *It Happened at Stonehenge*.

Since the inception of ITV, many mainstream television programmes have

shown distinct signs of being manufactured in mid-Atlantic, and in recent years multi-national financing for major TV productions has put a premium on bland and supposedly uncontroversial programming.

The pressure for television to be more in touch with people's lives is understandable. There is a simple way to achieve this — it is called access programming.

The last thing that the TV authorities want is to let the working class think that we could make and present our own programmes; or

even that we have a right to reply to their version of current events. Access programming presently amounts to a few dozen hours a year, and then — as Zadoc Nava records on this page — we are confronted by their censorship.

The authorities are well aware that technological developments threaten their control over television output and the companies' profits. The champagne consumed by those who celebrated the new franchises will also have been needed to calm some nerves.

As the recession begins

to take its toll of advertising revenue, there looms the prospect of satellite relays enabling broadcasters to beam programmes across national frontiers. That could mean a further loss of advertising for the British TV companies. It might also make a dent in television's Anglo-centric presentation of domestic and international events.

More down-to-earth, the development of wide-band fibre-optic cable will allow up to 1,000 television channels to be piped to every home (or come to that, workplace) in the

country. No doubt the authorities will try to find weird and wonderful reasons why, in spite of such an enormous potential for labour movement and community broadcasting, it's still not on.

Some expansion of TV broadcasting is scheduled for the early 1980s.

The Fourth Channel comes on air next year, and its chief executive, Jeremy Isaacs, has said that it will pay attention to the needs of 'minorities', among whom he has listed trades unionists, women, and blacks.

The IBA has given the go-ahead to breakfast television, by way of TV-AM.

What this star-studded station will have to offer is shrouded in the same secrecy as encompassed the IBA's own deliberations. The authority's idea of accountability has never gone beyond 10-yearly public meetings at which it seems to have to make some vague promises to the public.

WHAT THE IBA HAS DECREED.



More children's programmes, more local contact.



More local coverage, including Isle of Man.



More drama and more religious and children's programmes.



More coverage of region, especially Merseyside.



More studios and more emphasis on Welsh language.



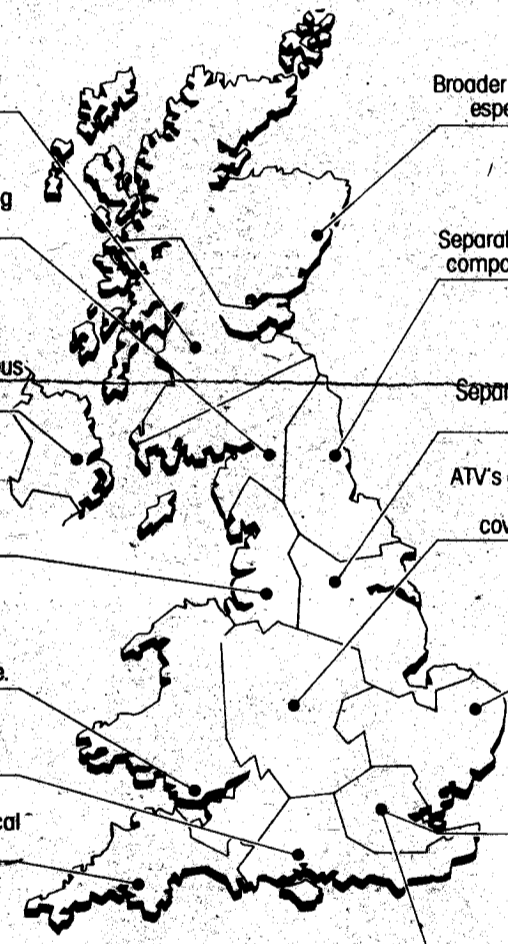
Replaces Southern TV. More local coverage.



Replaces Westward. More local coverage.



More programmes from network, more broadcasting hours.



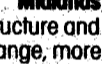
Broader coverage of the region, especially in outlying areas.



Separation from Trident parent company, new local structure.



Separation from Trident, new local structure.



Midlands

ATV's company structure and name to change, more coverage of East Midlands.



More local coverage.



Better regional service, more local news.



