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Labour
Party

Socialist ORGANISER

Fight for
socialist
policies

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No.133 May 26 1983 25p

Claimants and strikers 10p

Right hand down a bit, then
steady as she goes

ON COURSE FOR FIVE MILLION JOBLESS



EACH Labour vote missing on June 9 will be a note of consent for five million unemployed.

The Cambridge Economic Policy Group has forecast 3.7 to 4.2 million registered unemployed by 1988, and over 5 million by 1993, according to the Observer last Sunday, if present government policies continue.

The EEC predicts 3.7 million jobless in Britain in 1988. The semi-official National Institute of Economic and Social Research foresees continuing growth of the dole queues. Cambridge Econometrics (which is quite separate from the CEPG, and uses radically different forecasting methods) reckons that registered unemployment will be over four million by 1988.

The government's own economic plans assume an increase of 250,000 in unemployment over 1983. And on March 2 the official National Economic Development Council voted to postpone publication of a report on the British economy because (in the words of CBI president Campbell Fraser) it was "so gloomy that people reading it would want to get the first boat out of the country". CBI director-general Terence Beckett agreed that "publication would not be productive, because there was not a single item of cheer in it" though "he did not dispute its factual contents".

All these economic forecasts are essentially nothing more than sophisticated versions of the method of looking at a graph and guessing that it will go on in the future much as it has gone in the past. But there is every reason to believe the general picture they paint.

If the unemployed who don't bother to register (mainly married women) and people on government schemes are included, then unemployment is *already* about five million. And behind the rise in unemployment is a dramatic decline of basic industries — a decline which can only accelerate with a new Tory term of office.

Cars, steel, coal, rail — these industries, once central to

British capitalism, are now being chopped to pieces. If re-elected, the Tories will privatise BL, probably dividing it into several companies, junking parts of it, and cutting many more jobs. They will continue McGregor's work in British Steel, probably feeling confident to close Ravenscraig. They will speed up pit closures. And they will implement in one form or another the Serpell proposals for a drastic cut in the rail network.

Britain's top 50 private manufacturing companies now have 44% of their production and 38% of their employment overseas — and this drive of capital overseas is continuing fast.

'New industries will emerge to take their place', the Tories say. But investment is, and continues, low — especially state investment, which over the last eight years has fallen from 9.5% to 5% of national income.

'It's all due to the world economy', they declare. But what

People's March

Diary, pictures
and comment

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causes the chaos in the world economy, if not the same blind rule of profit that the Tories so vocally champion in Britain?

The shifts in the capitalist world division of labour have left Britain's basic industries crumbling. The Tories' plan is to push through this process of demolition as brutally as possible, taking advantage of it to beat down the working class and transform Britain into an economy with low wages, vicious speed-up in the factories, mutilated and crushed trade unions, and minimal overheads in the way of public services. Then, they reckon, Britain could see a revival — as a sort-of South Korea of Western Europe!

A Labour vote on June 9 is a first step in fighting back. If we can get the vote out for a Labour victory, it will be a demonstration that the labour movement is not resigned and demoralised, but on its feet, fighting, and demanding reconstruction in place of demolition.

Labour is pledged to increase public spending and public investment, restoring services and restoring jobs. The Labour leaders must be held to that pledge.

However, that's only the first step. Increased state spending alone will do no more than dent unemployment; and, faced with problems of inflation and balance of payments, a new Labour government led by Foot and Healey is likely to do what Mitterrand and Mauroy have done in France, and declare a U-turn.

A 35 hour week without loss of pay is also Labour policy, though it is not being featured in the official campaign. Alongside fighting for a Labour vote, socialists need to be fighting for this 35 hour week policy, for work-sharing without loss of pay, for nationalisations to make possible reconstruction of industry under workers' control, and for direct action to defend jobs and win such measures.

What Tories want to do to us next Centre pages

EDITORIAL

Labour's Generals sound the retreat

THE Times on May 24 reported a comment that goes a long way to explain Labour's problems in this general election.

As Jill Craigie went on a walkabout with the press in Bermondsey, the first voter she met was Karen Downey, who asked her: "What are you going to do for the country? They say Labour's working class, but whoever gets in it's the rich for the rich and the poor for the poor."

Ms Downey had voted Alliance in the February by-election. Labour canvassers will have come across the same response time and again — working class voters with a pretty clear awareness of the basic facts of class inequality, who nevertheless may abstain or even vote Alliance or Tory because of despair at Labour's record.

Yet many Labour leaders seem set on deepening that despair. John Silkin last week said that Labour's policy to cut defence spending did not mean that spending would actually be cut. The percentage of national income taken by defence would be reduced — by national income rising. How all this related to Labour's pledge to scrap nuclear weapons, he didn't explain.

James Callaghan — with Michael Foot silent beside him on the platform — told a meeting in Cardiff that Labour's "no wage controls" pledge meant wage controls. The National Economic Assessment would include regulation of wages: "I say to the trade unions if they have any mental reservations on this, they will not be playing fair by the next Labour government, or by those who are unemployed."

Len Murray was revealed to have consented in a National Economic Development Council meeting to the suppression of an NEDC report on the economy because it was too gloomy!

Dennis Healey has assured voters that Labour's policy of scrapping nuclear weapons actually means *keeping* nuclear weapons, only promising not to use them *first*. The Labour manifesto promises no return to the wage-control policies of 1975-9 — and Healey has declared that wage controls must be introduced *quicker* under a new Labour government.

So while the Tories are campaigning on the basis that Labour represents the demon of 'Marxist socialism', Labour leaders are busy declaring that all their radical policies really don't mean what they say at all.

Labour thus loses out both ways. Its policies are denounced by the Tories, and instead of defending those policies, the Labour leaders rush to explain that no offence was meant really. So there's no fight to convince people of Labour's radical policies.

Those who agree with policies like unilateral nuclear disarmament see Labour as unable and unwilling to fight for them. Those who see these policies as evil and dangerous hear no counter-argument: instead, the Labour leaders' frantic effort to distance themselves from the policies will tend to confirm all these fears.

What the Labour leaders won't do, local Labour Parties must do. The Tories have posed the issues starkly: capitalism versus socialism.

We have to answer in equally clear terms. We have to convince those voters who despair that if they not only *vote* Labour but also *join* their Labour Party and trade union and *fight* with them against the leaders who seek only to placate the Establishment, then society can be changed.

Why a vote for Labour is a vote for gay liberation.



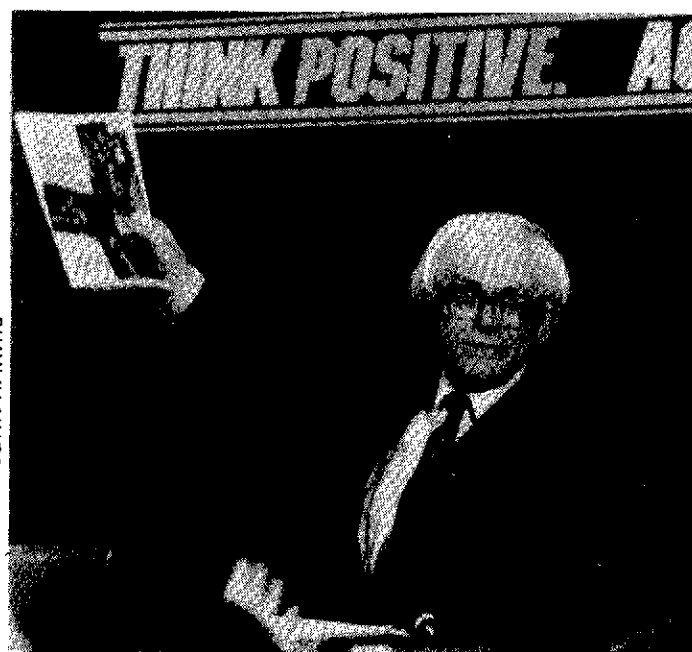
Gay rights leaflet gives a lead

The Labour Campaign for Gay Rights has published a model campaign leaflet. Copies from LCGR, 61a Bloom St, Manchester 1.

DO we really want Britain run on Victorian values?

Four years of Thatcher's government have meant drastic cuts in our most basic services. Even the Health Service is being cut, which has led directly to the import of blood products from the USA which passed on AIDS to haemophiliacs in this country.

The basic principle of the Tories is simple: "The pursuit of equality is a mirage. Opportunity



Foot with Labour manifesto means nothing unless it includes the right to be unequal" — Margaret Thatcher.

In other words, the destruction of a system where basic needs — housing, health, education — are for all, and the replacement of this by the greed society, where only those who can afford it get what they want.

The Tories go on and on about the family. There is pressure to conform with her idea of how things should be, and those who do not fit in are increasingly out on a limb. Labour is the only party that recognises the diversity of Britain today — something which gay people are particularly aware of. Labour is building on that diversity to help enrich all our lives.

Many Labour local authorities are now introducing employment clauses which outlaw discrimination on the grounds of 'sexual orientation'. Authorities which have done this include the GLC and the ILEA — which would both be abolished by a further Tory government. The next Labour government will amend the Employment Protection Act to stop a person's sexuality being an admissible reason for

dismissal.

Labour councils in many areas now recognise what gay people give to the community — not least in their rates bills — and are beginning to give something back. The GLC is funding a lesbian and gay centre for London and has given grants to many gay organisations including Lesbian Line, Gay Switchboard and the Gay Teenage Group. Other Labour councils in London are also fund-

ing local gay initiatives. Another Tory government could mean a virtual end to local council autonomy as more and more powers are stripped away. Labour is committed to local democracy.

The relationship between the police and the gay community has never been worse. Yet the government want to reintroduce their Police Bill which would:

*Allow the police to arrest anyone on the streets 'if they suspect them of having committed any crime'.

*Hold them in custody for four days, and for 48 hours without even letting them see a lawyer.

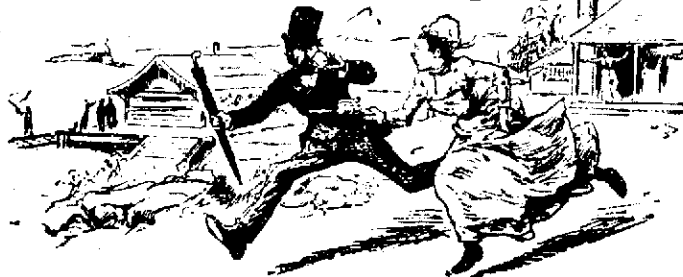
*Allow police to gain access to doctors', social workers' — even priests' — records.

This is a recipe for confrontation. Labour on the other hand would introduce measures to curb the abuse of police powers by making the police accountable for locally elected committees. At present the police in London are accountable to no-one except the Home Secretary.

The next Labour government will amend the law so that 'importuning' and 'sex in private' are dealt with for gay people exactly as for heterosexuals. Labour is also committed to reducing the age of consent, working towards introducing complete equality before the law for lesbians and gay men. The Tories are silent on this.

Four years ago who would imagine we would now have the worst level of unemployment and the heaviest tax burden ever. Four years ago the Tories promised the earth. What will they promise this time... and where will we be after five more years of Victorian values?

No time to lose!



* Socialists for a Labour Victory, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

JOIN

Membership of National CND is £6 (adult), £9 (couple), £3 (student) and £1 for Youth CND (under 21). Send to CND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4.



Thousands back day of action against the Bomb

THE LOCAL reports below cover only a small cross-section of about 600 events, demonstrations and protests in England on May 24. And those 600 events in turn were only part of an international women's day of action for peace.

In Britain hundreds of thousands of women took part — though not the millions that would have been needed to make initial hopes of a women's general strike come true. Labour Party women's sections were actively involved in many areas, but it seems that organised trade union involvement was mostly limited to a number of NALGO branches.

Active and public identification with the protest by prominent Labour Party and trade union women, or even strong publicity for the Labour Party NEC's support for the day — say, the Labour Party giving over its daily press conference that day to a platform of women peace campaigners — could have boosted both the action and Labour's election campaign. But Labour leaders were too busy trying to fudge the manifesto's unilateralist pledge out of existence.

The job now is to use the contacts, links and organisation built up for May 24 to take the fight for unilateral nuclear disarmament further into the labour movement (especially the trade unions) and the women's movement.

The next major activity planned is an international women's blockade of Greenham Common on July 4 to 8.

LEICESTER saw a whole range of activities on the 24th. There were a midday demonstration and rally; strike action by 50 women NALGO members, supported by some men; demonstrations at British Telecom (who have an underground communications centre), Cundys (a firm that decorates air force quarters at Greenham Common) and the army recruitment office; a peace studies session at the University School of Education and an exhibition at Countesthorpe college, a tour of Leicestershire villages; banners and washing lines strung with symbols of life put up along the main roads into Leicester and in Leicester station; peace camps in

Don't get caught!

IN THE rush for the election, don't forget this year's Labour Party conference.

The deadline for resolutions is July 8. Normally wards would discuss them in June. But now most regular June ward meetings will be cancelled.

Make sure your ward organises a special meeting in June to discuss resolutions in time to go through the GC for the conference schedule.

The last Socialist Organisation delegate meeting decided to back model resolutions from the Labour Committee on Ireland, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (its resolution on the 'Greenwich amendment', and the constitutional amendment to clause 9), and the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights. There will also be a SO model resolution on incomes policy.

Also: the closing date for payment of affiliation fees is June 10. Make sure your CLP treasurer doesn't miss it, or you lose your vote!



'Die-in' in Coventry shopping precinct



Peace campaigners joined the People's March

About 5,000 women rally in Trafalgar Square

a park and in the town hall square; and a lot besides.

There were at least six different leaflets produced for different activities during the day.

Labour Party support was shown by local councillors Sue Waddington, who spoke at the 1,000-strong rally, and Pete Soulsby, who helped with the creche all day.

DERBY: There was a 12 hour vigil outside the Rolls Royce factory, which makes parts for Trident. SHEPHERD: A large demonstration took place at Amey Roadstone, a firm that supplies granite for work at Greenham Common. LOUGHBOROUGH: Activities included factory leafletting and demonstrations outside schools, hospitals, and construction firms.

EAST LONDON: women from the Labour Party, East London peace group, and Greenham Common itself came together outside the London Hospital at noon.

For two hours we distributed leaflets, talked with passers-by, offered people the chance to buy — with specially-made 'paper money' — items from a display board: they prefer to have the money spent on weapons or on the health service?

Hackney women toured the area in a float, passing the London Hospital, the crowd of 200 outside Bethnal Green hospital, and a family planning clinic which had been decorated with graffiti about defence spending and hospital cuts.

The float attracted a crowd of well over 100 to Hackney Town Hall for a rally.

ISLINGTON: Many women council workers came out on strike — Islington NALGO had voted to strike and got approval from the

union's emergency committee.

There was activity all day. Leafletting at tube and BR stations and in the streets got a good response: many women were reading the leaflets rather than putting them straight into their bags.

There were stickers everywhere and posters up in some shops and offices as 500 women (with many children and banners) marched with a ragtime band to Highbury Fields, where food was laid on for us by men who had struck in support.

SOUTHWARK: After planting white crosses on Peckham Rye, women marched to the Imperial War Museum, where we put a wreath on a gun, danced and sang.

Hospital

HARINGEY: a rally at the Prince of Wales hospital, which is threatened with closure, aimed to underline the link between the arms drive and health service cuts.

There was also a stall, an exhibition, a float, and leafletting at Wood Green Shopping City, with a good response to a petition.

Members of Haringey NALGO struck for the day. And there was a 24 hour vigil and fast at Hornsey Town Hall organised by a 'Families Against the Bomb' group.

