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Scandal of London shootings IN IRELAND IT'S ROUTINE!

Suppose the police shooting of Stephen Waldorf, last Friday 14th, had taken place in Northern Ireland. We would scarcely have heard of it.

There would have been no immediate prosecution of the police gunmen for attempted murder, no detailed accounts in the mass circulation press of how the victim was shot again and

again and beaten about the head as he lay bleeding.

In November and December last year, RUC and British Army gunmen shot dead seven unarmed people.

On November 11 three Republicans were killed. According to the RUC they had crashed through a checkpoint. But the distribution of bullet holes in the car they were travelling in

showed that at least the majority of the bullets were fired at short range into the car while it was stationary; and local people say there was no checkpoint on the road.

On November 25 Michael Tighe was killed, and Martin McAuley seriously injured, when the RUC strafed a shed without giving them a chance to surrender. On Dec-

ember 13 INLA members Seamus Grew and Roddy Carroll were slaughtered; and on December 27 19-year old Patrick Elliott was shot dead by troops after stealing £20 from a chip shop.

On January 11 trigger-

happy troops shot an RUC man driving a car. This time the victim survived - and the Army made an apology.

There has been no apology for the killings. Tory minister James Prior said on Tuesday that there

was "no suggestion of mistakes" in the shootings.

Moderate, conservative Catholic politicians and clerics have called it "execution on suspicion".

The IRA described the November 11 shooting as "an act of war". The other shootings are part of the war, too - a war by the British army against the militias of the oppressed Catholic community, which inevitably is also a war against the community as a whole.

It is also a war to maintain an oppressive and untenable set-up. The way out can only be the victory of the fight against the oppressive and artificial partition of Ireland, through the unconditional withdrawal of British troops and the reunification of Ireland with the maximum autonomy for the Protestant community compatible with the rights of the Irish people as a whole.

In the meantime the murderous methods of state repression pioneered in Northern Ireland gradually, but inevitably, spread back

to Britain, with the extension of special squads and special weapons like plastic bullets.

We don't know who gave the orders for Friday's shooting. The prosecution of two detective constables may be an attempt to find scapegoats and deflect that question.

The Metropolitan Police is answerable to no local elected body, but only to the Home Secretary. The Labour Greater London Council has been campaigning for police accountability. It should demand access to police records, and the right to question police officers, so that there is a full public inquiry into the shooting (not merely an internal police operation).

We should call for not merely political control, but operational control, over the police by elected bodies.

We also need to know the answer to the question: are these shoot-to-kill tactics linked to the recent arrival of Kenneth Newman, former head of the RUC, to head the Metropolitan Police?

EVEN in Britain, last Friday's shooting was not such a novelty.

Over the last ten years, nine people have been shot dead by the police. In every case coroners' juries decided it was 'justifiable homicide', though three of them (Gail Kinchin, July 1980; Barsharat Hussain and Mohammed Hanif, February 1973) were unarmed.

Blair Peach was beaten to death by police in April 1979. Several people have died suspiciously in police cells.

Several people were also killed by the SAS in the Iranian embassy siege - after they had thrown down their weapons and surrendered.

According to official figures, the police carry guns on an average of 15

occasions per day in London alone. Small wonder that they 'go too far' every so often.

An armed force - deliberately separated off from society; soaked with authoritarianism, racism and sexism; structured to be a disciplined, unthinking support for the established order commanded by Tory die-hards; and regularly used to beat down struggles of workers and the oppressed - is a standing danger to working people. That is what the police force is.

We should fight for every scrap of democratic control over it that we can get - as part of the fight for its dismantling and replacement by organised labour movement/community patrols.

PHOTO: REPUBLICAN NEWS



PHOTO: REPUBLICAN NEWS



Seven unarmed people were shot dead in two months last year in Northern Ireland

LAW open letter to trade unionists Stop the witch-hunt!

IT IS likely that 1983 will be an election year. Despite this, the Labour Party NEC has decided that now is the time to mount a witch-hunt inside the Party. This will seriously disrupt the chances of a Labour victory.

Last year many trade union conferences voted against any sort of witch-hunt, while others took no position at all; but delegations at Labour Party conference voted overwhelmingly in favour of a register of affiliated organisations in the Labour Party. It was said that this register would not be used to witch-hunt, but we can already see that the opposite is true. Yet again, basic questions of union democracy and accountability are raised by this.

The same right wingers who support the witch-hunt are carrying out serious attacks on Party policy. Within hours of the two-thirds vote in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament at conference, Mr Roy Hattersley appeared on TV to say that this would not necessarily be included in Labour's election manifesto. Policies like unilateralism are the very ones which will win back the support of Labour voters in a general election. Recent polls show, for example, 47% in favour of removing American bases from Britain, 62% more concerned to remove unemployment than to reduce inflation, 51% in favour of withdrawal from the Common Market.

With the cooperation of some trade union leaders, Labour's right-wing are plunging the Party into civil war. The potential victims are working people and

their families. These are the very people who need a Labour government committed to carrying out Party policies — like withdrawal from the Common Market, implementing the 35-hour week, full employment, unilateral nuclear disarmament — to protect their living standards and their lives.

It is increasingly important that prominent trade unionists are seen to take a stand against the witch-hunt. We are therefore writing to ask you to sponsor Labour Against the Witch-hunt, and to add your voice to that of the MPs listed who are supporting the campaign.

LAW was set up from the October 30 conference, where more than 300 delegates, including trade union branches and trades councils, agreed to launch a 'broad-based campaign with the aim:

"to prevent expulsions or disaffiliations under the National Executive Committee's register of organisations, and to defend the unity of the Labour Party and the right of all Labour Party organisations and groups of Labour Party members against any witch-hunt under its provisions."

Although Constituency Labour Parties are in the front line of the attacks, LAW recognises the crucial importance of trade union involvement to put a stop to the witch-hunt and to ensure that conference decisions are upheld. We are planning a campaign to take this issue into the trade union organisations, and call upon affiliated trade unionists to raise this issue at their own conferences to ensure that their Labour Party delegations are left in no doubt how their members feel.

We hope that you will sponsor the campaign and lend your support in the interests of Party unity, Party democracy, and a Labour victory at the next general election. It is impossible to have unity, victory and a purge at the same time. We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Ernie Roberts MP (Chair)

Joan Maynard MP

[Vice-Chair]

Reg Race MP (Vice-Chair)

BAN PLASTIC BULLETS!

by Bruce Robinson,
editor,
'Labour and
Ireland'

PLASTIC bullets have caused 14 deaths and countless injuries on the streets of Northern Ireland. Seven of those killed were children, many simply bystanders while a riot was taking place.

Despite warnings that plastic bullets should not be fired directly at the face or upper body, the British Army uses them indiscriminately to punish people for being on the streets at the wrong time.

The use of plastic bullets has been widely condemned. The European Parliament passed a resolution condemning their use in Ireland, and the last Labour Party conference called for their withdrawal.

Despite this, the Tories continue to maintain that plastic bullets are harmless and have extended their availability to the British mainland police since the 1981 riots. There is also a fight still to be waged in the labour movement: after the Labour Party conference decision, front-bench Northern Ireland spokesperson Don Concannon stated that he would not implement that decision unless the Army were provided instead with other weapons of equal 'effectiveness'.

To highlight this issue, the Labour Committee on Ireland took the initiative



Hammersmith North delegate Jen Litherland shows Labour Party conference a plastic bullet

in calling a national labour movement delegate conference, to be held on February 26, from 11am at UMIST, Barnes Wallis Building, Manchester. Delegates' credentials cost £3 from Plastic Bullets Conference, Box 15, Hanging Ditch, Manchester.

The conference will discuss the role of plastic bullets in British repression in Ireland, and how to fight to get them banned.

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

PRESS GANG



JUST suppose for a moment that the police had shot the right man.

Suppose the man who slumped out of the yellow mini, his head against the road, moaning 'God how it hurts' had not been 25-year-old, brown haired Stephen Waldorf, a television film editor, but 35-year-old red haired David Martin, an attempted murder suspect.

It has not so far been possible to find this question actually asked in the press, although it would have been the second time Martin had been shot by police (he was wounded at his flat when arrested).

Since the first TV broadcasts on Friday night the media has been rightly criticised for its failure to ask the question. Wesson 38 revolvers, listened to their briefing and then went out and shot somebody whose worst crime was that he was on the way to see ET.

We will have to imagine the press coverage if the man in the car had indeed

been Martin.

Firstly, it would have reported police claims that Martin was armed, dangerous, and about to shoot. The story might have stuck. If Martin had been killed and had indeed been armed no amount of denials by his companions would have carried any weight. Their protests would have been condemned as the tainted evidence of associates of a would-be murderer.

If Martin had not been carrying a gun, the story would have been modified to the effect that Martin was known to be dangerous and had made a movement as if to reach for a firearm. No subsequent inquiry or inquest would have pointed any official criticism at the police.

had surrendered and thrown down their weapons in the Iranian Embassy siege. The inquest into their deaths did not waste any sympathy on them.

Barry Prudom, the man tracked down and shot in Yorkshire last year died

under strange circumstances, but awkward questions were pushed to one side.

The press does not see its task as embarrassing the police over the deaths of criminals — or even suspected criminals.

But the reason we can be so confident that the press would have helped to cover the truth of what happened in London is because they have so much practice at it in Ireland.

It is impossible to keep count anymore of the number of people shot at roadblocks, in ambushes or painting graffiti on walls where the police and army have first claimed that they were carrying fire arms and then claimed that they 'appeared to be carrying fire arms' and in every case

Outside the Catholic areas from where the majority of victims come, and outside the ranks of the left there is a callous indifference and silence.

The fact that the police have an undeclared shoot

to kill policy in Ireland, and that Sir Kenneth Newman seems to have brought the policy with him will certainly not be at the root of any inquiry that is set up.

The Daily Mail had a detailed report of the events leading up to the raid. It centred on the determination of Scotland Yard's D District to take the man who had allegedly shot one of their colleagues in the groin while breaking into a warehouse.

After the shooting it says: 'The next minute the horrifying truth dawned. The man was not Martin. Even worse there was no sign of a gun.' (Why exactly was this even worse? The presence of a gun would perhaps have helped some alternative

press will concentrate on two things. Firstly, why the police shot the wrong man. Secondly how to avoid answering the question, what if they had shot the right man?

Get set for LPYS

THE conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists starts on April 1 — only a couple of months off. Resolutions have already been submitted, and it's time for your YS to start thinking about raising money to pay for comrades' travel and accommodation.

Class Fighter is organising accommodations as cheaply as we can, and needs to know as soon as possible how many people want to stay with us.

This year a YS which had more than 25 members on December 31 can have two delegates, providing a letter of confirmation from the Constituency Labour Party secretary reaches Labour Party headquarters at Walworth Road by January 28.

Class Fighter is supporting Pete Cashman from Wallasey YS for the YS seat on the Labour Party National Executive Committee, and nominations have to be in by February 18 (the same day as amendments). The closing date for notification of delegates is March 4, and the YS office refuses to be flexible this year, so don't miss the deadline.

CF wants to make a big impact at conference. Last year there were over 100 people at our 'What is Class Fighter' fringe meeting. This year we can do even better, if we have enough helpers to sell the paper and pamphlets and to discuss with comrades.

It is important also that this conference is very large, to show the witch-hunters that the YS isn't going to be easy to dismantle. So make sure your YS is there in force.

YS regional conferences are also happening around now. Comrades should have contacted others in their regions to prepare leaflets, amendments, and nominations for the YS National Committee.

If it's possible, there should be a CF fringe meeting at each regional conference — it doesn't have to be a grand affair, just a forum for independent YSs to discuss with us.

Ring (01-) 609 3071 for details of accommodation, amendments, and addresses of supporters in your region.

CLPD threat

IF THE AGM and the new Executive Committee opposes these positions, this campaign will be CLPD only in name, but we will continue CLPD's work in a new organisation.

With these words in their statement for the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy executive elections, several members of the outgoing EC have announced an explicit threat to split if the AGM on January 29 goes against them.

The positions referred to are: that CLPD should register; that the CLPD EC should retain the right to coopt new voting members; and that CLPD should reject resolutions critical of personal attacks and threats of split made by CLPD officers, via CLPD mailings, over the last year.

A split in CLPD would be a big boost to the Labour right-wing. CLPD members should make sure of being present in force at the AGM to face down these threats.



Hattersley: wants to ditch unilateralism

Bermondsey Labour Party are anxious to lay the groundwork for the election campaign before the date of the by-election is set. We are offering of the constituency and continuing the work of the party and will continue throughout January. If you would like to help the details are as follows.

Sunday 23 January at 11am. Meet at 156b, Union Street, SE1.

Sunday 30 January at 11 am. Meet at 133 Lower Road, SE16.

Defend the Newham 8!

Asian youth face terror on streets

Unmesh Desai reports

EIGHT Asian youths, aged 15-21, living in Newham in East London, face serious charges ranging from conspiracy to assault persons unknown to assault and threatening behaviour.

The case of the Newham 8, coming close after that of the famous Bradford 12 victory, raises certain fundamental issues for antiracists everywhere and black people in particular.

With the decline of the NF and BM in electoral terms, many thought that the fascist threat had declined. Sad to say, this is far from the case.

Racial violence hasn't stopped: according to the evidence received by Searchlight and other anti-racist organisations, it is clear that it has become so much a way of life for black people that many take it for granted as a hazard of living in Britain.

Newham has always been an area where racial attacks occur with frightening regularity. The Newham Monitoring Project receives on average 2-3 cases a week and these represent only the tip of the iceberg.

Spitting

Harassment like spitting and verbal abuse more often than not goes unreported as black people either have lost all confidence in the police to protect them from such attacks or have accepted them as part of the price to be paid for living in Britain.

In 1980 the murder of a young Pakistani by a white skinhead caused enormous outrage. Frustration, resentment, and anger at being treated as second and third class people expressed itself in the form of a massive militant demonstration by the black youths of Newham. Newham Youth Movement surfaced and the Monitoring Project was formed.

Another case which left local black people angry and



JOHN HARRIS



JOHN HARRIS

After years of harassment by fascists and racists, black youth are fighting back -- and facing police repression

bitter was that of the Virk brothers who received prison sentences for defending themselves when attacked by white youths while repairing their car.

It is in the context of this history of racism -- both physical and institutional -- that the case of the Newham 8 must be seen. An increasing number of attacks upon

young Asian schoolkids reached a climax on September 24 when 8 Asian youths were arrested for defending themselves and their community from such attacks.

In the week preceding the 24th a number of cases of assault upon Asian schoolkids took place in the Manor Park area of Newham, mainly centred around one or two schools.

In one such attack, a 10 year old Asian schoolkid was seriously injured and hospitalised. In another incident, 60-70 white youths with iron bars and sticks went on the rampage in East Ham and Manor Park looking for Asians to beat up.

By this time strong rumours were circulating that there was going to be another attack upon Asian schoolkids on September 24. To ensure safety, the schoolkids decided to go home in a group. They were set upon by three armed white men, who, as it later turned out, were plain clothes police officers.

When the youths defended themselves from what they thought was a fascist attack, about 50 uniformed police appeared and arrested the youths.

The black community responded almost immediately. At a day's notice a meeting attended by about 250 people was called and the Newham 8 Defence Campaign was launched.

The Campaign has since attracted unanimous support from the black community of Newham, Labour Party branches and white collar unions like the NUT and NALGO.

The first court appearance of the 8 was marked a historic school strike -- called and organised by school children themselves -- of at least 500 schoolchildren and a week of action which started with a public meeting of about 300 and included pickets of all of Newham's notorious police stations.

At the second court hearing on December 17, 1982, the defendants were charged with conspiracy to assault persons unknown, signalling the state's determination to put black people in their place and crush all resistance.

The issues raised by the Newham 8 case concern the fundamental right of black people's survival in this country and defend themselves from racist and fascist attacks.

The Bradford 12 verdict recognised the right of black communities to defend themselves against the threat of fascist violence. That right is now being challenged; the challenge has to be met in an appropriate way by mobilising the black community and all antiracists on the most massive scale possible.

