

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist ORGANISER

Fight the
witch-
hunt

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The fight goes on to save jobs, NHS, union rights

DON'T LET THEM GRIND YOU DOWN!



Snatchers, slashers and bashers; Thatcher, Lawson, Boyson, Heseltine and Tebbit.



Inside
Livingstone,
Benn and
others
comment
on election

By Harry
Sloan

YES, WE lost the election: though Thatcher's vote declined, the leaders of the labour movement gave her a victory by default.

Now — even while Thatcher lines up a cabinet more hard-bitten and bloodthirsty than before, with hatchet men Lawson, Parkinson, and Rhodes Boyson brought in to axe everything in sight — we hear Terry Duffy and Labour's right wing again warning us against 'extra-Parliamentary action'.

Instead, these 'leaders' would have the working class passively accept five more years' penal servitude.

They have not gone unchallenged. NUM president Arthur Scargill and GLC leader Ken Livingstone have argued strongly that the working class must prepare mass action to defend itself against the Tory onslaught.

On this, they are absolutely right. Thatcher may have won solid support from the prosperous middle classes and in rural areas; but she has no mandate from the working class in Scotland, Wales,

the North or the big industrial centres — which her electioneering carefully avoided.

Crazy electoral boundaries and the activities of the SDP may create the illusion that the South of England is an unbroken sea of Toryism — but in the South, too, hundreds of thousands of trade union and Labour activists turned out against the Tories and are ready and able to defend their jobs, services, and basic rights.

Many unemployed youth — unmoved by Labour's limp and ragged campaign — may have

stayed in bed on June 9; but that gives Thatcher no right to condemn them, and millions more, to five years' poverty on the dole.

The vast increase in the Tory majority in Parliament — obtained with less votes, and theoretically fixed for five years — shows beyond doubt the folly of hoping to defend workers' interests simply through the ballot box.

Thatcher has no mandate from the working class: we

are not obliged to accept her dictates. Our class — whose labour is crucial to the whole economy — has the power to puncture the hot air balloon of Tory euphoria, and bring them down with a bump.

To do so we need to meet hard line class-war government with hard line class-war opposition — not just in Parliament, but right across the board.

Union leaders must stop hob-nobbing with the Tories and start fighting them. In the workplaces, the alarm must be sounded on union rights, on cuts, closures and privatisation.

We must build the base of support from which strikes, occupations, solidarity action and trade union boycotts can be mounted. The trade union movement must reach out, organise

and mobilise the youth on the dole. If we had done these things before, we could have won the election.

The Tories' best hope now — and that of the right wing — is that yesterday's militants, crushed by the election result, will give up the ghost.

But there is nowhere for us to run to: with our backs against the wall, we see the enemy approach. Forward, fighting, is the only way to go.

PHOTOS: JOHN HARRIS



Victory in POEU - see back page

EDITORIAL

Out of the frying pan...?

AS WE go to press, Peter Shore, Roy Hattersley and Neil Kinnock have declared themselves as candidates for leader of the Labour Party, and Gerald Kaufman, Dennis Davies and Michael Meacher have come out as candidates for deputy leader. Eric Heffer may also stand for leader.

To believe the press, the election is almost sewn up already. Millions of blocks votes are being credited to candidates while the members of the unions concerned have only just read about the race in the newspapers.

The votes of UCATT, NUR, UCW and TGWU have been credited to Kinnock, of the AUEW to Hattersley, and the EETPU to Shore, while in almost every case not even the union executive has met. In the TGWU, where the executive has discussed the issue, a conference of the union is coming up in three weeks and should have the right to take the decision.

The first thing that every affiliated trade unionist should demand is the most democratic possible decision on the union's vote — a conference discussion, if possible, or a ballot through branch meetings.

Unfortunately, however, prospects are not good for this contest to have the same politicising effect in the trade unions as Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign in 1981. None of the front-runners is any improvement on the retiring Foot leadership. The 'choice' we are offered is a clear reflection of the crisis of leadership facing the working class.

Peter Shore is a strong advocate of wage controls and of the witch-hunt, and was the most rabid jingoist during the Falklands war. Roy Hattersley is a more sophisticated right-winger, but equally supports wage controls, opposes unilateral nuclear disarmament, and is all for the witch-hunt.

On policy issues Neil Kinnock has generally spoken for conference decisions. But where there is room for doubt, he veers to the right. As front-bench spokesperson on education, for example, he has firmly refused to give a pledge to restore Tory cuts. On the democracy struggles of recent years and on the witch-hunt, his record has been consistently bad. He played a central role in defeating Tony Benn's challenge to Dennis Healey for deputy leader.

The Left should be pressing for candidates who will oppose the witch-hunt and defend the democratic reforms and policy victories of the last few years against the right-wing backlash. Such a Left slate may not have much chance of winning, but it can provide a focus for campaigning, agitating, educating and organising in the rank and file.

It could also increase pressure on the front-runner candidates to make commitments against a further witch-hunt.

The obvious Left candidate, Tony Benn, is not possible because he has lost his seat as an MP. Another problem in getting a Left slate is that many sections of the Left are reluctant to make the necessary challenge to the Kinnock 'centre'.

As of now the most likely Left candidates are Michael Meacher and Eric Heffer. They are not ideal: Meacher has favoured incomes policy (though unlike Shore and Hattersley he has not tried to sabotage Labour conference policy), Heffer has been wobbly at many points in the democracy struggles of recent years. It would be good to have a woman candidate, and Jo Richardson is well qualified in other ways too. Dennis Skinner would be a good standard-bearer for the Left.

Still, if it comes down to Meacher and Heffer, they should be supported. In the main struggles in the Labour Party in recent years, they have at least been on the right side of the fence. A campaign behind them would be able to continue the progressive work of those struggles.

Many on the Left may have a more optimistic view of Kinnock than Socialist Organiser, and/or want to make sure that Kinnock defeats Shore and Hattersley. But because the election is by eliminating ballot, not first-past-the-post, a Left slate will not hinder that. Delegates can vote for Left slate first and Kinnock on a later round (even if they have to grit their teeth to do so!)

We cannot afford to let our whole political vision be taken up by calculations of lesser evils. At the same time as the leadership contest, we must also work to rearm the labour movement politically, to take the fight for democracy into the trade unions, to build Labour Party workplace branches, to regroup a fighting, principled left wing capable of standing its ground under pressure, and to turn outwards to mobilising against the Tories.

Labour Campaign for Gay Rights
fighting in the Labour movement for lesbian and gay male liberation

Gay men can still be arrested for having sex if they are under 21 or if there is a policeman snooping. In jobs, in education, in housing, in child custody, gays and lesbians face continuing discrimination. Join the fightback: LCGR, c/o 61a Bloom Street, Manchester 1.



Don't miss the deadline!

THE deadline for Labour Party conference resolutions is July 8: so move fast, or your local Labour Party will miss its chance.

The Labour Committee on Ireland, the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, and Labour CND are circulating model resolutions which SO supports. We are also backing the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy's resolution on the 'Greenwich amendment' about the right for groups to organise within the Labour Party.

And we have our own model resolution on fighting the Tory government:

"The Labour Party has a duty to fight to protect the living standards and rights of the working class against the re-elected Tory government.

The labour movement can and must exercise the democratic right of resistance to the introduction of Cruise, to factory closures, to cuts in public services, and to attempts to cripple the trade unions and to shackle or abolish councils.

This conference therefore instructs the NEC:

1. To launch a mass campaign involving demonstrations, meetings and industrial action in defence of peace, jobs, services, union rights and local democracy.
 2. To urge Labour MPs to pursue a policy of obstruction in Parliament; and to urge trade unions to break collaboration with the Tory government by withdrawing from such bodies as the National Economic Development Council.
 3. Actively and publicly to support and encourage industrial action in defence of jobs, services and union rights, and direct action against nuclear missiles such as that initiated by the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp.
 4. To support trade unionists and Labour councils when they defy Tory laws in order to defend working class rights and interests.
- By such a policy we can best thwart the class war plans of this Tory government, and prepare for the most rapid possible return of a new Labour government."

Fighting the witch-hunt

THE publication in Tribune this week of the second 'Labour Against the Witch-hunt' advertisement is a well-timed reminder of the substantial section of the Labour Party who saw clearly the effect of the purge on Labour's election chances, and are committed to resist it.

The temporary lull in the witch hunt is likely to end sooner rather than later. The three

declared leadership contenders (Kinnock, Hattersley, and Shore) have all said they favour continuing the action 'to uphold the Constitution'.

However, the effect of the witch-hunt on the election result is likely to strengthen rather than weaken the resistance. And the right wing has lost important ground with the left victory in the POEU.

Against this background, this Monday night's Labour Against the Witch-hunt Secretariat (June 13) decided to:

Central

- Campaign to make the issue of the witch-hunt central in the leader/deputy leader election. LAW will be sending a questionnaire to all candidates on their attitude to expulsions, and will be publishing their voting records on the issue. LAW will support candidates who oppose the witch-hunt.

- Draw attention to the need to defend Hammersmith North and Islington South CLPs, which are still refusing to expel Militant Editorial Board members.

- Launch the campaign for the run-up to the Labour Party conference at its next National Council meeting on July 2.



Hattersley

Daily Mail

EXPRESS

FINANCIAL TIMES

The Daily Telegraph

Sun

Press

Gang

by Patrick Spilling

Scenes from everyday life

in the studio for this most democratic of events in the most democratic country on earth, over to our political correspondent... only poll that really matters of course, but it is clear that the Labour Party is finished as a serious force in British politics... to the Isle of Wight where the Liberals have won an amazing victory, back to the studio... across the country SDP/Liberal Alliance would sweep to power, and where of course the Labour vote has completely collapsed, humiliating this once great party, now finished as a serious force in politics... to Crosby where it seems that Mrs Williams might not have hung onto her seat... used to losing, but of course I am disappointed... this completely unfair electoral system where I don't get a seat in the House of Commons just because I lost... to Hillhead where Roy Jenkins has won an amazing victory... like to thank... like to thank... like to thank... to Plymouth Devonport where Dr David Owen has humiliated the opposition with an increased majority

to Bristol East where we have just heard that the electorate has rejected extreme left wing policies of Mr Benn... Dr Owen in studio... man of stature... increasingly, formidable Parliamentarian... smashed the Labour Party... completely discredited... got to agree with Mrs Thatcher... sink the Belgrano... jolly good shot... wish it had been the Labour Party on board... to Mr Foot... no thank you, would be inappropriate to comment... back to the studio... Cecil Parkinson... well of course in tune with majority of British people... Labour's most extreme manifesto ever... completely rejected... to Mrs Thatcher... Mrs Thatcher... we are the people... we will exterminate... exterminate... exterminate... exterminate... aaaaaarrrrrrggggghhhhhhhhhh!

LEFT wing militants within the Labour Party are set to take a terrible revenge on the only honest decent men left amidst the wreckage of their once great party.

Scarcely had the dust settled on the ruins of a Labour campaign in which full blooded revolutionary socialism was humiliated at the ballot box, than the grey men behind the politbureau drew the knives.

First came Red Ken, the man who opened a bomb factory for Irish murderers in London's County Hall. He expressed contempt for democratic traditions with open defiance of the most popular government since Abraham Lincoln reformed the union in the United States.

Next came Tony Benn whose prescription for a totalitarian state was decisively rejected by the entire population of Bristol who once again scorned the ballot box by saying he would take his struggle outside Parliament.

Behind him came Arthur Scargill whose brand of industrial anarchy writ large in the manifesto struck dread and loathing into the minds of ordinary decent men and women down the pits who support Mrs Thatcher. Scargill threatened to call out his troops to bayonet to death... any... Yorkshire miner

found to have voted Tory.

What this election shows is that the Labour Party — once a receptacle for some naive but well intentioned gesture towards an equal society — has become the haven only for envious toads who spit at the ballot box as they try to win at it.