OXFORD: 20 women were arrested when they lay down in the street to stop traffic at Carfax, but a lot of publicity was gained.

The Trades Council co-sponsored a demonstration and rally in the evening.

NOTTINGHAM: women from the Raleigh factory and from the County Council NALGO branch were among the 100 at a rally.

COVENTRY: A women's peace camp was organised for the day, and there were die-ins in five different spots in the main shopping precinct. Coventry Labour Women's Council held a rally in the evening attended by around 100.

ROCHDALE: There was a good response passers-by to street theatre in the town centre at midday. After that, some of us went to Manchester, and others went to a demonstration at Stoodley Pike, a memorial to victories in the Napoleonic Wars, out in the countryside. About 50 women and 100 children gathered at Stoodley Pike, and then walked to the Job Centre in Todmorden to underline the links between the arms drive and unemployment. BURY: At midday women encircled Kay Gardens, in the town centre, sang songs, and leafletted. They also petitioned the council to reinstate Bury's Nuclear Free Zone status.

MANCHESTER: Many hundreds of women held hands round Piccadilly Gardens, near the main bus station, at afternoon rush-hour time, and then staged a die-in. There was a good response from many passers-by.

Manchester CND is planning a festival on June 4.

TRAFALGAR SQUARE: About 5000 women gathered in Trafalgar Square from 6pm for the London-wide women's protest for peace. After singing some songs, we made our way in small groups down Whitehall to the Ministry of Defence — a grim, massive building, with great steel doors, built to withstand Russian tanks no doubt.

Several chains were formed round the building, with police following suit and making a chain

of their own. A number of women were arrested.

There were women from all over London arriving as their local activities finished. Women brought banners from the Clapham Common 'peace camp', set up near the threatened South London Women's Hospital, and many women brought NALGO placards with 'hospitals, not bombs' written on them.

Despite a huge police presence many passers-by and bus passengers showed their support.

Reports from: Colleen Molloy, Jenny Fisher, Jo Thwaites, Amanda Barnes, Mary Corbishley, Anne Marie Sweeney, Rowena Jewers, Anne Crowder, Kate Williams, Sue Arnall, Julia Redman, Judith Bonner, and Jim Denham.

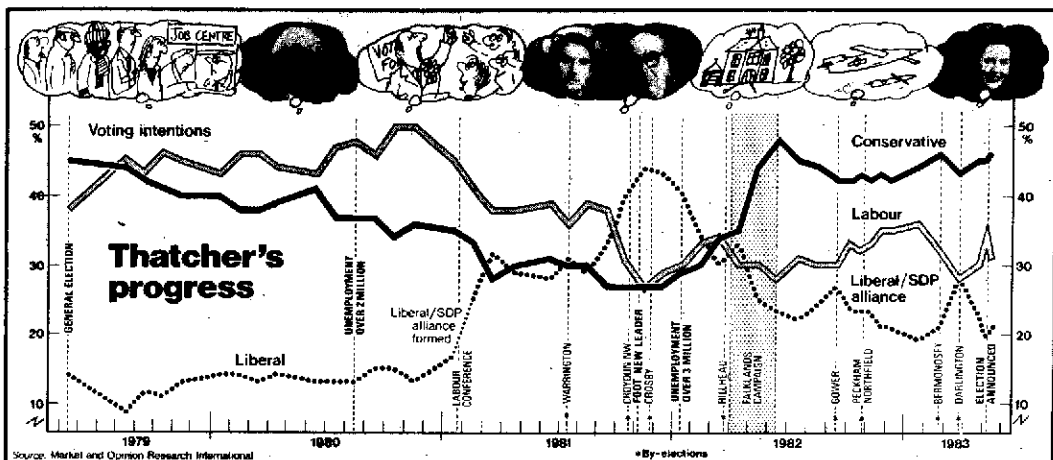
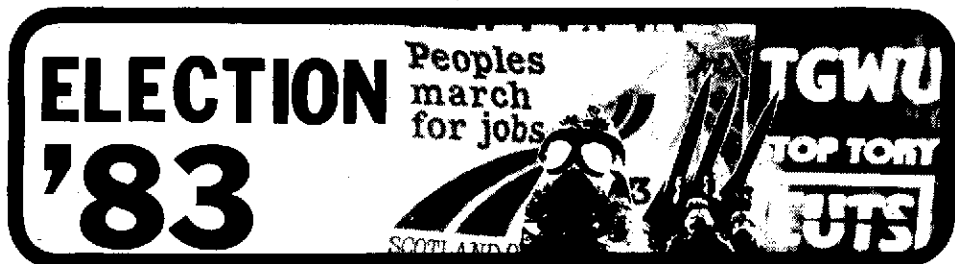
WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK 10p

STOP TORY ATTACKS ON OUR RIGHTS!

VOTE LABOUR

New issue 10p plus postage from 10b Landseer Rd, London N19

INSIDE: Why we're voting Labour...



Can Labour win? With a good campaign - yes! The chart above shows how the Tories only got a lead, quite suddenly, with the Falklands war fever (and the Labour leaders' floundering between feeble pacifist pleas and jingoist bluster). As the facts come out about the Belgrano and the cost of 'Fortress Falklands', more and more people must be seeing the criminal folly of that war. The Tory lead could yet vanish as quickly as it appeared.

Using the policies we fought for

WHILE Labour leaders seem to be joining a competition as to which of them can publicly junk the greatest number of manifesto commitments before polling day, many local Labour Parties are sticking to their policies.

Mick Cashman from Wallasey CLP told us: "We're fighting on Labour Party policies, and we're confident of winning. We've had a lot of support from trade unionists, including the Labour Party workplace branches at Cannell Lairs and Vauxhall, and CND members and tenants' associations are also helping with the campaign. We're recruiting new members".

Many local Labour Parties are campaigning boldly on unilateral nuclear disarmament even where they have fudged other issues. Some women's sections and

LPYSs have written their own leaflets - Peckham LPYS and York LPYS, for example, have been able to get out youth leaflets based on the 'Socialists for a Labour Victory' text - and won the right to platform speakers at Labour election meetings.

Examples of Labour election campaigns being linked in with direct working-class struggles are unfortunately none too common. But in Basingstoke the election address includes not only items about what a Labour MP would do in Parliament if elected, but support for industrial action against cuts and privatisation: and one ward has put out a leaflet on election expenses to campaign against the plans by Tories on the local council for privatisation of refuse collection.

From all indications Margaret Thatcher's "chance to wipe out Marxist socialism" line will be reproduced, only more crudely, in

local Tory campaigns - and Alliance campaigns, too. Take Islington South, for example.

SDP candidate George Cunningham's first leaflet contains not a single policy item, but a picture of a boot stamping on a snake labelled 'creeping extremism'. "The extremists are taking over in Islington", it says. "They've got control of the Borough Council. They've got control of the GLC. But you've still got George Cunningham..."

The Tory leaflet also has no policies. It takes the argument that "a Socialist MP would be a puppet of the extremists" for granted, and directs its main argument against the SDP: "Only a Conservative vote can beat the left wing Socialists".

'Red menace' campaigns like this cannot be fought by shuffling apologies, timid disavowals, and 'more moderate than thou' acts. Working-class voters want to know what Labour will do about jobs and bombs. Clear socialist answers can convince them and leave the Tories and Alliance screaming their abuse into deaf ears.

Blunders on the right

WHILE THE Labour leadership flaps, fumbles and retreats on conference policies, dismaying many supporters and alienating the undecided, the Tories too are making some blunders - though their friends in Fleet Street ensure them minimum publicity.

First there was the Saatchi and Saatchi gaffe - a party political broadcast which involved hiring a deserted ward in the axed Mildmay Mission hospital and filling it with actors dressed as doctors and nurses.

NUPE members in Tower

Simon Katz

IT IS with deep regret that we have to report the death of Simon Katz, for several years a member of Birmingham IMG and a popular figure on the left in the area. We offer our sincere condolences to all Simon's family, friends and comrades.

Hamlets threatened to strike if the filming went ahead; and the affair leaked to the Guardian and the Daily Mirror - but was largely ignored by the hardline Tory press.

Then there was the absurd Tory leaflet aimed at black people - 'Labour says he's black, Tories say he's British' - which the Caribbean Times refused to print and which was widely condemned by black leaders as a complete travesty.

There was Thatcher's visit to her Finchley constituency which was met and surrounded by a large, angry, chanting crowd of Labour supporters. They were filmed and recorded only by foreign TV crews, while BBC and ITV focused obediently on the Iron Lady of the Falklands.

And the proliferation of embarrassing leaks of economic forecasts and draconian plans to attack union rights and the welfare state are fended off with the aid of friendly editors - who will join Dennis Healey in the queue for more New Year's Honours in 1984 if Thatcher gets back in.

Bishops welcomed: socialists expelled!

AS THE People's March for Jobs heads towards London, and the big rally on June 5, the organisers still persist in their pretence that the unemployment issue is 'non-political'. Almost all the support the march has received has been from trade unions and Labour Parties, but the organisers - largely Communist Party members - seem terrified by the prospect of being identified with the labour movement.

Whilst bishops and SDPers are welcomed with open arms, Labour Party members and trade unionists who have come out to greet the march have been harassed and abused by the 'marshals' who run the march.

As the march entered Birmingham, they called in the police to hold back local Labour Party members and forced them to remove their banners. In Coventry they used a Church Army band to separate off hundreds of supporters chanting anti-Tory slogans from the main march.

Meanwhile, three of the marchers thrown off for chanting 'Maggie Out' and 'Occupancy, Organise, Kick the Tories Out' have continued to follow the march despite being denied food and accommodation by the organisers.

The organisers have attempted to dismiss the expelled marchers as fringe elements and sectarians, but they know that in reality the expelled represent the real feelings of most non-aligned rank and file marchers. And the expelled's credentials speak for themselves.

Pete Cashman, a Socialist Organiser supporter, is branch secretary of the TGWU 6/88 branch, and was sponsored by his branch. Paul Davis is TGWU district organiser for the Wirral, and is on the executive of the North West TUC. Kevin Coyne is a well-known unemployed activist, a member of Riverside CLP and the



People's March comment

TGWU, Mark Holte was sponsored by South Sefton trades council.

Region 6 of the TGWU has already protested to the national organising committee of the march about the expulsions, and several Merseyside trades councils have also objected.

Despite the behaviour of the march organisers, we must continue to build support for the march in the labour movement, and aim to turn the June 5 rally into a massive demonstration for the right to work and for a Labour victory.

PEOPLE'S MARCH (western leg): After some argument, a marchers' meeting on Monday 23rd heard Judith Bonner from the Youth CND National Committee speak on the link between Jobs and Bombs.

The marshals finally allowed the marchers to vote and decide on additional separate meetings for women marchers only in future, a minibus to go to Greenham Common on the 24th, and a woman speaker on 'Jobs, not Bombs' at the Leamington rally.

On the 24th, the march was joined between Warwick and Leamington by a vocal contingent of women chanting, 'What do we want? Jobs not Bombs' (though the marshals instructed the marchers themselves not to join this chant). At Leamington the speakers included a woman from Greenham Common, and the women's organiser of the union ACTT, who said she regretted very much that the marchers were not shouting 'Kick the Tories out'.

Chuck Chapple!



IN Islington North, EETPU general secretary (and TUC president) Frank Chapple has endorsed SDP candidate John Grant. Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour candidate, told us:

Frank Chapple's name appears on the SDP leaflet endorsing John Grant, but on the doorstep I've heard no-one mention it at all.

Among local trade unionists, however, there has been a strong reaction - of anger at the president of the TUC abusing his position. Our campaign has good local trade union support, hundreds of shop stewards working for us, and the backing of all Labour Party affiliated unions locally including the EETPU. In fact the EETPU North London lodge was one of the trade union branches that nominated me for Labour candidate.

We have asked EETPU head

office for an explanation, but we've had no reply yet.

The SOGAT 82 print union conference voted on Tuesday 23rd to condemn Chapple and call for his removal as chair of the TUC.

"We don't want a leader who acts against his own class", declared general secretary Bill Keys. The resolution stated: "An emergency motion should be put to the next general council meeting of the TUC that a vote of no confidence in him be carried and to remove him as chairman".

NUM president Arthur Scargill has also called for Chapple's removal from his TUC post, for "betrayal of the Labour Party and labour movement".

JOHN HARRIS



JOHN HARRIS

The People's March in Coventry



JOHN HARRIS

West Bromwich: women workers greet the March

Marcher's diary: North West leg

One Joe Stalin said to me: 'I thought you were going to start some trouble today with that megaphone: 'Maggie out' and all'

14.5.83
Wythenshaw. Nothing much happened in the morning. Stopped at the Forum in Altrincham. Saw a few bands but due to bad-awful organisation we had to leave before John Cooper-Clarke played. Then the fun started.

Everyone who wanted to chant 'political' slogans marched behind the North-West banner. We started chanting as soon as we set off.

Not a minute later the marshals stopped the march and wouldn't let it move until we promised not to chant.

We stood there for a while arguing against the marshals and CPers calling us 'wreckers' and 'splitters'. We were also told we weren't going to be allowed to continue on the march.

They then manoeuvred the march so that the North West contingent ended up at the back. As soon as we set off we continued our chanting all the way to the end.

15.5.83
Got on the bus to go to the starting point. The marshals were holding a meeting. Peter Lenaham came up to us, acting very nice, and asked Peter Cashman and Kevin Coyne to go outside.

They came back and said they'd been expelled, along with another person from the North West and a Militant supporter from Scotland.

We were given a spiel about how if we supported the march we should leave the bus and the expelled people should stay on.

A lot of people left the bus and we decided to also leave and continue the march until the people were chucked off.

The four expelled marchers stayed on the march until we arrived at Winsford where they had a meeting with the marshals when they were again told to leave.

They all decided to leave and take as many people from Liverpool back with them. One of the marchers, Paul Davis, was reinstated — but this is not that clear yet.

Another of the marchers, Ali from Scotland, a Militant supporter, is continuing the march and we're going to try to help him out with food, money etc., although he seems sure his contacts can sort all that out.

During the march today I had the megaphone and as I was coming up to the South East banner 'our' marshal said to me — 'Go away; we don't want you with that around here. People have been coming and saying to me you no longer represent them; so go and march somewhere else.'



JOHN HARRIS

Later in the evening I got a lift in a car with a couple of Joe Stalins. One said to me 'I thought you were going to start some trouble today with that megaphone. Maggie out and all that. Don't you think your mates were leading you on a bit?'

Due to them being very big, all I said was no. I kept quiet. John Cooper Clarke sent a signed book to a marcher who had complained about missing him.

16.5.83
Winsford to Crewe. The march was one of the most boring yet, all countryside and virtually no population to be seen. We made some serious attempts to get the support of the grass, birds and frogs we passed, but apathy rules.

We arrived at the Rolls Royce factory at about 1.40 pm. There were only 300-400 workers waiting for us. They clapped us in but nothing happened, so most of the workers drifted back in.

We set off for the town centre, passing by British Rail's Crewe engineering works, where there were about a dozen to 20 workers outside clapping us by. There was a short rally and then that was it.

Later in the evening we saw Pete Cashman who'd come back to the march with the rest of the people from Liverpool.

He said how the TGWU No. 6 region had sent out telex's everywhere and that Ron Todd was going to come down tomorrow to get them reinstated.

He asked us to get a resolu-

tion through our Labour Party GMC condemning the apolitical nature of the march and calling for the reinstatement of the expelled.

When Peter asked to be given some food he was told 'We'd rather throw it away than give it to you.'

17.5.83
Countryside, sheep and grass. But John and I did get a bed and blankets at the unemployed centre.

18.5.83
Paul Davis, TGWU official expelled from march for driving the expelled around in his car, still marched.

A very hard slog for about the second or third day running, covered about 20 miles from Stoke to Stafford.