*An open supporters meeting is being held on Sunday January 30. Details can be obtained from the campaign c/o PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7 9JN or ringing 01-555 3331 (day-time) and 01-534 1640 (evening).

LAST Thursday, 13th, there were jubilant scenes in the Crown Court in Birmingham as Pino Khan, a Pakistani worker who lives in Sparkhill, was acquitted on all charges by a jury of six black and six white

people. Pino was on trial for defending himself against racist abuse and physical attack from neighbours who have a reputation in the area for racism.

A.O'Shea

No to ethnic monitoring!

by Jessica Daniels

AS PART of Sir Derek Rayner's report on the social services, ethnic monitoring was due to be implemented on January 4 1983 in the Department of Employment (DE).

There are to be two 'checks'. The first is voluntary, for a 'statistical collection', to identify all non-whites. It involves 'UBO staff showing claimants whose appearance of speech suggests that they are in one of the specified groups, a card containing a list of ethnic groups and asking to which ethnic group the claimants consider he or she belongs'.

The groups are: 01 white, 02 West Indian/Guyanese, 03 Indian, 04 Pakistani, 05 Bangladeshi, 06 African, 07 other Commonwealth.

The second 'would involve staff making a visual assessment of the claimants'. This will not be voluntary, and as far as possible the claimants will know nothing about this 'visual assessment', for which there are four categories, negroid, Asian (excluding Chinese), white/Chinese, and refusals.

A major conclusion of Rayner's study was that black claimants are more likely to commit fraud than their white counterparts. Having the black claimants labelled as Negroid, Asian, etc on their files enables the fraud squad to select likely cases to investigate.

What this means for black claimants is a very big increase in the amount of harassment. Effectively the reception clerks will become immigration offi-

cers (even more than they are already).

In face of opposition from the civil service union CPSA the Tory government has postponed the implementation of ethnic monitoring until April, when it will coincide with the CPSA's pay claim -- the tactic appears to be to sneak in the ethnic monitoring when the CPSA membership will be more concerned with their pay claim.

It must also be borne in mind that the union leadership in the past has been very reluctant to take up the fight against race checks. Previously race checks were conducted at the Job Centres on registration, and not one bit of resistance was ever put up to these checks.

The attitude of the CPSA leadership can be summed up in the contribution by its president, Kevin Roddy, to the conference against racist laws. He said he was not opposed to ethnic monitoring: the statistics gained could be put to good use.

Only the pressure from the membership has forced the CPSA to take even token action. One major DHSS in each region will be called out on strike. All other DHSSs will carry on as normal, including the new checks.

More pressure must be brought to bear in order to make sure that these new checks cannot be implemented. The government has launched an attack on black people, and the working class must united to defeat it.

The race checks must not be implemented!

Deportation threat

IN HACKNEY, East London, another black family, the Macarthurs, are threatened with deportation by the Home Office.

Guyanese-born Mrs Erla Macarthur and her son Eon are threatened. They would be separated permanently from three daughters, Gwendoline (18), Andrea (16), and Simone (12), who were all born in Hackney.

Representations have been made to the Home Office by MP Stanley Clinton Davis, Hackney CRE Family Centre, Hackney Black People's Association, and the British Caribbean Association. A Macarthur Support Committee has been set up. But the Home Office has refused to change its position.

In September 1982 Home

Office minister Timothy Raison declared that Mrs Macarthur's case did not present "sufficiently exceptional circumstances" to allow her to stay in Britain.

The deportation is yet another example of state racism splitting up families and driving people out of the country.

The campaign needs to be given support by all sections of the black and labour movement, on a national basis. This has been proved to be the only way to defeat deportations.

All messages of support, invitations for speakers, and donations to: Macarthur Family Support Committee, 50 Rectory Rd, London N16 (tel. 01-254 1193).

Victim of racist laws

ANTHONY Brown is a Jamaican who lives in Stretford, Manchester. He is 22 years old.

Since he was six, Anthony has been settled in Britain except for a period of two years and 10 months when his father, Derek Wilton Brown, accepted a two-year contract to go and lecture at a Technical College in Jamaica.

Anthony's father renewed his contract in Jamaica at the end of the two years. He did not know that he was placing his family and himself in breach of the 1971 immigration legislation by staying outside Britain for more than two years.

When Anthony and his family tried to return to the UK in July 1976, they found that they had lost their resident status. Anthony

was allowed to enter Britain as a visitor, and returned to Jamaica after a six week holiday.

Student

In 1977 Anthony entered again, this time as a student. On completing his A level course he found that he was classified as an overseas student and would have to pay thousands in fees to continue into higher education.

Anthony decided his best option would be to work for his brother's motor company and continue his education at evening classes.

The Home Office have refused his application for a work permit. Since he had finished his studies, they say, he is an overstayer and should leave the country.

Anthony Brown faces deportation unless the Home

Secretary, William Whitelaw, uses his discretionary powers to allow him to stay.

This case is just one of hundreds of threatened deportations. For Anthony Brown to win, a militant national campaign has to be mobilised, not just on the merits of each individual case, but against all racist laws and controls.

Campaign

A well organised mass movement must be built on the issue of stopping deportations.

Anti-racists and SO supporters should invite speakers from the Anthony Brown Action Committee to their local black and labour movement meetings.

Other actions of solidarity asked for are:

• Writing to local MPs, and

writing to the Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.

• Urging local groups and councillors to do this.

• Collecting signatures for the campaign.

• Sending donations.

For more information, messages of support, and donations, please write to:

Anthony Brown Action Committee, c/o Abasindi Co-op, Moss Side People's Centre, St Mary's St, Manchester 13.

National Day of Action
STOP THE DEPORTATIONS!
Suspected 'illegal immigrants' are facing not only threats by the Home Office to deport them, but refusal by the DHSS to pay them supplementary benefit and child benefit. The Khan and Kaur Defence Campaign has called for a protest on Monday January 31.
PICKET YOUR LOCAL DHSS

Manchester: Gt. Ancoats St/Clarence Road, Longsight, 11am to 2pm. Nottingham: Castle Boulevard, 10am-1pm; called by Nottingham Campaign against Racism and Fascism. Pickets also planned in Brighton, Southampton, and other places: phone 051-225 6886.

International News International News International News

Why Zionists are daubing Swastikas in Tel



Gleeful at Israel's first invasion of Lebanon, Israeli soldiers are now cynical and disillusioned

Aviv

Our reporter
in Haifa
looks at
"Beirutis-
ation in
Tel Aviv"

lately.

A 2,000 strong demonstration in Tel Aviv's centre called for an immediate, unconditional Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and immediate release of all

PoWs — especially those which are not recognised by the army to have that status — and said "There is no peace without the Palestinian people".

Lebanon's civil war was dramatised by the division of Beirut between the poorer, mostly Muslim, West, with its Palestinian refugee camps, and the richer, more Christian, East.

Divides

Another line divides Tel-Aviv, between its richer, mostly European-origin north, and the poorer south, mostly inhabited by Jews from the Arab countries together with some Palestinians who stayed after the exodus of 1948.

This week this division was suddenly highlighted. A special force of police and municipal workers came to Kfar Shalem, a southern neighbourhood, to destroy an unauthorised extension

to the home of a family of 19. A court order to stop demolishing the house was given that morning and was on its way, but the police refused to wait.

One son of the family displayed a pistol and demanded they stop. A police officer shot him dead, and they completed their work of destruction.

No major riot ensued, but the intensity of the feeling against "the north" gave a shock to Israeli public opinion, used to the killing of Arabs. Some roads were blocked on the day of the shooting near Kfar Shalem.

The body itself, as in the case of West Bank demonstrators who have been killed, was not given to the family, and they were forced to hold a quiet funeral at midnight to avoid agitation at a public

burial. In north Tel Aviv, car tyres were punctured at night. The Nazi swastika was painted on cars and walls with slogans like "Askenazim (the slang for European-origin Jews) — Back to Auschwitz". It was a sharp rebuff to the Zionist claim to have reunited the Jewish people and provided an answer to anti-semitism, and a testimony to the Oriental Jews' hatred of the dominant Askenazim.

The rulers also have other reasons to worry.

The current tension comes at the end of two

years of election boom and then war boom, and proves that while buying time, the boom has gained no stable support for the government that relied on a populist appeal to the oriental Jews against the "European Labour establishment".

Now with no economic growth, 140% inflation and a five billion dollar yearly deficit, they are starting to think what the reaction might be to a major attempt to lower living standards.

A layer of "neighbourhood activists" has begun to show itself, and though very unorganised, it could form a pole of organisation

when the people begin looking for it.

And lastly, all ask what would be the effect of any intensification of tension inside this society, armed to the teeth, always de facto at war, and under a state-of-siege law for the last 38 years.

Some demonstrators at the Committee Against the War rally in Tel Aviv last Saturday were chanting: "In Hebron (West Bank) and Kfar-Shalem — Together we shall revolt!" — getting more public support from the street bystanders than for the simpler call for withdrawal and peace.

Salvador's rebel Colonel moves on

IN El Salvador the military crisis which threatened to divide the ruling junta has been patched up.

Ultra-right wing Colonel Ochoa, who had point blank refused to relinquish his command in Cabanas province and take up a military attaché position in far-off Uruguay, had won huge support amongst the most bloodthirsty sections of the Salvadorean officer corps.

The Air Force commander and the commander of the First Infantry Battalion had been among the hard-liners backing Ochoa. His

removal had been recognised as a superficial "clean-up" operation designed to appease US public opinion and make it easier for Reagan to overcome the embarrassment of signing a declaration that progress is being made in El Salvador towards restoration of "human rights".

Ochoa not only refused to budge; he called for the resignation of the powerful Defence Minister General Garcia, whose own grisly record in previous years has been more skillfully camouflaged recently, to make him appear a relative 'moderate'.

In the event Ochoa finally agreed to leave his post — in exchange not for virtual isolation in Uruguay but a course at military college in Washington.

But the extent of his support confirms that there will be no substantial shift

in the brutal tactics of the Salvadorean army.

Meanwhile, seizing upon the confusion and disorientation of the military, the country's left wing FMLN guerrillas have pressed home a fresh wave of attacks on military targets.

Managua slams US role

In the Nicaraguan capital of Managua, a meeting of the coordinating bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement has voted to denounce the US for:

"financing of undercover operations; the use of US territory and that of Nicaragua's neighbours for training counter-revolutionary forces; and the violation of Nicaragua's air space and territorial waters by US planes and ships — all of which has resulted in terrorist actions aimed at overthrowing the revolutionary government."

A pre-meeting of several Latin American countries held in the Panamanian island of Contadora had

AN old trade unionists' cartoon shows a union bureaucrat and a boss furiously denouncing each other across a table, while underneath the table they are cordially shaking hands.

Relations between Poland's military regime and the Western powers are rather like that.

The US magazine Newsweek last month revealed that in late 1981:

"By the time General Jaruzelski sent his tanks

and troops into the streets, the agency had had a complete copy of his operation plan for a full month. For a very long time there were very few things that went on at the upper levels of the Polish military that the CIA didn't know about," said one source.

But the CIA chose not to blow the whistle. Officially the reason was that to do so would threaten their agent, a colonel at Polish army HQ: continued spying was more important than the fate of the Polish workers.

The true reason may be even more cynical thinking: a western banker commented soon after martial law, "If a few people are shot in the cause of getting the economy moving again, then it would be a small price to pay."

Meanwhile, the Financial Times reported last Thursday, 13th, "Western businessmen find plenty of profit in Poland."

The "investment law allows foreigners to found private companies in Poland with Western capital. For their first three years in business, overseas investors pay no corporate taxes. They are also allowed to transfer back to the West a proportion of profits earned in Poland each year, and retain up to 50% of profits made on exports."

The firms — often owned by emigre Poles in Europe or the USA — have turn-overs sometimes as large as \$40 million a year. 360 new companies were founded last year alone.

Renault strikers reject offer

THE mass lay-offs at Renault's Flins factory may soon be followed by similar lay-offs at the Billancourt works.

This Monday, 17th, the Flins paintshop strikers voted overwhelmingly — 165 to 2 in a secret ballot — to reject management's latest offer. Renault offered a 140F (about £13) monthly increase in the paintshop's 'dirty job' bonus, but refused to budge an inch on the strikers' demand for a 300F (£29) bonus for all production workers.

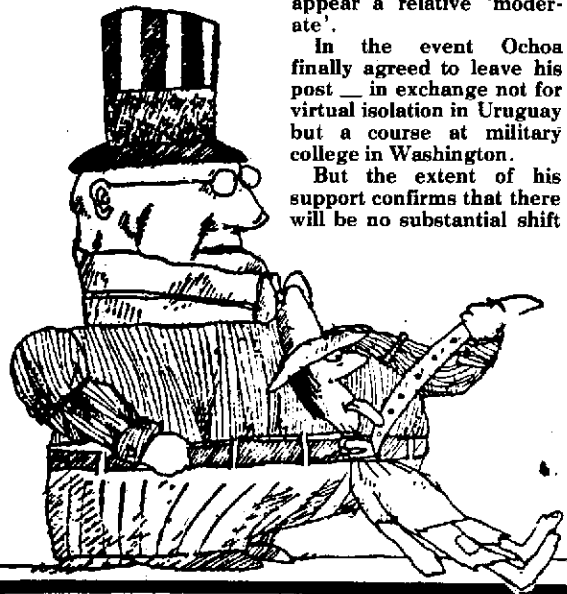
The Billancourt strike — also in the paintshop — is concerned only with the 'dirty job' bonus, but is reportedly likely to continue now that Flins has decided to stay out.

The unions still seem to be slow-peddalling the dispute. The Communist Party led CGT made no recommendation for the Flins ballot. The position of the Socialist-leaning CFTD — the biggest union in Flins — is not clear from press reports.

Advertisement

NEW!

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



International News International News International News

Siles Zuazo : caught between the bankers and the unions

OVER three months after taking office, Bolivia's first elected government in over 18 years is still fighting to achieve the stability which is the objective of President Siles Zuazo's 'war economy'.

Despite the tough economic package announced by the President at the beginning of November, the Bolivian economy remains on the verge of collapse, lurching from crisis to crisis under the burden of a massive external debt and with little sign of the recovery hoped for by the leftist government.

In October Dr Siles Zuazo's administration was sworn in after a wave of strikes and demonstrations had forced the two month-old military junta of General Guido Vildoso to stand down, bringing to an end 26 months of a succession of some of the most corrupt and incompetent military regimes in the country's history.

Debt

Since July 1980 — when General Luis Garcia Meza seized power, preventing the civilian government elected the previous month from taking office — Bolivia's foreign debt, according to latest figures, has grown to close on four billion dollars while GNP and the performance of the public sector have fallen alarmingly.

Inflation, virtually zero in 1979, is now up to 40 per cent, while the balance of payments deficit has reached near two million dollars. This year's budget deficit is expected to be around 15% of GNP and bankruptcies and unemployment have risen dramatically.

Yet, despite inheriting virtually empty state coffers, the new government must find 135 million dollars to satisfy a consortium of some 128 international commercial banks who are threatening to request that western governments slap a trade embargo on all Bolivian goods unless the debt is met in full by April.

Priority

Since taking power, Siles Zuazo has made it clear that his first priority is to tackle the external debt — despite pressure from the left wing of his own party and from the country's powerful trade union federation, the COB,



Siles



Miners and other workers rejected a union call for strike action against the government. But for how long?

to default.

The President argues that such a course would prove disastrous since Bolivia's long term future depends on the outside world as a market for its primary goods (especially tin exports) and for loans to finance badly needed expansion programmes for its decaying export earning

industries and to invest in new industry.

Siles Zuazo recently told supporters that some 80% of the country's export earnings in 1983 have been earmarked to service and repay outstanding debts. Moreover, until the present crisis has been overcome, he says, Bolivia's 4.5 million inhabi-

tants will have to put up with at least three years of austerity and belt tightening.

This tough line, extended to cover incomes, was the source of a major boost for the government when, at the start of December, it refused to budge from its offer of a 30% increase in the minimum wage despite

threats from the COB to call a nationwide stoppage in support of a 150% rise.