MRS Thatcher announced yesterday that there would be a free vote on whether to bring back hanging.

Now some Tory MPs are confident that the new intake of former National Front candidates to Parliament could reverse the result last time round.

Mrs Thatcher said: "Of course this is a matter for individual conscience, but as several ex-members of my cabinet are aware, we must have the right to use in a limited way the gallows on those in society whose crimes are so awful that they really cannot be tolerated in any civilised and democratic nation which has shown its desire to be governed by the most moderate and fair but firm government this country has ever seen."

Besides it will be so much cheaper than passing all that legislation to abolish the GLC.

Martin Thomas examines the entrails

What the results mean for Labour

THE June 1983 general election has marked the end of a chapter in British politics.

Since 1945-50 the political stock-in-trade of the labour movement has essentially been a promise to complete the work of the Labour government of that period. What has passed for socialism has been state-capitalist nationalisation plus welfare services.

The 1945-50 government did the essential groundwork of that programme: since then the labour movement has been promising to bring that programme up to the ideal form in which it was originally envisaged, in contrast to its grubby, humdrum reality.

The inadequacies of such politics have now been starkly exposed.

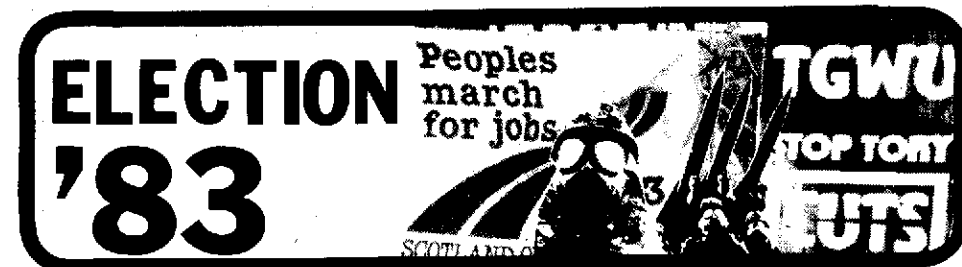
'1945 socialism' has been a decaying force in the working class for many, many years. Cynicism and disillusionment about Labour's promises has increased. Repeatedly pundits have interpreted this trend as 'the decline of working class politics'. In truth it is more a matter of the increasing irrelevance of the avowedly non-class, 'national interest' politics offered to the working class by official Labour leaders.

Declining

The big industrial struggles of the early 1970s, and the tremendous class solidarity for the health workers just last year, show that working class struggle, at least in its basic economic form, is far from a declining force in society. And for all the SDP's talk about new politics, the real new force in British politics recently has been not the Alliance's rehash of right wing Labourism but the growing new Labour Left.

But at this election, two factors turned longstanding cynicism and disillusionment into a substantial swing away from Labour. Firstly, the depth of Britain's economic and social crisis led working class voters to look for new answers. Vague talk from Labour leaders about 'tried and tested' methods of Keynesian reflation was not good enough. Labour came across as having good intentions, but only waffle and pious promises at the centre of its policy.

To win support for a socialist programme of common ownership and workers' control in the 'decisive sectors of industry and finance' would not have been easy. Radical new ideas need strong enthusiastic argument to blaze the trail for them, and momentous experiences to



shake people's prejudices.

But the fact that Labour centred its programme on borrowing from the capitalists, and the claim that such a policy could heal the economic crisis without struggle or trouble, made Labour's promises just not credible.

Alliance

Secondly, the existence of the Alliance as an apparently viable, apparently new, anti-Tory option meant that Labour did not automatically get the anti-Tory vote.

The anti-Tory vote actually increased. The Tories got 700,000 votes fewer than in 1979. But the Tories' support did hold up pretty well: the decisive factors behind this were the Falklands war and the failure of the union leaders adequately to challenge Thatcher in struggle. The Tories have managed to retain the image of a successful, decisive, resolute government, whose policies may be painful but will do good in the end.

Undoubtedly the election result shows some demoralisation and loss of self-confidence among the working class; but if this analysis is correct, it was not a positive turn to the Right by the electorate.

The main facts about the voting were as follows. The Tories got 43.4% of the vote, Labour 28.2%, the Alliance 25.9% and others 2.5% (figures for Britain, not including Northern Ireland).

Lost

Compared to 1979, Labour lost about 10% of the electorate, the Alliance gained about 12%.

In absolute terms this shift from Labour to the Alliance was fairly uniform across the country. In the North-West, Labour lost 7%, the Alliance gained 11%. In the South-East, Labour lost 11%, the Alliance gained 11%. Most other areas were somewhere in between.

If Labour lost roughly the same proportion of the electorate, i.e. roughly the same

"The existence of the Alliance meant that the anti-Tory vote did not automatically go to Labour..."

UNDOUBTEDLY the Liberal/SDP Alliance did well in the election. But what are their prospects?

Not good. The SDP is now down to six MPs. But it is the sort of party that can only exist as a Parliamentary force. It does not have dedicated, ideologically committed activists, not even to the extent that the Liberal Party has.

The careerists who streamed into the SDP when it was founded will now stream out again. And the process may be accelerated by new tensions between the Liberals and SDP.

Thus the Liberals will be left with nothing but a good one-off election result — better, but only just better, than their February 1974 success.

number of voters, everywhere, we did not of course lose the same proportion of the Labour vote. We lost 40% of the (small) Labour vote in the South-East outside London, and 14% of the (relatively big) Labour vote in the North-West.

Switch

According to a Gallup survey in the Guardian, the impression given by the overall figures of a straight switch from Labour to the Alliance is largely correct.

"Vague talk about 'tried and tested' ideas was not enough"



32% of first-time voters abstained



Of those who voted Labour in 1979, 63% voted Labour this time, 7% voted Tory, 7% did not vote and 22% voted Alliance. These figures for Labour voters going Tory or abstaining are not vastly different from the numbers of Tory or Liberal voters switching or abstaining.

Working-class Labour voters went Alliance just as much as middle-class ones. Among semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, Labour lost 11% of the vote and the Alliance gained 14%; among trade unionists, Labour lost 14% and the Alliance gained 12%.

Abstentions

Although abstentions cannot be identified as a major overall reason for the decline in the Labour vote, they were very important among first-time voters. 32% of these abstained.

A whole string of factors can be cited as contributing to the election result: the impression of disarray that Labour gave because of the witch-hunt and the open, unrepudiated attacks on Labour policy by our own party leaders, and the embarrassed, unimaginative, timid and incompetent way in which the campaign was run centrally. But for the left the main job must be to focus on what we can and must do.

The right wing was able to retain control of Labour in the

whole period up to the election essentially thanks to the support of the trade union bureaucracies. The fight for accountability and democracy has to be taken into the unions. At the same time the policy debates have to be reopened.

Our prospects are not bleak. Despite everything, in terms of activism at grass roots the Labour campaign was good. Many new recruits have been or can soon be brought into the Labour Party. In the unions, serious left advances have recently been scored in the NUR, UCW, and POEU.

There is an active minority which can lead the way for mobilising against the Tories now on the streets and on the picket lines. Objective pressures will be lending weight to that minority's arguments. Trade unions and Labour councils can no longer go for the line of

'hanging on until there is a Labour government'. They have to fight or go under.

The struggle for this mobilisation can be taken up immediately with a campaign for the labour movement to break collaboration with the Tories — withdrawing from the NEDC and nationalised industry boards and obstructing the Tories' work in Parliament.

The Left must be organised for a fight for democracy in the trade unions, as it was organised before to win the victories in the Labour Party. Labour Party workplace branches will be central in linking political and industrial concerns.

Inside both wings of the labour movement, a left wing must be developed that can pursue the necessary fight for new policies. That is the crucial role of the Socialist Organiser Alliance.

No to imperialism!

PRESSURE on the British state to shift from its policy of repression, repression and more repression in Northern Ireland will be increased by the election results there.

Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein won West Belfast, and overall Sinn Fein increased its score from 10.1% in the Assembly elections to 13.4% this time.

The other party mainly based in the Catholic community, the SDLP, dropped from 19.7% of the poll in 1979 to 17.9% this time. It got one MP, John Hume in Foyle.

Sinn Fein's Danny Morrison just missed in Mid-Ulster by 78 votes, and all 15 other seats went to the Unionists. Within the Protestant community, the result was a victory for the more upper-class Official Unionists as against the more plebeian and more fiercely 'Protestant Ulster

nationalist' Democratic Unionists of Ian Paisley. The Official Unionists got 11 seats, the Paisleyites, 4.

In East Belfast, Muriel Tang of the Northern Ireland Labour and Trade Union Group [linked to Militant in Britain] got a respectable fringe vote of 584.

For God's sake!

Consolation for the battered SDP came after polling day with the news that God's vote had been cast for them.

Unusually for an Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie voted. The press reported that Runcie favours the SDP.

"When I get criticism from one side, then from the other," Runcie declared, "I think it's just possible that I'm putting God's point of view."

He has not yet made any statement on God's preferences for a successor to Roy Jenkins.



**Election
'83**

Peoples
march
for jobs

TGWU
TOP TONY
PUTS

Emptying out the legal chambers?

HERE come the Tories, swaggering back for another five years of self-enrichment.

And what a shower they are! Anyone doubting the class line-up of the parties should look at the biographies of the newly-elected Tory MPs. Look at the number of sources of income many of them command: see how few of them have ever done a useful day's work in their lives.

A glance at the list of Tory MPs makes you wonder how the legal profession carries on — with so many of its number having turned to other forms of robbery and extortion.

The average Tory member is a middle aged solicitor, barrister or chartered accountant. Many now focus on business connections, merchant banking or a directorship or two.

A handful are engineers, managers, academics or media people: others are younger career politicians who have not yet had time to accumulate directorships and lucrative quango posts. And there are perhaps rather fewer farmers among today's blue battalions.

More than a third — 146 — of the 397 Tory MPs are currently or former company directors. 28 are members of the Lloyds money-making club for the extremely rich. A sprinkling own their own or run family businesses.

A mere handful have done any productive work after emerging from their lengthy and expensive education in strings of private schools and top universities — though one conspicuously lowly character (Warren Hawksley from The Wrekin) claims once to have been a bank clerk.

If they do not own or help control banks, the nearest most of his party colleagues come to working in one is paying in the tax concessions and boosted profits handed out by the Thatcher government.

To judge from the parasitic proliferation of largely nominal but highly remunerative posts held by the Tory MPs, the Thatcher shake-out of over-manning in the British economy has a long way to go before it reaches the top.

But then, with so many of them qualified as barristers and solicitors (and presumably drafting their own contracts of employment) it might take a bit more than an economic squeeze to force them out of their cosy nests!



Candidates and campaigners discuss

What went wrong?

Jo Richardson, Labour MP for Barking

We clearly did not get our message across, and it's a very good message. It was and it still remains a good message. We scored a few own goals, which is a matter we're going to have to consider later on, in terms of the way some of our leaders presented the policies.

In my own constituency, and in other constituencies that I visited, we had a more enthusiastic campaign than we have had for a very long time. I think that the whole election has been manipulated by the press and by the media.

We conducted a campaign on the policy, which I thought was a good left wing policy, the best we have had. It was difficult, though, in the light of the press campaign, to get over that it wasn't some kind of loony extremism.

Perhaps the Left has missed the boat in not trying to explain those policies more clearly. I think we've got a tremendous job to do in the next year or so, starting now, to show exactly the relevance of those policies.

Certainly we ought to have a more positive leadership which puts them over, but that's a matter for who we elect as our leader. I was sorry that the presentation of the policies in the press conferences nationally and other media coverage tended to be done by people who are regarded as being at least in the centre, in some cases on the right,

and that is a matter I think that possibly a more left wing NEC could correct.

There was hardly, as far as I could see, anybody on the Left that was at those press conferences and able to put across the message on a national level. That resulted in fudging and mudding and a division about policies that some of the right don't agree with.