There should be a full

marchers' meeting tonight but at 7pm there's still no sight of it. Beer is 36p a pint but we've got no money.

Began our chanting again, only a handful of people unfortunately, but received no warnings and no sign of expulsions.

For a couple of days it has seemed that the march is past the point of being changed. The opportunity, the people and the money is being totally wasted.

20.5.83
Wolverhampton to Sandwell/ West Bromwich. Set off from the Poly. As we passed by a hospital all along and outside there were nurses clapping us.

People were coming out of shops and leaning out of windows to see us and a lot clapped. Then after a while we came to

some factories where again workers were outside clapping.

As we walked past they joined on to the end of the march.

This continued, lots of workers had come out and they too clapped us by and then joined the march.

All in all there were probably around 500 people there and we heard the local MP, a well known shop steward spoke to us and of course there was a vicar (groan).

Then we were presented with a coffin to carry to No. 10 and as a marshal who lived in the town went to collect the coffin, a group of us chanted 'take him back, take him back...'

Then we marched to lunch in Walsall where we were treated to fish and chips and free drinks, with tea and some other food laid on by the Indian Workers Association.

A YOUNG woman marcher has been thrown off the eastern leg of the People's March on the grounds that she is pregnant.

The marcher herself felt fit and wanted to continue. But the marshals insisted that she be removed for 'health reasons'. They got their verdict endorsed by a male doctor with no relevant experience, and then a marchers' meeting which heard only the marshals' side of the case.

Leicester Trades Council, who sponsored the marcher, supported her wish to stay on the march, and Hull Trades Council has passed a resolution demanding an explanation from the marshals.

It was a very enjoyable lunch. We set off again for Sandwell, stopping for a break at the border into West Bromwich. We arrived at the town soaked after heavy rain. Here we were welcomed by the mayor (no vicars this time).

Then we were treated to an Indian busman singing a poem in his own language. His son also did an Indian folk dance. And that was the end of the day.

Earlier on a steward spotting 'Solidarity' type Socialist Action headings said 'How can any socialist paper have that symbol on it? They support private enterprise.'

21.5.83
Breakfast at 6.30!! Set off to Birmingham which was only about five miles from Sandwell.

As we came near to Birmingham city centre the police came up and formed a chain to stop the support marchers from marching in with us.

The support march consisted of local Labour Party banners, a prospective Labour MP, some union banners and a WRP banner. Reception in Birmingham was very poor.

International news

How revolutionary is the Salvadorean Communist Party?

THE Salvadoran Communist Party has a record as long and squalid as any Moscow-line CP. For fifty years it has rejected the fight for working class leadership of the fight against the dictatorship, and instead doggedly pursued a search for political alliances with sections of the capitalist class.

Its central conception has been of two distinct 'stages' in the revolution, the 'first' of which is the establishment of a 'democratic' bourgeois state. This concept, at best, utopian, has led the CP into outright reactionary policies.

For eleven years from 1969 it followed a cravenly electoralist strategy in alliance with sections of Christian Democracy and the social democratic MNR.

As late as May 1979 the Salvadoran CP insisted that:

'The bourgeois democratic path to solving the political crisis has today to be an inseparable part of substantial socio-economic reforms...'

Five months later the same CP leadership ignored even bourgeois democracy and took five cabinet posts in the October 1979 junta — with catastrophic results for its own credibility as a party.

Government troops stepped up their murder of workers and peasants. Angry strikers kidnapped CP ministers and held them hostage.

By January 1980, in total disarray, the CP left the government and looked for an alternative means of lining up with 'progressive' sections of the bourgeoisie.

They joined the 'left' alliance, the CRM, whose ill-conceived programme they hailed as an 'unstoppable advance of Popular Unity', and then joined the cross-class front, the FDR.

CP General Secretary Shafiq Jorge Handal took a seat on the centralised guerrilla command, the DRU — indicating a miraculous about-face by sections of the left, which had consistently and correctly denounced the CP's politics as 'rightist'.

These facts are no secret:

Harry Sloan reviews the 'left turn' of the Salvador CP

they are well documented, and in the forefront of the consciousness of militants at the time.

Yet now they are being deliberately concealed not only by the legitimately shame-faced leadership of the Salvador Communist Party; not only by their new-found allies of the left and the reformist bourgeois leaders in the FDR; but also by the one-time Trotskyists of the American Socialist Workers Party, who have now openly disavowed Trotskyism and look to Stalinist leaderships in Cuba and El Salvador and the petty bourgeois nationalist leaders of Nicaragua and Grenada as the basis of a new revolutionary international.

To paint up the 'revolutionary' credentials of the Salvador CP is no easy task.

It demands on the one hand suppressing references to the CP's recent involvement in the October 1979 junta. The SWP is more than prepared to do that. A recent issue of its paper, *The Militant* (May 6) contains a potted history of the Salvadoran left which deliberately avoids any reference to the CP's involvement in the junta.

On the other hand, the task of building up 'revolutionary' credentials for the CP demands that its current brand of populist rhetoric be accepted as good coin and retailed by the SWP.

This was done by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes last December in a keynote speech to the SWP's youth organisation the YSA.

He singled out for special praise an article by



El Salvador's obstacles to a 'peaceful road'...

Shafiq Jorge Handal which was produced in 1981 (and reprinted nearly a year later in *Intercontinental Press*, which supports the SWP's line).

In the article, Handal — General Secretary since 1973 — shows clearly that the CP leadership is predominantly affected by its fears of losing credibility and influence in the face of the emergent groupings to its left.

Hoping at all costs to regain lost support, Handal recognises the need to throw overboard some long discredited policies — most obviously the unworkable strategy of electoralism and the 'peaceful road to socialism'.

In the wake of the 1973 Chilean catastrophe (which was brought about by the class collaborationist policies of the Socialist and Communist parties) and in an objective situation in El Salvador where none of the trappings of bourgeois democracy have ever carried much conviction, it is not hard for even a Stalinist to take his distance from the notion of a 'peaceful road' to socialism.

Handal duly does so, declaring — albeit 50 years too late — that:

'The idea of a peaceful road to revolution in Latin America is, in my opinion, tied to reformism.'

He goes even further, and — in contrast to the CP's actual strategy of seeking to purge only particular fascists from the government and carrying through a programme of reforms — Handal actually talks about:

'dismantling the state machinery of the capitalists and their imperialist masters, to erect a new State and a new Power'.

But though Handal talks (in strange terms) about Chile he makes no explicit criticism of the 'Popular Unity' strategy of the socialist and communist parties. Either he has learned nothing of substance, or his unbroken loyalty to the Kremlin forbids him to draw out any useful lessons.

Nor does he draw an honest balance sheet of the CP's past record, even though his speech poses as a form of self-criticism.

He defends the party's eleven year electoral block with the bourgeoisie, which he claims 'was a huge political contribution to the struggle toward the revolutionary movement'. In the ironic sense — that the CP's electoralist line alienated many militants from the CP and helped line them up with more radical organisations to its left, this may be true — but not in the way Handal intends!

He now claims that the CP's electoral interventions:

'freed [the masses] of illusions about the electoral path', so that they understood that there was no other road... than the defeat of the dictatorship by means of violent revolution.'

Yet in October 1979 the Communist Party sent ministers into a junta which was designed precisely to crush revolutionary struggles! Handal, significantly avoids any reference to this. He claims, on the contrary, that the CP decided as early as 1977 to redirect the party towards armed struggle, though they 'delayed two years in doing so'.

What happened in those two years? The armed struggle waged by forces to the left of the CP grew substantially in scope. The Stalinist leadership, still coyly flirting with the bourgeoisie, was getting left behind.

Handal certainly hits the right note when he points out that

'It is curiously symptomatic that the Communist parties have shown in the last decades a great capacity to reach understandings with our neighbours to the right, while, in contrast, we have not been able in the majority of cases to establish relations and stable progressive alliances with our neighbours on the left.'

In case any of his members should fear that he is abandoning the well-worn line of the Popular front, with 'democratic' bosses, Handal hastens to reassure them:

'There is nothing disrespectful or scornful in the denomination "neighbours on the right"; it is only a way of expressing these ideas. The Salvadoran communists swell with pride, [!] honoured by the friendship of a large number of these allies,



FMLN base: CP now aims to achieve by armed struggle the reformist bourgeois government which electoralism failed to secure.

who are firm and consistent fighters for the democratic ideals of independence and social progress.'

Handal goes on to offer explanations of the rise of revolutionary organisations to the left of the CP, blaming previous 'reformist' errors by the CP, and the emergence of a new proletariat, the radicalisation of the agricultural proletariat, and the enormous 'marginal urban society' thrown up by economic development.

In Latin America, leftist organisations based on these strata, Handal admits

... appear even where there are developed communist parties and reappear even after being put down and even physically annihilated; they are not, then, special expressions of the infancy of the workers' movement and communist parties, made obsolete by the further development of these structures, but rather these organisations are repeatedly appearing with greater frequency than the respective communist parties [!]. The communist parties in the majority of our countries are small and have little influence, in spite of the fact that their mean age is about half a century.'

There is no point in CP members believing that they can defeat those left wing rivals by ideological and political struggle insists Handal. 'That schema has failed in Latin America.'

Indeed in Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada it has been non-Stalinist radical forces that have led struggles that inflicted setbacks on imperialism (though of course the Cuban leadership has since been assimilated fully into the Stalinist apparatus).

From these points arises an almost inevitable conclusion: if you can't beat them, join them — and crush the life out of them. And so it is no surprise that Handal winds up arguing that it is the CP who 'first raised and systematically defended the banner of the unity of the left.'

The basis on which the CP seeks unity with the left however is the same as that on which it sought unity with the bourgeois-

ie: a popular frontist programme of building a 'broad alliance' to achieve — now by avowedly armed struggle methods — the reformist bourgeois government which a decade of electoralism failed so abysmally to secure.

So long as this is guaranteed, Handal can offer a few apparently magnanimous gestures, such as

'the possibility — sooner or later — of the formation of a single revolutionary leadership and even the integration of parts [!] of all the revolutionary organisations into a single Marxist-Leninist Party.'

But before the American SWP and its co-thinkers rush to sign on the dotted line for membership of this party, they should note that on this question, too, Handal remains an unregenerate Stalinist. With not so much as a whisper of inner-party democracy, he insists that one fundamental aspect of a 'Marxist-Leninist' party must be 'an iron discipline... impressed upon and maintained in the ranks.'

Neither Handal, nor the party he represents, have moved in real terms to the left: but they have been forced to adapt politically to a new objective situation of intensified class struggle, in which the old CP line brought the danger of total isolation and permanent irrelevance.

Those like the SWP who promote such populist versions of Stalinism as some kind of progressive, internationalist leadership for the workers' movement are actively betraying the programme and principles of Trotskyism and — insofar as any workers heed their advice — cruelly misleading and confusing the working class.

The only way forward for the Salvadorean working class is through the construction of a proletarian revolutionary party that will resist pressures towards class collaboration and defend the political independence of the working class even while engaging in joint military and industrial action with reformist and Stalinist forces.

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Bob Fine

International news

Polish socialist denounces Stalinism from the dock

Official
"unions"
flop

Edmund Baluka, a leader of the Szczecin shipyard workers' struggle in 1970-71, a member of Solidarnosc and a founder of the Polish Socialist Labour Party, is now on trial in Bydgoszcz. These are excerpts from his defence speech, reprinted from the bulletin 'Free Trade Unions' (20p plus postage from 114 John Scurr House, Branch Road, London E14).

"I deny that I am guilty of crimes against the People's Republic of Poland. I am a socialist and I have never nor would in the future engage in any activity which sought to destroy socialism, either in Poland or any other country. There never has been nor will there be in my programme of political action proposals for the use of violence to overthrow socialist systems.

My aim is to destroy the bureaucracy in the state apparatus which in my opinion is anti-socialist.

A leader of the KPN (Confederation for an Independent Poland), Szeremientew, said during his trial "The mechanism which exists in our country is a mechanism which dates from another epoch and in order to get rid of it blood must be shed."

Personally I see this mechanism referred to by the KPN leader as being based on Stalinism. It has already been covered with the blood of the workers of Poznan in 1956, of the Baltic ports in December 1980 and again in December 1981.

The official propaganda of the Polish United Workers Party claims that such events were 'exceptional', 'mistakes' in the exercise of power. My own



Edmund Baluka

The charges against Baluka:

He edited and sold in Poland the information bulletin "The Hornet" in which he called into question the basis of the institutions of the People's Republic of Poland, and in particular, its military alliances, and insulted and ridiculed the leading organs of the People's Republic of Poland; he worked to bring into existence a party of a Trotskyist type; in public declarations he called for action against the united alliance of Poland with the Soviet Union, and in particular for the withdrawal of the Soviet forces stationed in Poland; he insulted the PUPP and the leading organs of the state.

view is very different.

I see those events as the continuity of Stalinism and not 'mistakes' or 'exceptional situations' in the functioning of the state apparatus. I would reiterate with all the strength of my beliefs that the responsibility for the blood already shed and which

can flow again, rests with those holding state power and not the people.

As for myself I put forward the following principle: Socialism can be reformed, Stalinism cannot be reformed.

(...)

When ... the tanks were

brought out into the streets and the state of war was declared, we were faced with the following

fundamental question: how can a socialist government, a socialist society carry on a dialogue using such methods?

(...)

In my opinion, it is not possible to consider the reform of the greater part of the state apparatus. Indeed, it is the basis of the bureaucratic system.

That is why the imposition of the state of war on the 13th December was certainly not just directed against the so-called 'extremists' - since to get rid of small groups would not have required such radical measures.

The state of war was imposed to repress the entire Polish people who were trying to alter the way in which power was used.

The Polish Socialist Party of Labour (PSPL) is fighting so that the idea of socialism regains its credibility and its respect. This remains a very difficult fight because of what Stalinism has done in the USSR and what has been done by the Polish United Workers Party and similar parties in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Roumania, East Germany and Bulgaria.

The programmatic basis of the PSPL is the struggle for political pluralism and for the plurality of parties. Clearly the PSPL has its place within the opposition movement, though this is not to minimise the fact that it has its own role to play and its own objectives.

In an open letter in 1965, Jacek Kuron and Modzelewski put forward their view of workers' councils. I quote: "This is why it is necessary for the working class to organise councils in the workplace, to set up in the country as a whole a system of

representatives from factories and workplaces. This would mean a system of workers' councils and of workers' delegates in a central council. Through this system of councils the working class could formulate a national economic plan, relating to the setting of production targets as well as the allocation and use of products."

This corresponds to the programme of the PSPL and it is my own opinion as well.

The changes necessary cannot be accomplished by a single man or even by a single party, whatever its strength. This task can only be accomplished by the Polish people themselves since it is vital for their interests.

Socialism does not come about through issuing decrees, nor can it be imposed by decrees or violent means. Socialism is the expression of the interests and the will of working people."

"Sinn Fein of Ireland demands that you immediately grant political prisoner status to Edmund Baluka on hunger strike in prison in Szczecin. Baluka, during his visits to Ireland, supported the hunger strikers in the H-blocks, ten of whom died at the hands of the British government. We do not want to see such a tragedy occurring in Poland and we believe that a total amnesty for all those detained, whether sentenced or awaiting trial as a result of martial law, can only help to advance the cause of democratic socialism."

Solidarity against apartheid

IN A recent statement, Solidarnosc leaders in exile have declared their "fullest solidarity with the black majority workers and their independent trade union, which - like Solidarnosc - constitutes a trade union and a grass roots social movement struggling for the respect of trade union rights, basic human rights and democratic freedoms for society".