In the end the country's two million strong workforce rejected their union leaders' recommendations to strike, accepting the President's argument that, with foreign debt repayments, a large public sector wage bill and balance of payments deficit to be met, such an increase was untenable unless it was to result in the same kind of inflation that has been responsible for an increase of up to 1,000% in the price of many everyday commodities over the past nine months.

Lack

Indeed, the UDP's lack of an overall parliamentary majority appears to have been more than made up for by the widespread personal popularity of Siles Zuazo — not to mention fears that, if the present government falls it will be replaced by, at best, a right wing coalition and, at worst, another military regime.

By far the biggest disappointment so far for the

government has been the lack of badly needed foreign loans and aid from friendly countries and international credit agencies.

Hard cash

Despite an encouraging initial response firm offers of hard cash have been conspicuous by their absence. Only Argentina has so far come up with an offer of ready money available for debt repayments. All other offers to date have been tied to specific areas or goods or development projects — such as 50 million dollars from Brazil for oil exploration and 10 million from the US in the form of wheat.

Without the necessary foreign aid the government's prospects are indeed gloomy. Many believe that the foreign bankers, encouraged by certain western governments, are ready to let Bolivia go under as an example to discourage other far larger debtors such as Argentina or Mexico from deciding to default.

Prospects for the new Bolivian coalition government are gloomy. Paul Macadam reports

Similarly, pressure is on the Interamerican Development Bank and other international credit organisations to exercise restraint — particularly when dealing with requests from such 'leftist' regimes as that in La Paz or Managua whose debts are too small to threaten the western banking system.

Thus, as in his previous Presidency (1956-60), Siles Zuazo finds himself squeezed between an economy near collapse, a strong trade union movement who expect some benefits from their support of the UDP, a small but very dangerous right wing and military in Bolivia and foreign governments and bankers who appear intent on keeping Bolivia where it is — South America's poorest mainland country.

Hong Kong workers face collapse of the boom

"THE worst seems to be over", headlined today's English daily, the South China Morning Post business news section.

The article recalled a disastrous year for this British Crown Colony's economy, but pinned hopes on better days to come when the US economy comes out of recession.

During the post-war boom years, Hong Kong's export-led economic growth was spectacular — its textiles, toys and electronic goods penetrated every Western market. Although land and labour costs have become higher than the rest of the Far East, huge investments by local and international capital have brought about continued technological innovations and maintained high productivity.

As the western economies have stagnated in recent years, their curbs on imported goods, especially textiles, have begun to take their toll.

Skyward

Investment in Hong Kong was channelled into land and property speculation — office blocks and luxury flats rocketed skyward, and sometimes were pulled down before even being occupied in order to build another building twice as high! Prices went through the roof, fuelled by banks throwing caution to the winds and competing to offer credit to property

tycoons.

The long-overdue collapse of this boom was triggered by discussion of sovereignty over Hong Kong between Britain and China. So far two property firms have crashed, with several others facing a similar fate next year. Many international banks remain jittery, unable to recover their funds while empty office blocks dominate the skyline.

Brunt

The Hong Kong working class, 2.5 million strong, has borne the brunt of the recession. The official unemployment rate is 4%, which hides considerable under-employment. Over one-third of the 900,000 employed in the manufacturing sector work in textiles, and this sector is unlikely to boom even if and when the US economy recovers, given ever stricter import controls.

Trade union membership, which has fallen from 404,000 in 1977 to 345,000 last year, is organised in two major federations, with the pro-Peking FTU taking the brunt of the membership decline. The transport and seamen's unions are a pale shadow of their heyday in the 1920s when the British administration was rendered totally impotent during a nine month long Hong Kong-Canton general strike.

Neither federation has led any substantial industrial actions in the past



Property firms have crashed, the banks remain jittery

period — the FTU's pro-Peking stance in particular has meant the subordination of Hong Kong workers' interests to China's economic needs for a flourishing capitalist Hong Kong, through which China earns about a third of its foreign currency.

Workers in China face increasing pressures too — the recently revised Constitution has banned the right to strike, and new workers are now hired on contract, instead of the "iron ricebowl" of guaranteed life employment as before.

This is of course being applauded by the Hong Kong press as part of

China's "new realism".

Apart from foreign revenue, Hong Kong is being used by China's leadership as a model in intensifying productivity of labour.

Citizens

Tomorrow Hong Kong citizens become a new type of species — citizens of British Dependent Territories, as decreed under the UK Nationality Act. Immigration controls have already denied Hong Kong people the automatic right of entry to Britain in the past, and this change is part of the same racist and sexist process.

From now on, babies born in the UK are no longer to be British citizens automatically, (if both the parents come from Hong Kong but are not British subjects, the child born in the UK is stateless!), and even the third rate British Dependent Territories citizenship is now not conferred on those born in Hong Kong — they have to apply and are subject to a process like naturalisation. They have to show loyalty to the Crown, be "of good character", etc.

Socialists are not saying that full British citizenship is God's gift to Hong Kong workers, to be grasped with both hands.

Nevertheless, Britain's attempts to wash its hands of all responsibility for those Chinese who are some form of British citizen by accident of birth or otherwise, should be thoroughly condemned.

A final ironic note — Wilfred Newton, managing director of Turner and Newall UK (of asbestos fame) is the next chairman of Hong Kong's Mass Transit Railway Corporation — a company financially reliant on land speculation, and with a notorious reputation for poor wages and working conditions.

CHAN YING
Hong Kong, December 30

International News International News International News

Indian workers need lead against Gandhi

Italian stoppage

MOUNTING opposition to Indira Gandhi's Congress (I) regime has been reflected in election defeats for it in all three of the recent state-level elections. On January 7 Congress (I) governments in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh were defeated and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) CPI-M retained control of Tripura.

In the South Indian state of Karnataka, a cross-party alliance was victorious in a state that had been a Congress stronghold for over thirty years. The winning alliance is dominated by the bourgeois Janata grouping, which ruled India from 1977-80 after the end of Indira Gandhi's 'Emergency'.

Janata has won 100 out of 223 seats in Karnataka and is assured of a majority by the support of the Hindu communalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with its twenty seats.

The last national Janata government disintegrated amidst factional intrigue and economic crisis. Yet, this election triumph may encourage a similar hotchpotch of liberals and communists, anxious both to capitalise on Gandhi's unpopularity and to check and derail popular resistance.

Congress (I) lost another southern stronghold when former film star N.T. Rama Rao won a sweeping two-thirds of the seats in Andhra Pradesh. The significance of this result is not only that it shows the unpopularity of Gandhi's regime, but that local cult heroes and rabble rousers have received popular backing — not the parties of the left.

Rama Rao's Telegu

"Comparisons are being drawn with the years before Gandhi's Emergency"



Gandhi's power is beginning to crack. Aly Mir reports.

Desam Party was formed only last year and has made profitable use of its leader's many Hindu religious roles in Indian films. Rama Rao has been greeted in this backward part of India as an 'Avatar', a prophet destined to restore the virtues of 'true faith'.

Not surprisingly his elec-

tion campaign encouraged communal violence: on January 5 four died and over 100 were injured, three days later two more were killed in religious rioting.

As the authority of the Federal regime is crumbling, the ruling class has resorted to local particularist forces as their only viable alternative to the discredited Congress.

However, the Stalinists of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (now the largest of the left parties) seem content to support this strategy. In the 'Politbureau's Election Appeal' ('Peoples Democracy, December 5) the CPI-M called for a vote for any non-Congress (I) candidate, except for the

extreme communalist BJP.

The CPI-M suffers from dispersed support outside the states it controls (West Bengal and Tripura). However, instead of looking to the struggles of the workers and peasants as ways to overcome this isolation and build support, the Stalinists have turned to their 'democratic' and 'left' allies in the other states as a way to influence government at the national level and align bourgeois forces against Gandhi's 'authoritarianism' and 'personality rule'.

By subordinating the workers' and peasants' struggles to the conflicts of competing bourgeois politicians searching for the most viable forms of

capitalist rule, and by making fake distinctions between the BJP and other pro-communal and particularist forces, the Stalinists have shown themselves to be bent on constraining mass struggles.

In Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh the 80-day long public sector workers' strike and peasant campaigns have shown the need to provide a clear proletarian challenge to the other parties. Instead of tailing Janata and Rama Rao, the CPI-M should, for example, have demanded that these incoming regimes restore the jobs of the thousands of victimised public sector workers and demanded an end to police attacks on trade unions.

Tripura

Mass militancy led to a victory for the ruling CPI-M in the north-eastern state of Tripura. But the Stalinists have shown their fear of the masses by contriving another broad 'Left Front' regime, even though the CPI-M could easily have fought and won an election on its own.

Of the 'Left Front's' 60 candidates, only six are not members of the CPI-M.

With more elections next months in the north-eastern states of Assam and Meghalaya, and local city elections in Delhi, struggles in India are likely to intensify increasing pressure on the government to call an election, even though national elections are not due until 1984 and the regime still controls two thirds of the seats in Parliament.

Already some are drawing comparisons with the crisis years before Gandhi imposed her dictatorial 'Emergency'.

This Tuesday, 18th, Italian industry was stopped by a four hour general strike as workers continued their action against a government package of tax and price rises. Franco Grisolia spoke to us from Milan.

IT ALL depends on the next few days. The trade union leaderships have planned no further action — but almost certainly there will be some.

Workers' anger is running at a high level: and there is also the issue of the sliding scale [inflation-protection agreement on wages]. It seems very unlikely that there will be an agreement on that.

The bosses are demanding that the sliding scale payments be cut by half. The union leaders have offered 10 per cent; the government says 25%. Probably either the bosses will unilaterally impose their 50% cut, or the government will impose the 25%. In either case there is almost sure to be a big class struggle response.

Today in Milan it was the biggest workers' demonstration in the history of the city — or at least, one of the biggest. From what I can make out, it was similar in other cities.

The bureaucrats wanted it to be a silent demonstration — but it wasn't. It was very militant, with slogans about general strike action and about bringing down the

government — although officially the trade unions had organised it purely against the employers, with the march going past the offices of the employers' federation but not the prefecture.

The reason why the bureaucrats wanted silent demonstrations today is that last week there were local general strikes during which the Socialist Party bureaucrats were booed. [The Socialist Party is in the Christian Democrat led coalition government].

On the other hand, there was no breakthrough. There was no direct confrontation between the workers and the bureaucrats.

There are confused ideas about general strike action — calls for an 8-hour general strike and national demonstration, and so on, which in our view are totally inadequate. The left reformist party PDUP (which comes from Il Manifesto) had the slogan of an eight-hour general strike to force a new election. They were the only force apart from us to have a precise slogan.

We said: down with the government; generalise the struggle; prepare for an indefinite general strike to bring down the Fanfani government and defeat the bosses' offensive; for a government of the Communist Party and the far left on an anti-capitalist programme.

* Franco Grisolia is a member of the Italian Trotskyist group LOR.

Canvass against the bomb

CND's next major national action is a 'Peace Canvass' running through 1983. National CND is sending out its 'canvassing pack' in mid-February, but some local CND groups have already started planning.

CND canvassers will ask four questions — about Cruise, about Trident, about US nuclear bases, and about unilateral disarmament — and try to convince the unconvinced. In the CND magazine 'Sanity' James Hinton explains:

"The prospect of an election gives CND an unprecedented opportunity to translate popular support into real political influence. CND's role is not to endorse particular parties or candidates. Rather, it is to maximise the pressure of public opinion on the parties and the candidates

Non-party

This 'non-party' stance is particularly strained at a time when the Tories have just appointed their no. 1 demagogue, Michael Heseltine, as defence minister specifically to combat CND; when the Liberals are in alliance with the SDP, who made nuclear disarmament one of the main issues in their split from the Labour Party; when Labour has voted overwhelmingly for scrapping the Bomb, and a

major fight is on to hold the leadership to that decision.

A new 'Tories Against the Cruise and Trident' group is being publicised by CND (with complaints that "CND's image is off-putting to our supporters within the Conservative Party"), but hardly carries much credibility.

Labour

In Islington, for example, a mobilising committee for the Peace Canvass has been set up by the local Labour Parties, with local CND members participating individually, but not formally as a group.

For Labour Parties such canvassing is an important way of preparing for the general election, recruiting — and helping the fight to commit the Labour Party leadership on the issue. But where possible, we should try to establish a basis for cooperation between local Labour Parties and CND which satisfies the CND groups that their autonomy is being respected.

Also coming up is a Youth CND Festival in Brockwell Park, South London, on May 7. YCND is launching an appeal for funds to finance this event.

Contact: Festival Appeal Fund, YCND, 11 Goodwin St., London N4; Peace Canvass 83, same address, phone 01-263 0977.

Hundreds face death in Turkish show trials

IN A new mass trial, this time featuring prosecution demands for no less than 261 death sentences, the Turkish junta has hauled 759 left wingers before a court in Amasya.

They face charges arising from the mass uprising

which took control of the town of Fatsa on the Black Sea during the turbulent struggles prior to the 1980 coup.

The left wing forces took over control of the town and repressed the fascist murder squads, setting up

people's courts and resistance committees.

The uprising was forcibly ended by a commando raid. Now the town's mayor Fikri Sonmez and many others face charges of terrorism and of responsibility for 90 murders.

Meanwhile, the number of death sentences demanded in the DISK trial has risen from 53 to 63. The state prosecutor has now asked for death penalties for seven members of the DISK Research Institute as well as Cetin Uygur, President of the Underground Miners' Union, Yerali Maden-Is; Ahmet Yildiz, President of Halkevleri, the People's Cultural Organisation (set up by Ataturk); and Teoman Ozturk, President of the Union of Architects and Engineers.

In the trial proceedings Celal Kucuk, an executive

member of DISK, repudiated a statement he was forced to sign under interrogation. He said: "This statement was signed under torture. I did not say anything. Not a word of that statement belongs to me. I was forced to sign it while I was blindfolded."

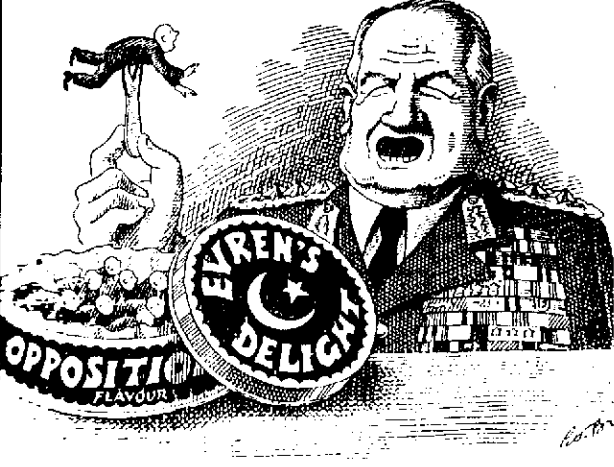
In a separate development, the authorities have commenced a new mass show trial against lower officials in DISK affiliated unions. The state prosecutor is currently demanding sentences of up to 20 years for 51 officials of Gida-Is, the Foodworkers Union, accusing them of links with the Peace Association, and sentences from 5 to 20 years for 29 officials of the Independent Devrimci Kimya-Is, the union of chemical workers, alleging they had ties with the socialist organisation Dev Yol.

These attacks are part of a massive attack upon Turkish left wing, pacifist and liberal opposition forces by the Evren junta.

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign, fighting to expose and build opposition to these attacks within the British workers movement, has just published a new, enlarged issue of its Information Bulletin. Included is a major feature on Turkey after the referendum, coverage of the visit of a Turkish mine union leader to Britain, and wide coverage of the Europe-wide fight for solidarity with the Turkish working class.

Readers are urged to subscribe to the Bulletin, (£2 per annum), to join the TSC, and to fight for the affiliation of trade union bodies and Labour Parties.

Contact TSC, 52 Acre Lane, London SW2 5SP.



The forgotten gay population

YOU don't have to look back many years to find socialists who viewed homosexuality as an aberration produced by the distortions of life under conditions of economic exploitation by the bosses; and an aberration hardly to be tolerated.