Ray Davies, Labour candidate for Cardiff Central

What I think we've got to do is to fight against the betrayal by the leadership, not afford ourselves the luxury of bouts of despair and tears. We've got to flex our muscles and go out and build a new leadership, which was the only weak point in the campaign.

Democracy didn't win when the election results were announced. We've got to go out and organise in the trade union movement, in particular, for the fight back over the next five years.

I had over 120 active young people in my campaign. There is no humiliation or defeat in that sort of campaign. Those are the people who are going to go out and win. It was a tremendous campaign — but there was nothing they could do to get over what the leadership was doing.

The Left have really got to persuade people in the Parliamentary Labour Party to put their names forward for the leadership election — Jo Richardson, Joan Maynard, people like that. It's going to be Kinnoch and the Right or Kinnoch and the Left, and it's got to be the Left, fighting on the policies, not personalities. It's only us on the Left who can put the arguments forward strongly.

Valerie Veness, Labour candidate for Hornsey and Wood Green

We're quite pleased with our result, because it was one of the few swings to Labour.

The Labour Party, at a constituency level, at its grass roots, has never been healthier. That showed in the campaign, where the party was recruiting members and had lots of people out working.

But at a national level, in the national leadership, it is hopeless. They were useless in the way that the campaign was conducted. They didn't believe in half of the things that you had the Tory

manifesto. It wasn't that the Tories won the election, it was the Labour Party that lost it.

There was a lot of anti-Thatcher feeling in the country, but it wasn't being translated into pro-Labour feeling.

Obviously now the struggle goes on. There isn't really anyone in Parliament who is going to lead the Left, and it's a question of getting someone in there who is.

I should imagine the Party leadership is going to be between Hattersley and Kinnoch, and if so we haven't got any choice but to support Kinnoch.

It's an awful situation facing Labour councils, especially if Thatcher brings in rate capping. And I don't know how much more they'll take away in rate support grant. So you're either faced with massive cuts, or you have to fight back. The question is how you fight back.

It's quite clear now that it's no good disappearing into the Town Hall and having nine hundred committee meetings. You've got to get out onto the ground, explain the issues.

The strategy to fight back has yet to be decided. But it's got to be outside the Town Hall.

Tony Benn, Labour candidate for Bristol East

The fact is that our policies, if you take them as policies, were acceptable to people. The public opinion polls they didn't publish showed that there was enormous support for the policies.

It was an election where the media had a very clear objective of making Thatcher prime minister and Roy Jenkins, as it were, leader of the opposition, and hammering the Labour Party.

It was a very bad defeat. On the other hand we did get enormous support from our own people. If I take my own experience in Bristol, people came from all over the country and worked. One old lady of 73 came down from Cumberland and stayed for a fortnight. There was an Indian family who drove down every day from London and canvassed among the Asian community. Welsh steelworkers and miners came over, and there was a terrific campaign and tremendous commitment.

And that is very, very significant for the future. I think there is no doubt that all the work done in the Labour Party over the last ten years, or certainly over the last four, had produced a degree of commitment which I had never before seen in my life as candidate. That is something which is very precious and bodes well for the future.

Ian Williams, a member of the National Union of Railwaymen executive

In Liverpool we won five out of six seats with a slate of what would clearly pass in most of the country as far left candidates, and far left policies.

But between the press and the government and the SDP, a lot of people are abandoning any form of class loyalty. From Liverpool, or Scotland, the election looks very much like the affluent south east declaring war on the industrial areas, and the people with jobs declaring war on the people who haven't got jobs. Where we've failed, in the labour movement, is to develop a sense of class consciousness.

And the behaviour of the Labour leadership over the last few years has really been designed to make that worse. They don't believe in class war. Most of the Labour leadership, ideologically, are far closer to the SDP than they are to us.

The labour movement should start fighting the next election now, and in a way that we've never done before. We should be coordinating local campaigns and national campaigns. In many areas now we're going to have local Labour councils in confrontation with the government. We're going to have whole industries — coal, steel, railways — in some form of confrontation with the government. If the normal pattern is followed, these will each be fought and lost separately.

We should be coordinating them. The labour movement will have to turn itself into more of a versatile, fighting organisation than just an electoral machine.

On the Labour Party leadership — I think Eric Heffer is running, and he has got a lot more impressive credentials than the others. Neil Kinnoch's actions over the last year have caused a lot of mistrust.



Pat Wall

Barry Turner, Labour councillor, Bradford

Pat Wall and Militant supporters locally are laying the blame for Pat Wall's defeat on Ben Ford, the former Labour MP, who stood as an independent and got 4000 votes. I think this is wrong.

The blame lies with the Labour Party leadership. For a long period it was unclear whether or not Pat Wall was endorsed by the NEC as the Labour candidate, even after two selection meetings. This uncertainty allowed the local press to build up some momentum behind Ben Ford.

If the NEC had accepted the democratic selection of Pat Wall after the first selection meeting, this wouldn't have happened.

Get out of that armchair and into the country!



Labour Party Young Socialists summer camp 1983: July 30 to August 6. All Young Socialists should come: a week of YS workshops, Class Fighter meetings, and very much more debate than there is at YS conference.

Contact Class Fighter, 13 Buxton Road, London N19 for details and transport. Bring sleeping bags and tents.

SAVE SOUTH LONDON HOSPITAL!

Campaign meets every Tuesday at Balham Food & Book Co-op, High St., 8pm.

WE SAVE THE SOUTH LONDON HOSPITAL!

"We can't go on dodging these issues!"

Ken Livingstone, leader of the GLC.

We should try to challenge some of the myths about why we lost the election.

Undoubtedly a major factor was that a reason for the creation of the SDP was to make sure that Labour lost. Also there's the question of the Falklands. That was a factor. But I don't think that these were decisive.

Neither was it crucial, I think, that Callaghan and Healey moved in on the question of defence. Had we had a party clear on its policy and committed to its policy, it could have brushed that aside.

For all the talk of an Alternative Economic Strategy, in the months coming up to the election the leadership put over a succession of gimmicks... devaluation... import controls... borrowing... and the National Economic Assessment, just a very long way of saying an incomes policy. Voters realised that all these gimmicks weren't going to solve the problems of our society.

The media attacks clearly had an impact - but once again, if we had had a clear policy that could have been swept aside. The key to our weakness is the central issue of economic policy.

What we've been doing is defending a policy which was devised in the late '60s and early '70s - a programme that was created at the end of the 20-year boom.

A number of years ago I was interviewed, by Socialist Organiser or Socialist Action, I can't remember which, and I was asked whether the AES would solve the problems. I answered no, but it was a stage the Labour Party would have to go through. What I ignored, I think, was that the inadequacies of this policy could be exposed before you got to a Labour government, in an election campaign.

Just because we expected something worse, I think we slipped into being too uncritical of

the manifesto. We can't say that the policies we fought the election on were a betrayal of the party conference. The problem is that the party conference has fudged the issues.

Workers wouldn't believe this economic policy. They remember that we made all the same promises before and we never kept them. They know a Labour government making those promises is going to go back on the road of the IMF and cuts and incomes policy.

We are not going to win an election until we tell workers clearly that we are going to fund the programme out of the existing wealth, out of the control of capital. We have to reopen Labour's programme, and make it a coherent programme, before we can convince people on the doorstep.

Until we're prepared to take into public ownership the productive sector of the economy we're going to fall into the trap of paying for Labour's increased public services by increased taxes. When doing this we've got to combat ideas of public ownership based on what it has been like over the last 30 years, a la Herbert Morrison. We've got to raise the issue of involving workers in the control of their industries.

Nor is it only an economic policy that we've got this dodging of the issues.

The second key issue is defence. It's not very credible calling for unilateral nuclear disarmament when we say we're going to continue in NATO...

And there's a third key issue - which is the question of Ireland. Until we can go into an election committed to withdrawal from Ireland, we're committed to maintaining all the apparatus of British repression in Ireland. We can't continue to duck this issue.

We have to go back to the conference this autumn and argue not just for the defence of the existing manifesto. The right will be attacking - but we can't just defend the manifesto. We would be defending an incoherent policy, and we would be bound to lose.

JOHN HARRIS



Ken Livingstone: "The key to our weakness is economic policy"



Herbert Morrison shaped the 'public corporation' model of nationalisation after 1945

We need a firm commitment against witch-hunts

Ken Livingstone was speaking at a meeting on June 13 organised by Socialist Action. Afterwards, he discussed some issues further with Martin Thomas.

You talked about the need to present alternatives to the Herbert Morrison model of nationalisation. What are your ideas?

I think, to be quite honest about it, no work has been done on working out the detail. We have relied on slogans, and I have very little idea in my own mind of the exact mechanism by which, say, British Telecom should work under workers' control.

We have to hear from those unions where the Broad Left are now in control what their thoughts are, and use those models.

I think it's much easier to be clear about the central theme of control of capital. That's much easier to get across, because people are shocked by the scale of money leaving the country. They can understand that £1 billion a month is a vast sum which could be put to more productive use in rebuilding our economy and rebuilding the structure of the welfare state.

So I think that's the one to start with first of all. You've got to convince a lot of workers that there is the wealth here in society to do the things we're saying. Half of them have taken on board Thatcher's propaganda that it can't be done because the money just isn't there.

The second stage, I think, is the question of what you mean by popular control when you talk about nationalising the profitable sector of the economy, and I need to hear other people's views before I finalise my own on that.

You also mentioned defence. Don't you think that to be convincing the Left must put forward its own alternative defence policy to nuclear weapons?

If we have a radical socialist government in this country, I think we would need to have a strong defence, because we could very well find an intervention from America to try and overthrow that government. And therefore I don't think we can talk about a completely civilian-based army. We'd need the necessary hardware to resist aggression from the Pentagon. But in terms of the control of it is where you need to think again. I don't think that what we want to see is a defence force that

is organised and controlled in the way that the existing armed forces are in this country.

You need, once again, a method of popular control. You need to base that defence force, in much the same way that some of the Third World liberation struggles have been, in the community it is defending.

I think the initial thing to get over to people is that we should not be part of the NATO defence strategy. It's called a NATO defence strategy, but it isn't even that. It's solely and totally a Pentagon defence strategy, in which Europe and Canada are the front lines.

In an interview with Socialist Organiser two years ago (April 4, 1981) Ken Livingstone explained that he saw the GLC manifesto policies as "something like the Alternative Economic Strategy. Not in any sense revolutionary - because the Labour Party isn't at that stage."

The problem isn't so much what your notional policies are, but whether you'll fight to implement them...

The next stage should be a left Labour government following Bennite policies. You can't jump from the Callaghan government to a perfect revolutionary position. You've got to go through a spectrum of left wing opinion...

It's easy to popularise that question of Britain needing to step out of that once people realise that it isn't our own defence - we don't even control Polaris, it's targeted by the Americans - when you make the point that we are just being used as the front line by the United States. It gets much more complicated when you get onto this question of how would a radical socialist government organise its defence.

Isn't there a danger here of falling into the same trap as the Left has fallen into before? If you talk to a lot of people on the Left about the AES, they say: 'Yes, it isn't too wonderful, but we should get these issues over to people as a first step'. Isn't there a danger you just take it a stage further with control of capital and getting out of NATO, and in five years' time you'll be saying, 'We didn't make it clear enough. That wasn't convincing...'?

I think there is a major difference in terms of control of capital and being outside of NATO. It's not just a slight shift along the spectrum to the left, it is the fundamental point at which you cross the major divide that takes you

outside of Western capital. And I don't think it's going to be that easy to achieve that. You are saying to the Labour Party that the time has come to make a break with the existing system.

Clearly, if we had done these things, there would still be other problems. But I do think you've got to go through those changes to be aware of what the problems are at the second stage. You can start to construct a theoretical case about what the next stage of problems and the next things to go on to are, but it is such a massive transformation in those very simple phrases...

In an interview two years ago, you said that you saw a left wing GLC as a sort of mini first run for a left wing Labour government. In the light of this Tory victory, how would you see the GLC's strategy now?