The Coordinating Office Abroad of Solidarnosc made the statement because it was "perturbed by reports of increased emigration to South Africa by Polish workers as a result of re-

cruitment campaigns by South African agents in Polish refugee camps in Vienna.

"The Office has approached the Austrian national trade union centre... to carry out information campaigns among Polish refugees outlining the true nature of apartheid, and the fact that emigration to South Africa is tantamount to the denial of livelihood to a black worker and therefore contrary to the basic precepts of trade union solidarity embodied in the very name of Poland's independent, self-governing trade union, Solidarnosc".

CIA chief backtracks on leaked war plans

After unguarded statements on the American covert war in Nicaragua leaked out from secret testimony to a Congressional committee, the Director of the CIA has been forced to issue a hasty and embarrassed denial.

CIA chief William Casey had - according to the New York Times - told congressional intelligence committees that the US-sponsored anti-government guerrillas in

Nicaragua were planning a steady increase in fighting, culminating in a pincer assault on Managua later this year.

One Republican Senator echoed this, telling the NYT:

"We were told that there were 7,000 rebels and their numbers are growing. The scenario they presented us has the rebels picking up more and more popular support, which will produce desertions in the Nicaraguan military, all setting the stage for a drive on Managua that forces the Government out of power. They

think it can work."

"They" refers to Casey and to Thomas Enders, Reagan's Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, a leading spokesman on the Central American wars.

The New York Times also quotes "a senior national security official familiar with covert operations in Nicaragua" as saying that one force attacking Managua would come from the North in the CIA bases on the Honduran border; a second would be from the east, drawing forces from Miskito Indians, and a third "Southern Front" would be manned by forces led by Eden Pastora, the renegade Sandinista now in league with the US imperialists.

The NYT sensibly points out that Congressmen are sceptical about the feasibility of these plans and the actual numbers on the ground in the CIA's cobbled anti-Sandinista army of what Reagan has called "freedom fighters".

There is indeed no evidence that the murderous gangs of former Somocista National Guardsmen and CIA mercenaries are securing any significant popular support inside Nicaragua: most of their bloody operations are in the least populated areas.

But Casey's plans are not only ill-conceived: they are also strictly speaking illegal under the terms of the "Boland amendment" passed last December which forbids the CIA from attempting to over-

throw the Sandinistas.

This is why, as soon as the information on his secret testimony leaked to the press, Casey was forced to issue an immediate and unconvincing denial that any such prediction was made.

But an indication of the mood of the far right of Reagan's Republican Party came in an outburst from Barry Goldwater, chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Reagan should declare that US troops will be used in El Salvador - and announce his willingness "if necessary" to invade Cuba, insisted Goldwater.

He claimed that the situation had changed substantially in El Salvador since a month ago - when Reagan won applause from both houses of Congress for his assurance that there were no plans to send US troops to Central America.

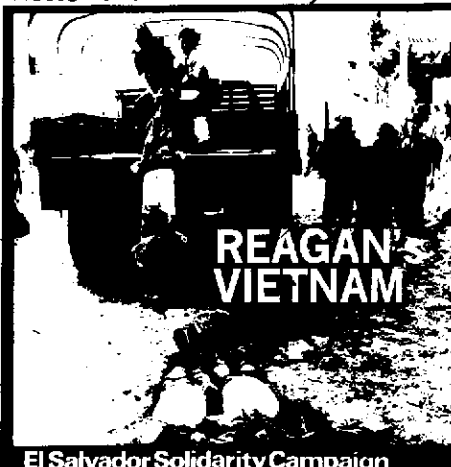
"I would not oppose invading Cuba if it continues to try to Cubanise our friends in South America", declared Goldwater.

The problem which produces such extravagant statements is the failure of massive military and economic aid to "Americanise" El Salvador - where the guerrilla forces of the FMLN are gaining ground on the army of the puppet regime.

Solidarity with the workers and peasants of El Salvador and Nicaragua against the imperialist offensive will remain a central task for the workers' movement as the struggles unfold.

EL SALVADOR

News Bulletin No 20 May-June 1983



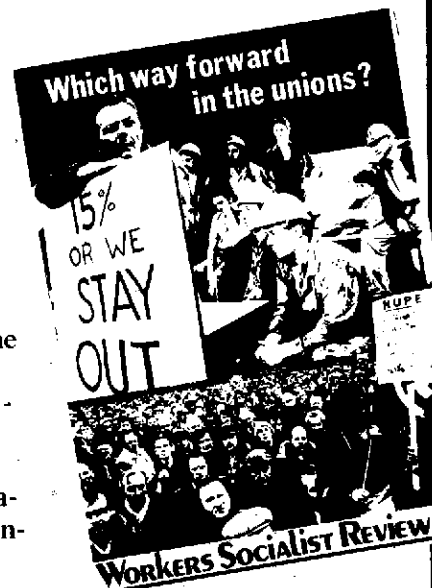
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As if four years were not bad enough What the Tories want

IF YOU thought the last four years were bad, the next five if Thatcher gets back will make them seem like a Mediterranean cruise.

The Tories have produced an arrogant package of plans which make not the slightest concession to the interests of the working class.

And they are relying on the salesmanship of Saatchi and Saatchi, the usual deluge of slanted coverage from the gutter press and television, and the lack of credibility of the Labour and TUC leaders to neutralise or even allow them to win over some of their potential victims.

For the hardline Tory loyalists there is a "robust" mixture of the "three Ps" — Prisons, Police and Privatisation, with the "three Bs" — Ballots, Bombs and the "right to Buy". Together they make up a prescription for some of the nastiest medicine on offer since before the NHS was set up.

Significantly few of those prosperous folk who will buy the medicine intend taking any of it themselves, but look to Thatcher's gang to force it down the throats of the working class.

Centrepiece of a Manifesto which exudes complacency at the "achievements" of the Tory government is a promise of further rich pickings for the prosperous middle class and for bigger speculators from a further bout of privatisation.

Gusto

The motto "if it moves, privatise it; if not, close it down", which has lain behind the Thatcher offensive on nationalised industry and public services, will be applied with gusto.

Industry Secretary Patrick Jenkin has confirmed that if reelected the Tories plan to flog off at least half the surviving elements of the British Steel

Harry Sloan looks at the Tory Manifesto

Corporation, along with a large chunk of British Leyland including the highly profitable Jaguar, Land Rover, Unipart and Truck and Bus divisions.

On top of this the Tories promise to hive off Rolls Royce, British Telecom, British Airways, British Shipbuilders and as many airports as possible.

This extension of what are effectively new "licences to print money" in virtually fool-proof profitable ventures, follows on the Tory sale of Cable and Wireless, Associated British Ports, British Aerospace, Britoil, British Rail Hotels, Amersham International and the National Freight Corporation.

In each of these cases the Tories sold off profitable concerns at incredibly low prices for private speculators to make a killing, and for capitalist institutions subsequently to secure fat dividends. Cable and Wireless shares, for example, were sold off by the Tories at 168p a share: 2½ years later they stand at an astonishing 415p. Amersham International shares have nearly doubled in price.

Despite populist nonsense in Tory propaganda, the shares in these concerns have not, for the most part, wound up in the hands of the employees, but in the vaults of big shareholders.

In British Aerospace, 143

large shareholders own over 60% of non-government shares; only 3.1% of capital is owned through employees' shares. In Amersham International 92 shareholders own 64.5% of the company.

Even in the "star" case of the National Freight Corporation, while employees (mainly from middle management upwards) hold 83% of the total shares, the banks hold the bulk of the firm's capital, and drew out a cool £8.3 million in interest payments in the first seven months of trading — nine times the total dividend!

With the sole exception of the computer firm ICL, the "hived off" firms have been disposed of by the Tories in such a way as to ensure a sharp increase in profit figures — and thus a healthy handout for their wealthy owners.

The stock market killing has been achieved at the expense of tens of thousands of jobs axed in efforts to make the firms attractive to investors and heavy subsidies from the government.

This same process has already begun in BL, British Airways, British Shipbuilders and British Telecom. Workers at Heathrow and other airports appear to be next in the firing line.

Chill warning

But those outside the named corporations should not breathe easy: the Tory manifesto has words for them too. There are to be moves to draw private capital into the National Bus Company and introduce competition and private capital into the gas and electricity industry.

British Rail is to suffer the cold hand of Toryism, with a chill warning that "we shall examine ways of decentralising BR and bringing in private enterprise to serve railway customers."

For workers in other state industries, too, there is good reason to be alarmed, as the Tories promise the arrival of squads of Michael Edwardes clones to smash up existing

conditions and trade structures: "those in privatised or organised industries which are smaller and more efficient will be given top management and required work to clear guidelines."

Council services — particularly refuse collection — come increasingly under auctioneer's hammer; and NHS too a deadly combination of middle class "voluntary contributions" and attempts at "services like laundry, and hospital cleaning, competitive tender" — a bitter struggle in the next to defend standards of care, and protect already inadequate staffing levels against erosion.

IT IS estimated that a million people belong to the Tory Party. They have democratic structure decide policy.

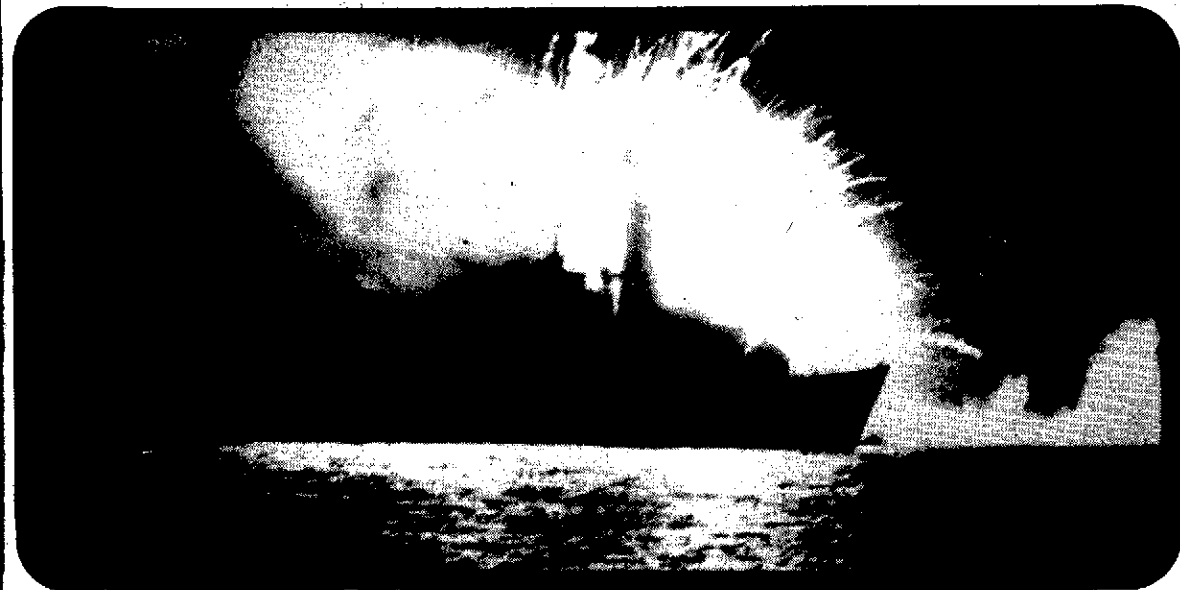
Thatcher was elected leader by the 277 Tory in 1975. She appoints chairman, and all senior officials. She may not ignore Tory conference policies, which have authority.

Representative bodies of the Tory Party are "made advisory to the leader, constitutionally can do no more" (John Cole, BBC Tory leader, Thatcher is subject to restraint a control than the leader, other political organisations calling itself democratic (Robert McKenzie).

And Tories lecture unions on democracy!

To back up employers in the public and private sectors their war on wages, working conditions and staffing the Tories pledge themselves a new round of anti-union legislation even more wide-ranging than the Prior and Tebbit 1980 and 1982.





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The Manifesto follows on and builds upon Tebbit's Green Paper last autumn, and proposes to impose:

■ Ballots for the election of union governing bodies.

■ Periodical decisions on whether unions should have party political funds.

■ Curbs on the legal immunities of unions to call strikes without a prior ballot of those concerned.

■ Steps to "ensure that individual members are freely and effectively able to decide for themselves whether or not to pay the political levy."

■ Adequate procedure agreements — in specified essential services "breach of which would deprive industrial action of immunity."

In short, the Tory proposals amount to a wholesale, forcible, rewriting of union rulebooks; the making of another very large category of industrial action — that without ballot endorsement — unlawful; and undisguised attempts to smash the financial basis of the Labour Party as the political voice of the trade union movement by changing the present "contracting out" situation on the political levy to "contracting in".

Supremely confident in the power of the Tory press and mass media under conditions where mass unemployment and chronic misleadership has weakened the solidarity of the trade union movement, Tebbit and the cabinet head-bangers plainly believe now would be a more fruitful time to experiment once again with pre-strike ballots — a move which failed disastrously in Heath's Industrial Relations Act.

As if to prove the link between all this and the driving down of wages, the Tories go on to spell out proposals to further strip away protective health, safety and employment protection legislation "which discourage the creation of new jobs", and to effectively destroy the authority of Wages Councils

which fix rates of pay for the lowest wage-earners.

Halved

Beyond the industrial front, the counterpart of the privatisation bonanza is the "sale of the century" of council housing through the Tory "right to buy" provisions.

Their manifesto boasts that this has brought "The largest transfer of property from the State to the individual. No less than half a million council houses and flats were sold in the last Parliament to the people who live in them."

The other side to this is that the halving of government investment in new housing and cash limits on councils have cut public housebuilding by more than half from 107,000 in 1978 to 52,300 in 1982. The result is that while the Tories boast of having sold off 500,000 council houses, only 181,000 new homes have been built to take their place.

Thus Thatcher could equally boast of hitting the 800,000 figure for those households in overcrowded conditions, with another 800,000 in shared accommodation. The number of thousand homeless is not known.

And while the council homes that have been sold at knock-down prices are generally the better and more modern buildings, the huge cuts in housing subsidies and council finance have brought a growing crisis in repairs to existing housing stock.

In total there are 1.2 million unfit dwellings, housing an estimated 5 million people —

Tory talk of a 'property-owning democracy' seems more than ever like a sick joke

while the Tory slump has put 400,000 building workers on the dole!

Unabashed, the Tories promise even more of the same: bigger discounts for long-term tenants who choose to buy, and other schemes to extend this grand plan to destroy the structure of council-rented accommodation — forcing more and more young working class families into the clutches of plundering private (Tory) landlords, or onto the treadmill of mortgage payments as house prices begin to soar once again.

Vouchers

With over 3 million on the dole, and the prospect of more unemployment the longer the Tories stay in, the blithe manifesto talk of a "property owning democracy" seems more than ever like a sick joke to all but the most well-heeled and smug sections of the middle class.

So, too, does the Tory defence of the "right of parents to spend their own money on educating their children", which, coupled with Sir Keith Joseph's bizarre brainchild of the education "voucher" system, means in reality a further boost for private education at the expense of state provision.

Even more appalling to tens of thousands of hard-pressed working class women must be the prospect of their already desperate housing situation being exacerbated by the need to care at home for elderly or sick relatives for whom the NHS makes no provision.

War-whoops

The Tories have consistently boasted of their successes in forcing such patients upon harassed daughters, wives and mothers: they call it "care in the community". The manifesto promises still more of this as part of the Tory "plans" for the NHS.