Now that the Left realise that gay people won't become straight when economic structures change, demands for ending gay oppression are taken more seriously by socialists. However, too many people still explain gay and other oppression as 'divide and rule' tools created by capitalism. The answer is just change the economy and that will remove all oppression and power relationships.

Forget

Thus we can effectively forget the need to organise against sexism and gay oppression for now, and follow the straight, white men in their endeavour for socialism. Gay oppression can be pushed aside; barely understood, but in a neat package to be dealt with later (perhaps).

Because of the insensitivity and the plain bigotry of many socialists, if oppression of gays is to be overcome (within the labour movement as well as in society), it must be gays ourselves who are at the front of the struggle, supported, on our terms, by others. And to be effective, we must understand the problems in organising for gay liberation. A basic problem is sexism.

While it is obviously worse for black and working class women, it is true to say that all men have power over all women, regardless of class. Gay movements are no excep-



"Coming out" is a huge problem for most gay people

tion — men are at the forefront, and the problems faced by gay men predominate in discussion.

The gay publication with the largest circulation, Gay News, only last year managed to devote a couple of its pages to 'Visible Lesbian', and contains angry letters from (male) readers protesting about women 'interfering' with 'The rush of maleness'; the writers expect to feel when turning its pages.

This same attitude often comes across at gay meetings: any lesbian attending can so easily be intimidated and alienated by the out-and-out misogyny of some men, or the sense

that all women just aren't worth bothering with. It's not surprising that many lesbians organise within the women's movement and find support in women's groups, in contrast with the isolation they feel in often semi-hostile, male-dominated gay groups.

All this is not to say that gay men oppress lesbians (and all women) more than straight men do. Obviously, some gay men, perhaps through the experience of their own oppression, are acutely sensitive to the power they can hold over women.

But, in general, mixed groups become dominated

by men, with men defining the nature of that group (and defining the women within it), men taking the lead and speaking much more than women, and women feeling intimidated and passive, if men have their way. This is why we support positive discrimination for women at every opportunity.

Straight men, as the beneficiaries of a patriarchal society, have defined sexuality. Patriarchy entails rigid sex roles for men and women. Men are expected to be actively heterosexual, boasting their sexual prowess and promiscuity, whilst fathering 'their' children. Those

Mary Gallagher argues that 'socialists must be careful to listen to what lesbians have to say'



who 'deviate' from, and pose a threat to this happy lifestyle are punished accordingly by being out-cast and discriminated against.

Women must be submissive, pure, innocent and hopelessly devoted to their macho master and 'his' children. Their heterosexuality should be hidden or they will be branded a whore. How much harder it is for lesbians and bisexual women to express and explore our sexuality.

And if a lesbian has a child, the law does its utmost to take away her custody of her/him, as she must be a 'corrupting' influence on the child. (And we already know that when men err, the mother is to blame!). Lesbians demonstrate to men that they don't need them — women can be quite independent from men, and society, geared to the possessive male, is not

pleased.

Society has tried to overlook the fact that women can be gay, so when women come out, and crack this facade, society's wrath knows no bounds!

The male gay scene, although it is an anomaly and a threat to patriarchal values and the 'healthy' continuation of class society, largely maintains assumptions of male superiority. Heads would turn in a number of the gay pubs, clubs and discos if a group of lesbians came in. The role playing in which many gay men participate, and the humour which has appeared — 'camp', 'queen', 'slag', 'bitch' — spring from male definitions of sex roles. In fact, it's bloody sexist.

Too often when gay oppression is discussed, it is gay men's oppression, and not lesbian oppression that is focussed upon. This is partly a result of cam-

paigns which concentrate on trying to change specifically anti-gay laws as a priority. (Bob Sutcliffe's review 'Laws against Sex' SO 113 discusses the legislative discrimination against gay men).

Lesbians are not even recognised by the law (not that we're requesting to be made illegal!), which has implied that for women there is no choice from heterosexuality, and trivialises women's sexuality. Although there are no specific laws against lesbians, women in general suffer under repressive legislation, which in some instances is analogous to anti-gay law.

For example, it is illegal for women to solicit men, as it is for men to solicit men, although the law seems happy for men to solicit women!

Gay oppression takes on many forms other than in a legal context: economically, if you're gay, you can lose your job for simply being gay; ideologically, you face problems all the time because of society's reaction to homosexuality, and 'coming out' is a huge problem for most gay people. And you can't escape from doubting yourself when society tells you that you're immoral/sick/disgusting, etc., and it's hard to overcome the guilt and shame.

Gay men and lesbians obviously have many points of contact when organising against oppression, but unless more gay men realise that their experiences and concerns are for a fair part not those of lesbians, and recognise that, as men, they still remain in a dominant position over women, gay liberation will remain a movement aimed primarily at liberating gay men.

Whenever there is a gay caucus or meeting, lesbians must be able to organise autonomously. Within groups such as Women's Fightback, and the women's movement in general, lesbian struggles must become more and more central. And socialists must be careful to listen to what lesbians have to say, before thinking that you understand gay oppression.

Storming Parliament

NONPLUSSED! That was the reaction of MPs and House of Commons officials when women from Greenham Common made their extra-Parliamentary protest an intra-Parliamentary one last Monday, January 17.

Hundreds of women had arrived at the House of Commons for a mass lobby of MPs. After a long wait, they were allowed in in small groups.

In the central lobby about 40 women who had been talking to MPs formed a circle and sang. And some 70 women who had been sitting in the public gallery started heckling and chanting slogans.

Immediately, door-keepers descended and dragged the women out of the gallery.

"I shall suspend the sitting if we cannot be allowed to proceed", squeaked the outraged Speaker, George Thomas. "We cannot allow anyone to try to stop Parliament. It would be the end of democracy."

Jenny Fisher reports on the invasion of Westminster by the women from Greenham Common

The women in the lobby were also dragged away — into Westminster Hall. At first, the police were very rough, but after complaints from some Labour MPs they stopped using heavy arm locks and bumping the women down the steps, which could easily have caused injury, and asked the women to walk down the steps instead.

Once they had all the women safely in Westminster Hall, the police herded them into a corner, surrounded them with metal gates and stood round on guard, while the women sang.

Several Labour MPs supported the women's action in the House. Frank Allaun (Salford East) commended their "brave action"; Jo Richardson spoke of them as "determined and very courageous", and went on to talk to them in Westminster Hall.

Others protested at the way the women were being kept "prisoner" by the police, with only MPs and not the press being allowed to speak to them, including Kevin McNamara (Hull Central) and Reg Race (Wood Green). Indeed, the women were eventually allowed to leave, even though people who interrupt Parliament are usually detained until the session ends.

Meanwhile, the Speaker was unimpressed and summed up the proceedings by saying that interrupting Parliament was "a very serious offence. If we give encouragement to that sort of thing our future would be bleak indeed."

But how "bleak indeed" will all our futures be if

Thatcher is allowed to continue bringing more and more nuclear weapons into Britain? So why did Labour MPs just carry on sitting in Parliament (debating whether to guillotine the Transport Bill)? Why didn't they all leave the Chamber, join the women and talk about how the Conference policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament can be implemented?

Cruise missiles are due to arrive this year! How do Labour MPs intend to stop them? By sitting in a minority in the House of Commons? Or waiting for governmental "power" so they can send them back?

"Parliament is no longer reflecting the fact that over 50% of the population don't want Cruise missiles," says Deborah Law from Greenham.

Perhaps Labour MPs will be lucky enough to get a second chance. Simone Wilkinson from Greenham says there will probably be another demonstration next month.



To join national CND:

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

To join Youth CND (under 21): Send £1 to above address.

Or join your local CND group

Spanish Civil War

THE FACT BEH

Bob Sutcliffe reviews the new Channel Four TV series on the Spanish Civil War [Fridays, 8pm].

THE first two episodes of Channel 4's six hour serialised documentary on the Spanish Civil War have been about as good as it is reasonable to expect TV programmes of this kind to be.

They have been so full of interest and emotion as to show that the series will merit a much longer review when it is over and can be seen as a whole.

In the meantime these interim observations are mostly designed to encourage SO readers to watch the rest of the series.

The Spanish Civil War today is mostly discussed by both left and right (outside of Spain, that is) not as a real event in human history but as a legend or a symbol.

It becomes, to different political currents, an object lesson in discussions of the Popular Front or reformism or anarchism or fascism or ultra-leftism.

Doubt

There is no doubt that such a monumental event has lessons which are politically significant today. The history of Spain in the 1930s is relevant to understanding the contemporary politics of, say, Chile — or France — or Spain itself.

But, so far at least, the Channel 4 series is not about the Spanish Civil War in that way. It is about the War and its origins as a concrete historical convulsion which happened to the

"Catalonia has shown what prodigious tasks of production the proletariat will undertake once it is in control of the factories. Yet the workers' committees in Madrid which at first took over the public utilities and many big plants were thereafter subordinated to the government's bureaucratic administration. This constriction is not bettered because the government now includes a socialist delegation. Until the workers are masters in the factories, those factories will not become fortresses of the revolution."

real, live people of Spain in the 1930s.

It is an approach which allows it to make full and almost unique use of the available resources to create a frighteningly vivid and involving recrea-

tion of the upheaval.

The war is almost the most distant major event of the past in which there exists both a considerable amount of moving picture footage and a considerable number of survivors who

remember events in which they played prominent roles.

The 'Spanish Civil War' takes full advantage of this by presenting us with a vast amount of contemporary film material and by using

recent interviews with people who remember the events.

The film material is wonderfully vivid, creating a sense of the reality of events which scarcely any book could rival. It would,

however, be good to be told what historical documentary makers are hardly ever willing to tell us — namely, who made the film, exactly when and for what purpose.

The interviews are of two kinds. Some are with those who were significant political figures of the time — Franco's brother-in-law and briefly his Foreign Minister Ramon Serrano Suner, Dolores Ibarruri ('La Passonaria') of the Communist Party, or the anarchist leader Federica Montseny.

Defend

Such figures have undeniably interesting reminiscences which you may or may not believe, but their remarks are designed essentially to defend, however obliquely, their political role at the time.

The other kind of interviews are concerned entirely with the memories of the politically more humble events which they observed or participated in. The stunning vividness of these interviews has often been enhanced by filming them



"The Madrid proletariat was mobilising. The left socialists distributed their scant store of arms, saved from October 1934. Barricades went up on key streets and around the Montana barracks. Workers' groups were looking for reactionary leaders. At dawn of the 19th the first militia patrols took their places. At midnight the first shots were exchanged with the barracks. But it was not until the next day, when the great news came from Barcelona, that the barracks were stormed."



The bodies of Anarchist militants

"On December 17, 1936, Catalonia, the purging of begun; it will be conducted in the USSR".

The 'legal methods', however, by organised terrorist bands termed 'preventorium' description: ex-members of racketeers, passport forgers, position of the Communist programme, these organised workers the ferocity of H trained to exterminate rev

in the location of the events they describe.

It would be hard not to be spellbound by these interviews, which are conducted in a totally unpretentious way.

The story told by the widow of one of the Republic's supporters killed in the massacre of Badajoz moved me to tears — not, I suspect for the last time in this series.

If anyone is wondering why there have not so far been interviews with leaders or supporters of POUM or, except for the anarchists, other groups to the left of the Communist Party, it is worth pointing out that a horrifying proportion of them were



Troops of the Durruti Column

"No government in the world fights fascism to the death. When the bourgeoisie sees power slipping from its grasp, it has recourse to fascism to maintain itself. The liberal government of Spain could have rendered the fascist elements powerless long ago. Instead it temporised and compromised and dallied . . . We know what we want. To us it means nothing that there is a Soviet Union somewhere in the world, for the sake of whose peace and tranquillity the workers of Germany and China were sacrificed to fascist barbarism by Stalin. We want the revolution here in Spain, right now, not maybe after the next European war. We are giving Hitler and Mussolini far more worry today with our revolution than the whole Red Army of Russia. We are setting an example to the German and Italian working class how to deal with fascism."

Quoted above from the left anarchist leader Durruti. Other quotes from the Trotskyist writer Felix Morrow — 'Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain'

IND THE LEGEND



Shattered by Stalinist murder squad in Barcelona 1937

Pravda, Stalin's personal organ, declared: "As for the Trotskyists and the Anarcho-Syndicalists has with the same energy with which it was conducted."

never moved too slowly. They were supplemented with private prisons and torture chambers. The worthies recruited for this work beggar the Fascist CEDA, Cuban gangsters, brothel-keepers, spawned by the petty-bourgeois camp, nurtured by its counter-revolutionary hands of the Spanish GPU exhibited towards the war's bloodhounds, for like them, they were

only in the war but by Stalinist purges which followed the installation of Lluís Companys as Prime Minister in 1937 — something which will presumably be the subject of one of the next two episodes. The film archive and the interviews are the two basic resources of this series. They are supplemented by well-chosen still photos and graphics, only of the geographical progress of the war. The series I personally found a little disappointing, and not clear as might be hoped. More disappointing, if very central, was the curious lapse in the first episode when the assassin of the rightist leader

Calvo Sotelo was fictionally reconstructed in film. Such an unnecessary technique was oddly out of character with the style of the rest of the series.

In documentary the aural is as important as the visual. In this series the aural resources are first, the interviews which start in the original language and are then superimposed by good translations well spoken by appropriate voices (a good second best to sub-titles); second, the rather pointless, and to me annoying soundtrack of explosions with which the war films are "enhanced"; third, the music which seems to me totally appropriate and helpful to appreciate the film (it is written by Patrick Gowers and played by the Gabrieli String Quartet and the guitarist John Williams).

Finally, and most important, the commentary — pleasantly spoken by Frank Finlay and written by Neal Acherson, author of the widely read book, *The Polish August*.

There is no way in which such a commentary could provide a full account, let alone analysis of such complex events as the civil war in Spain.

The first episode, for instance, tried to condense five of the fullest political years in any country in

modern times into less than one hour.

One can only reasonably demand that a commentary with these constraints tells no lies and does not, through inevitable oversimplification, distort too much.

Clearly

On these criteria, I personally found it hard to criticise the commentary in the first two episodes. The main political figures and events were clearly located and the events were treated not as the clash of personalities but of class forces and ideologies.

This success is due not

only to the skills of Neal Acherson but to the quality of the three historical advisors.

These are Hugh Thomas, a Thatcherite British historian, whose mammoth and detailed book on the Spanish Civil War is the best factual account of the war available in English, and whose analytical judgements are much closer to those of Marxists than you might expect; Javier Tusell, a Spanish historian who has written the standard work on the elections of February 1936 in which the Popular Front came to power, and who was a leading intellectual of the Centre Democratic Union

— the right wing party which lost power in the recent Spanish election; and the socialist writer Ronald Fraser whose book *'The Blood of Spain'* is the powerful and moving literary model of the interviews of the TV series.

Credit

All in all, so far the director of the *'Spanish Civil War'*, John Blake, deserves credit for a series of films which seems unlikely to achieve the near impossible task in his medium of definitively analysing the politics of Spain in the 1930s but in proving that events, so important in the

"Isolated engagements before paving stone barricades led to a general engagement in the afternoon. And here political weapons more than made up for the superior armament of the fascists.

Heroic workers stepped forward from the lines to call upon the soldiers to learn why they were shooting down their fellow toilers. They fell under rifle and machine-gun fire, but others took their place. Here and there a soldier began shooting wide. Soon bolder ones turned on their officers. Some nameless military genius — perhaps he died then — seized the moment and the mass of workers abandoned their prone position and surged forward. The first barracks were taken. (...) With arms from the arsenals, the workers cleaned up Barcelona. Within a few days, all Catalonia was in their hands.

(...)

The Asturian miners, fighters of the Commune of October 1934, outfitted a column of 5,000 dynamiters for a march on Madrid. It arrived there on the 20th, just after the barracks had been taken, and took up guard duty in the streets."

struggle for socialism, yet so often devalued into mere symbols, really did happen.