Better regional service, more local news in conjunction with Thames.

1981 launch for a labour daily?

THE General Council of the TUC has decided that there needs to be an examination of the possibility of launching a new national newspaper to reflect the interests and concerns of the labour movement.

Proposals for a feasibility study are to be drawn up by the TUC's Media Working Group, which is chaired by Moss Evans.

Announcing last month that there has long been a need for a new paper of this kind, the General Council said that the study would examine the financial implications of a new paper, as well as its potential circulation, format, content, potential advertising revenue, and management and organisational structure.

Moss Evans is one of the main enthusiasts for the project, and he considers that what is needed is a serious dai-

ly tabloid, with an initial circulation of between 250,000 and 350,000.

He estimates that the launch cost would be in the order of £5m. The outlay for the feasibility study will be £30,000.

Labour movement activists should consider how a mass paper could be shaped to advance working class politics and activities. Socialist Challenge will shortly present a plan for such a class struggle paper.

Socialist Challenge

Violence against women

THE CASE IS NOT CLOSED

By Judith Arkwright

'DELIGHTED' police have announced the scaling down of their hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper. Their message to women is clear — you can relax now. 'good coppering' has saved the day again.

The Yorkshire Ripper, whoever he is, is a crazed and merciless individual. But violence and sexual attacks against women are by no means always the work of such people.

The National Council for Civil Liberties estimates that some 47 per cent of all rapes are committed by people known to the victim, and only 2 per cent of rapists are clinically 'sick'.

Women cannot rely on the forces of law and order to 'protect' them. We live in a society which condones and perpetuates violent acts against women.

Pinups

Films such as *Dressed to Kill* depicting violence against women, page three pinups in the popular press, and the police turning a blind eye to widespread wife-battering all encourage sexual violence.

Despite recent

reforms protecting rape victims from having to reveal their sexual history in court, the police often insist on knowing such information. In 1978 women reported 1,243 rapes and only 309 men were convicted.

Recent court cases have also illustrated the hypocrisy of the law: the Maw sisters were convicted of murdering their brutal and violent father while a man was found not guilty of murdering his wife because she nagged him!

The only suggestion Yorkshire police could make to women last week was to avoid going out at night and to scream loudly if attacked. And when women take elementary steps towards self-defence it is the police who move in against them.

Last week, for example, Caroline Farnjad was sentenced to one month in jail, suspended for a year, for having a pepper and red dye spray

in her handbag. That's police defence for you — arresting women defending themselves.

Now that the police have finally charged a man with one of the 'Ripper' murders, all the most reactionary forces are being whipped up.

Abuse

Carefully arranging his court appearance for late afternoon to allow the largest crowd to hurl abuse, the police and the press have already tried and convicted the suspect and thus saved themselves any more embarrassment.

So much for British justice and 'innocence till proven guilty'!

Already the 'hang 'em' brigade is out in force. 'Hang the madman and then it'll be over'. The campaign to bring back hanging br-

ings together the police, the Tories, Mary Whitehouse and the National Front — all those who are most emphatic that a woman's place is in the family, and who attack all moves towards establishing women's equality.

Capital punishment is no solution to violence against women. It has never deterred murderers or violent criminals. It is always used by the right wing to strengthen the

state and the police, and to intimidate all those who threaten the status quo — like women, blacks, young people, gays, and trade unionists.

Violence against women is not just the work of a few madmen. It's built into capitalist society where women are still seen as second class citizens and the property of their menfolk. Symbolic of this attitude is the fact that it is still

legally possible for a man to rape his wife, his own 'property'.

The police and the laws cannot and will not protect women. The press hysteria will only make the position for women worse. Women organising themselves have achieved more to inspire other women with confidence and to highlight the causes of sexual violence than these reactionary forces.

Women should fight for the right to organise and defend themselves. The demos by Women against Violence against Women in protest at sexist films, the Reclaim the Night demos by women up and down the country, and the resolution on sexual violence passed by this year's Scottish Women's TUC all show the way forward.