If we had elected a government on this manifesto, and it had carried it out, it would have had most probably worse problems even than the Labour GLC has had.

The GLC has a very limited range of responsibilities and powers, and nothing that the Labour GLC does challenges the structure of society. It raises issues, it promotes campaigns, it makes small shifts in wealth - they're all things that a Thatcher government could live with if the truth were told.

In a way we are a trial run for what that sort of government would have been, but we are not a trial run for the sort of election that I'm talking about now. A Labour government elected on that basis would be in a position to actually transform society. No Labour GLC, whatever basis it is elected on, is in a position to transform society.

Local government is not going to bring down central government. It never has been a possibility. At the end of the day you run into the problem that if you openly try and challenge the law, your officers won't carry out your instructions. A Labour government elected on the sort of programme I'm talking about is in a position to transform society in a way that no Labour GLC is.

So you see the GLC's strategy for the next five years as essentially a straight continuation of the last two years?

Our problem is that we are in a position of responding to what the Tories do. We're not in a position of being able to initiate, because we aren't in a position to mobilise the sort of forces required. You come back to what's always been the case - without the trade unions mobilised behind the Labour Party locally or nationally, there's a very limited amount you can do.

What are your ideas on the Labour Party leadership?

We've got to wait to see if there is a left candidate. I've heard that Heffer may stand. But I think we've got to make it quite clear that if there isn't a left candidate, and we've got to choose between candidates of the right like Hattersley and Kinnoch, then there should be no support for any candidate without a firm commitment against witch-hunts and purges and without a firm commitment to support the existence of re-selection and the electoral college. I don't care which of the right-wing candidates gives those commitments: that will be the candidate who should have the support of the left if there isn't a left candidate.



Build workplace Labour branches!

You need ten members to start a branch in any workplace. The definition of 'workplace' is left open in the rules: separate branches can be established in separate sections of a large factory or office complex.

The Labour Party membership of workplace recruits has to be processed through their ward branches. But the workplace branch can send one delegate to the Labour Party GC in each constituency where it has at least ten members living.

LABOUR PARTY AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT!

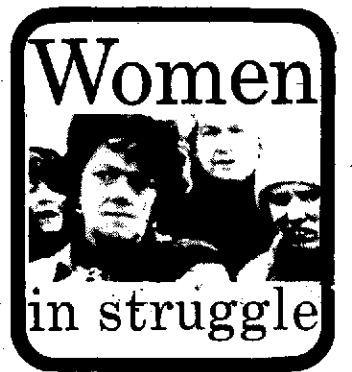
Join LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCHHUNT

Membership open to Constituency Labour Parties, trade union organisations, Labour Party affiliates, and individuals.

Fee. CLPs and unions £10, wards £5, individuals and other organisations £3. Write to - LAW, 11 Wilderton Road, London N16.

Next National Council meeting, open to delegates from CLPs and trade union bodies: Saturday July 2, 12 noon, Camden Town Hall, Judd St. entrance.

Whatever happened to all those leaflets? The fight to make women's voices heard in the campaign



by Jenny Fisher

YOU'D never have guessed from following the national campaign that the Labour Party fought this election with its best policies on women yet.

After long battles to develop Labour's awareness of the needs of its women members and electors, we've won the token paper commitments, but still no life behind supporting them. Except, that is, where women were strong enough to organise and make an impact on local campaigns.

There were 76 women standing for Labour in this election, and in some places, this helped shape and balance the local campaign.

Yet the successes of the women candidates in themselves betray Labour's tokenism. Of the candidates, ten were elected, only 16 came second, and 49 were in third place, with one fourth. Women generally were allowed a look-in in the unwinnable seats, doing the donkey work — but where there's a chance of success, that's still men's work!

Faced with the task of making Labour's policies known, (after all, how many voters get to read a party manifesto?) many parties produced leaflets to put the point across.

Many of these leaflets seem to have met with unfortunate "accidents". Women from the London women's Committee produced a leaflet, only to find when it came back from the printers that the centre pages had disappeared, taking with them the best bits of the politics and leaving a much weaker



PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

For the first time ever, a smaller proportion of women than of men voted Tory — little thanks to Labour's campaign effort

leaflet, going little further than a few anti-Tory comments and Labour promises.

There was a similar "accident" in Peckham. A leaflet was drafted by some women from the women's sections, together with the candidate, Harriet Harman.

Left in the hands of the candidate and the agent to be sent to the printers, the leaflet came back totally watered down, unrecognisable and late.

The Nottingham East agent eventually agreed to produce a women's leaflet, but saw fit to let it be duplicated, and very badly at that.

When women's leaflets were handed out, though, the response was generally very good. At Bethnal Green's 'Play Day', in Peckham market places, in Manchester shopping centres, in Cardiff, women obviously

appreciated being given leaflets aimed specifically at them.

As well as leafleting, many areas organised women's canvasses — particularly useful on estates during the day, where women on their own in the house are often scared to open the door — and the increase in women's membership of the Party seems to have brought more women out canvassing with wards.

To help women get out, Cardiff organised creches, with one all day on polling day.

The most imaginative campaign seems to have been run by Rochdale, where Val Broom was standing for Labour.

Their women's leaflet, produced by the women's section, was distributed throughout local hospitals and schools, often through shop stewards.

It was also given out in the town, at nursery schools and playgroups.

One of the playgroups Val went to (with an entourage of councillors in tow) had never been visited before. A Day of Action was held, one of many on various topics, with visits to workplaces where lots of women work, including the Rediffusion factory. The Day of Action was followed up with a women-only public meeting.

A women's dayschool was also held during the campaign, with Val Broom and Barbara Castle speaking, and workshops.

Here, having a woman candidate meant that issues, for example, mentioning Labour's pledges to improve abortion facilities, which had to be fought for elsewhere, could be 'taken for granted'.

Abortion went in the election address, and Val stressed Labour's commitment to remove VAT from sanitary protection in newspaper interviews, even if the paper did miss that bit out — twice!

But such a campaign would have been impossible without the strong organisation of women on the ground, within a well-organised Party.

In some areas, such as Manchester, where Party organisation was weak, women were called in to be the backbone of the wards' campaigns.

Experience in the election shows that we haven't reached the end of the road. We've

THERE are 13 Tory women in the new Parliament, five of them there for the first time. And it's good to know that most of them will be following in the traditions of their leader.

Edwina Currie, MP for Derby South, has always admired Mrs. T. "We both have the same birthday, we both went to Oxford on scholarships, and both our fathers had shops", she told the Observer.

They have even more in common: "I think she has made it easier for women in politics to be both ladylike and aggressive. I am both, and so is she."

She believes that only incompetent women believe in 'women's rights'.

They also follow the Thatcher line on the wonders of traditional family life. Ann Winterton, MP for Congleton, is described by the Observer as "extolling thrift, kindness and family values". One wonders which of those she found most use for as joint master of the South Staffordshire hunt.

And Marion Roe, MP for Broxbourne, "makes no apology for the fact that I stayed at home to look after my children." As wife of a bank director, perhaps she had some choice in whether or not to lead this life. She also thinks "being militant about women's rights only retards the progress of women." We'll see.

reached the first rung of the ladder, by getting the conference policies into the manifesto, but in this election it's been left to women to make anything of them: they're still token, fringe commitments, they haven't been brought into the centre of Labour's campaign.

Where women are a force in the local party, they've been able to do that: if we combine those forces, we can have the same impact at national level.

One forum we must use to do this is the National Labour Women's Conference. Originally scheduled to be held in Cardiff, the conference was 'postponed' when the election was announced. We must make sure it isn't 'postponed' until next year.

Don't miss your extra delegates!

NOW is the time to check whether your Constituency Labour Party (CLP) is one of the many entitled to send an extra woman delegate to Conference.

The advantages of sending an extra woman delegate are clear.

It's not just a question of preventing Labour Party Conference from being as male-dominated as most other Labour Party meetings. Reporting back to General Committees and wards can be done by both delegates, and the opportunity to go to Conference as 'an extra woman delegate' can gain women the confidence to stand for delegate next year.

Rules

The entitlement comes from Clause XVI (4) in the Rules for Constituency Labour Parties:

"In the event of women's individual and affiliated membership of the Party exceeding 1,500 an additional woman delegate may be appointed."

And that's where the difficulties usually come from: calculating whether your Labour Party has those 1,500 members.

The number of individual women members is usually easier to find: your CLP Membership Secretary should have the necessary records. If not, you'll have to build up the picture from the Membership Secretaries of the individual wards.

There are two kinds of affiliated women members.

Most affiliated 'socialist societies' (that is Co-operative Party, socialist health or education associations, and so on) will have women members: so get in touch with someone in the society who can tell you how many.

Women will also be affiliated through unions. A union branch secretary may be able to tell you

how many women members the union has, but there are two ways you can estimate female membership.

Any trade union affiliation fee over £5 (the minimum) can be broken down to give the total number of members affiliated. You can then estimate what proportion are likely to be women (depending on the union), and arrive at a number to add to your total.

Or, a union branch secretary can add up the number of women members in the branch, and divide the total up over the constituencies which the branch covers.

The number of 'extra women delegates' is increasing, and it's now time to start campaigning for the rules to be made easier.

But once there, what are we to discuss? The positive discrimination measure on delegates must now be extended to resolutions, with a renewed campaign for the right of the National Women's Conference to submit five resolutions directly to Annual Conference.



National meeting of Briefing groups

Sunday July 3, 11.30am, County Hall, London SE1.

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...

International news

Will Syria push through a split in the PLO?

BOTH PLO leader Yassir Arafat and Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi are visiting various Middle East capitals to win support for their respective sides in the dispute that has broken out within the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The internal dispute, which has already led to a few armed clashes, burst into the open some weeks ago. The PLO troops in Lebanon's Bekaa valley, where they are protected by the Syrian army, refused to serve under two new commanders appointed by Arafat.

The newly appointed commanders, said the objectors, had fled the field of battle when the Israelis launched their invasion exactly a year before. Arafat refused to back down, though he did try to create a compromise by appointing the popular General Ahmed Afani as Commander-in-Chief.

Predictably this gesture made no difference, for the appointment of the two commanders was merely the last straw. The crucial issues related to the withdrawal of the PLO troops from Beirut and their dispersal in several Arab countries and the attitude of the PLO to the Fahd and Reagan plans.

The "rebel" group, led by Abu Mussa, sees Arafat's support for the plan put forward by Saudi Arabia's Prince Fahd as tantamount to recognition of the legitimacy of the state of Israel. It was pressure from this quarter too that forced Arafat after a long session of the PLO Executive to withdraw his support from a joint Jordanian-Palestinian agreement in line with the Reagan plan.

And even before the appointment of the two commanders to whom the rebels object, Arafat recalled 40 Fatah officers he considered unreliable from Lebanon to Tunis. His statement several weeks ago that only war could now win the Palestinians their rights can now be seen as an attempt to assuage more militant elements within Fatah.

The fact that the Abu Mussa group is right in a good many of its criticisms of the Fatah leadership cannot be taken in itself of evidence of a progressive trend. It is clear that while the group may not be simply a creation of the Syrians, it is very much

By Andrew Hornung

dependent on the Syrians and pro-Syrian PLO factions like the PFLP General Command of Ahmed Jibril, which has been supplying the rebels with arms.

Arafat so far has refrained from a direct attack on Syrian manoeuvres within Fatah and within the PLO in general (where apart from the Jibril group they control another organisation, al-Saiqa).

The current military dependence of the PLO on Syria is too great for that. Instead his attacks have been openly directed at Libya, which has played the role of declared supporter of the dissidents. Libyan airplanes, for instance, flew large quantities of food and arms into the area in response to Arafat's blockade of the rebels' positions.

So far there have been no reports of the stand being taken by leftist Palestinian organisations like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (led by George Habash) and the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (led by Naif Hawatmeh).