Perhaps some SO readers will have the time to combine the watching of this splendid series with reading some of the more significant historical books on the subject available in English such as Pierre Broue and Emile Temime, *'The Revolution and the Civil War in Spain'*, George Orwell, *'Homage to Catalonia'*; Felix Morrow, *'Revolution and Counter-revolution in Spain'*; Hugh Thomas, *'The Spanish Civil War'*; Leon Trotsky, *'The Spanish Revolution'*; Ronald Fraser, *'The Blood of Spain'*.

Answering the question of solidarity

Sarah Murison reviews a pamphlet on black unions in S. Africa.

'A Question of Solidarity: Independent Trade Unions in South Africa', by Bob Fine and Laurence Welch. Published by SOFSAS; available for 90p plus 20p postage via SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

At last we have a pamphlet that offers to trade unionists and solidarity workers in the UK the straightforward information necessary for effective working class solidarity with the South African struggles. It provides a very powerful argument for direct links between British workers and independent unions in South Africa, and a critique of those who resist a socialist perspective on the struggle against apartheid.

Independent unions are those committed to the democratic organisation of black workers in South Africa, and independent of the state.

Support for South African workers is difficult, the authors argue, for four reasons. The first is lack of information about the trade union movement in South Africa — its size and structure, its demands and the actual disputes taking place. While it is known that some unions are racist, or the stooges of the state, it is not widely known which ones these are. This makes people hesitate to support any union.

Deflect

Worse, management in Britain can deflect solidarity by claiming that a genuine dispute is really only inter-union strife. The pamphlet seeks to combat this ignorance directly by providing information on the structure of the South African trade union movement, its history, its demands, and its relationship with the nationalist struggle. To facilitate the direct links called for a list of Trade Union centres and their affiliates is included.

The second difficulty is the lack of experience in Britain of the many ways in which solidarity can be expressed. These range from letters of sympathy, through protests to parent companies in the UK, to exchange visits, sympathy strikes and blackings.

In discussions of five case-studies of industrial disputes in South Africa in which UK unions were involved, Fine and Welch illustrate the ways in which these and other expressions of solidarity have been employed.

A difficulty is the policy of isolation of the South African state pursued by the Anti-Apartheid Movement AAM: the group which opposes Southern African solidarity work in the UK. The authors argue that this policy is a

solidarity



The car firms are the centre of union organisation

extremely unfortunate side-effect of isolating from international support those workers inside SA who are also fighting the apartheid state.

The pamphlet discusses at some length the implications, for the growth of working class internationalism as well as for workers in South Africa, of a stage-ist strategy for revolution in South Africa.

While supporting absolutely the demands for an end to apartheid articulated by the AAM, the authors expose the essential contradiction of its position in calling for a broad front of all groups fighting against apartheid while denouncing those whose policies do not resemble those of the ANC.

The fourth obstacle to the development of clear solidarity strategies by workers is the confusion on the question expressed by leading Trade Union bodies who have, in various ways, fallen short of effective leadership despite being generally sympathetic to the struggles of South African workers. This failure of leadership derives in part from the general lack of information available to all trade unionists, but also has a darker side, with serious implications for socialism.

There are elements in the trade union movement, especially, perhaps, at leadership levels, whose grasp of socialism extends no further than economic demands for a bigger work-

ing class share of the capitalist cake. When united, as it usually is, with national chauvinism, this orientation leads to a reluctance to support worker demands overseas which may threaten British capital, and therefore the size of the cake to be divided.

Direct links would by-pass this, and demonstrate in very practical ways the essential unity of the working class struggle.

Here Fine and Welch touch upon, but do not develop, perhaps the most intractable problem of all: the defeats that internationalism must often suffer in the course of a recession, when workers seek to protect their own interests, often without



Rowntrees: a case for solidarity

regard for those workers in other countries. There are no concrete solutions to this problem. Specific counter-attacks can only be worked out by activists in the context of local conditions in each branch and shop.

Facts

However, this pamphlet makes a major contribution to the problem by providing facts and arguments necessary to back up calls for international solidarity. It is especially useful in showing how this solidarity has been important both to the South African struggles concerned, and for the broadening of the horizons of British workers.

Moreover, in one of several quotes from trade unionists, the pamphlet points out that one of the provisions of Tebbit's laws is the prohibition of any form of trade union action in solidarity with workers abroad, whether or not they work for the same multi-national corporation. The penalties include hefty fines for the union, or the imprisonment of officials. Tebbit's proposals must be opposed on international as well as domestic grounds.

In South Africa the

Wiehahn Commission on Labour Relations of 1979 took very seriously the threat of international labour opposition. The government has since set up a special sub-committee of the National Manpower Committee to study international labour issues, and appointed labour attachés in Brussels and Washington. The governments of our two countries are well aware of the threat of international working class solidarity. This pamphlet urges us to ensure in concrete ways that their fears are justified.

Firmly

The authors base their argument firmly on the concrete lessons to be drawn from five case-studies of actual struggles in South Africa in which direct support from British workers was called for and given. They call unequivocally for direct links between unions at shop floor level as being the only way to overcome the problem of lack of information, and to bypass the actions of possible well-meaning but basically obstructive elements.

Lack of contact weakens workers in both countries, and serves the purposes of management only, prolong-

ing the time before socialism is achieved in either South Africa or the UK.

Strikes

Strikes and blackings in support of South African workers may sometimes be called for, and have, as Fine and Welch show, often been successful. However, even small actions, such as writing fraternal letters or making collections for material aid can be extremely important to morale in South Africa, and effective forms of support.

A trade unionist committed to internationalism could begin solidarity work at his or her next branch meeting by initiating a discussion, inviting one of the authors to speak or proposing opening contacts with a sister union in South Africa.

Telling

Perhaps the simplest and most telling argument for direct links between workers in South Africa and Great Britain is that the democratic independent unions in South Africa call for them.

Sarah Murison
Islington South LP
Just returned from South Africa.

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

WHAT'S ON

SPARTACIST Truth Kit — a 68-page analysis by John Lister, published by the Workers' Socialist League. £1 plus 25p postage from WSL PO Box 135 London N1 1ED

NOTTINGHAM Campaign Against Racism and Fascism: public launch meeting, with speaker Vron Ware (editor of the anti-fascist monthly Searchlight), 7.30pm, International Centre, 61b Mansfield Road.

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

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

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

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

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

LONDON ASSEMBLY: the second London Assembly will take place on Saturday January 29 1983, from 10 am to 1.30pm at Friends House, Euston Rd, London NW1. Called by the Greater London Council and other groups to 'bring Londoners together to discuss how we can defend, extend and improve our services'. Organisations are invited to nominate up to two representatives.

SCOTTISH Labour CND conference: Saturday January 22, City Hall, Candle-riggs, Glasgow, 10am-5pm. Open to delegates and to visitors (£1 admission).

LABOUR CND national conference: Saturday February 19, West Midlands County Hall, Lancaster Circus, Birmingham.

Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine public meeting: **THE FIGHT FOR PALESTINE** Speakers: Tariq Ali, Ron Brown MP (Leith), Jeremy Corbyn, and speakers from Women for Palestine and Lebanese National Movement.

Wednesday February 23, 8pm at County Hall, London SE1.

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

ing of the LCI National Council on January 22.

Hand-printed silk-screened T-shirts:
• Socialist Organiser: paper masthead with option of local group's name added at 20p per T-shirt extra.
• Solidarnosc logo, red on white.
• Labour against the witch-hunt.
• Red star on white background.

£2.50 each except SO T-shirts, £3. Postage 50p. T-shirts come in white or yellow, please state preference. Also individual designs undertaken, cost 26, must have details of design and idea. Allow 14 days for delivery. Send orders to Kevin Glover, 19 Ranton Way, Leicester.

Councillors must prepare fight on cuts and rates

by Dave Scott

MANY on the left are reluctant to fight on a "no cuts, no rate increase" platform, preferring instead to rally around the simpler "no cuts" slogan.

Unfortunately this stance means that Labour Councils are being increasingly seen as executioners of Tory policy — Tories garbed in Labour talk and sloganising. And sadly, many are just that.

It is time for this kind of retreat to stop: time that Labour councils put up an effective fight and gave an effective lead against Tory policies of destruction.

Many Labour councils would rather act as administrators and book-keepers than as leaders of any kind of fight against Tory cuts. But we must begin to argue and struggle for a policy of not cuts (indeed, improvement) in jobs or services, the meeting of pay claims from council employees and no rent or rate rises above the average wage settlement (i.e. workers' capacity to pay for an increase).

Rate rises are sometimes argued for as a progressive form of taxation because it is businesses which have to pay larger amounts.

This is true in straight monetary terms (and explains the initiating in Hull of a 'Campaign Against Spendthrift Humberside' started by local Tories after the Labour-controlled Humberside County Council had increased rates by 63%). But, in real terms, rate

increases hit the poorer working class the hardest.

The worst effect of large and repeated rate increases is felt in low income areas. The poorer households are, the larger the proportion of their income taken by rates — because rates are based on the value of your house, and, poorer households spend a bigger proportion of their income on housing.

The effect is even more marked in old and economically depressed areas where there is a decline in the working population and hence a fall in the number of ratepayers and an increasing demand for public services.

Isolation

If rate rises could be considered in isolation, there might still be a case for seeing them as a rough-and-ready form of redistribution. The GLC's plan for cutting London Transport fares would have cost the average household only about 50p a week in rates in return for a saving of £1.50 on fares.

But most of the rate rises levied by the GLC and other Labour councils have gone not to finance improvements but to meet cuts in central government

grant. The 'redistribution' has been from ratepayers to central government.

Massive and continuing rate rises cannot be introduced without having a serious effect on the living standards of working people, and we must therefore work towards an alternative.

How then are we to fight for a policy of "no cuts, no rate rises"?

Firstly, we must recognise that the fight against Tory attacks on local government cannot be left up to a handful of dedicated Labour councillors. We need a huge labour movement response with the involvement of the Labour Party, public sector trade unionists, trades councils, unemployed workers groups, tenants groups and community associations.

Infuse

We have to infuse a new meaning into the term 'local government'. It will produce new methods of debate and decision making within the labour movement — in short, it will necessitate greater democracy and co-operation.

Already a lot of groundwork has been laid for such a response to Tory attacks

on local government: through the NHS dispute, work against the Tebbit law and recent local initiatives to fight cuts and privatisation. We should be aiming to build on this.

This kind of strategy will depend initially on how effective the rank and file of the Labour Party and trade unions are in pressuring local Labour councillors into this kind of action.

Many councillors will be opposed to such a path, because of the implication of greater labour, movement democracy and what they may consider to be an infringement of their domain. This must be fought hard against by the rank and file.

We must argue that the Labour councillors must be representatives of labour. By capitulating on the fight against cuts and rate rises they become merely executioners of Tory policy and have no right to be representing the Labour Party. Whether the rank and file win on this one will determine the whole course of any opposition to Tory cuts.

A motion calling for "a rates and rents freeze, no cuts in jobs or services, and meeting of council workers' pay claims, combined with a strategy for mobilising labour movement resistance to the inevitable Tory attack, and linking up with other Labour councils"



Rate rises are not a progressive alternative to cuts

would serve as a starting point for the fight.

But it is not resolutions which win fights: it is organisation. And if councillors do not take a lead in mobilising the local labour movement, then rank and file Labour Party members, trade unionists and trades councils must take the initiative in calling public meetings and mobilising the local labour movement — if necessary coming into confrontation with Labour councils.

Confrontation with Labour councils is not what we should be looking for, since it will not lead to the most effective opposition to Tory cuts, even though it may show up the reactionary nature of several Labour councils and councillors.

The most effective opposition to cuts and rate

increases will, I believe, come through Labour councils refusing to impose cuts and rate rises with the backing of the local labour movement. In cases where the Council is Tory controlled, the lead of Labour councillors in rejecting rate rises and cuts with the backing of the local labour movement will again make opposition more effective.

Assuming local Labour councillors have taken the lead in refusing to impose either cuts or rate rises this will inevitably lead to a direct confrontation with the Government.

This confrontation could come about through any of the following:

- Council officers refusing to implement council decisions;
- Banks cutting off the council's credit;
- The district auditor

ordering an 'extraordinary audit' of the Council;

■ A Labour council going into opposition;

■ Resignation of the Council, with cuts and rate rises as the future election issues.

Whichever form the confrontation takes, it is at this point that the mobilisation of the labour movement is needed. It must have been built for in advance, with commitments to strike action from public sector unions and private sector unions if the local Labour Council comes into such a confrontation with the government.

Ultimately, only the organised working class can defeat the Tory cutbacks, and we should not balk at the task that we face if we are to fight for "no cuts, no rate rises".

DAVE SCOTT

An appetiser for Marx's 'Capital'

Socialist Bookshelf

Mary Wilkins reviews 'Kapital for Beginners'

'MARX's Capital for Beginners', like the other volumes in the series, attempts to provide a simple explanation of the subject, extensively illustrated with pictures and cartoons. It gives a brief biographical introduction, and explains key concepts in 'Capital'; and it is very funny.

What's more, it ends with a glossary of important terms and a short bibliography for further reading.

In some ways the book is good. One immediate point in its favour is that both the text and the illustrations attempt to be non-sexist. There are pictures of women manual workers, and the text refers to wage labourers as she/he.

More particularly, many of the concepts of Marx's analysis of capital are explained clearly, in a way which is easy to understand. The double life of the commodity as both use value and exchange value is

made clear. The origins of surplus value are explained well, as is the difference between relative and absolute surplus, and the means the capitalist uses to further exploit the workforce and maximise profits.

Particularly good are the sections on the need for working class organisation in trade unions and political parties, as a defence against capital, and a means of challenging it. The links are also made between capital and imperialism and the attempts by the capitalist to exploit workers in underdeveloped countries, and use this pool of cheap labour as a means of driving down wages in the imperialist country.

However the book does have its weaknesses. At times it seems confusing — and confused. Sometimes it is just plain wrong, sometimes from an excessive desire to simplify; for example, the statement that the production of commodities for exchange only happens in capitalism is too simple and ignores the importance of commodity production in European feudalism, for example. These are perhaps rela-

tively minor matters. But when the book deals with the key concepts in 'Capital' it is even more confusing and misleading. The authors explain what Marx means by socially required labour, and then embark on his notion of abstract labour.

The latter is an absolutely crucial concept for understanding value. The book says that materially unequal forms of useful labour can be 'treated as if they were equal to facilitate exchange' — in other words, useful labour can be treated as abstract labour.

Now this just isn't good enough. Marx is insistent that useful labour cannot be equated with abstract labour — you can't just pretend the two are the same. Useful labour is productive activity carried on with a definite aim, of a definite kind, whereas abstract labour, the substance of value is only apparent at the moment of exchange.

Difficult

Admittedly, the book faces a difficult task in trying to explain what

abstract labour is, when Marx himself was not very clear on the subject, but reading 'Capital for Beginners' is more confusing on this point than reading Capital itself.

Similar problems arise when the book deals with capitalist crisis. The glossary of terms defines economic crisis as 'The inborn tendency of a commodity economy to witness a fall in the rate of profit as a result of the rising organic composition of capital'.

But as Marx makes clear, the fall in the rate of profit does not automatically result in economic crisis; if the rate of profit falls, but the volume of production and sales expand, then the capitalist continues to make a profit and capital continues to accumulate. For Marx, crises arise when commodities cannot be sold; when there is overproduction and shortage of markets. Again, the book's attempt to simplify leads to a misrepresentation of Marx.