For those Tories who like a little blood on their cornflakes of a morning, there are predict-



able whooping references to the Falklands war, through which "this country has recaptured much of her old pride"; there are dire warnings of the fiendish plans of the Soviet Union; boasts of the level (£16 billion this year) to which military spending has been raised, and promises of more bombs and missiles to come.

The manifesto swaggers over the squalid premeditated SAS murders in the Iranian Embassy siege, and the callous indifference with which Thatcher's gang allowed the Irish hunger strikers to die. It exults in the 9,000 extra cops recruited in England and Wales alone since 1979, points to the gigantic rates of pay these thugs in blue now receive, and promises them even more sweeping powers to harass ordinary people under the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill.

Having driven up the prison population to a staggering 44,000 the Tory manifesto promises to build more prisons! They propose to complete ten new prisons allowing another 4,800 working class people to be

locked up; and an opening on jobs front is offered to would-be screws, who will be taken on to hold the keys and batter the inmates.

To appease the racist elements of the 'hang 'em, flog 'em, lock 'em up' brigade, the manifesto combines a ritualistic opposition to "racial discrimination" with a bragging assertion of the effectiveness of racist laws which have ensured that:

"Since 1979 immigration for settlement has dropped sharply to the lowest level since control of immigration from the Commonwealth began more than 20 years ago."

The same government has presided over a soaring level of deportations and a rising tide of violent racist attacks on black people in the social crisis promoted by its policies of slump and the destruction of the welfare state.

"Conservatives reject Labour's contention that the State can and should do everything", proclaim the Tories. Yet their four years in office and their plans for another five show that with the state machinery in

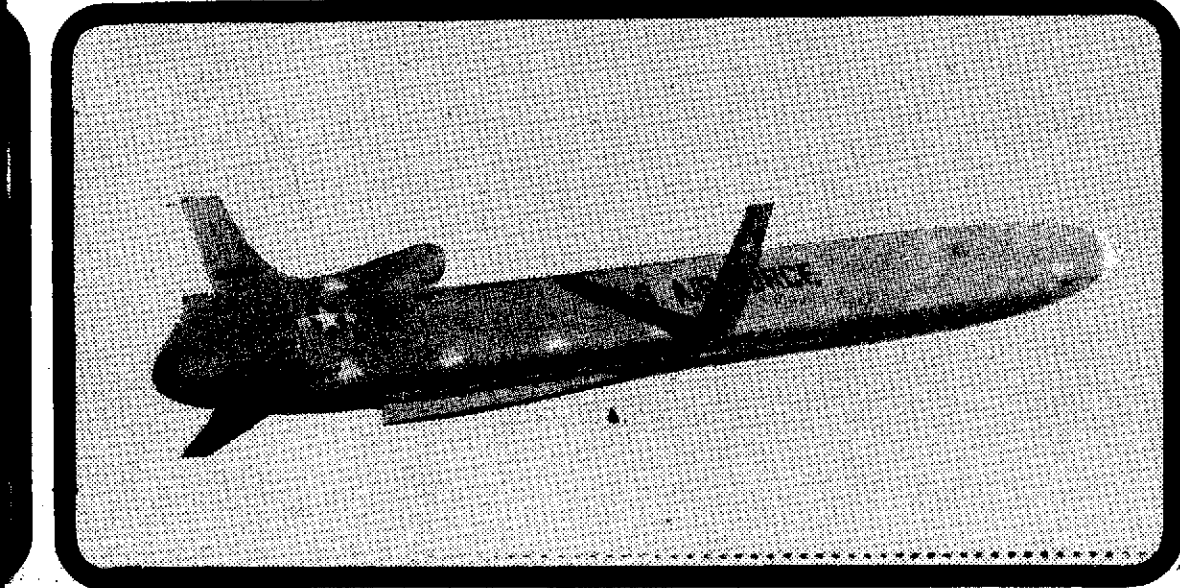
their hands the party of the capitalist class can mould everything very much to their own interests — and reap rich rewards from doing so.

Half-baked

The repeated failure over decades of the trade union and Labour leaderships to recognise the power and the nature of this state machinery, their utopian and ill-conceived attempts to utilise it to legislate socialism inch-by-inch, and the catastrophic and half-baked results they have brought the working class, are part of the reason Thatcher can hope to cash in on the disillusion and demoralisation of the labour movement.

The immediate answer to such disillusion with Labour programme and leadership must be to confront workers with the brutal reality of the Tory blueprint for the next five years.

Only the biggest possible Labour vote, coupled with preparations to fight on after the election, offer any glimmer of hope of resisting the Tory steamroller.



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The policies we fight for

Socialist Action and the Labour Committee on Ireland

A NUMBER of points need to be made in response to the less than honest letter from Martin Collins which appeared in SO 131 and which criticised the report in previous issue on the AGM of the Labour Committee on Ireland (LCI).

For reasons of space we limit ourselves to the following:

*The letter contained a number of unsubstantiated slanders (e.g. the reference to 'the sagging confidence of SO supporters') and downright lies (e.g. "SO... is playing no role at all" in building the LCI).

*Collins does not even make any attempt to address himself to the contents of the article, which constituted an honest account of a not particularly fruitful conference. After the letter's opening paragraph, the article itself is completely ignored.

*Collins lists six points as "proof" of the valiant work of Socialist Action (SA) supporters in the LCI. In fact, only two of the six were put to the conference. One was defeated, whilst the other originally emanated from a motion from Glasgow LCI.

Gloomy

*The letter dishonestly refers to 'the gloomy pessimism of your (SO's) writer.' If Collins bothered to read the article with any degree of attention or honesty he would have noticed that it concluded with a number of highly positive proposals for building the LCI.

*Collins takes exception to SA proposals being characterised as "zany". But is it not zany to propose that the LCI pro-

duce a magazine at an uneconomical price and for which it does not have the resources anyway? Is it not zany to still believe now, after 14 years of unsuccessful Irish solidarity work, that a gut reaction to the Army's violence (e.g. use of plastic bullets) can provide the basis for building a withdrawal movement? Is it not zany for SA supporters to lecture and hector Labour Party members on how to build a withdrawal movement when it is not that long since they backed candidates standing against Labour, as a way of building a withdrawal move-

ment?

*What makes Collins' letter particularly pathetic is the record of SA supporters in Glasgow LCI branch, one of the most serious in the country. Two SA supporters are members of it. One joined five minutes before the LCI AGM. The other joined in February 1983 and has since attended one LCI meeting. Glasgow LCI has been in existence for three years. The contribution of SA supporters to it throughout that time has been precisely nil.

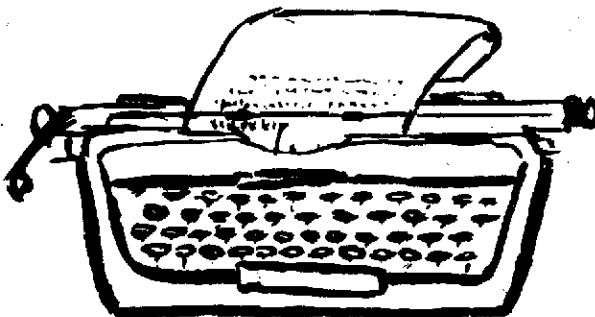
We would be only too happy to debate out the contents of

the article and this letter with SA supporters in Glasgow. Unfortunately, though, none of the attempts we have made at debate with SA supporters has even provoked a reply, never mind a debate.

And the last time we challenged them to a debate, their local 'leading lights' never even informed the other SA supporters of our challenge. Would it be any different this time round?

Yours in solidarity,
Glasgow SO supporters

Writeback



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

Bankrupt search for unity

Dear SO,

John O'Mahony's epic 'Ireland - which way forward?' attempted yet again to defend one of the British left's most venerable sacred cows, the peculiar idea that it is possible to unite Catholic and Protestant workers in the Six Counties around 'bread and butter issues', a notion dismissed by Connolly as 'almost screamingly funny in its absurdity'.

To illustrate the bankruptcy of this strategy, I will select two key events from the many available: the 1932 'Outdoor Relief' strike, the case generally cited as the model for future attempts at 'working class unity' and the 1974 Ulster Workers' Council Strike which brought down the 'Power-Sharing' Executive, a case about which the left is (not surprisingly) silent.

Two factors were important in

creating the conditions for the 'Outdoor Relief' strike. Firstly, Protestant unemployment had risen rapidly. Between January 1930 and October 1932, when the strike broke out, employment had fallen by 87% in the Protestant dominated shipyards (see Isles and Cuthbert, 'An Economic Survey of Northern Ireland', HMSO Belfast p. 594). Secondly, the republican movement had been further disorientated and weakened by the election of De Valera's Fianna Fail (anti-Treaty) government in the South.

As a situation there was no apparent threat to partition in the minds of the Protestant workers. The combination of extreme poverty and the security of Partition, the guarantee of Protestants' privileged position in the Six Counties' labour market, facilitated the united

action.

However, the traditional Protestant response to rising unemployment was never far below the surface. In 1931 the 'Ulster Protestant League' was set up 'to safeguard the employment of Protestants'. Unionist leaders like Craigavon made demagogic speeches encouraging Protestant employers not to employ any Catholics. With the economic upturn of the mid 1930s, incipient class unity was destroyed and by 1935 Protestant workers 'celebrated' the Jubilee of King George V by murdering Catholics, driving hundreds from their work and burning many out of their homes (see Michael Farrell, 'Northern Ireland: the Orange State', Pluto 1980, pp. 136-40).

Similarly with the Loyalist workers' response to what they perceived as a sellout of the link

between the Six Counties and Britain, via the Power-Sharing Executive with its institutionalised Catholic representation and 'Irish dimension'.

John O'Mahony has failed to appreciate that it is the social position of the Protestant working class which has led it to line up with the Protestant bourgeoisie and with the British state, the guarantor of capitalist social relations in Ireland against any nationalist threat to the privileged position of the Loyalist working class in the Loyalist state. The actions of the Protestant working class are neither those of 'dupes' nor are they a threat to the Protestant ascendancy. Their opposition to the Unionist establishment was motivated by the same force that drove them to chase Catholic workers out of the shipyards. In both conditions they were

defending their privileged status.

Of course, the Protestant working class is exploited under capitalism, but its relative privileges, which form the very basis of Partition and the division of the Irish working class, mean that they cannot act as a working class so long as their privileges and Partition survive. The crucial modification of the wage labour/capital relationship produced by the sectarian working class can have nothing in common with the Catholic working class.

Any call for Protestant/Catholic working class unity is a chimera which serves to mask the real issue: the political oppression of Ireland by British imperialism.

Alastair Todd,
Cambridge

The fight against genetic poverty

THE plants we grow for food all have wild ancestors and relatives. Presumably our ancestors used to just go and pick these plants to eat. Then later on, they started actually planting seeds from these plants, to make the supply more regular and reliable.

The next step was to plant seeds from only the 'best' plants - the ones with the biggest yield. Then, as plants

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

were taken to different lands, exposed to different climates

and soils, etc., these new factors influenced their choice of the 'best'. Nowadays, domestic varieties are frequently as different from their wild relatives as the pike is from the wolf.

With the dominance of monopoly capitalism in world agriculture has come a decrease in the number of varieties of food plants, as these have been standardised. And the standard varieties, obtainable from the big seed companies, usually require lots of fertilisers and pesticides!

This standardisation has brought with it the serious problem that food plant species are now often genetically impoverished.

Genetic

The ability of any species to survive and adapt to damaging conditions depends on its genetic resources. If a plant meets a disease it has not met before then its ability to survive depends on its potential to defend itself.

Genetic diversity makes it more likely that some plants already have some resistance. These plants will survive and multiply. A genetically poor species will only survive if the

farmer can afford to inundate it with pesticides.

Genetic poverty already exists - so what can be done about it? The obvious answer is to introduce more genetic variety into plant populations - but this can only be done by interbreeding the domestic plant with a closely related species with more genetic diversity. This will usually be a wild relative.

A case recently reported in New Scientist shows how this works.

The domestic potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) is ravaged by aphids, while its wild cousin *S. berthaultii* is immune (according to R.W. Gibson and J.A. Pickett of the Rothamsted Experimental Station).

Gibson and Pickett found that the wild spud had hairy leaves - while the tame spud was smooth. These hairs were of two types - long ones which exuded a sticky fluid, and short ones with lobes which burst when touched to produce a quick-setting glue.

Together, these would immobilise an unsuspecting aphid.

But *S. berthaultii* has an even more elegant defence. It produces a smelly substance identical to the alarm pheromone* of the aphid. So most aphids would smell 'danger' and leave the hairy 'tater' alone.

The next step is to try to introduce this useful character into the domestic potato - and already hybrids have been produced.

So, if you need to improve

the genetic wealth of a food plant, find a wild relative and breed with it. What's the problem?

The problem is conserving the habitats where these wild relatives grow before they are made extinct. For example, the small area where the perennial maize grows is threatened with cultivation by subsistence farmers (who are frequently displaced from better land by agribusiness).

Further South, the vast Amazon jungle is being destroyed at a frightening pace, together with untold numbers of plant species potential benefit. A recent small survey identified 1,000 plants with economic potential as food, drugs or industrial substances.

Capitalist agriculture is not ignorant of the value of wild genetic resources. In fact, there is quite a large industry in stealing resources from Third World countries. Two examples from America:

1. a gene for resistance to wheat stripe rust disease from a wild wheat in Turkey has been saving the US wheat industry \$50 million per year since the '60s.
2. a gene for resistance to barley yellow dwarf disease from Ethiopia protects the Californian barley crop, worth \$150 million per year.

No recompense has been made to either country.

Indeed, improved varieties of seeds are sold back to Third World farmers at considerable profit. According to Earthscan, the international seed trade is worth \$6,000 million per year.

Plant (and animal) species are being extinguished at a rate of one per year (perhaps a thousand times faster than during prehistory) as their habitats are chopped down, burnt off, cultivated for a few years and then abandoned to become deserts, all under the pressure of capitalism's search for resources. Our future is being squandered to let capitalism survive a little longer. And that's why socialists should be conservative!

Information from the New Scientist.

*pheromone: a chemical with a message which travels through the air and is detected by smell.

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Idris Davies 1905 - 1953

The bard of Abertyswg colliery

By John Cunningham (Dinnington NUM)

Idris Davies, poet and one time miner, was born in Rhymney, South Wales on 6 January 1905. At the age of 14, like so many before him, he went to work in the local pit, first at Abertyswg and then Rhymney-Mardy.

For almost seven years he worked underground, sharing the hardships and dangers of the miners' work.

Looking back on his work underground, Davies wrote in an unpublished notebook of an accident he received:

"I looked at my hand and saw a piece of white bone shining like snow, and the flesh of the little finger all limp. The men supported me, and one ran for an ambulance box down the heading, and there I was fainting away like a little baby girl."

He also wrote a novel about his earlier days, which he titled "Collier Boy", "... a plain story in straightforward English, of a boy who did not want to be a miner but who had to be one."

Unfortunately this novel is still unpublished. The memories of those days stayed with him all his life. The '20s and '30s were periods of great hardship and suffering in the South Wales valleys and in his poetry Davies was to rile against the injustices and indignities inflicted on the working class, his was not a poetry written in quiet contemplation but one in which his anger at the ravages of a brutal capitalism, his passionate and partisan feelings for his people, were to remain a constant theme throughout his writings.

After 1926 and the General Strike, Idris Davies never returned to the pit. Like thousands of others he could not find work and it was during this period that Davies first becomes acquainted with the world of literature.

At school, he says in his autobiographical poem "I was born in Rhymney", he detested poetry.