The Arab states are generally lining up behind the Arafat leadership of Fatah with — apart from Syria and Libya — the only supporters of the dissident group being the People's Republic of Yemen. Not surprisingly Saudi Arabia and the other conservative Arab states are supporting Arafat.

It is possible that this crisis will be largely solved through the intervention of the Soviet Union which will support Arafat and put pressure on Syria not to attempt to depose him.

Syria's influence in the PLO has been growing steadily for some time and it may be that they will feel that they can control the organisation and make even further inroads by not splitting Fatah definitively.

Against this is their desire to keep up the pressure on Israeli troops in the area: for this they

THE REBELS' demands are:

■ Bring back to Lebanon all the PLO groups that last summer after the evacuation were split up between eight different Arab states.

■ Creation of a military central leadership with fair participation for the other PLO organisations.

■ Establishment of a committee of investigation into the financial activities of the PLO leadership.

■ Working out of a long-term strategy for the prosecution of the armed struggle against Israel — an end to all negotiations.



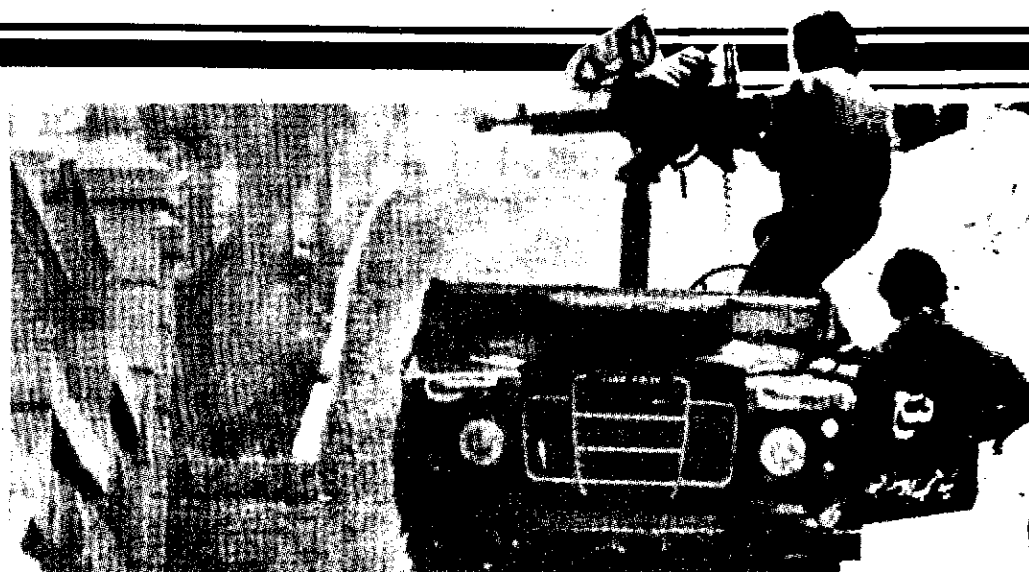
Arafat

need an active and sizeable military group, ready to launch attacks on the Israelis.

Syria's motives — like Libya's — have nothing to do with the Palestinian cause. They are a temporary posture taken up until it is inconvenient — until, perhaps, the possibility of an agreement with imperialism offers itself... even over the dead bodies of thousands of Palestinians.

In an interview with the German weekly Der Spiegel, Abu Mussa claims to be completely independent of Syria — merely in an alliance.

Yet he insists — rightly — on referring to King Hussein of Jordan as "the butcher of the Palestinians" without insisting on a similar designation for the Syrian leader Hafez el-Assad whose intervention on the side of the Phalangists in the Lebanese civil war was the prelude to the Palestinians' terrible defeat there.



Palestinian and Lebanese fighters combat Syrian invasion in 1976



Tel al-Zaatar: a Palestinian camp destroyed with the support of the Syrians

What the rebel leader told Der Spiegel

Abu Mussa, why do you want to split from Fatah?

We are neither separatists, nor dissidents nor rebels — or whatever else we are called. We see ourselves as part of the Fatah movement that is still the spearhead of the Palestinian liberation struggle. Disagreements are nothing new. We have been at loggerheads for seven years now.

Why has Yassir Arafat excluded you and four of your officers from the Fatah Central Committee?

No individual can decide that. Only the majority of the Committee can decide who fights for the sacred rights of the Palestinian people and who does not.

What sparked off your clash with Arafat?

We are opposed to the "good life" being led by the leadership. They are corrupt and politically moribund.

Is that true of the whole Fatah establishment or only of Arafat and his circle?

It is true above all of people like Haj Ismail (one of the two commanders appointed by Arafat), who when the enemy marched on Tyre fled from the Israelis like a frightened rabbit. Are we supposed to accept someone like that as commander of the forces in the Bekaa valley and in North Lebanon?

Arafat did propose a compromise in relation to Haj Ismail.

It's not just a matter of personalities. For us the issue is the very dangerous line Arafat adopted following our withdrawal from Beirut.

Arafat has not really given up any of the old positions.

We are against these negotiations in our name — over the Fahd plan and the so-called Reagan Peace Plan.

You don't want any negotiations with King Hussein or the Saudis either?

No. We are not prepared to deliver ourselves into the hands of the Arab potentates, for them to tell us what to do, although they can't even handle their own

problems.

You are referring to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States?

Above all I mean Hussein. The very fact of there being negotiations about a Palestinian-Jordan confederation is itself in complete contradiction with our idea of sovereignty. The Jordanians managed to get Arafat to a point where he was ready to agree to a federation under the leadership of Hussein. Arafat returned from Amman and tried to get us to approve the plan. That's when the alarm bells really started to ring.

May we assume that you also reject the idea of contact with progressive and dovish circles in Israel?

These are deviations that are

incompatible with Palestinian self-determination. If I talk to them, then how can I condemn Egypt or the people that support the Camp David agreement? How can we blame Gemayel for his pact with the Israelis, if Arafat himself has dealings with Israeli politicians?

Your quarrel with Arafat comes at a convenient moment for the government in Damascus. Aren't you afraid that, should Fatah break apart, you will be totally dependent on Syria?

No. As long as Syria rejects the Reagan initiative and Syrian tanks support us against the Israelis and as long as we have the same aim, we will be comrades in arms.

LABOUR MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN for PALESTINE

Further information and membership details from:
LMCP,
c/o 28, Carlton Mansions,
Holmeleigh Road,
London N16

Weekend School
Sat-Sun 18-19 June 11am-5.30pm
at County Hall, London SE1

Programme Sat

Sun

Fee: Sat £1 (50p unwaged) Sun free

Speakers: Avdiel Ertel (the Zionist State), Moshe Moshonov (Labour Zionism), Nira Yovel Davis (Zionism and Women), Uri Davis (the Histadrut), Palestinian and Lebanese speakers for Palestine, the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine, the Palestine Solidarity and Women for Palestine.

Speakers School: how to present the case for the Palestinians in the Labour movement - includes a workshop for women only.

First National Conference
Sun 26 June 11am-6pm
at County Hall, London SE1

Fee £2 (50p unwaged)

Only individual members of the LMCP and delegates from affiliated organisations will be allowed to vote in the conference

Observers welcome
Creche

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.



Youth conference

Youth CND conference: July 2-3, Manchester University Students Union, Oxford Rd. Open to YCND members only. Delegates from YCND groups: 1 delegate per 4 members. Visitors must notify YCND office before conference. Registration fee £1.50 for visitors and delegates.





The Great Depression: a US dole queue in the 1930s



On the eve of the New Deal, a protest march in

Keynes and the search for

ON ANOTHER page in this issue is an interview I did with Ken Livingstone, in which he argues for the Labour Party to make 'control of capital' the centre of its economic policy. I argue that this is an unsatisfactory halfway house.

A policy centred on controlling the City and the funds available for investment does tackle issues more seriously than the watered-down Keynesianism of official Labour economic policy (borrow more, spend more). But, rigorously analysed, the difference is one between radical Keynesianism and watered-down Keynesianism, not between socialism and capitalism.

Keynes himself argued that "a somewhat comprehensive socialisation of investment will prove the only means of securing an approximation to full employment." But he insisted that his theory was "moderately conservative in its implications", and complained that "the difficulty is that the capitalist leaders in the City and Parliament are incapable of distinguishing novel measures for safeguarding capitalism from what they call bolshevism."

Of course a 'control of capital' proposed as friendly advice to

John Maynard Keynes, the most influential economist of this century, was born 100 years ago this month. Martin Thomas looks at Keynes's theory and argues that it cannot be a guide for the labour movement.

the capitalists (as it was by Keynes) is different from 'control of capital' proposed as a first step in a struggle by Labour against them. But if we look at the theory in more detail, I think we will see that Keynes was right about it being "moderately conservative", if about nothing else.

John Maynard Keynes was a gadfly within the Establishment. First coming to fame in 1919 with a pamphlet that denounced the vindictive reparations plan imposed on defeated Germany by the Allies as unworkable, he was active not only as an economic theorist but also as a journalist, civil servant, and political figure on the fringes of the Liberal Party.



Keynes

Especially through his book, "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money" (1936), he fundamentally shifted the focus and concerns of orthodox economics.

By the 1920s orthodox economics had developed a whole theoretical system based on the balancing of supply and demand. The supply cost, per extra unit, of blouses or Bibles or whatever, increases, or does not decrease much, as more are produced. On the other hand, as the price of blouses or Bibles increases, demand for them declines fairly markedly.

At a very low price, demand would exceed supply, at a very high price, supply would exceed demand. A balance will be reached at that scale of production which puts supply cost equal to price. (For these economists, return on capital was always included as a necessary cost of production).

Labour

As for blouses and Bibles, so for labour. At a very high wage, everyone would be keen to work, but the additional production to be got by hiring an extra worker would not be sufficient to make it worthwhile. At a very low wage, demand for labour would be high but many workers would not consider it

worth the trouble. Balance would be reached when the wage was just equal to the additional production got by hiring an extra worker, and just not high enough to persuade the idle and reluctant who remained jobless to offer themselves for work.

Cause

For an economist of this school, therefore, the only possible cause for unemployment (beyond the temporary 'between-jobs' type) was wages getting stuck at too high a level. As Keynes put it, such an economist "may sympathise with labour in refusing to accept a cut in its money-wage... but scientific integrity forces him to declare that this refusal is, nevertheless, at the root of the trouble."

For orthodox economists in the early 20th century, then, unemployment was a quirk, a disturbance due to some abnormal factor or another. Keynes swivelled the whole theory round so that the question of unemployment became central.

The orthodox theory declared that supply and demand must balance because "supply creates its own demand". When goods are produced, the amount added to supply via the extra

goods is equal to the amount added to demand via the wages, profits, etc., of the people involved in the production.

The economists conceded that people might not spend all their income. They might save. But the deduction from demand due to those savings would be exactly balanced by an addition due to investment in machinery and equipment. The supply of funds from savers, and the demand for funds from industrialists seeking to buy new equipment, would be balanced by movements of the rate of interest in just the same way as supply and demand for goods was balanced by movements of their prices. If savings were going to exceed investment, then the rate of interest would fall to make saving less attractive, and borrowing to invest more attractive.

in mature capitalism (because he explained profits as being due to the 'scarcity' of capital: as capital became more plentiful, profits had to decline). And at any shock expectations would fall lower still.

Result: a decline in investment. And closely following on that decline would be an increase in the general desire to hold wealth in the form of liquid cash, whether for motives of caution or for speculative motives. The rate of interest would be forced up, accentuating the decline in investment.

The decline in investment would lead to much bigger decline in overall effective demand, and therefore in employment, through a process which Keynes called the 'multiplier'. £1 million less demand for equipment, for example, would mean £1 million less

"Ought I, then, to join the Labour Party? Superficially that is attractive. But looked at closer, there are great difficulties. To begin with, it is a class party, and the class is not my class. If I am going to pursue sectional interests, I shall pursue my own. When it comes to the class struggle as such, my local and personal patriotisms, like those of everyone else, except certain unpleasant zealous ones, are attached to my own surroundings. I can be influenced by what seems to me to be Justice and good sense; but the class war will find me on the side of the educated bourgeoisie"

J.M. Keynes, 1925.