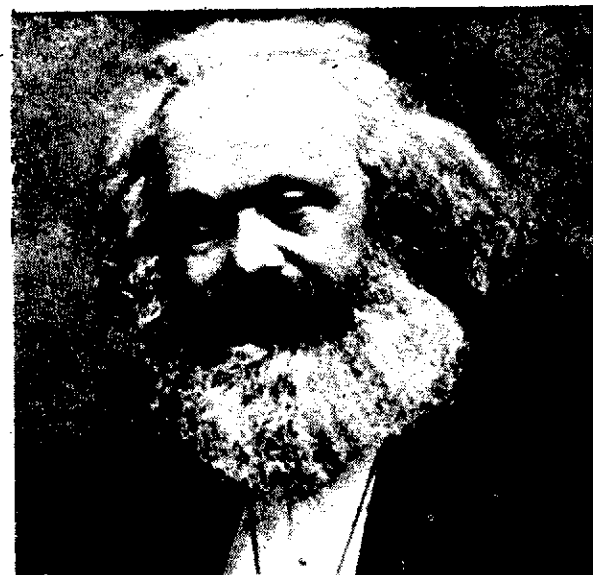
Further errors could be mentioned: the identification of price and value; the description of commodities, money and capital as 'the

three forms of value', the somewhat confusing definitions of fetishism and fetishisation; and so on.

What makes this more of a problem is that the sections of the book, which broadly follow the sections of Capital itself, do not give page references to Capital. This means that if a reader finds the book isn't clear s/he doesn't know where

exactly to find the corresponding passage in Capital.

This is a shame because although Capital is very long, it is not difficult to understand, with Marx's numerous explanations and illustrations of every point. In any case I think 'Marx's Capital for Beginners' should be seen as an appetizer, not a substitute for the real thing.



Marx: not so obscure

Leninist line and CLPD

John Bloxam believes (SO, 13 January) that he is on particularly strong ground when he claims that all the rules which should apply to the Labour Party are equally applicable to CLPD. In fact the comparison is inappropriate.

A pressure group like CLPD, depends largely on the existence of a reasonable measure of agreement as regards the group's aims and methods. A democratic party on the other hand assumes only a broad measure of agreement so far as its immediate aims are concerned. Consequently it may include a much wider spectrum of opinion as to how its long term objectives may be achieved.

The election of a Labour government, for example, is a vital objective on which all Labour Party members may unite in a joint effort irrespective of their other differences.

Had John Bloxam done a bit of reading instead of merely pontificating about the "defence of democracy in CLPD", he might have avoided the mistake of confusing parties with pressure groups.

Lenin's writings during



Lenin: "A party can contain a whole gamut of opinion ... for a section real unanimity of opinion is necessary".

the period of reaction which followed the defeat of the Russian 1905 Revolution, and which dealt with the tactics appropriate in a new situation are instructive in this and other respects. In them Lenin defends the integrity of a socialist party against two forms of "liquidationism" which gathered strength in res-

ponse to the Revolution's defeat — the liquidationism of the opportunistic right and that of the ultra-left "Left".

"... A section is not a party," says Lenin. "A party can contain a whole gamut of opinion and shades of opinion. In the German Party, side by side with the pronouncedly

revolutionary wing of Kautsky, we see the ultra-revisionist wing of Bernstein. That is not the case within a section. A section in a party is a group of like-minded persons formed for the purpose primarily of influencing the party in a definite direction ... For this a real unanimity of opinion is necessary." (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 15, p. 430).

Parallel

Without wishing to draw too close a parallel between the two situations, it is clear that the rules Lenin applied to the "section" are also appropriate to a pressure group like the CLPD. For a pressure group cannot operate effectively if it allows different "sections" within it to pull in opposite directions. But this is precisely the present situation within CLPD.

During the period when conditions were favourable for the advancement of democratic reforms, most of the "sections" which joined CLPD, including those which suffer from a large dose of infantile leftism and infantile femin-

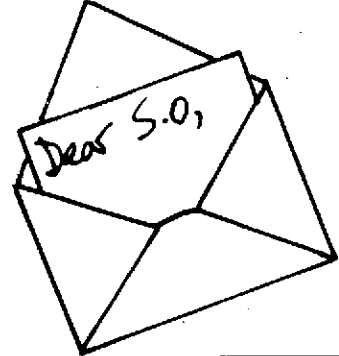
ism, were able to co-operate.

Once the tide had turned, these tendencies, having previously taken one step forward, have now retraced two steps back towards their previously held tactical positions. In these circumstances John Bloxam's calls for unity and democracy amount to no more than a smokescreen for an attempt by one section — and a very motley one — to impose their sectarian tactics on those not prepared to be dragged down the road of political ineffectiveness.

Even though this alliance is composed of politically heterogeneous elements — it includes supporters of the Socialist Organiser Alliance as well as those of the International Marxist Group, Socialist Labour Group and the circle around the new Tribune — they have one feature in common with their Russian counterparts. In Lenin's words, they are "linked inseparably by their common spirit of adventurism."

VLADIMIR DERER
London

Writeback



We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words.

Send to
'Writeback',
Socialist Organiser,
c/o 28, Middle Lane,
London N8.

People's March

FAR from "spoiling the image of the Labour Party" (SO115), the real reason for opposing the Scotland to London People's March for Jobs was far more cynical. In an election year the trade union and Labour Party leadership did not want resources diverted away from the election campaign.

Despite the public sympathies shown by this leadership to the plight of the unemployed, this exposes their real attitude to the unemployed; that mass unemployment is a secondary issue, the most important being the election of a right wing Labour government at the next general election.

Of course they argue that only a Labour government can reduce the level of unemployment, but there are currently divisions within the leadership of the Labour Party as to whether they should publicly commit themselves to reducing unemployment to any predetermined level.

The more astute Labour politicians realise that the election of a Labour government cannot solve in Britain the current world problem of unemployment, and that they need to leave their options open to be able to make the usual excuses when their policies fail to do so.

Before we commit ourselves to supporting the march, surely we need to know how the march is going to be organised.

The unemployed themselves need to be fully involved throughout the planning stages to enable them to determine how the march is to be conducted. We should not blindly endorse a re-run of the undemocratic, rigidly controlled People's March for Jobs (1981).

Whilst offering limited support to any democratically run march controlled by the unemployed, we should still recognise that this type of march — a blanket protest against mass unemployment, without a specific issue to focus on — is largely a diversion away from the essential task of organising the unemployed to campaign on all issues, both locally and nationally, affecting the unemployed.

MICK JARMAINE
Leicester

'Vanishing mandate'

IN his recent article, "Wafer-thin margin in CLPD poll" my colleague John Bloxam gives an interesting account of CLPD and the Register issue.

However, in part of the third paragraph:

"In fact a resolution submitted earlier that the EC should recommend the AGM accept the ballot was withdrawn."

John inadvertently implies (by writing "In fact") that the withdrawal was by a Bolshevik member disgusted by the narrow result.

Actually, the motion had been submitted by an over-confident Menshevik member, Walter Wolfgang, and was pompously accompanied on submission by the testimony that:

"When the ballot votes have been counted I may find that I disagree with the result. Nevertheless I am convinced that we should treat that result as our mandate."

Needless to say, following the unfavourable result Mr Wolfgang is now "convinced" that we should not "treat that result as our mandate."

To formally accuse Mr Wolfgang of opportunism above and beyond the call of duty would be quite monstrous of me, but it would be nice to clear up the strange case of the disappearing mandate.

DOUGLAS HAYWARD
London N2

Women's role in CND

I FAIL to comprehend the attitude expressed by the two Notts supporters (Writeback, SO114) with regard to the women of Greenham Common and peace camps in general.

The fact that CND is middle class dominated and not entirely sympathetic to socialism is to be regretted but should not be the reason for not supporting it. I believe, as many frightened people do, that time is rapidly running out, and that if CND doesn't win, we can forget about socialism because there won't be a world left to be socialist in.

Therefore to talk about building a campaign to stop imperialism and so away with capitalism instead of fighting the arms race is naive. Aren't we trying to build such a campaign anyway?

The unfortunate fact is that socialism is not as

attractive to working class people (for various reasons) as CND; if it were half our troubles would be over. To take the view that we should reject CND in case we get let down is like telling a battery hen not to support the animal liberation movement; we have no choice.

Instinct

The instinct to survive is just as strong whatever the political beliefs of some CND members, and I don't understand any socialist who can reject the aims of an organisation aimed towards the preservation of life on this planet. You can use the "come the revolution" argument for any political issue from female to gay liberation but it turns into an excuse to do nothing and when you're talking about the arms race you can't play around with

time.

There is serious doubt in some people's minds that the human race will even see the end of this century.

As for questioning the relevance of the activities at Greenham Common "to the women's struggle as a whole" I'd say that the events which took place there did as much for the feminist cause as anything since the Suffragettes.

Setting aside the hanging of baby clothes on the wire (a debateable point, although I'd accept they

were meant to be symbols of life) the media coverage of Greenham Common showed women on the front line, leading a campaign instead of being behind male leaders, living in rough conditions in zero temperatures and prepared to go to prison for their beliefs. This, in my view, went a long way to blowing the myth that women are weak, helpless creatures, fit only for household chores.

Action such as this does more than endless rhetoric. That CND is using the

women as "objects of sympathy" is ridiculous. Every great cause has its martyrs (remember Bobby Sands), and if every time women get involved in a political fight it will be interpreted as exploitation then maybe our Notts comrades feel women should be kept out of politics.

Eat

Your can't have your cake and eat it: if you want women involved in politics you have to realise that they'll be seen in a different light from men mainly because they are still a phenomenon (as seen by some) in political activities, and the more you try to keep women out of the limelight for fear of being exploited the more you reinforce the prejudices.

To conclude, I think the Notts supporters who wrote in should examine their own views and consider whether they may be restricting the causes that some people genuinely believe in.

ELAINE JOHN
Sheffield S0



Greenham Common: "did as much for the feminist cause as anything since the suffragettes"

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Damp squib from the ILP

ANNE-MARIE Graham's attempt on behalf of the ILP to dig up 'errors' in my report of the LCC AGM ends up with a pretty damp squib.

She complains that I said Anne Cesek and Jon Lansman were 'kicked off' the LCC executive, when in fact they were democratically voted off. But that's what I said — "... the AGM took place against a background of defeat in the EC elections for most of those who have fought against [equivocation on the witch-hunt]"

Her one other complaint was about my description that "the Clause 4/ILP/Peter Hain grouping tight-

ened their grip on the LCC". She cites the fact that the ILP voted against the others once! But I never said they were 'homogeneous', and certainly do not believe that one disagreement stops them being a 'grouping'.

I do not know the precise relationship between Clause 4, the ILP, and Peter Hain, or even whether the ILP attends the caucus meeting with the others on the night before the LCC AGM.

But the plain fact is that on the major issues inside the LCC over the last year or so — opposition to the Left organising; equivocation on the witch-hunt;

turning away from the fight for democracy and accountability — they have consistently voted together.

They were the majority on the old LCC EC; they are the overwhelming majority on the new one.

Why deny it? If you have not got a 'grouping', how else can you ensure that "the EC voting was in keeping with the line adopted on the register", when you remember that the EC vote took place in a postal ballot before the AGM decision on the register?

If there is an 'error' it is in Anne-Marie Graham's letter. It's a blatantly dishonest one.

She writes: "Audrey

Wise's loss of position (as Vice-Chair) might just have had something to do with the fact that she wasn't present and that her record of attendance at EC meetings left something to be desired".

She must also know the facts. Audrey Wise didn't attend this AGM and sent her apologies. She didn't attend a number of EC meetings because they were held mid-week in London. Audrey Wise was one of the people who complained about this practice, and the fact that it effectively excluded a number of EC members from meetings. It was changed at the AGM.

Why then the attack on her? Because she also complained that the EC was ditching the policy of the previous AGM unequivocally to oppose witch-hunts, and fought against it; because she argued that the LCC should take part in Labour Liaison 82.

Significantly the ILP don't query such statements in my report as: "Over the last year they (LCC) have equivocated on the witch-hunt...", or the view that the LCC has shifted "to the right". The quibbles in their letter, and their failure to deal with this main issue, says everything about the ILP.

JOHN BLOXAM.

Courts, nihilism and labour movement

I WROTE, and Kevin Riley quotes parts of it: "True, the courts in a long-stable bourgeois democracy such as Britain normally dispense a high level of justice and fair and impartial dealing — within the existing laws".

This was to concede the main pillar of Militant's case for using the courts, while arguing that it was irrelevant to the issue of making the bourgeois courts the arbiter of the affairs of the labour movement. The same paragraph goes on to discuss the increasing use of the courts to interfere in the affairs of the unions under the new Tory legislation. The reference to 'the existing laws' was emphasised in the original.

Why then does Kevin Riley think me likely to disagree with him that those existing bourgeois laws are for the defence of property... (and) are racist, sexist and anti-you-h"? Yes, of course they are! What reason does Kevin Riley have for thinking that I don't know that? These are after all pretty much ABC questions.

Does he think that I don't read the regular exposés in SO? That I am innocent of such typical experiences of a socialist militant in Britain as, being lied about in court or beaten up in a police station?

Whatever the reason, that would seem to be his picture of me. But that still doesn't explain why he thinks it needs to be spelled

ed out in such details for socialists prepared to plough through a long 'heavy' article about whether it is in line with socialist and Marxist principles for Militant to go to court?

Perhaps Kevin Riley thinks that the readers of SO also don't bother to read the exposés of racism, sexism, police violence, court bias, etc? I think comrade Riley has just missed the point.

Perhaps I should have spelled it out — not for the typical SO reader but to forestall trigger-happy comrades so eager to attack that they haven't got time to read what they are attacking, or to think about it.

Sometimes articles are over-compressed and distorted for lack of space. That was perhaps why the editors cut an important paragraph from my reply to Bob Fine (last week).

Why we should help the black youth in Brixton and others to avoid a sweeping nihilism — unjustified and false to reality — towards every aspect of the existing system, is that the widespread political attitudes that result from such nihilism — ultra-leftism, eclectic populism, 'Brixton (etc)' is part of the Third World' — are also directed against the existing British labour movement and thus ultimately against the interests of the oppressed groups, too, by needlessly isolating them from that movement.

The labour movement's racism, sexism, backward-

ness, subordinate enmeshment in the existing system, etc., are seen as irreversible and unchangeable. Forces (blacks, youth, women, gays, etc.) that could help transform that movement, by helping to fight its backwardness and by strengthening it in other ways, remain separate and isolated from it. Their rebelliousness is thereby isolated, ghettoised, and politically neutered.

All this helps only the ruling class and its agents in the labour movement. The job of Marxists is to fight for a different outcome, to help integrate the Brixton youth and others into the labour movement, to give them a perspective of fighting to change it — so as to be able, as part of a labour movement - based socialist offensive, to transform existing society, and not merely impotently to 'reject' it in words and sometimes in desperate but mainly fruitless deeds.

Despite appearances and intentions, there is really little that is revolutionary, and (despite eclectic phrases) nothing Marxist, in the negative and nihilistic 'politics' to which some of the most oppressed are driven by the indifference and hostility of the broad labour movement.

If you doubt it, look at the antics of the mindless sect that calls itself the Revolutionary Communist Party, which systematises this approach.

JOHN O'MAHONY, London.

SO delegates' decisions

Martin Thomas reports from the Socialist Organiser delegate meeting in Coventry on January 15

THE TWO major debates at the Socialist Organiser delegate meeting last Saturday, 15th, were on the planned Scotland-London People's March for Jobs and council budgets for 1983-4.

A motion from Dave Ayrton of Sheffield SO to give full support to the March, form local support committees now, and fight for a class line and democratic organisation of the March, was carried — with a big majority, but after a lively debate.

Clive Power from Stock-

port said that a march would be "a waste of time" though if it went ahead we should support it. Mick Jarman from Leicester argued that it would be a diversion, dominated by the Communist Party. Local committees would be controlled by Trades Councils, "the same bodies which are putting in the boot against the unemployed".

Several comrades argued in response that we had to take up the struggle as it really was, not as we might choose it to be; and Dave Ayrton referred to his own experience on the previous People's March. "I didn't like the Stalinists — they tried to kick me off about three times. But you can't deny that the March had a tremendous effect on the consciousness of the working class".

On council budgets, I introduced a discussion on the lines of my article in SO115. West Midlands county councillor Dave Spencer reported that in his Labour group he was advocating cuts — in the police budget. SO should think more about demands to be put to central government on council finance, he said.