Idleness

Through his enforced idleness Davies begins to read voraciously and widely — Wordsworth, Shelley, Milton, Shakespeare, the Shropshire poet A.E. Houseman and many others. As well as his literature,

... Do you remember 1926? The great dream and swift disaster
The bravery of the faithful, simple folk?

'Ay, Ay, we remember 1926', said Dai and Shinkin,
As they stood on the kerb in Charing Cross Road,
'And we shall remember 1926 until our blood is dry'.

(Gwalia Deserta VIII)

These are your children begging for bread
'You foolish miners!' the newspaper said

'Look at the pictures that all may see —
Victims of your stupidity!

O you stubborn callous men,
Starving your wives and your kids again,
Striking because the weather is fair,
And leaving your collieries out of repair,
And drinking as if you had the right
To share in the joys of a summer night.
Once you were heroes you rescued your kind
Out of the galleries left blazing behind,
And we praised you in eloquent journalese
And chatted about you at parlour teas
And now you won't work for your daily bread
You lazy miners! the newspaper said.

(The Angry Summer 19)

But Pearse and Macdonagh, and the Countess of the drums,
The dreamers and the fighters who fought to save their dreams,
They strode out from their shadowy echoing churches,
They strode out and fought and died
And they redeemed their land from many shames
And left the name of Dublin splendid among cities,
And made this white Glasnevin a garden of glory.

(Glasnevin Cemetery)

which he often read while walking in the mountains around Rhymney, he studied by correspondence course and towards the end of the '30s he was taken on as a student teacher at Middle Rhymney junior school.

He wasn't there for long, in 1930 came his first big break when he won a place at Loughborough Training College, later going on to Nottingham University and it is from this period on that his poetry can be dated.

Between 1932 and 1947 Idris Davies was employed as a school teacher by the London County Council mainly in Bow in the East End but with a number of periods in the country teaching to evacuee children and returning to his beloved Rhymney whenever holidays came round.

The time in London was an important one for Davies, he made the acquaintance of other writers and on a Friday evening he would go drinking with Dylan Thomas, Rhys Davies, the short

story writer and other Welsh writers and journalists.

They would meet in a bookshop off Charing Cross Road and then move on to the 'Pillars of Hercules' where it is said, Davies, to the delight of his drinking partners would quote Shakespeare "by the yard".

Davies' poetry began to be noticed and in the '30s he had some poems published. "Wales" magazine published a few and the socialist "Left Review" published two more. In 1938 Dent published "Gwalia Deserta" which although well received did not sell very well.

"The Angry Summer", Davies' bitter and moving recollection of the 1926 strike was published in 1943; it sold only 896 copies. "Tonypanydy and other poems" followed in 1945, this time selling 1427.

After the war, Davies, not without some difficulty, returned to South Wales and took up teaching at Cwmystflog Junior School, very near to his native Rhymney. His last years sadly were spent fighting cancer to which he finally succumbed on 6 April 1953, the same year that Dylan Thomas died.

His "Selected Poems" published with the accolade and encouragement of none other than T.S. Elliot, appeared shortly after his death, but it was only in 1972 that a book of his collected poems, edited by Islwyn Jenkins appeared.

All Davies' poetry was written after he left the pit, almost as if those bitter years of struggle were an apprenticeship which he had to undergo before he could write.

His poems, not all of them, but certainly the main ones, have a common theme, bitter and righteous anger at the sufferings of the ordinary people

and the ravages inflicted upon the Welsh valleys by a rapacious capitalism.

There are other themes as well: the honesty, determination, solidarity and the humour of the working class, but particularly the Welsh miners — all these qualities, so desperately needed, he personified in his invented figure — Dai, "Dai — the great of heart" as he called him, symbol of all miners.

For all miners, and Idris Davies was no exception, the year 1926 was etched indelibly into the memory and for him personally it was a watershed. In his poem "The Angry Summer" he recollects the pain, suffering and heroism of the Welsh miners as they struggled through those difficult and stormy months. Like so many, Davies never forgot or forgave.

Humbug

Much of what Davies wrote about is still with us today. He detested lies and humbug and he more than once poured his scorn on the press of the time for the slanders they threw around about the miners and their leaders:

So you have come down from London

O young man in plus-fours,
To write about our trouble
in slick and popular prose?

Say, are you a slave from London

Who write what you are told
By a brazen man of millions
Whose only creed is gold?

Or have you come for knowledge
Solid and plain and bare
And have you a love for honesty
To teach you how to dare?

Do you value the code of comrades

And the decency of life
And the pride that spurns the traitor
In the soaring hour of strife?

But if you come here to slander
And trade in yellow lies
Go back, young man to London
With shame between your eyes.
(The Angry Summer 9)

The 'Angry Summer' dragged on. A.J. Cook, the miners' leader comes to the valleys "... arousing his people ... almost burning his way to victory." More peaceful days are spent on the mountains reading Shakespeare and dreaming of a better future.

A day trip to Barry Island provides a welcome break from queuing at the soup kitchens. Finally, however, the strike is lost and the miners are starved into submission, evoking a bitter judgement:

And this Friday goes down in history
Yellow and edged with black.
(The Angry Summer 48)

The hopes and visions of 1926 however remain, tragically only to be realized many years later in the great victory of 1972: But the battle's end is not defeat



Idris Davies

To that dream that guided the broken feet
And roused to beauty and to pride
Toiler and toiler, side by side,
Whose faith and courage shall be told
In blaze of scarlet and of gold.
(Angry Summer 50)

In his poem, "Gwalia Deserta", published five years before "The Angry Summer", Idris Davies, as well as writing about aspects of 1926 and the miners' life, sets out a much broader theme — the destruction and blighting of the South Wales Valleys he loved so much (similar in some respects to Richard Llewellyn's 'How Green was my Valley'). In Gwalia, in my Gwalia, The vandals out of Hell ransacked forever The wooded hill and dell.

They grabbed and bruised and plundered
Because their greed was great,
And slunk away and purchased
The medals of the State.
(Gwalia Deserta XXIII)

Idris Davies' outrage at the 'vandalism' of the coal owners and the sufferings of the working class were often mixed with a distinct pride and sense of identity as a Welshman — yet he wasn't a nationalist.

He writes of the rich Welsh heritage and of heroes such as Owen Glendower, yet he is a socialist, although there is little in his poetry, or the other fragments of his writings which are available, to indicate that this was ever developed politically.

His socialism rather than deriving from a study of the political world seems to arise almost out of the earth on which he was born.

Hardly surprising — South Wales and the South Wales Miners Federation have long been one of the foremost cradles of socialism in the British Isles. Although first and foremost a Welsh writer of Welsh conditions and character he did find inspiration from other places and people.

In particular he found inspiration in the writings of W.B. Yeats and visited the West coast of Ireland on a sort of poetic pilgrimage. He identified with the heroes of the 1916 Easter Uprising, maybe seeing a parallel between their struggle

against British domination and that of his native people against British capital and the defilement by the coalowners of the Valleys. Certainly the rebels of 1916, that strange mixture of revolutionaries, poets and nationalists, fused together in a glorious struggle against overwhelming odds, appealed to the veteran of the 1926 strike

Important though the trips to Ireland were and however great Davies' love of Yeats they were temporary departures from his main themes — "... the colourless streets and long black hills" of South Wales, the "... slag heaps and hovels and little bowler-hatted deacons" and that moment, by the fireside, of painful reflection, when "... you know in your heart how your life has been botched."

For the unemployed life was grim and for those lucky enough to work there was little reward for a life of arduous and dangerous toil in the 'local hell'.

"Tonypanydy", published in 1945, is possibly Idris Davies' most reflective poem, in it he ponders on the fate of Dai and his miserable lot in life, something which, despite the distance of the years Davies could not and would not forget:

So much you have given, so little received
O Dai you miner of Tonypanydy!
And 'blessed it is to give' the bible says
My god then you ought to be an angel."
(Tonypanydy IV)

Idris Davies ends "Tonypanydy" with a call from the heart to Dai, asking him to never let people forget the debt they owe to him and the tens of thousands of other Dais who have and still "toil in the galleries of grime", to those whose unseen blood and sweat, and sometimes death itself have allowed others to live in comfort and a pampered despotism few to live like kings.

Sadly the sentiments of Idris Davies' poetry, the crimes and insults which outraged him so much are still with us. And for the Welsh miners, who today still face the same ravages as they did all those years ago, the poetry of Idris Davies far from being a sad, nostalgic reminiscence is a stark and grim day to day reality.

Welsh miners face the same ravages



HARD TIMES

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Agenda

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

Labour CND West inaugural meeting. Sunday June 26, 2.30pm, Taunton CLP meeting rooms, 24 East Reach, Taunton. LP members only.

CONFERENCE of Socialist Economists conference 1983: The World Economy in Crisis. July 9 to 11 in Sheffield. Details from 25 Horsell Rd, London N5.

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

GREATER Manchester CND trade union conference. Speakers Ron Todd (T&G), Les Huckfield MP, Greenham Common speaker. Afternoon workshops. Saturday May 28, Town Hall, Manchester. Further details: 061 682 9334.

'VOICE of Solidarnosc': £8 for 6 months to Solidarnosc Information Office, 314-320 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP (01-837 94964).

LABOUR Movement Conference on Ireland: July 16, from 10.45am at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Delegates £3, observers £2, details from LMCI, Box 189, 32 Ivor Place, London NW1.

Stop the Police Bill!

1984
A Police State in Britain?



Saturday June 4: national day of action with pickets of police stations. Contact the campaign c/o Room 116, Hackney Town Hall, Mare St., London E8 (01-986 3123 ext 252).

Three students from St Martin's School of Art Film School have made a film entitled 'Who killed Colin Roach?'. It shows the campaign in its various dimensions.

This video is available from the Roach Family Support Committee, and can be used for showing at meetings, youth clubs, schools, colleges, etc.

During the course of filming all three members of the film crew were arrested. Two were charged and one released without being charged.

Details from RFSC, 50 Rectory Rd, London N16 7PP. Tel: (01)-254 7480.

NICARAGUA, Guatemala and El Salvador Briefings are produced by the Central America Information Service, 14 Brixton Rd, London SW9. If you would like to receive them regularly, please write enclosing your name and address.

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 0DD.

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4 & 5th JUNE 83

Sales soar in W. London

OVER recent months Socialist Organiser sales have tripled in West London, as we have grown from a small group in one constituency to a large group covering six constituencies.

One new seller, Nick De Marco of Richmond LPYS, has sold 60 papers in the last three weeks. And from our last meeting, on May 22, we have another three new sellers.

The fortnightly Socialist Organiser meetings, with regular political discussions, have been vital. We have now built up a range of activity covering trade union work (one NALGO comrade, Nick Driscoll, has

done a lot of work in the Ealing council unions' fight for their jobs and services), anti-cuts campaigning, CND activity (we helped organise a Hounslow 'nuclear free week'), anti-racist work, and women's groups, as well as the LPYS and the Labour Party. We have constantly fought to turn the Labour Party out to the working class and to bring youth and workers into the Party.

Our street sales of the paper every Saturday, have also helped us grow.

We reckon that, given energy and good organisation, every SO group could do the same.

Where to find Socialist Organiser

• 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

Rochdale. Meets second Monday of the month, 7.30 Castle Inn.

Manchester. Public meeting, Thursday May 26, 7.30 at the Millstone pub, Thomas St, off Tib St. 'Kick out the Tories — for a new Labour government'. Speaker Jim Denham. SO is sold at Grass Roots Books, Newton St. Piccadilly. Contact: 273 6654.

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

Wirral. Contact Colin John-

stone, 1 Wellington Rd, Wallasey.

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

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

Stoke. Contact Paul Barnett, 151 Broadway, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent (328198).

• YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

Huddersfield. Contact Alan Brooke, 59 Magdale, Holey, Huddersfield HD7 2LX.

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

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

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

Sheffield. Meets every other Wednesday, 7.30pm at the Brown Cow, The Wick. SO is sold outside Boots, Fargate (Saturday 12 to 1) and the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Rd. Contact: Rob, 589307.

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

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

York. Contact 796027. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, outside

the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings.

• WALES

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

• MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Meets alternate Fridays, 7.30pm, the Hen and Chickens, Constitution Hill. Next meeting Friday June 3. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop, Dig-

beth High St.

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Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Freeze rents and rates.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Debate on shop floor crisis

Leadership and the rank and file

TONY Richards' articles (SO 125, 126) are a welcome contribution to an essential discussion of where we are going on the industrial front. As Tony appears to be in substantial disagreement with my views, I would like to briefly reply to clarify some of the issues for SO readers.

This is particularly essential because Tony has misunderstood or misinterpreted many of my comments. Lack of space prohibits me from taking up all his arguments, particularly those on the Labour Party.

Take as an example of Tony's approach his claim that I support "the hoary old SWP" attack on the "open the books" demand. In arguing that one of the problems we face today is the fact that many rank and file activists accept bourgeois explanations of the crisis including arguments about capitalist viability, I wrote:

"How many struggles have we seen aborted by the basic trade union idea the employers have shown us they can't pay? How many anti-redundancy fights have been impaled on the capitalist logic 'We are not making a profit, there is no alternative to closure.'"

Acceptance

Tony argues that since I use the word 'show' rather than 'claim' this can only be read as "an acceptance of those figures and an implicit attack upon the 'open the books' demand."

The point is that this demand is intended to take workers beyond the enterprise and capitalist logic. As Tony points out it has not been successfully taken up.

Within the workers' prevailing consciousness employers are able to show that the cupboard is bare. My comments were simply a recognition that whatever we may desire workers in the main do not move beyond ideas of enterprise viability. They start and they finish there.

This is at the root of defeat after defeat.

The 'open the books' demand attempts to take workers beyond their existing consciousness. Unless we accept where workers are now we cannot develop bridges to take them further. Tony's attempts to assimilate me to the SWP are simply without foundation.

Just one more example. There is a similar misunderstanding about what I term "the bureau-

John McIlroy continues our discussion on the industrial downturn, responding to Tony Richards' articles in Socialist Organiser nos 125-6

cratisation of the shop steward movement."

This is an imprecise, short hand term. There has, for example, not been any such 'movement' for nearly 60 years. It is often used to describe the way stewards compared with the '50s or '60s have become enmeshed in written procedures divorced from direct bargaining over cash and integrated more into union machinery.

Having made this clear and having criticised this process as weakening the rank and file, I then went on to make the very limited statement:

"The greater integration within the union has the potential of focussing a fight for control of the machines, a fight which is ever more necessary in the face of centralisation of capital and the role of the state."

This focus on the leadership of the unions is, of course, what has always distinguished us from the rank and file.

Tony, however, eliminates my inverted commas, assumes a model of bureaucratization pure and simple in terms of full time officials (even though I specifically pointed out stewards were distinguished from the latter "by the fact that they work in the plant and are subject to recall") and blithely asserts an irrefutable truism, "we need revolutionaries not apparatchiks."

This kind of method makes fruitful discussion rather difficult. It is not helped by Tony's

criticism of some of the examples I use to show that the rank and file are on the defensive.

The TGWU, Tony tells us, supported Alan Thornett in 1974. If they did it was like the rope supports the hanging man. As the Battle for Trotskyism, with which Tony is familiar, comments:

"The next day recognition as deputy convenor and shop steward was withdrawn from Thornett, the transport drivers struck in his defence, and the witch-hunt began in earnest. For the next three weeks the transport section was under attack from the combined forces of BLMC, the TGWU bureaucracy at National, Regional and District level..."

(My emphasis) p.82

Events in the NUM have been dealt with in recent correspondence in SO and I will not take up any more space here. Suffice it to say that a framework which sees Scargill's behaviour as "the very high point of leadership betrayal" killing "the strike wave stone dead" pays little attention to what actually occurred.