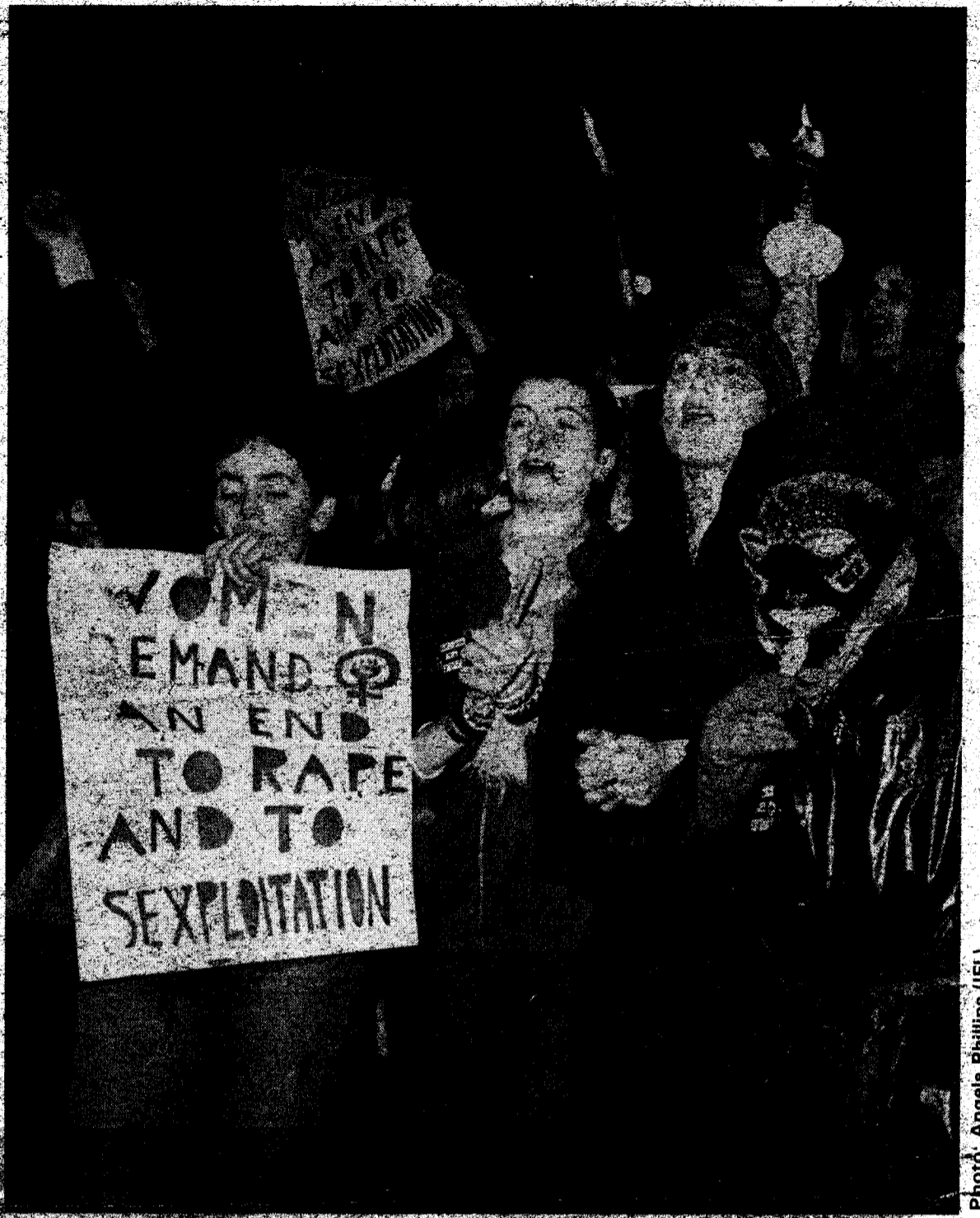


Photo: Angela Phillips (IFL)

THE police and the laws cannot and will not protect women. Women should fight for their right to organise and defend themselves, as on the 'Reclaim the Night' demo above



Already the 'hang 'em' brigade is out in force



Innocent until proved guilty?

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Registered as a Newspaper with the Post Office.

Published by Cardinal Enterprises, PO Box 50 London N1
Printed by East End Offset (TU), London E2.