Stressed

Other comrades stressed the importance of trade union mobilisation for a fight against cuts and rate rises, but Rob Johnstone from Nottingham said that Labour councillors had to be prepared to take a stance of confrontation first, to give a lead to that mobilisation.

Another major discussion covered SO finance and fund-raising in detail. Also:

• We decided to campaign for sympathetic readers to help SO by paying £1 for their weekly paper.

• John Bloxam reported that Vanessa Redgrave of the WRP has taken out even more libel writs against SO writers, on the grounds that they had alleged that the WRP was trying to bankrupt SO.

• We asked the SO groups to discuss, in preparation for the next delegate meeting, whether we should campaign for CLPs to have a bigger share of the vote at Labour Party conference; and the use of 'bad language' in the paper.

• We heard reports from local groups on increasing work in CND, especially YCND.

• Nottingham SOA called for a regular anti-racist page in the paper.

Where to find us

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

• SCOTLAND

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

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

• NORTH-WEST

Wallasey. Contact Colin Johnston, 1 Wellington Rd, Wallasey.

Liverpool. Contact 733 6663. Next meeting: Thursday January 20, 7.45pm at the Swan Hotel, London Rd: '1983 — what prospects for capitalism?' SO is sold at Progressive Books, Berry St, and at News from Nowhere, Whitechapel.

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

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

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

Rochdale. Contact 353 Rochdale Old Rd, Bury. Group meets second Monday of each month, 8pm, Castle Inn, Rochdale. SO is sold at Metro Books, Bury.

• YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

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

York. Contact: 425739. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, outside the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings.

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

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

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

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

Halifax. Contact 52156.

• WALES

Cardiff SO. Contact 492988.

• MIDLANDS

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

Coventry. Contact Keith White, 75623. SO is sold at the Wedge Coop, High St.

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

Northampton. Meets alternate Mondays. Next meeting January 24. For details contact 713606.

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

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

• SOUTH

Oxford. Meets alternate Thursdays. For details ask paper sellers. SO is sold at the Cornmarket (Saturday, 11am to 1pm).

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

• LONDON

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

Islington. Meets every other Sunday, 3pm at Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Copenhagen St. Next meeting: January 23 — clrs Keith Veness and Pat Longman on 'The Politics of Decentralisation'. February 6: 'Council budget 1983'. For childcare phone Nik, 607 5268.

Haringey. Contact 802 0771 or 348 5941. Meets every other Sunday, 6pm, Trade Union centre, Brabant Rd. Next meeting January 16.

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

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

Newham SO jumble sale: Saturday February 5, 2pm at Harold Road Centre, Harold Rd, E13. South East London. Contact 691 1141.

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

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

Hackney. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane.

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

A programme for Ireland

SO no 115 carries two letters on Ireland, both critical of John O'Mahony's article in SO 113 and of SO's Irish coverage in general. Peter Jones makes a valid criticism of the paper's inadequate coverage of both industrial struggles (e.g. NHS, De Lorean) and of developments within the Republican movement — notably the emergence of a campaigning, leftist current around people like Gerry Adams, in opposition to the old guard militarist nationalists. I hope comrade Jones' constructive criticism will be taken to heart by SO.

Tony Richardson's letter, however, is a horse of another colour. He typifies the kind of maximalist, abstract sloganising that has passed for 'analysis' for too long within the British Trotskyist movement. Apparently incapable of developing any programme beyond the endless repetition of timeless truisms ('the only solution is a socialist united Ireland'... 'this means connecting the anti-imperialist struggle with the need for the working class to take power through a socialist programme'), Richardson actually reproduces all the methodological errors of 'Militant', albeit with a nationalist, rather than economic bent.

Worse, he counterposes his maximalist phrase-mongering to O'Mahony's proposals for a democratic programme to deal with the national question, which would take into account and (hopefully) neutralise the protestant community's fear of and hostility towards unification. Such a static, dead-



mean by 'fighting for the permanent revolution' in the Irish context? If he uses the phrase loosely, to mean attempting to establish the maximum unity between the national and the economic struggles, as part of the fight for a socialist Ireland, then fine (although it might have been better not to have used the phrase). But I suspect he means more that that — and is attempting to suggest that Trotsky's very precise theory is applicable to the Irish situation.

This suggests either a fundamental misunderstanding of Trotsky's theory, or a considerable ignorance of the nature of Irish society. Trotsky specified that his theory related to countries with a 'belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries', where the peasantry is 'the overwhelming majority of the population'. In such countries, he argued that socialism could only be achieved by the proletariat making an alliance with the 'peasant masses' to attain the 'complete and genuine solution' of the national and agrarian questions.

Does comrade Richardson seriously believe that such a strategy is appropriate in an advanced, industrialised country like Ireland? The idea that 'Permanent Revolution' can be applied to Ireland is surely preposterous, and has led many would-be 'Trotskyists' to the most bizarre conclusions in the past.

Yours,

Jim Denham
Birmingham

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How lack of leadership helped close Kinneil

Dave Milliken looks at why and how the fight against closure collapsed

IN THE course of the eight weeks from November 2 to December 28 a 69% vote by the Scottish miners in favour of industrial action for their wage claim and against closures, was converted into a vote of 12-7 not to support Kinneil.

The implications for the Scottish mining industry are grave. No pits are safe, and the NCB has been given a green light to do their worst.

We can perhaps best understand the failure of the 'Save Kinneil' campaign if we compare the actions of the miners at Kinneil with the actions of the Scottish NUM executive (and indeed of the national NUM leadership: Arthur Scargill was heard speaking about his speeding charge more than about Kinneil).

It had been known for some time that the NCB were going to announce the closure of Kinneil, with the disappearance of 320 jobs, but the timing, the Monday before Xmas did surprise many.

On hearing the news, NUM Kinneil branch met immediately and decided



to take whatever action was necessary to prevent the run-down, and specifically not to carry out recovery work, i.e. removal of machinery etc.

That same day, the back shift were instructed to start recovery work, which they refused to do. The following two shifts were given the same instructions and also refused. The strike was thus underway.

Pickets were organised and in the course of the next week all 19 Scottish pits were visited. Not all of

them, however, backed this unofficial request for support. By Tuesday 28 December, the day of the delegate conference to decide on further action, six pits were on strike, with others seriously undermanned (contrary to the information, or lack of it, in the media).

Since Sorn, which had been shut down before Xmas, and the remaining Ayrshire pits, four out of five of which voted for a strike at the conference, had not yet returned after

Xmas, a significant level of support had been demonstrated.

The Scottish miners' representatives — their executive — showed less urgency than the Kinneil workers. They contributed little more than hot air.

Kinneil was prominent in the 'Miner' and a special issue of Scottish Miner was entirely devoted to the implications of Kinneil. It carried an extensive report of a packed public meeting in Bo'ness in which NUM representatives debated

with Wheeler, Scottish director of the NCB, the economics of closure, demolishing the NCB's arguments.

But the remainder of the Executive campaign was various officials talking to the press — "There will be no let up by Scottish miners in their fight against pit closures" said McGahey on November 1. "Scottish miners are preparing for an all-out fight over pit closures" he stated on 3 November. "Conference [delegates from pits]

has given us instructions that if action is required, action must be taken to pull out the entire Scottish coalfield to support Kinneil or others threatened with closure" said George Bolton, Scottish vice-president, on November 21.

The official campaign conducted was only a propagandist one, aimed more at publicity to the 'general public' than to build the support within the Scottish and British workforce which was needed to take on the NCB and win.

On McGahey's first visit to Kinneil after the occupation he told them that the situation wasn't looking promising. The groundwork for the unpromising position had been well and truly laid by the Executive's lack of effort to mobilise support amongst their members.

And then why did the Executive recommend that the conference vote against strike action?

There is probably a higher degree of loyalty by NUM members to their leadership than in any other union. Kinneil branch chair Jim McCallum's reaction when I asked him last week what he felt of the Executive's campaign was that "I'm not prepared to attack the NUM to a newspaper. If I'm criticising them, then it'll be at an NUM meeting."

It may well be that the support would not have been there. We will never know. But there comes a point when leadership has to take the lead. The

"we'll support any action you take" mentality is inadequate especially on jobs.

Job cuts and closures are difficult issues to fight; there have been few victories on this front (although perhaps the most spectacular was by the NUM two years ago) and little action is likely so long as leadership brings up the rear.

The collapse of the Kinneil fight torpedoed battles against closures in South Wales and Kent, and set the whole NUM back. If the NUM Scottish area executive had recommended strike action and had the recommendation, then that would have been worse for their bureaucratic credibility. But would it have been worse for the working class than the executive's collapse without a fight?

In the end it was another example of bureaucracy within the labour movement. The process is relentless. Militancy is sat upon by leaderships who make use of all the rhetoric at their disposal — until they announce that much as they would like to take action, the membership has let them down once again.

It took eight months in the case of the health workers and eight weeks for the miners.

The process will continue until this sort of 'leadership' is replaced by people prepared to take a stand and actually fight for the interests of their members.

"Somebody passed the ball to the men"

Yorkshire NUM militant Dave Douglass spoke to Socialist Organiser

WHAT is your view of the Kinneil pit closure defeat and what are the implications for resisting further closures?

It was a disaster. It was a mistake for the Scottish NUM leadership to rely on unofficial action.

Scottish miners have always been constitutionally minded and in fact voted 80% for strike action in the ballot. The Executive had the authority to call action but someone passed the ball to the men.

Noone said the occupation of Kinneil was wrong when it began. The miners crossed the picket for two reasons. One was the pressure of the Xmas week pay packet, the other was the fact that the picket was unofficial.

I personally don't think this should make any difference, but on this occasion the men were waiting for an official call. The conference went the way it did because the officials recommended acceptance to the Executive who then recommended acceptance to the conference. That's what did it.

The effect on the Welsh miners can only be one of demoralisation, though I

have no doubt that Yorkshire is strong enough to hold. In my view last year's ballot was a tactical blunder; the two questions, about the pay offer and closures, should have been put, but with room for two separate answers.

If pit closures had been put separately, there would have been a massive vote to fight which would have taken the middle stump out of the press campaign about tying the two issues together.

What is the likely effect now on the National Coal Board's plans?

I don't see them launching an all-out attack before a general election. But the employer has now got the thin end of the wedge and will press the advantage.

With steel and other industries running down the NCB can't go on for ever with 40m tons on the ground. There must be a limit to that. The Board will be paying more to store the coal than mine it.

Then there is the privatisation threat. Their long-term prospects must be to

massively reduce coal output. That could leave us with the Selby complex in Yorkshire and Notts, with nothing in Scotland and the North East.

It is known that long-term plans are for the development of nuclear energy; each PWR nuclear fuel station means the closure of 41 existing power stations relying on coal.



Scargill — 'not a Messiah'

The Tories have been taking their time getting ready for their next major battle with the miners. We've been going through a softening-up process.

How do you assess the state of the national leadership?

Arthur Scargill has been looked to as a Messiah. Even right wingers voted for him, though they want changes without a struggle. He is not that.

Though a brilliant orator, he is only as good as his team, and the team he's got on the national executive are, at best, non-political militants who don't understand the climate and have no slogans or strategy for it. The worst are right wingers who want to derail any initiatives and, frankly, don't believe in the union. Trevor Bell is an example.

A lot of the right-wing branches in Yorkshire that Scargill managed to keep in check have become increasingly active since he left to take the national presidency, and the balance of power on the Yorkshire Executive has begun

to shift.

The right wing, previously in full flight, began to get bolder. An example is the candidate from North Yorkshire for the Yorkshire Presidency election. His election platform was that they'd always supported the bonus scheme and that the Tories had some good things to say about the trade unions.

What are the main issues coming up in Yorkshire?

Closures are the main concern. These could arise within a very short period.

Yorkshire has a policy of strike action against closures of pits except in cases of proven exhaustion and will resist run downs. With privatisation, the legislation has already been altered to allow privately-owned pits to employ twice as many employees, though still in limited numbers. Yet new technology means 150 people can now produce coal on a mass scale.

Things like the selling-off of Selby coalfield which is a prime site, would probably need another election mandate before being tried. Such a move would be fought against very bitterly.

Things have gone no way far enough for them to be allowed to get away with that. The same goes for attacking the closed shop.

ACAS called in

PAUL Hobbs, shop steward for the ten sacked workers at Stanfords Map Shop, told SO:

"Management have agreed to a meeting at ACAS on Monday the 24th. Before they've said there was nothing further to discuss. So clearly our picket, which has the official support of ACTSS, is having an effect on their trade and it's embarrassing them."

"They may try and offer to pay us off to make us go away but we'll be restating our case for full reinstatement and union recognition."

Tories block deal

THE Tory government is helping Rowtons in their long war of attrition with TGWU strikers at Rowton's Arlington House hostel in Camden.

Camden Labour council is ready and willing to buy the hostel and employ the TGWU members at a decent rate of pay — not the £30-odd a week that they struck to improve. But to buy it needs permission from the Department of the Environment, and that is being blocked.

In an effort to speed the purchase, on January 17 the strikers, jointly with the Residents' Association, the

Previously, management have only offered re-engagement under different terms for all the sacked workers except Paul.

"The London book-sellers branch of ACTSS which was set up a couple of months ago has been growing. We've had a couple of new bookshops join as well as recruiting staff at the shops where there are already members."

Messages/money c/o ACTSS, 173 Clapham Road, London SW9 0QF. (Cheques payable to Stan-ford Strike Account).

Chalk Farm ward Labour party, and the Arlington Action Group, presented the council's Labour group with proposals to pressurise Rowtons under public health regulations.

The strikers still need money, and support on their picket lines — at Arlington House, Arlington Road and at the hotels also run by Rowtons, the Mount Pleasant in Calthorpe St and (from 12 to 2 the Grand in Southampton Row.

Donations to Arlington House Strike Fund, c/o 8 Camden Road, London NW1.

T&G "done nothing"

Interviewed by Socialist Organiser, an S&K striker describes the obstacles facing their struggle

ASIAN workers at the Sandhar and Kang cash and carry warehouse in Coventry struck in September against redundancy and the victimisation of TGWU members. Since then local TGWU officials have refused either to back the strike or to defend the strikers against a High Court injunction.

Largely as a result of this, the workers have been sacked, and the injunction has prevented effective picketing.

A Socialist Organiser supporter in the local Foleshill Ward Labour Party spoke to Manjit Singh, TGWU shop steward for the S&K strikers.

Manjit explained that the workers struck because the S&K management "were anti-union, wouldn't recognise the union and victimised members through redundancies, as we made clear in our leaflets."

He said that the negotiations between the management, the official and the workers were "no use. The official said the same things as the management and wanted us to accept redundancy."

After the workers decided to come out "the union did nothing to back the strike."

On the question of the court injunction, Manjit said that this was deliberately done to delay and prolong the struggle "and weaken the picketing."

The bosses were able to do this because the TGWU had refused to back the strike. When the strikers were faced with legal action, Manjit said the officials "didn't say anything in our support and didn't listen to us."

Manjit commented that there was little support from the District Committee and explained that one AUEW member told the strikers that people had been spreading the idea that only one S&K worker was in the TGWU. "We showed him our membership cards to prove we were in the union."

The original picketing,

said Manjit, was effective to begin with, but was stopped by the injunction. The strikers and supporters decided to hold solidarity pickets on Saturdays, and "these were useful to tell the people of the dispute."

He particularly mentioned the support from the local Labour Party, the University and community organisations such as the IWA.

Manjit then explained that "these pickets were stopped because of the legal action, as the solicitor advised." The strikers decided to call off the solidarity action and to return to the picket lines themselves.

"We think our pickets were effective for three to four weeks, then just before Christmas it just wasn't effective as the trade went up and the injunction kept us away from the gate."

The strikers decided to stop picketing. "Now we still hope that the injunction will be lifted."

Manjit said firmly "I am not discouraged by this strike," and commented finally that the injunction had been the strikers' biggest problem, coupled with the lack of union support.

You can help the S&K strikers by:

□ Sending donations to the strike committee, c/o 88 King George's Ave., Foleshill, Coventry.