But what is truly amazing in his treatment of these two examples is that Tony adopts and extends the argument I am putting and attempts to use it as a stick to beat me.

The reason I raised the examples of the NUM and of Alan Thornett was to precisely make the point that the circumstances were different in the '70s than today and that those very different circumstances mould workers' consciousness in different ways.

Because of this the miners took action in defiance of misleadership a decade ago but refused to support principled leadership over the last two ballots. All Tony does here is expand my argument. He does move in the right direction by looking at what was actually happening and its impact on consciousness. He baulks, however, at the conclusions.

Tony also makes a meal of the fact that I don't mention the 1938 Transitional Programme. We certainly need a transitional politics and I did mention the need to bridge what is and what should be. But a formulation nearly 50 years old, whilst a useful starting point is in itself inadequate for today's tasks.

I could go on but I want to come to the most important difference between Tony and myself which centres around the concepts of "leadership" and "consciousness".

I had no intention of downgrading the importance of leadership. The point I was trying to make is this: leadership and consciousness are dialectically interrelated. Like Love and Marriage we cannot talk about one without the other.

Let us simplify. A revolutionary is elected convenor in a workplace. He or she will find that they are miles ahead of hundreds of their members. The task ahead will be to grapple with the backward ideas held by many in the ranks to educate his or her members in the context of an overall strategy which can take them forward.

That is what leadership is: the conquest of consciousness, grasping clearly and honestly the level of the membership, having a clear estimation of the balance of forces and the possibilities battling for revolutionary understanding and action against the ruling class ideas and action not from the pulpit of the pub or canteen meeting, although that will be important, but centrally from the platform day to day struggle provides.

Now that day to day struggle, as Tony emphasises, will push the membership towards confrontation with the employers and their leaders.

Material

Moreover, I do accept — and this point must be stressed — that whilst the rank and file share the ideas of the bureaucracy the different material positions of the two groups means that the former, unlike the latter, have no vested interest in those ideas and that whilst formally the ranks may even at times be to the right of the bureaucracy their structural position ultimately propels them into confrontation with it.

Such confrontation provides the pre-conditions for development. It is necessary for workers to take up socialist positions but it is insufficient. We need conscious, political leadership to develop, extend and systematise the basic lessons learned.

We are Marxists not spontaneists. We know that the existing ideas of the rank and file are not magically dissolved by the heat of battle. Moreover, those ideas can often restrain the workers from giving battle at all.

The biggest struggles since the '20s have accompanied a deepening economic crisis without any qualitative increment to the forces of the revolutionary left and with the unions pushed onto the defensive.

Part of the explanation lies in the failure of Trotskyists to integrate leadership into an understanding of consciousness. Workers are not Pavlovian dogs who are reactionary, reformist or revolutionary in direct reaction to events.

Mould

Leadership also has to grapple with the ways in which the ruling class mould consciousness and the content of that moulding, the process by which they maintain control even as the material bases for that control are undercut.

The vast apparatus of thought control in the hands of the ruling class today is far more powerful than when Gramsci or Trotsky were alive. Look at the potentiality of cable technology in atomising the working class.

And, of course, consciousness is not just fluff on a stone. Capitalist ideas are a real social force. They run deep. They are reproduced daily by the process of capitalist production and by capitalist institutions.

I repeat we cannot simply analyse the industrial struggle in terms of upturns or downturns in militancy.

Whilst we do have to see the other side the degree to which workers can move forward in struggle, we have to understand how at certain times the objective situation of which their consciousness is one part means that they will not be prepared to struggle even when leadership is offered.

In other words, our revolutionary who has been elected convenor will have to be prepared to accept many reverses from the membership despite textbook tactics.

Voluntarism, heroism will not be enough. This may be a function of the general lack of leadership but that is the terrain on which we have to struggle.

In the understanding that sometimes adequate leadership is not sufficient and not in wrong tactics at the top lies the basic roots of an explanation of what has happened in the mines in the last period.

On the other hand we also know that in certain periods workers will not accept misleadership. When the officials tell them to go back to work they won't. When the officials sit tight they will act themselves. They will kick over the traces.

That was the situation in the early '70s. Look at the fight over the Industrial Relations Act for example. The present period on the other hand is characterised by the inability of the rank and file to take struggles beyond the confines set by the leadership. Strikes keep coming but so does defeat.

Unless today we honestly explore why the rank and file acquiesce in the politics of the bureaucracy we cannot commence to recreate the situation where they reject those politics and behave like they did in 1972 not 1982.

Not only will revolutionaries in the unions often give leadership which is rejected. As they gain more important positions the constraints of the consciousness of the members and the limits of trade unionism in a non-revolutionary situation will mean that they will have to increasingly accept all sorts of compromises and make all sorts of retreats.

How you do it is, of course, vital. In 'Teamster Rebellion', Dobbs describes how the American Marxists in the 1930s fought against a strike to support a victimised comrade. It has to be subordinated to a recognition struggle.

The further up the ladder we go the greater the problems. But

we will have to go up that ladder if we are to get anywhere. We know where we stand here against ultra left sectarians.

But we have to apply this understanding of the structural limits of trade unionism outside an overall upsurge to the way we criticise left reformist union leaders.

Obviously we have far more optimistic conceptions of what is possible than they do. In the end their stance reflects their bureaucratic position. At times there will be sell outs, pure and simple like ASLEF or the NHS. We have to criticise those responsible mercilessly.

But at other times left leaders will come up against real limits. We should not set up abstract ideal conceptions of what leadership should entail and criticise on that basis particularly when we have little or no base in the union or industry.

Conceptions of leadership divorced from the consciousness of the workers and the constraints of trade unionism collapse into voluntarism and impossibilism. They cut us off from the militants coming to Marxism.

Two final points. I think sometimes differences emerge because of different conceptions of the period we are in. I certainly do not believe that a General Strike or a pre-revolutionary situation are just around the corner.

We are in a Grand National, not a five furlong sprint. Revolutionary politics have no hold over even a significant minority. We need a strategy for the long haul.

Trotsky was correct when he stated "The mentality of the class is backward but the mentality is not such a substance as the factories, the mines, the railroads, but is more mobile and under the blows of the objective crisis the millions of unemployed, it can change rapidly."

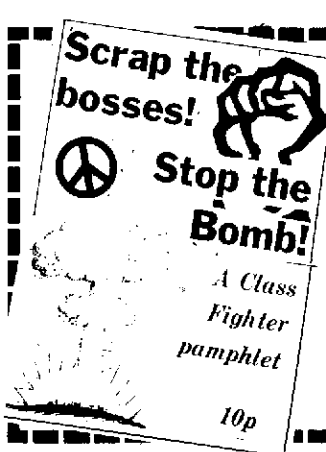
It can. Generally after long preparation and as a pre-revolutionary situation looms. As yet it has not changed. We have to accept that.

But we need to have a far more detailed and well worked out analysis of what the different sections of the working class are thinking and doing if we are to learn from them. Both Tony and myself need to go beyond general formulations like "the working class" and "the rank and file". What exactly do we mean by the rank and file? We are not nearly scientific enough.



Ford Dagenham: rank and file revolt stops a sell-out. But what determines whether successful rank and file revolt emerges or not?

For an independent inquiry into the death of Colin Roach!
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Tremendous fight, but What prompted Timex turnabout?

WHY did the 348 workers occupying the Timex factory on the Milton industrial estate in Dundee unanimously vote to end their sit-in on May 18, only two days after a virtually unanimous vote to continue the sit-in?

According to the Communist Party's Morning Star, the workers achieved a "famous victory" and Timex had "conceded all but one of the points for which the occupation had been struggling."

A similar interpretation was placed upon the ending of the sit-in by Gordon Samson, chairperson of the occupation committee: "It's a tremendous victory. Our workers can walk out of here with their heads held high."

Staging a sit-in of nearly six weeks duration in pursuit of the right to work is in itself a justification for feeling proud. But in reality the formula for ending the occupation which was accepted on May 18 was not markedly different from the formula overwhelmingly rejected on May 16. Both formulae involved the reinstatement of the 127 workers declared compulsorily redundant and who had initiated the sit-in, and also the reinstatement of the 200 workers dismissed for supporting the sit-in.

But both formulae also recog-

Was it a famous victory?
Stan Crooke argues that it was not.

nised that Timex management would seek another 425 voluntary redundancies. If these redundancies had not been achieved at the end of 90 days, then management can achieve them by other means, including compulsion. This point was not even mentioned in the Morning Star report.

Another point common to both formulae was the withdrawal of watch-manufacturing from Dundee, the main cause of the redundancies in the first place.

The only real difference between the two formulae seems to be that, according to the first one, all reinstated workers would be put on short-time working immediately, whilst the second formula guarantees the reinstated workers two weeks full work.

Both formulae were therefore basically the same, and revolved around the acceptance of 425

voluntary redundancies, with the threat of compulsion in the background. The 425 additional redundancies would mean a total of 2,200 job losses this year - 300 more than the figure first announced by Timex in January.

It cannot be the case, therefore, that the workers voted to end the sit-in because they were being presented with a radically different set of proposals from that put forward on May 16.

Moreover, on May 17, the day between the two opposite votes by the Timex workers, the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service had approached the AUEW in Dundee to try to find a solution - but immediately gave up. "We decided that the gulf that exists is still too wide, and there is no point in our having a meeting at present", said an ACAS spokesperson.

ACAS is not known for letting slip even a half chance of ending a dispute. Yet the same day they reached this verdict talks were held at the AUEW offices in Dundee, involving local union officials, Timex representatives and shop stewards from the occupation. The outcome of these talks was the end of the sit-in.

At the end of the all-day talks, local AUEW full-timer Harry McLevy read out a statement which said nothing about the terms of the agreement reached, but simply said:

"Following discussions with the company this morning, this afternoon and this evening, an understanding has been reached. This will be put to the shop stewards at 9 am tomorrow and following that to a mass meeting at 11 am."

Uncritical

Management wanted an end to the sit-in, obviously. McLevy clearly did so too. Whilst he had verbally opposed the formula presented to the May 16 mass meeting, the fact that he had stated his willingness to meet management over the weekend, and then arranged these talks, suggest that he was looking for a way to get the sit-in over and done with.

What of the leaders of the sit-in themselves, like Gordon Samson, Jim Tinney and John Kydd? On the one hand, they had certainly been uncritical, in public at least, of the role of union full-timers. On the other hand, they had taken the lead in opposing the initial "peace formula", drawn up by their union national officials.

Whether they were actively party to getting the sit-in ended, or finally knuckled under under pressure, seems destined, for the time being at least, to remain a matter for speculation.



"Much more could have been achieved if those in occupation had been given the active support they deserved"

Whilst many questions about the ending of the sit-in remain unanswered, what is clear is that throughout the dispute, both the STUC, the AUEW and AUEW/TASS bureaucracies failed to give the sit-in active support and were looking for the first plausible reason to call for it to be ended. In the end they got what they wanted.

The withdrawal of the 127 compulsory redundancies and of the 200 dismissed notices was certainly a positive achievement. But how much more, indeed a genuinely "famous victory", might have been achieved had those in occupation been backed up with the active support they deserved?

Officials knifed Albion struggle

"BY A narrow majority", as shop stewards' convenor, Jim McLean, expressed it, a mass meeting of the 1,300 shop floor workers at the BL Albion plant in Glasgow voted last Monday (May 23) to end their 2 week old strike against the threat of compulsory redundancies.

The strike had begun after management had threatened to implement compulsory redundancies if 146 volunteers had not come forward by the start of the plant's summer holidays (mid-July).

The strike opposed the compulsory job losses, but not the idea of 'voluntary redundancies'.

Support for the strike was solid. There was no attempt at

by Stan Crooke

scabbing, but only a small number of the strikers had been involved in picketing. And while support for the strike came from throughout the BL combine, the strike leadership was slow to build up outside support, only asking for financial and moral backing.

Management's reaction to the strike was in the Michael Edwards' tradition. Ron Hancock, Chief of BL Vehicles, issued a letter to all strikers demanding that the union hold a mass meeting and that a return to work take place by May 23 at the latest.

"If you do not," his letter continued, "then Albion will have retired itself out of Leyland's long term plans, with dire consequences, and Albion will be closed - permanently."

Terror

A leaflet issued by the Albion shop stewards' committee to counter Hancock's letter described the letters as "designed to strike terror into the home of every Albion worker and his family; designed to send a mob of frightened men along South Street and into confrontation with their fellow workers, out of that would come, they hope, a return to work on their terms."

BL management also announced the lay-off of 3,000 workers at the Leyland (Lancashire and Bathgate (Lothian) plants, unless the dispute was finished by May 23.

From one side, management applied pressure to break the strike. From the other side, the pressure came from the AUEW full-timers.

On May 18 (the same day as workers at the occupied Timex plant in Dundee voted to accept the 'peace formula' negotiated over their heads by AUEW full-timers and management) AUEW full-timers met with BL management and drew up an agreement to end the dispute at Albion. Shop stewards from Albion rightly refused to attend this meeting.

The main points in this agreement were:

- *immediate return to work;
- *transfer of workers from one section of the plant to another where workers had taken voluntary redundancy;
- *if management still had not achieved its 146 voluntary redundancies by 2 weeks before the deadline, the national and local union officials would meet management to find a solution.

With the threat of union national officials calling a mass meeting over their heads the Albion shop stewards called a mass meeting for Monday May 23. Both the works committee and the stewards committee had voted unanimously to reject the proposals to end the strike, and recommended rejection to the mass meeting.

Pressure

Even so, the meeting, voted to end the strike, although the majority was only about 50. "I can understand the pressure on workers to vote that way", commented Jim McLean after the meeting, "the continuous pressure

applied by management over the past 2 weeks, the threat of closure, and also the financial hardship, caused by the strike."

But an equal, if not much more crucial, factor in influencing the vote must have been the manifest opposition to the strike by the strikers' own union leaders. Even before a deal had been stitched up with management AUEW full-timers like Tom Gougan had been attacking the strike as irresponsible.

However, perhaps because he was speaking to the bourgeois press, Jim McLean was loathe to criticise the union full-timers. He claimed that he was "not dis-

appointed" at the mass meeting's outcome on the grounds that "we still don't accept compulsory redundancy, and national officials have pledged to fight compulsory redundancy in line with AUEW policy".

Threat

And yet at the same time McLean stated that the shop stewards had recommended rejection of the national officials' formula because it "did not take away the threat of compulsory redundancy". And the very union full-timers who are "pledged to fight compulsory redundancy" had just

undermined a strike against it!

By collaborating with BL management to break the strike the union full-timers have effectively given them the green light to implement further cutbacks in the workforce throughout the BL combine, and have inevitably made any fightback against them that much harder to mount.

The role played by union full-timers in sabotaging this strike could not be a better example of the need to set up the fight for democracy and accountability throughout the entire labour movement and the need to elect full-timers who will lead struggles rather than betray them.

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UCW leaders shrug off vote of no confidence

DISGUST at the Union of Communication Workers (UCW) Executive Committee's record over the last year surfaced powerfully at the beginning of the union's 2000 strong conference this week.

On the first day (May 22), after rejecting the softer option of a censure motion, delegates overwhelmingly carried a vote of no confidence in the union leadership. The reason was its blatant reversal of union policy on simplified sorting.

Delegates then went on to throw out an EC attempt to undermine last year's decision in favour of five-yearly election of union general officers. The EC had wanted to give themselves the power to appoint defeated officers to the administration side of the UCW bureaucracy.