In this theory, as Keynes put it, "money makes no real difference except frictionally." It figures only as a convenient token to facilitate exchange, not as a store of value.

Keynes looked more closely at the role of money. The rate of interest, he argued, regulated not the balance between savings and consumption but the balance between the desire to hold cash and the attractiveness of interest-bearing assets. To equate savings and investment was not so simple.

Unemployment could thus arise as follows. Investment in machinery and equipment, Keynes argued, was determined by the relation between expected profit rates on such investment and the rate of interest.

These expected profit rates, he thought, were generally low

incomes for workers and capitalists in industry.

That in turn would mean less demand for the consumer goods otherwise bought by those people. Suppose they would have spent 80% of the £1 million on consumption, and saved the rest. Then there is a loss of £800,000 in demand for consumer goods.

That in turn means a further £800,000 loss in incomes; and, following from that, yet another loss in demand, £640,000 this time... When the process has worked itself through, then in this example the total loss of demand is £4 million. And there is a corresponding loss of jobs.

Keynes argued that savings were determined not so much by the rate of interest as by income. The balance between savings and investment would thus be





Chicago



Keynesianism in practice? Union/management joint production teams were established in Britain during World War 2

For a planned capitalism

struck, not by movements of the rate of interest, but by a reduction of overall income and employment.

There are counteracting factors. Prices and wages would fall, thus reducing the amount of cash needed for current transactions, easing the pressure on the rate of interest and allowing it to fall. But Keynes saw no reason to suppose that the rate of interest would necessarily fall low enough to push investment up to a level allowing full employment.

"So, failing some novel expedient, there is no answer to the riddle, except that there must be sufficient unemployment to keep us so poor that our consumption falls short of our income by no more than the equivalent of the physical provision for future consumption which it pays to produce today."

What "novel expedients" did Keynes propose? A willingness by central banks to increase the supply of money in times of downturn, and thus to keep the rate of interest low, would help.

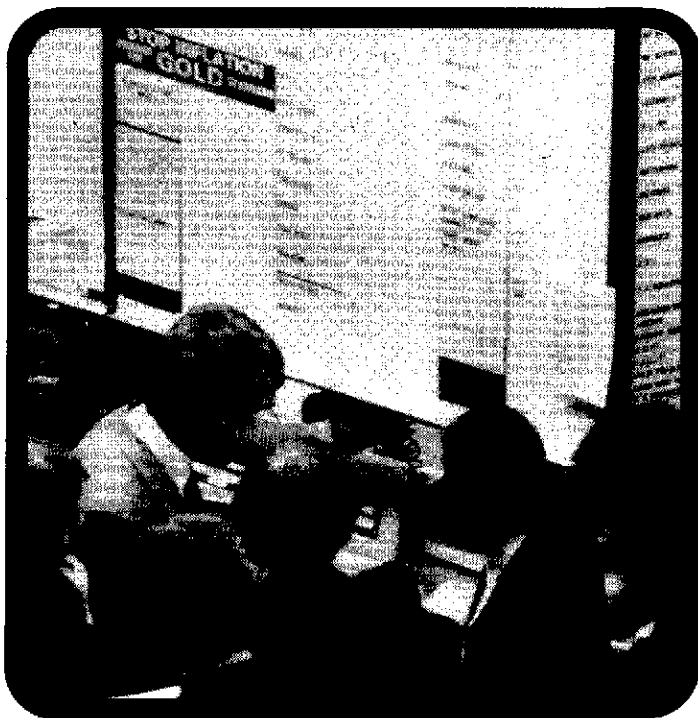
That would not however be sufficient on its own. The state must undertake additional investment. If it does so, the multiplier works the other way. £1 million extra spent by the state will produce £4 million total boost to demand, and a corresponding boost to employment.

For the state to "overspend" is not therefore folly: in a slump it is the wisest policy.

Value

As the "scarcity-value of capital" falls, the state would gradually have to take a commanding role in investment. This would, however, preserve much of capitalism; it would, indeed, be "the only practicable means of avoiding the destruction of existing economic forms in their entirety" by socialism.

Keynes was something of a



The Stock Exchange: pillar of market harmony, or seat of potential crisis?

snob in his political views. Against Marxism he wrote: "How can I adopt a creed which, preferring the mud to the fish, exalts the boorish proletariat above the bourgeois and the intelligentsia...?" Against the Labour Party his chief complaint was the importance within it of "the trade unionists, once the oppressed, now the tyrants, whose selfish and sectional pretensions need to be bravely opposed."

Yet it is easy to see why the main leaders of the labour movement embraced Keynes's theories so eagerly. Here was a respected man of science giving support to the view that wage cuts were not the answer to unemployment, and support to their demands for public spend-

ing. Here was an alternative to the assaults of the Tories, free from the horrors of revolutionary socialism.

Fatal

So easy! But is it? Keynes's system has some fatal theoretical faults. The "scarcity of capital" view of profit rests on a confused idea of what capital is. Capital is not machines and equipment. Capital is a social relation: wealth derived from exploitation of labour in the past, as a power able to exploit labour in the present. By its very nature it is in perpetual movement through different forms: from money to machines and equipment to stocks of commodities to money again. As capitalism lurches through crises, there will be "excesses" of one form of capital, "shortages" of another.

But the abundance or scarcity is always relative — and likely rapidly to turn into its opposite.

Marx, like Keynes, saw a tendency for the rate of profit to fall. But Marx's theory of this tendency was located in the social workings of capital itself — its tendency to expand faster than the living labour which provides it with profits —

and not, like Keynes's theory, in the idea of a natural limit at which capital loses its "scarcity value".

At other crucial points, too, the Keynesian theory appeals to supposed "given facts" from outside the theory to explain economic relations, where it should be explaining how economic relations mould those facts. The key variables in the short-term Keynesian analysis are people's propensity to consume, inducement to invest, and preference for holding ready cash rather than interest-bearing assets.

The analysis tails off into psychological speculation: and here Keynesianism betrays its roots in previous orthodox economic theory, which held that the economic balance of society was the automatic product of the interaction of the 'given facts' of people's psychological preferences for this good against that, for leisure against reward, and for present consumption against future profit.

While Keynesian economics puts the economic role of the state in the limelight, it contains no theory of the nature of the state. Again, instead of economic theory explaining the behaviour of the state, the behaviour of the state is called in as a given fact from outside to explain economic relations.

Keynesian theory is inherently short-sighted, if only because it takes institutions and the behaviour of its fundamental psychological variables as more or less fixed: Keynes himself stated that the theory did not cover "abnormal or revolutionary circumstances."

Moreover, it is a theory which takes a national economy as its basic unit, in an epoch when capitalism is increasingly an integrated international system. Considerations about foreign trade, capital flows, and so on can easily be added to the Keynesian scheme (and indeed Keynes himself was an expert on international trade and a chief architect of the post 1945 Bretton Woods system) — but the international framework is an extra factor tacked onto the national unit, rather than being the starting point for analysis.

Keynes's theory thus fell very far short of scientific thoroughness. It was a rationalisation through a brilliant mind, of the increasing role of the state

forced on capitalism by its own development.

The most through putting into practice of Keynes's recommendations came not through the bright idealists of the New Deal but through the hard-faced men who administered the war economies of 1939-45. When the labour movement embraced Keynes's theories, it tied itself to the chariot of state capitalism, not socialism.

Bloodless

During the '50s and '60s a bloodless version of Keynesianism — running adjustments to monetary, tax, and state spending policy, with a view to smoothing slumps and booms — became capitalist orthodoxy. Most economists proclaimed that such adjustments could guarantee indefinite prosperity.

They didn't; and on close examination the adjustments of the '50s and '60s seem to deserve little of the credit for the relative stability then. More than the Keynesian public spending policies permitting capitalist prosperity, it was a matter of the capitalist prosperity permitting the public spending policies.

From the late 1960s capitalism has lurched into stagnation and acute instability because of a general decline in its rates of profit and decrease in the viability of its international trading and financial arrangements.

"Keynesian" public spending boosts can still prompt limited economic upturns. But they bring with them a long list of problems for the capitalist state.

Profits do not come from the natural "scarcity value" of capital: they are an expression of surplus value, the value produced by labour in excess of the amount paid in wages.

Deduction

Public spending is a deduction from that surplus value. It therefore tends to reduce profits. Capitalist states with high public spending tend to lose out in international competition.

Increased public spending and increased employment strengthen workers' fights for higher wages. In a situation where capitalists are desper-

ately striving to reverse a fall in their profit rates, that means they generally respond by trying to outstrip the higher wages by higher prices. There is an inflationary spiral. Public spending boosts also push up prices directly. Inflation and low interest rates are liable to lead to balance of payments problems. In the current chronically unstable financial situation of international capitalism, these problems are serious.

For the capitalist classes now, cuts in public spending and in employment are a class-war policy to beat down the working class and restore profit rates. Keynes recognised the class struggle — but as something separate from his economic theory, which started from supply and demand relations between individuals.

The milk-and-water version of Keynesian policies in Labour's 1983 manifesto would not work even according to Keynesian reckoning. Keynes stressed the need for an interventionist government to maintain "business confidence": if it didn't, a decline in private investment would probably cancel out the increased state spending. The manifesto policy would mess up the capitalists' way of running things without replacing it with a coherent alternative way.

State

A more radical Keynesian policy of 'control of capital' could keep investment high, but the capitalists would not (outside a war economy) willingly accept it. A movement strong enough to force it on them would be disastrously ill-advised to stop at that half-way house of 'control of capital'. 'Control of capital', actively opposed and sabotaged by the capitalist forces who would retain ownership and control in industry and in the state machine, would lead to chaos. Amidst that chaos the reserve forces of the capitalist class — the courts, the House of Lords, the monarchy, the police and army hierarchies — would organise for the overthrow of the Labour government.

Our programme must be, not state control and regulation of capital, but the replacement of capitalist relations with common ownership and workers' control.

"On the economic front, this period [1928-40] saw the theories of John Maynard Keynes provide the sound intellectual framework for the views which trade unionists had always instinctively held and known to be right".

(From the official History of the TUC)

International news

Dutch "Thatcher" axes public sector

ON Thursday and Friday May 27 and 28 the tram, bus and metro workers of Rotterdam went on strike against proposed cuts in expenditure by the town council between 1984 and 1987 of 120 million guilders.

De Volkskrant reported that the civil (public) servants' union AbvaKabo 'had only wanted to hold the strike on Friday but the personnel decided early on Thursday morning at an action meeting to go on strike at once.' The strike was not supported by the Christian union CFO.

Despite the strike and a demonstration in front of the town hall on Thursday afternoon of about 6,000 council employees from practically all services, to which processions went accompanied by ambulances and fire engines sounding their sirens, two planes at the same time flying above displaying the slogan 'special education in Rotterdam must continue at a high level', in the evening the motion for the cuts was carried.

Voting for the cuts were the main workers' party, the Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA) (the 'party of labour', which received 50% of the votes in Rotterdam in the general election for the Tweede Kamer (second chamber or House of Commons) in September and controls the town with the support of the social democratic D'66, as well as D'66 itself and the Communist Party (CPN), the Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij and the Politieke Partij Radikalen.

Conservative

It was the conservative parties, the Christen Democratisch Appel (CDA) and more right wing Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD), which voted against the motion, although it is the CDA-VVD coalition government which is seeking to impose a series of massive cuts on the spending of local councils.

In Rotterdam PvdA councillors argued that by doing away with a number of auto-

By David Harris

matic wage rises for the town's employees and other measures it would be possible to save 300 jobs. However according to de Volkskrant the cuts are likely to cost 1500 jobs.