□ Sending motions from TGWU branches demanding the strike be made official, to the TGWU regional secretary, Brian Mathers, 917 Victoria Street, West Bromwich, B17 8HY, and to TGWU, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1 and to the TGWU District Office, Short St., Coventry CV1 2LS — with a copy to the strike committee.



S&K strikers: "the officials didn't support us, didn't listen to us"

Vauxhall: yes to a fight, no to import controls!

Tony Cashman reports on moves to industrial action in the British branch of General Motors

ON Friday January 7 a meeting took place between Vauxhall Motors top management and the full time officers of the trades unions.

It was reported in the media as discussions about the union's ban on the Spanish-built S-car; the truth was the meeting was called for by Gerry Russel, the AUEW national officer with the main subject matter being the lack of investment and the massive run-down in component and manufacturing areas in this country.

At the meeting Vauxhall management tried to bring up the subject. Alex Kitson, the deputy general



Kitson

secretary of the TGWU said that they could not and would not talk about the S-car, and that if it was discussed they would leave the meeting. So the company more or less stated that they had no plans for investment in manufacturing areas of Vauxhalls, which just reinforced the trade unions' views about the run-down of the British side of General Motors into small

assembly plants.

Since that meeting there has been a meeting on January 13 of the TGWU full-time officials and shop floor representatives where Alex Kitson reported on what was happening.

The national committee, districts, branches and membership had supported the ban.

Contact had been made with the seamen's union, International Transport Union and Spanish unions, and as a follow-up to this Alex Kitson would be leaving for Spain on January 17 to talk again to Spanish unions and to get the information on where, how and when the imports of the S-car start.

A joint meeting of all unions at Vauxhall at national level would be held on January 27 to co-ordinate policy and tactics in implementing the ban.

With less than three months to go before the start of the ban and a strike threatened if necessary by all of the Vauxhall plants, for the first time in their history the unions in Vauxhall's three big plants are working and acting together.

There are plans for joint stewards' meeting inside the plants over the ban. A publicity campaign which is just starting includes badges, car stickers, and leafletting of the local areas around the factories to get the support of local communities.

A strike levy which started in December of a pound a month, and in my own plant at Ellesmere Port, out of 1900 TGWU members, only nine people have not paid so far.

A meeting of all Vauxhall shop stewards will take place on Sunday January 30 (10.30 in Digbeth Hall, Birmingham) with national full-time officials from the unions. The meeting will be chaired by Tony Woodley, the chairman of the union's combine committee. It is important because the shop stewards are planning to make their feelings plain and clear to the full time officers, to stop any ideas of a sell-out.

In short, the Vauxhall unions have built the foundations that if necessary can take them into a joint fight and beat General Motors at a time when they are making a good profit and increasing their share of the market.

But what about the demands of the campaign?

Agree

As socialists we don't agree with the idea of import controls because it means workers in one country fighting and doing other workers out of a job in another, instead of fighting for the company to make a different product or for a guaranteed job. Workers should start questioning why multi-nationals can open factories and employ workers on low wages, while happily making profits out of them and then just sacking them when they are not needed

or when profits aren't high enough. The only way such multinationals can be fought effectively is by international workers' unity.

Although we don't support import controls, if the strike and ban do happen then we as trade unionists will, of course, campaign for the strike to win for three main reasons.

1) There is no doubt that if the unions lose, Vauxhall Motors will carry out mass redundancies and smash the unions just when they have pulled themselves together after losing a bitter, divided strike in 1979 over wages.

2) It will be the first well organised, united fight against redundancies in the car industry for years. It will also give workers hope and the will to fight back at a time when they are demoralised.

3) If the strike and ban do take place, it will mean breaking the Tebbit anti-union laws on issues like secondary and mass picketing, solidarity strikes and blacking. Hundreds of different firms could sue the unions.

Different

But we should argue for different demands. To stop imports of the S-car would be a blow to Spanish workers, but would guarantee nothing for British workers. Rather than fighting about the different shares of GM production allocated to different countries, GM workers need to have a common international strategy to counter the international strategy of GM bosses.

Demands for a guarantee on jobs and increased investment would relate directly to workers' interests, and provide a basis for unity with Spanish GM workers.

The major thing that comes out of the campaign, whether Vauxhall workers fight or not, is that they have created the foundations by united action, which they can use to take on the company over wages and conditions in the future.

**Timex
axe**

1900 jobs are to go at two Timex factories in Dundee; 4,000 AUEW members there voted by a 3-2 majority to strike if there are any compulsory redundancies.

Harry McLevy, AUEW District Secretary, said "If we concede the principle of total opposition for 1900 workers, then the effect is to concede it for all our members."

The Dundee factories recently lost the contract for the new 3-D camera, designed by Nimslo, which will account for the loss of 500 jobs, the remainder to go in watch manufacturing.

Nimslo decided to switch production of the camera to Japan and France because of, in the words of Graham Dowson, deputy chairperson of Nimslo, "serious labour relations difficulties at Dundee" and hoped for production levels not being met.

Since the announcement of the strike threat, Clive Sinclair of Sinclair Research who make the ZX81 and Spectrum computers and who is Timex's major customer, has threatened to take his business elsewhere "overnight" if the strike goes ahead and production is disrupted.

One option for Sinclair is the Fraslen Company which owns a former Timex factory in Besancon, France.

Mr Sinclair has been offered a seat on the board of Fraslen, which is owned by Norwegian shipping magnate Fred Olsen who is a majority shareholder in Timex and Nimslo. Two directors of Nimslo already sit on the board of Fraslen.

The union have now received £10,000 from Dundee District Council and the support of councillors and local MPs, Ernie Ross and Gordon Wilson.

Gavin Laird, general secretary of the AUEW, is to visit the plant this week. But it is clear that the actions of these multi-national corporations must be met with an international trade union response. Direct links with workers employed by Timex in other countries are necessary to combat the situation.

AIR India workers are still picketing at New Bond Street and Heathrow. They have been on strike since July 2 last year, against first the sacking of a shop steward and then the sacking of all the strikers.

While continuing the picket, they are also taking the case to an industrial tribunal. They expect the hearing to be next month.

Messages/money: Air India TGWU, c/o Transport House, 7-9 South Rd., Southall, Middlesex.

Screwing the Gaffers!
By Ray Attwell

The room was full of smoke when this unschooled working bloke

Said the words that put the lawyers in a stew.
You can talk of famous phrases that have solved historic mazes

Of which I understand there've been a few.

The gaffers had their pencils, their accounts and blue print stencils,

And files that went straight back to '45;
They were crying in their beers that they, for twenty years,
Had hardly made enough to keep alive.

Tom and Barry sat so quiet, touched and saddened by a diet
That held the bosses' waistlines' down to fifty.
They heard the gory story of investment without glory.
But the facts and figures seemed a little shifty.

The gaffers, on the table just as fast as they were able
Laid reams and reams of tabulated stuff.
The union boys grew weary, their eyes were wet and bleary
When our hero cried, "Hold on! I've had enough!"

And he looked them in the eye, this uneducated guy,
This unschooled, gnarled, wrinkled working wretch,
He said, "Though I'm not smart I like a bevvie, I've got a heart
And all I know is My Pay Don't Stretch!"

And with Logic absolute he did their facts confabulate,
He put their foolish figures all to rout.
He pricked the hot-air balloons of the company's buffoons,
And the workers in the plant took up the shout.....

"You may think we're not so smart,
But we like a bevvie and we've got a heart,
And all we know is
Our pay Don't Stretch!"

NUJ 'no' to strike call

PROVINCIAL journalists have voted heavily against strike action over their 1983 pay claim.

The penalty for accepting is now — according to the Newspaper Society — that they will not have the £4-£6 pittance backdated to January 1, the date the agreement is supposed to start.

The employers declared that even if the accepted the offer, the NUJ members would lose out for daring to vote on it (they set a limit of January 7 to capitulate).

Scab

The scab organisation — the IOJ — was told it could have a week longer to make up its mind than the NUJ — so long as its executive did not recommend rejection (some hope: rejection is not in their vocabulary).

The journalists voted about five to one against an all-out strike, despite a recommendation from the

Provincial Newspapers Industrial Council and a delegate meeting of chapel representatives.

The crucial factor was the belief by the membership that the strike would be long and bloody, and their doubt that they would win it.

The employers pumped out propaganda — using the papers on which the journalists worked — about the precarious state of their newspapers and the threat from competition (although much of this competition is the same owners wearing a different hat).

This propaganda had less effect than the loss of 700 jobs in the provincial newsrooms over the past two years.

The employers warned that a high wage settlement would lead to rapid job loss. The settlement is minute, but those jobs will be attacked anyway.

**Start the
campaign
now**

GET

Socialist Organiser

READY FOR AN EARLY ELECTION!

by Harry
Sloan

SMALL wonder Margaret Thatcher has refused to rule out an early election. In many ways the summer of 1983 is likely to be the pinnacle of Tory hopes for a further period of office.

With the economy currently running at 1967 levels of output, and redundancies still announced on a daily basis, there is no prospect in even the medium term of a fall in unemployment substantial enough to merit a further delay in going to the polls. Thatcher must be resigned to the prospect of fighting an election with 4½-5 million people jobless or on 'work creation' schemes.

So tight has been the Tory clamp on public spending however, and so draconian the cuts in benefits, housing, health, education and welfare that Thatcher can still reckon on giving a vote-catching tax handout to the most smug and satisfied sections of the middle class in this Spring's budget.

Jingoism

And with her stage-managed trip to the Falklands under her belt, and the hurdle of the Franks Report surmounted, she has rekindled the wave of jingoism which engulfed whole sections of the middle and working classes last summer, and can hope to enlist this for electoral advantage — provided the election is not too far distant.

The disgraceful stance of the Labour leadership — both in supporting the war, and now in criticising the Thatcher government for having been insufficiently efficient imperialists in maintaining the armed defence of the Falklands — means that Thatcher can play the 'patriotic card' with little fear of a substantial response.

There is another important factor which might urge Thatcher to go for a summer election rather than wait until autumn.

The US Cruise missiles destined for deployment at Greenham Common arrive in November — thus heightening the sense of alarm which — according to recent

opinion polls — has now gripped a majority of the population.

It appears that the impact of the Greenham Common peace camp has been a major factor in weakening the Tory support amongst women according to the latest MORI poll.

Impact

Thatcher is of course aware that the movement against nuclear weapons is growing throughout Europe. It is even having a visible impact on the Reagan administration.

There is no reason to suggest that a later date for the election in Britain will do anything but strengthen the impact of the peace movement — to the detriment of Tory support.

With Thatcher as usual playing her cards close to her chest, nobody can be certain exactly what plans are uppermost in her mind.

But it seems likely that a summer election fought on 'putting the Great back into Britain', and on Norman Tebbit's latest plans to 'democratise' the unions by imposition of state control over rule books could be the Tory objective.

Thatcher could also hope in this way to catch the Labour leadership on the hop, with the extreme right wing's witch-hunt half-way completed and causing the maximum confusion among the Party's rank and file.

'Party unity'

As soon as the election date is confirmed, we can expect a rapid 'pre-emptive strike' by the right wing on Labour's NEC to force through a manifesto which avoids any commitment to policies adopted by recent conferences.

And in the name of 'not rocking the boat' and 'party unity' we can expect foot and whole sections of the Labour 'left' to join the retreat.

Key policies the right will seek to squash in any manifesto include the most popular of all — the com-

mitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament, which had barely passed through last year's Blackpool conference before it was publicly disavowed by Roy Hattersley.

Both Labour and TUC leaders will combine once again to hedge on repeated commitments that a Labour government will not seek any repetition of the vicious wage controls which helped bring the downfall of the Callaghan government — and which are now central to Peter Shore's economic proposals.

Other targets for suppression include the calls for the 35-hour week without loss of pay, for renationalisation of State corporations 'hived' off by the Tories, for the reversal of cuts in the NHS and other public services, for the repeal of all racist immigration legislation and for immediate abolition of the House of Lords.

Questions

Even if upheld, such policies would only begin to answer the vast economic and social crisis unleashed by Thatcher's policies and the decay of British capitalism.

They would open as many questions as they answered: how would Labour deal with the probable sabotage by the state machine of nuclear disarmament moves, by the bosses of a 35-hour week, or by the courts and monarchy of the abolition of the House of Lords?

Workers would need to organise independently to pursue the fight for a serious programme of policies to defend their jobs and wages and demand the kind of sweeping nationalisations and socialist policies necessary to create five million new jobs and restore Thatcher's cuts.

But without even the left wing policies adopted by conference, a Labour manifesto would be a pathetically feeble response to the Tory propaganda machine — and Party canvassers would be sent out to fight for votes with both hands tied behind their backs.

The threat of an early election therefore underlines the need to step up the fight in every Labour Party and trade union branch against the witch hunt, and for an immediate turn in the workplaces and on the working class estates to build a socialist campaign for a Labour victory.

The best answer to Thatcher and to the witch-hunters is for Labour Parties to start their election campaigns now, fighting for a Labour victory on conference policies and on every local working class issue. And in London, we must also mobilise immediately, right across the city, to help Peter Tatchell win in Bermondsey.



Thatcher — an early election her best hope for victory

Army scab threat to water strike

"EVEN with troops", reports the Financial Times, "it is estimated by Government contingency-planners that there could be a serious threat to health within 48 hours of the start of an all-out manual [water] workers' strike."

The water workers' strike will also paralyse major sections of industry. Sewage services and clean water supplies will stop.

Water workers in the GMWU, TGWU and NUPE are already banning overtime as we go to press, and an all-out strike is due to start from Sunday midnight, 23rd.

The main fear of activists in the industry is that the National Water Council will propose some tiny improvement — maybe the 6 per cent they originally

wanted to offer, instead of the 4 per cent the government insisted on — and the union leaders will use that as an opportunity to get off the hook.

Because of the tremendous effects of an all-out indefinite water strike, in the past there have always been retreats by both employers and union leaders as they neared the brink of confrontation. This time, with a cock-a-hoop Tory government standing behind the employers, and rank-and-file anger pressurising the union leaders, it could be different.

As soon as the strike starts — if it does — a flood of abuse against the water workers from the media is likely.

Fleet Street has often been compared to a sewer,

and some would call it filthy and rat-infested. But it is a great deal more comfortable and profitable to work in than real sewers. The editors who will hold forth against the water workers endangering public health would themselves never dream of doing a water worker's job for a basic rate of £78.20 to £85.85 a week.

The four per cent offer means a cut in real wages for water workers. Their claim — 15% — is designed only to bring them into line with workers in other essential services.

9,000 troops are reportedly being readied to strike-break. Water workers in London told us that they were not willing to work alongside such strike-breakers, and would walk out and end emergency cover immediately

if they were used.

Other unions — especially the supervisors and the craftsmen in the water industry — should also refuse to cooperate. The use of troops as strikebreakers with the apparent justification of saving life and health is a preparation for their use as strikebreakers without conditions.

Despite their great industrial strength, the water workers will need support — to combat the media's moves to isolate them (remember the power workers in 1971), and to help extend their fight into a generalised challenge to the government.

The best way of doing this would be for the gas and power workers — who both have claims outstanding — to come out for their demands alongside the water workers.

FUND

IT was going to be only £136.30 this week — until this morning's post brought a huge cheque for £100 from an Oxford SO supporter, sending us a week's wages. That's £236.30, bringing the January total to £882.85.

But we mustn't slacken off now! We still have to pay all our running costs, and put some money towards paying off our debts. So if your group hasn't sent a donation to the fund this month, have a collection this week!

Also this week, groups should be making plans for February fund raising. We heard at the delegate

meeting that SO groups in East London, Lambeth and Islington have plans for jumble sales; Edinburgh, Sheffield and York for socials; and Coventry is planning a sponsored swim.

What about the rest of you?

Thanks this week to: three Oxford SO supporters who gave £10, £20 and £100; Ann McKinley £5; Kath Munby £40; Richard Emmett £20; Hyndburn SO supporters £10; Southwark/Lambeth SO proceeds from a social £26.30; Alex Simpson, Cambridge £5.

Send money to: The Treasurer, 214 Sickert Court, London.N1.