However, the impact of the no confidence decision was lessened because it took place after the EC elections, the results of which will be announced on Wednesday (25th). After an emergency meeting, the outgoing EC felt able to announce that it saw no reason to resign, and simply scheduled an emergency meeting of the new EC

By John Bloxam

immediately after the conference to examine 'the implications'. Union members would be 'advised' of the decisions.

The strongest feeling at the conference was undoubtedly that the EC had blatantly ignored and ridden roughshod over previous conference decisions. This came out again on Monday, in the post office section conference. The anger was directed at the failure of the EC to put up any resistance to job-cutting through new technology, or make progress on the draft new technology agreement passed by the 1982 conference, and also at the way it included an extension of OCR 'trials' in the 1983 recommended pay deal.

At the conference the EC pleaded that their hands were tied by that agreement! This position was overwhelmingly rejected, and the withdrawal of all cooperation carried until a comprehensive new

technology agreement was negotiated with the Post Office. The resolution clearly means that the EC should withdraw from the OCR 'trials'.

Whether this feeling is reflected in the new EC remains to be seen. A number of Broad Left supporters were standing, although organising for the election is still at a relatively rudimentary stage.

The one result so far announced, however, was hopeful. Gay Taylor, regarded as a soft left with a previous record as a militant, was elected as assistant general secretary against another candidate with similar policies in a run-off ballot.

Although the Broad Left has played an important role in the union over the past two years, and its journal sold well at the conference, it only has loose connections with rank and file feeling. Few delegates turned up to its badly organised meeting on Sunday evening. Unless the Broad Left can make a much closer connection with the feeling in the rank and file, it will become irrelevant.



Kinnock anti-Tory rhetoric

Political issues are discussed on the Friday afternoon of conference. However, Neil Kinnock got a slot on Monday lunchtime and after his speech £2,000 was raised in a door collection for Labour's election funds.

Rejecting the class struggle as being a Tory policy, and likening Labour's programme to Stanley

Baldwin's in the 1930s, Kinnock's rhetoric nevertheless won two prolonged standing ovations. Kinnock got a silver tea-set with the UCW crest on it; and the delegates, in their hatred of the Tories, seemed to forget the fight they would face against a government led by the likes of Kinnock.

Pickets support fight on sexual abuse

by Bob Towers

A PICKET line has been set up outside the Liverpool fashion store 'Lady at Lord John', where the manageress was sacked after complaining that her co-workers were being sexually harassed by the area manager.

The manageress, Audrey White, is a member of the TGWU 6/612 branch, and the branch is picketing the store until she is reinstated.

Since the picketing started, management has first tried to pay her off (but she refused), and then offered her two other positions within the company that would mean demotion and loss of pay. Audrey has stood firm.

On Saturday May 14 eight pickets were arrested and charged with obstruction. One young woman was subjected to a strip search at the police station. Since then injunctions have been taken out on Audrey, her brother (who is currently on the People's March), and full-time TGWU official Bobby Lamb, to prevent them from picketing the shop.

The rest of the pickets are constantly in danger of being arrested for obstruction, too. Keva Coombes, the leader of the Labour-controlled Merseyside County Council, will defend the eight so far arrested when they appear in court, and both he and Labour MP Bob Parry were on the picket line last Saturday.

The picket is very successful in hitting trade, with most shoppers boycotting the store. Thousands of signatures have been collected calling for Audrey's reinstatement. As we stand on the picket line collecting signatures, many women shopworkers relate similar experiences of harassment. One woman told me that harassment had forced her to quit her job.

Over the weekend TGWU regional secretary Bill Heywood personally intervened and instructed the local full-timer to call off the picket and thereby the dispute, because he did not want to put the union funds at risk of legal action. This message was relayed to the pickets, who decided to ignore it. The instruction was not formally issued, and was in clear breach of union policy.

This dispute is important because it shows that sexual harassment is a trade union issue; and it is also a test of the local trade union leadership.

Messages of support etc. to TGWU, Transport House, Islington, Liverpool 3.

No move by Greenings bosses

THE management at Greenings in Warrington last week agreed to talks with the 400 workers on strike against moves to abolish the annual wage claim, end negotiated holidays, reduce trade union facilities, and axe 89 jobs. Management's only previous move in the dispute had been to issue redundancy notices to all the strikers.

The talks, however, produced no shift in the bosses' position, and the strike continues. The strikers have been sending delegations round the country, especially to union conferences, to appeal for funds.

Messages/donations: N. Greening JSSC, c/o Len Blood, 26 St. John St., Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside.

TUC gags Trades Councils Conference

By Bill McKeith

THE 59th Annual Conference of Trades Councils was a "low-key" affair. Not surprising, as TUC instructions are: "no motion or reference back can be accepted which is in conflict with declared Congress policy." To protect this advisory-only status, the TUC General Council elects a majority 10 representatives (compared with the conference's 9) to the Trades Councils Joint Consultative Committee (TCJCC). And at the chairperson's right hand sits John Monks (appointed TCJCC secretary).

Conference opened with almost its only contentious motion - lost by 92 votes to 93 - which proposed regular reports to trades councils from the

TCJCC (none at present) and the right of trades councils as well as County Associations of Trades Councils to submit motions and amendments. However, following a successful reference back in 1982 (there was none this year) CATCs will in future be able to submit amendments.

The platform was overturned on one issue only, when it was told to press the TUC to campaign for financial support to be given to the British Pensioners and Trade Unions Action Association. (There is no other national inter-union pensioners' organisation).

True to instructions, none of the 40-odd motions challenged TUC policy. The nuclear disarmament composite called on the TUC to campaign for its unilateralist policy.

A similar call made last year has been ignored by the TUC, and the platform failed to respond to the "union turn" inside CND - the need for blacking and strike actions to prevent the deployment of Cruise was barely discussed.

The TCJCC agreed to send a "telegram" of support to Greenham for the May 24 Women's Day of Action. Since telegrams were abolished last year, this announcement reflects the restricted nature of the debate on privatisation.

The election and jobs were the subjects of a "Labour government elected on socialist policies" composite.

The motion on the Youth Training Scheme "noted" TUC approval of YTS, following conference's call last year to reject it, and insisted that the TUC make it a condition of continuing support that all schemes have local trade union or trades council approval. That one is in conflict with TUC policy!

The increasing political pressure put on unemployed centres by the Manpower Services Commission was evident: the TGWU "Record" was said to be too "political" by an MSC visitor to one centre, and another centre was told that MSC funds would be withdrawn if Peoples' Marchers were received into the centre. (Two marchers addressed the conference).

Not one motion on international questions or women was on the agenda. However, the conference ended with two attacks on the TUC and Labour leaders' hypocrisy over the Falklands/Malvinas. One highlighted support for the right of "peoples" to self-determination in the Malvinas, and the denial of it in Ireland.

The other pointed out that the TUC had "put on the butcher's apron which is the Union Jack to recruit sailors to go to their death in an operation designed to keep Thatcher in power". Both contributions received considerable support from the conference.

No motion mentioned Ireland. The TUC is again threatening Tameside Trades Council with disaffiliation (for showing a video about which an anonymous informer objected to the TUC). Tameside Trades Council has unanimously affirmed its right to discuss what it chooses including the war in Ireland. Messages defending this right should be sent to J. Monks, TCJCC, Congress House, London W1.

First time

The first thing to strike this first time delegate was the very low proportion of women delegates - barely 20 out of 223 (although creche facilities were available not one delegate brought his/her children) - and the complete absence of any written Standing Orders or a Standing Orders Committee. But despite the constitutional and procedural stranglehold of the TUC, half the trades councils in England and Wales send delegates. Why?

No doubt some delegates come, see a charade, and go, never

to return. Others come to provide uncritical support for the TUC. But most delegates attend because they know a meeting of trades councils has enormous potential and in the meantime it is useful to exchange information and experience if not form policy.

It was an early conference of trades councils in the 19th century (not of national-level unions) that led to the establishment of the TUC; the conference used to elect representatives to the General Council.

Subsequent "rationalisation" by the bureaucracy has eliminated the troublesome complication of constitutional powers for trades councils, because they might be important organs of progress.

This year's conference threw out a motion to abolish the "talking shop". The alternative at this stage must be to fight for the right of the Trades Councils Conference to send a strong delegation to the General Council and for the right to put up motions to the TUC Congress.

DEFEND THE NEWHAM 8!

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

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

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



WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

NUPE 1983 Conference Special

Yes, we can fight ... now we've got to win!

END LOW PAY

Women's Fightback special NUPE broadsheet - for copies send a stamped addressed envelope to 10b Landseer Rd, London N19.

Socialist ORGANISER

Civilian targets hit in Mozambique

Terror raids by apartheid rulers

THE vicious air raid by South African planes on the suburbs of the Mozambique capital Maputo was an indiscriminate reprisal attack on civilian targets.

The planes damaged a jam factory, a creche, private houses and a peasant hut, killing six people and injuring 40, as they strafed the area with rockets and machine gun fire.

Reporters who visited the scene insist that there was no evidence of the alleged "main camp" of ANC guerrillas, or of recent ANC presence in the area, despite claims by the South African regime that their raid was aimed at "ANC terrorists".

The episode — like a similar raid into Mozambique in 1981 and the carnage near the Lesotho capital of Maseru last year — is part of the strategy of brute force and intimidation through which the apartheid rulers seek to crush the black struggle and cut off support for the ANC.

It followed a massive rush hour car bomb explosion in Pretoria outside the South African Air Force headquarters in which 18 people were killed and 216 injured.

But it also dovetails in with persistent South African attempts to undermine and overturn the nationalist regimes of Mozambique and Angola, and to crush the liberation struggle in Namibia, where a vast South African army of occupation is pitted against SWAPO forces.

South African operations inside Angola — including more or less permanent occupation of some border areas — are so com-

By Harry Sloan

mon they now scarcely rate a mention in the press.

And the apartheid leaders have sponsored the reactionary guerrilla forces of UNITA in Angola and the MNR in Mozambique. Added proof of this link came last month when MNR leader Orlando Cristina was shot dead — in the South African capital of Pretoria! Since then the South African "Sunday Tribune" reports evidence of a group based in South Africa claiming to be the MNR's "Mozambique government-in-exile".

The latest apartheid raid into Mozambique was accompanied by rhetoric exactly paralleling the cold blooded threats of the embattled Zionist regime in Israel. Military strongman, Defence Minister General Magnus Malan, announced that:

"I have no doubt that every South African who is proud of his country and who supports evolutionary change will agree with me when I say that South Africa's security forces will avenge every drop of blood spilled of innocents — be they white, black or brown — with all the power at its disposal."

But another parallel with the Zionist situation is that this bloodthirsty attitude has caused a



Troops arrest black demonstrator

degree of embarrassment for the British and American imperialists, who have hopes of a longer-term, more global development towards stabilised rule in Southern Africa, and are courting some of the black states Pretoria is abusing and antagonising.

In Washington, the State Department — which wants to site Cruise missiles in South Africa, and has been consistently friendly towards the apartheid rulers

— criticised not only the Pretoria bombing but also the retaliatory raid on Mozambique. In Britain, Francis Pym adopted the same stance, going so far as to "deplore this violation of Mozambique's sovereignty."

Interestingly, while the British press has focussed on the various condemnations of the Pretoria bombing, a leading Roman Catholic Archbishop has been among those who have blamed the regime for the episode:

"Essentially the escalation of violence is a response by desperate people to the built-in violence in an apartheid society."

It is still not clear whether this bombing — aimed at a "hard" military target, but plainly carried out without regard for probable black civilian casualties — indicates a substantial shift of strategy by the ANC — who have not as yet claimed responsibility for it.

It is clear however that despite evidence in recent years of the power of the black working class in the South Africa economy — with a growth of unionisation and strike action — the ANC has continued to focus on guerrillaist military tactics.

While the guerrillas' courageous blows against the regime are no doubt supported by the vast majority of black workers, they do little to organise the mass class action and mass self defence that are vital if the apartheid-capitalist state is to be overthrown.

Apartheid will not be 'reformed' away. Further evidence of this is the new constitutional proposals being pushed through, which would give virtually dictatorial powers to an elected Executive President, who would single-handedly supervise the business of the proposed 3-chamber Parliament (whites, coloureds, Indians), appoint ministers, proclaim or terminate martial law, declare war and make peace, appoint or remove civil servants, and chair the cabinet.

As the black working class faces draconian repression and mounting exploitation, the task of international solidarity is an urgent one.

It can be begun in every union, through steps to build direct links with the emerging black trade unions of South Africa.

The ANC bomb was aimed at a "hard" military target

New battles in Bogside



WHILE Sinn Fein candidates canvass for electoral support in the Six Counties of Ireland, republican supporters took to the streets last weekend in the biggest riots since the hunger strikes two years ago.

500 petrol bombs were thrown at the RUC by youth in the Bogside area of Derry on the second anniversary of the death of INLA hunger-striker Patsy O'Hara.

In Belfast on Tuesday a massive 700lb car bomb demolished the Andersonstown RUC barracks.

Meanwhile in Britain the rooftop protest in Albany, Isle of Wight, has thrown the spotlight once again on the discrimination against republican prisoners held in British jails.

These are the visible reminders that whichever party wins the next election there will remain a long hard battle to force the withdrawal of British troops from the six counties, and ensure the right of the Irish people to self-determination.

Khomeini regime courts Japan

FURTHER moves by the Khomeini regime to cement its links with imperialism have accompanied new threats to exterminate members of the now banned Tudeh (Communist) Party.

Last week saw a visit to Japan by an Iranian delegation seeking a resumption of work on the delayed Bandar Khomeini petrochemical complex.

A joint company comprising the Mitsui group and the Iranian government will operate the complex which came to a halt in the Iran-Iraq war.

But this link-up between Khomeini's professedly "anti-imperialist" regime and one of the world's most powerful multinationals is only part of a broader scheme for economic links between Iran and Japan, which will be discussed by a further Iranian delegation to Japan in mid June.

This open move towards restoration of broken links with imperialism runs alongside the heightened witch-hunt of left wing oppositionists within Iran, and the purge of the Tudeh Party.

Khomeini on Monday made a speech in which he lumped together Tudeh supporters — until now some of the most craven supporters of the "Islamic republic" — and US sympathisers.

In a chill warning to Tudeh members — who are being rounded up by Islamic "revolutionary guards" — Khomeini compared them to the banned Mujahedeen.

"Except that you are wearing a different mask, the mask of sympathy with the impoverished masses, of patriotism."

Let me tell you that you will not live to witness the return here of the US, nor will you live to see the return here of the Soviet Union."

What they will live to witness is further repression and — if captured — torture, already inflicted on the Tudeh Party's General Secretary to force him to make bogus "confessions" that he has worked for the KGB since 1945.

The workers' movement internationally must take up the fight against this promised slaughter of Tudeh members and the continuing murder of leftists, trade unionists and militant fighters for the rights of national minorities, women and gay people in Khomeini's prison-house Iran.

Resolutions and letters of protest to: Ambassador Ali Reza Farrokrouz, Iranian Embassy, 27 Princes Gate, London SW7.

FUND Make plans now!

Make your arrangements now for fund-raising activities after the election! Unless the fund gets its full target of £1,000 in June, we'll be in real trouble.

We asked for immediate personal donations of £5 from all waged Socialist Organiser supporters — but only a few have responded so far. This week's contributions were Steve Macarthur £5, Mick O'Sullivan £5, Jo Thwaites £10, Roger Welch £5 — grand total for May £184.75, or £815.25 short of the £1000 we need.

We can't continue to absorb that sort of shortfall for long. Send your £5 now. Be bold — when you see your regular buyers this week, ask each of them for £5 too. And make your plans for fund-raising events after June 9.

Money to: The Treasurer, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.