The chairman of AbvaKabo, which with some 249,000 members is the second largest union in the largest union federation, the million strong FNV, commented after the Rotterdam vote: 'You ask yourself who is more right-wing: the cabinet or the town council which calls itself left wing.'

A local official of AbvaKabo attacked the Rotterdam council as 'a willing wheelbarrow for the government.'

But it is not only in Rotterdam that the acts of the PvdA are causing a confusion which lends itself to exploitation by the right wing press.

Coalition

The national policy of the PvdA is concisely expressed in what in many respects is an effective recruiting 'paper', Amsterdam-krant, which criticises the government's cuts and asks people to join the party, now being pushed through the letter-boxes of houses and flats in Amsterdam. A headline in this says 'Economise (Make cuts?) Yes, but do it fairly!'

In fact it was only recently that the PvdA withdrew from a coalition government with the CDA and D'66 which had already introduced cuts. In the provincial elections in March last year its vote slumped to 21% compared with the 34% it received in the provincial elections of 1978 and 28% in the 1981 general election, and it refused to go along with further



Mass demonstration in Athens against anti-union laws, June 2

cuts.

In the general election which followed in September 1982 the PvdA, then in opposition, won back support receiving 30% of the poll. The party which made big gains was the VVD, increasing its share from 17% in 1981 to 23%.

Building on the cuts introduced by the government of which the PvdA was a member, the CDA-VVD government formed on November 4 has sharply intensified the attack on the working class.

Unemployed

On 21 January 1983 de Waarheid, the daily paper of the CPN commented: 'the minister for transport and the department for the maintenance of ways and waterworks Smit-Kroes (VVD) is beginning more and more to develop herself into the Netherlands Thatcher.'

In February the number of unemployed in the whole country, which has a population of 14 million, reached 778,700 (the equivalent of about three million in Britain).

Offensief, the Marxist paper in PvdA and trade union movement (a sister paper of the British Militant), calls for a refusal to accept cuts and sackings, for the sharing of existing work without loss of pay, the opening of the books of firms which threaten dismissals and their nationalisation under workers' control and management except in cases of need, for a programme of public works, for the FNV and PvdA to coordinate action against the government including as one step the organisation of a 24 hour general strike to replace it with a majority PvdA government to carry through a socialist programme expropriating key sectors of the economy.

Injustice

What I do not see in Offensief however — and I hope I am not doing the paper, which in many respects puts forward a correct programme and is absolutely right to see the importance of the parliamentary struggle, mistakenly underestimated by many revolutionaries, an injustice — is any specific call for the linking up of action meetings such as that in Rotterdam which decided to strike at once, in the same and different industries and services, a call to build towards local soviets and a national soviet.

There is no doubt that there is an urgent need and immense possibilities for building a powerful Trotskyist tendency in the Netherlands.

Thousands strike against Greek anti-union laws

By Bill Peters

ATHENS, JUNE 4

A SERIES of strikes and mass demonstrations throughout Greece this week have mounted a serious challenge to the 18 month old government of PASOK and created a substantially altered political situation.

On Monday and again on Thursday demonstrations and strikes took place both in Athens and in eight other major cities and towns of Greece.

In Athens 50,000 demonstrated on Monday and substantially more on Thursday, marching through the city to Constitution Square in front of the Parliament building.

The mobilisations were in response to a package of legislation by PASOK designed to curb strikes and control militants in the public services — banks, transport, electricity, hospitals, water and telephone — about 200,000 workers in all.

These have been the most militant sectors of the working class, particularly the banks and the trolley bus workers.

There are two phases to the bill. Article 4 is designed to prevent strikes in the public services; and articles one, two and three are a political move against militancy in those sections of workers through the imposition of mandatory 'workers participation'.

This week's demonstrations were against article 4 which was enacted late on Thursday night (in response to which the demonstrators stayed in Constitution Square until after midnight). The second stage of the bill is due to be legislated in the autumn.

Article 4 doesn't actually outlaw strikes, but it makes them very difficult to call — most unions involved say impossible.

Under it, the unions — and the union federations — have to ballot their members and obtain a 51% vote before they can call a strike.

To make this very difficult, PASOK utilises a peculiarity of Greek trade union organisation, requiring not 51% of financial

— programme. This included withdrawal from the EEC and NATO, the removal of the US bases from Greece and the removal of the anti-union laws of the previous government.

Initially it took some measures. It abolished all anti-union laws. It made lock-outs and the hiring of scabs illegal. (It was already more or less illegal to sack strikers).

This was very progressive (extremely progressive when viewed from Thatcher's Britain).

But it was accompanied by measures which provided for state intervention into trade union structures.

Now PASOK has retreated on many of these policies. US bases for example, are not to be removed forthwith but subject to a termination date sometime in the distant future.

Cost of living rises for the last four months of 1982 have been frozen.

This backtracking, however, has now met its response, not only in the size of the demonstrations but their content — overwhelmingly working class with big contingents from the sectors affected.

This shows that PASOK has mobilised a big section of workers against it, and that situation will not easily be reversed.

HARD TIMES

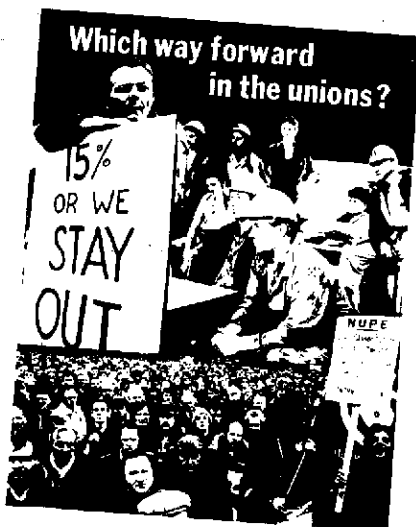
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Thirty years ago

German workers' verdict on Stalinism

THIRTY years ago this week, the workers of East Germany gave their considered verdict on the self-styled 'Communist' regime that had been imposed upon them in the aftermath of the defeat of Hitler.

In an explosion of anger which staggered the Stalinist bureaucracies in the Kremlin and across Eastern Europe, they downed tools in their thousands and took to the streets in massive strikes and demonstrations beginning on June 16.

The initial factor which prompted a spontaneous outburst of anger was the decision of the regime to impose a 10% increase in work 'norms' (effectively demanding 10% more work for no extra wages).

But this issue was swiftly linked in the thinking of worker militants to a range of political grievances against the regime.

At the forefront of the walkout were the building workers, particularly those on the Stalinallee building project. At 1pm, on June 16 between 3-6,000 builders stopped work and marched in unorganised columns to the Marx-Engels-platz, and eventually crowded in front of Government offices in the Leipzigerstrasse.

Shouts demanding the abolition of the new work norms were supplemented by demands for 'free elections' and 'no people's army' as well as a reduction in food prices.

The strikers demanded to see Prime Minister Gottwald or Walter Ulbricht, General Secretary of the 'Socialist Unity' (Stalinist) Party. When neither appeared, a hapless bureaucrat called Selbmann was sent to pacify them.

He got up on a table and the scene, as described by a correspondent from the French 'Observateur' went as follows:

"I voted against the increases of production norms at the May 28 session of the Council of Ministers. The increase has not been introduced in my depart-

By Harry Sloan

ment. I will insist that the government revoke the measures... Go back to work calmly and put your trust in me."

But the workers interrupted him:

"We no longer have confidence in you. We want guarantees."

"But I have myself been a worker for a long time."

"You have forgotten that. You are no longer our comrade... We are the real communists, not you."

"Selbmann was left speechless. An unknown construction worker forced him off the table and got up in his place and delivered a calm and dignified speech in the opinion of witnesses I questioned and formulated the demands of the workers in four points:

*Immediate revocation of the 10% increase in working norms.

*Immediate reduction by 40% of prices of food and of primary consumer goods in state stores.

*Leaders who committed serious errors should be dismissed; the party and the unions must be democratised.

*We must not wait for the Bonn [West German] government to take the initiative for the real reunification of Germany. The East German government should start immediately by eliminating all barriers separating the two Germanies. The country must be unified by secret, general and free elections and a workers' victory must be won in these elections."

According to the Times correspondent, the demonstrators shouted also that "we are not only against the norm

increases in Stalinallee, we are against the norm increases in all Germany."

Also, in an exact preview of one of the most telling slogans of the Polish Solidarnosc movement 28 years later, came the shout of 'we are workmen, not slaves!'

Traumatic though it must have been for Herr Selbmann and the inhabitants of the government building, this initial protest lasted only two hours or so — the police were not called, and there was little incident.

Two demonstrators were arrested, only to be released in response to demands from the crowd. Even when evening brought a number of clashes between workers and blue-shirted thugs of the 'Communist Youth' the police stayed in the background.

But the call had gone out for a general strike and it spread like wildfire both in and beyond Berlin.

June 16 had in any event seen heated meetings in a number of big nationalised factories around Berlin, with workers demanding a reduction of work norms.

By June 17 the movement was much wider in scope, embracing every major industrial city — Halle, Merseburg, Magdeburg, Erfurt, Leipzig, Dresden, Jena and Chemnitz.

A huge mass meeting of Henningsdorf steelworkers was held at the Walter Ulbricht stadium, with speakers demanding the resignation of the government and some seeking to replace it with a 'metal workers' government'.

Thousands of workers from the locomotive and electrical equipment plants in the Henningsdorf suburb set out to march into central Berlin — and decided to take a short cut through the French sector.

'We are the real communists...!'

"50 armed Russian soldiers tried to stop their advance but they had to yield and to lower their guns which had been raised to firing position. The women demonstrators cheered them, kissed them and showered them with flowers as though they were a victorious army returning from the wars."

The demonstrations were conspicuous for the prominent role of women workers — and the scale of popular support. As they proceeded, marchers raised again demands for a general strike, and pelted pro-government gangs of 'Communist Youth' with mud. Rail and transport workers swelled the march as it went along.

Once again the march congregated outside the government building, where it was attacked by squads of Vopos with drawn truncheons. The Times correspondent tells us:

"The demonstrators gave way, reassembled, then gave way again. Truncheons and

police helmets were seen flying through the air. Then eight Russian armoured cars, each containing six steel helmeted soldiers, arrived. The Russians trained their machine guns on the crowd, but did not fire. They were followed by truckloads of infantry with machine pistols. Jeers came from the crowd and "Russians get out — we're not afraid of you either."

The workers were not afraid; but they were heavily outnumbered. In fact a Russian force of no less than 300,000 troops, including armoured divisions had been mobilised in readiness and moved in swiftly to intimidate the workers with a display of overwhelming force.

The soldiers for the most part did not need to fire: most of the violence was meted out by the 'People's Police'.

A state of emergency was declared by early afternoon, prohibiting, among other things, any assembly of more than three people. Tanks moved into key positions, and there were bitter confrontations. In Berlin 11 workers were killed — one crushed by a truck — and an unknown number injured.

But even amid this crackdown the bureaucracy suffered its humiliations. One Deputy Prime Minister, Nuschke, who had attempted to argue with workers in defence of the Russian actions, found himself and his car pushed firmly into the Western Zone by the crowd.

Outside Berlin, too, there were confrontations, including a pitched battle in Magdeburg in which as many as 20 workers were killed, and building workers broke into the local jail and freed the prisoners. Strikes in other industrial centres meant a generalised extension of the state of emergency.

The fear struck into the hearts of the Vopos was indicated by the fact that literally hundreds fled in fear of their lives, abandoning uniforms and insignia, and taking refuge in the West. There is no doubt at all that without the massive military intervention of the Soviet armed forces, the East German bureaucracy would have been unable to contain the movement. The mood of the workers was summed up by the Times correspondent.

"It was the stuff revolutions are made of. The demonstrators forsook all notion of danger, and flung themselves unarmed against tanks... some of those who were on the streets on Wednesday must now no doubt be wondering at their boldness."

Sitting astride such a powder keg was no easy position for the East German bureaucracy. They had to move swiftly to defuse the immediate build-up of militancy, while preparing a through,

long term clamp-down to prevent any recurrence of these amazing events.

Towards the evening of June 17 it was announced that the strikers' initial demand — the cancellation of the increased work norms — had been conceded. A few days later a further package of economic concessions, designed to mollify the workers, was announced. They included:

*reintroduction of workers' tickets on railways;

*an increase in old age pensions;

*improved supplies of food and clothing for workers;

*government funds to be set aside to "ameliorate working conditions in factories".

Conspicuously, none of these concessions related at all to the democratic and political demands raised by the workers. The bureaucrats recognised that political concessions could undermine the basis of their own power and privilege — as in fact the explosive events in Poland of 1980-81 confirmed.

By making limited economic concessions, the Stalinist leaders were seeking the elbow room to enable them to regroup and crack down later on the working class.

The next day Ulbricht at a factory meeting argued that 'the discussions between the workers of the GDR and the government were a family quarrel.'

Not many family quarrels leave such a trail of death and destruction as the East German events. On top of those killed by police and army in riots and demonstrations; the subsequent government reprisals brought 42 death sentences and 25,000 arrests.

The Justice Minister, Fehner, was unwise enough to declare on June 30 that 'the right to strike is constitutionally guaranteed. Members of strike committees will not be punished for their activities as strike leaders'. A week later, after mass arrests of strike leaders, Fehner himself was dismissed and expelled from the party for his expression of 'liberalism'!

By September, a regrouped East German leadership was calling for a strengthening of the secret police. Far from there being any trust within Ulbricht's 'family', the Stalinist leaders had good reason to fear many of their own — and most experienced members. Over one third of the party members purged as a result of the rising proved to have been Communist Party members since before Hitler's rise to power in 1933!

For Trotskyists this open conflict between the most class conscious elements of the working class and the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and its stooge regimes is no surprise.

Trotsky had argued from the mid 1930s that the only means to restore workers' democracy in the Soviet Union and create conditions for serious planned

development of the nationalised economy was through the mass insurrectionary overthrow of the parasitic Stalinist caste.

His conclusion had been derived from years of struggle within the Soviet Communist Party and the Comintern, fighting against the politics of Stalin's leadership, and initially seeking the reform of the bureaucratised workers' state and its ruling party and apparatus.

Experience showed Trotsky that Stalin and his henchmen were no longer blundering and incompetent centrists, but had become increasingly hardened, cynical bureaucrats, cold bloodedly sacrificing the interests of the working class at home and abroad to the preservation of their own power and privilege.

They had to be ousted — and the degenerated state machine, which the Stalinists had transformed into an instrument of terror against the working class — had to be smashed and replaced by revolutionary organisations of workers' democracy.

The only social force capable of achieving this, insisted Trotsky, was the working class — which needed a firm political understanding of the origins and nature of the bureaucratic Soviet ruling clique: this meant the building of a revolutionary party within the Soviet Union in opposition to the 'official' and counter-revolutionary Communist Party.

Trotsky's verdict on the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR proved to be equally relevant to the regimes installed by Stalin in the Eastern European 'buffer zone' during the Cold War period.

The task before the working class in these countries was of course not the restoration of a past period of revolutionary workers' democracy; there had been no 'healthy' revolutions in these countries.

The task was to overturn the Stalinist bureaucracies and establish genuine workers' power through workers' councils — which would of course defend and build upon the nationalised property relations established under Stalinist rule.

Continued next week

Trotsky on Stalinism

The classic Marxist analysis of Stalinism is Leon Trotsky's 'Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?' Available via Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8: £2.50 plus 50p postage.



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Agenda

PLASTIC Bullets: a working conference to launch and plan campaign activities. Saturday June 25, 1pm to 5pm at County Hall, London SE1. Organised by Labour Committee on Ireland.

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

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 Road, London N5.

'VOICE of Solidarnosc': £8 for 6 months to Solidarnosc Information Office, 314-320 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP (01-837 9464).

CRISIS in Zimbabwe — a Socialist Perspective. Public meeting organised by SOFAS, the Socialist Forum for Southern African Solidarity. Saturday June 25, 2pm at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19.

Time to join us!

IN THE wake of the election defeat, many activists in the labour movement are cursing Callaghan and Healey. And with good reason.

But it is too easy just to lump all the blame on the right wing. The election campaign also laid bare terrible weaknesses on the Left.

As the right wing laid waste Labour's conference policies, the Left mostly kept its head down. Even at local level, Labour Parties mostly toed the official line and stuck to 'safe' issues. The 'Socialists for a Labour Victory' campaign, weighed down by comrades who wanted to make it only an attempt to influence the official campaign, had little life.

Central to Labour's defeat was the fact that the economic policy — the 'tried and tested' method of Keynesian reflation — was neither socialist nor convincing. But while the Left has fought hard on other policy issues like unilateral nuclear disarmament and wage controls, it has never really challenged the orthodox line on economic strategy. From the Left the Alternative Economic Strategy of reflation 'capitalism in one country' has received positive support or indulgent toleration as a 'first step'.

These hard lessons must be learned. The Left cannot leave its analysis of the election defeat at the level of routine curses against the right wing and media.



'Socialist Organiser is organising meetings throughout the country on the theme, 'After the Election, Where Next?' Come to the meetings, discuss — and join us in the work of building an organised left wing which faces the issues squarely and stands its ground under pressure.

GETTING organised means joining together with those who have been active in the election campaign, and doubling our forces for the fight ahead.

Many groups are planning 'After the election, where next?' meetings. Here are the details of the meetings that are definite. If your area isn't mentioned, phone the contact number of your group, or see Socialist Organiser sellers.

Basingstoke. June 15, 7.30, Chute House, Church St.

Birmingham. June 17, Phone 471 1448 for venue.

Coventry. June 17, Binley Oak, Paynes Lane. 7.30: Speaker — John Bloxam — and discussion. 9pm: wholefood buffet. 9.30-12: disco. Tickets £1.25 (60p unwaged). Food free. Full bar extension.

Durham. June 16. Phone John, 43004, for venue.

Glasgow. June 16, 7.30, Club Room, bottom of Block 40, Stirling Sauld Place, opp. Citizens Theatre, Gorbals St. Nearest tube: Bridge St.

Hull. June 15, 8pm, Blue Bell, Marketplace. Speaker Alan Thornett.

Leeds. July 1, 7.30, Chapel-town Community Centre. Speakers: Cllrs Garth

Frankland (Leeds) and Barry Turner (Bradford).

Liverpool. June 15, 7.30, Pig and Whistle, Covent Garden, Liverpool.

Manchester. June 23, 7.30, The Millstone, Church St, Manchester.

Rochdale. July 11, 8pm, Castle Inn, Manchester Rd. Sheffield. June 19. Phone 589307 for venue.

Hounslow. June 19, 8pm: phone 898 6961 for venue. Speaker: John Bloxam.

Lambeth/Southwark. June 22, 8.30, Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, SE5.

South East London. June 14, 8pm, Lee Centre, off Lee High Rd, SE12.

Tower Hamlets. June 30, 7.30, Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road, E3. Speaker: Jeremy Corbyn MP.

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, 7.30pm Castle inn.

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

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

Wirral. Contact Colin Johnstone, 1, Wellington Rd., Wallasey.

Liverpool. Contact 733 6663 for details of meetings. 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 (328 198).

• YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

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

Durham. SO is sold at the Community Co-op, New Elvet. Meetings 6.30pm Tuesday, Student Bar, Dunelm House. Contact John, 43004.

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 Wicker. SO is sold outside Boots, Fargate (Saturday 12-1) 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 11-12).

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, Consti-

tution Hill. Next meeting: Tuesday 21. Marek Garztecki (from Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group) on the present condition of Solidarnosc. Phone 471 1448 for venue. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop, Digbeth High Street.

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

Leicester. Contact Phil, 857908. SO is sold at Blackthorne Books, High St.

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 blocking 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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Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns. It costs £1.50 a month (20p — unwaged) to be a supporter.

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Bundle of 5 each week: £12 for 3 months. Bundle of 10 £21 for 3 months.

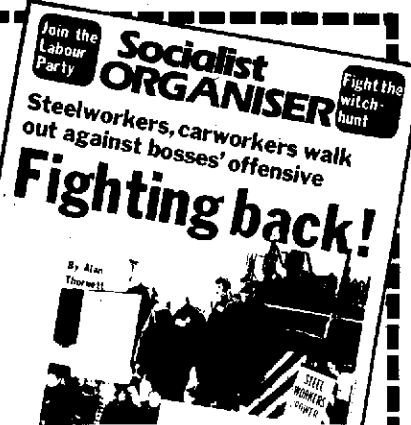
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In defence of Salvador CP

Harry Sloan's article entitled "How revolutionary is the Salvadorean Communist Party?" in your May 26 issue, deliberately falsifies the positions of the Salvadorean CP, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front as a whole, and the Socialist Workers Party. For reasons of space I can only refute a few of your slanders here. Among the most important are the following:

1) "Neither Handal, nor the party he represents, have moved in real terms to the left". In other words, "in real terms" there is no difference between the Salvadorean CP's participation in the pro-imperialist regime from October 1979 to January 1980, and its participation since January 1980, alongside the other mass revolutionary organisations in the FMLN, in the armed struggle against that dictatorship! Sloan's "real terms" are a world of fantasy.

2) "CP General Secretary 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'." Another lie, the objectives of the FMLN and its forerunners, the CRM and DRU, were never modified to gain the CP's support. They include the destruction of the bourgeois army, the expropriation of imperialist and oligarchic property, a radical agrarian reform, and a thorough literacy campaign (see the programme of the Democratic Revolutionary Front, reproduced as an appendix to the excellent book by Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk, *El Salvador: the Face of Revolution*).

3) "... on this question,

too (the question of the party), 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.' Sad to relate, comrades, the need for 'iron discipline' is a little harder to ignore in the conditions of ferocious repression and civil war in El Salvador than in the petty bourgeois discussion circles known as Constituency Labour Parties, where your organisation is buried.

Discipline

The FMLN, least of all, would claim that discipline within the movement is as firm as it could be; on at least two occasions, the January 1981 offensive and the March 1982 "elections", different FMLN radio stations did in fact carry different lines, but this kind of "inner party" democracy is now recognised as beneficial only to the enemy and will hopefully never be repeated. And "iron discipline" is taken from Lenin, not from Stalin.

4) The "potted history of the Salvadorean left" which Sloan refers to ("Salvadorean rebels press forward united after loss of two top leaders and fighters", by Larry Seigle, *The Militant*, May 6), was in fact written to counter the imperialist disinformation campaign after the assassination of Comrade Ana Maria and the suicide of Marcial.

The key objective of this campaign is to sow division and demoralisation among the FMLN and its supporters abroad and thus facilitate Washing-

ton's military escalation in Central America.

For example, the claim in the April 22 New York times that Marcial was in fact assassinated by the Cubans, the Nicaraguans or the Salvadorean CP (allegedly in order to sell out the liberation struggle) is clearly sucker bait for petty bourgeois radicals, and it seems to have had the intended effect with Sloan, who summarises Handal's outlook as follows: "if you can't beat them (the other components of the FMLN), join them — and crush the life out of them." (Emphasis added). With enemies like Socialist Organiser, Reagan and his Salvadorean puppet regime sure do not need friends.

5) And finally, "of course the Cuban leadership has since been assimilated fully into the Stalinist apparatus". Of course, after all, if you've got Sloan's word for it, who needs proof? Precisely how the sabotage of Che's guerrilla front in Bolivia by the pro-Moscow CP, the insistent Cuban demand that Moscow and Peking step up aid to Vietnam and the refusal of the Cubans to follow Moscow in recognising the Salvadorean junta, can be fitted into this schema, Sloan doesn't say.

Generation

The new generation of vanguard revolutionary fighters in Central America and the Caribbean have proven themselves, not once but countless times, by leading, organising and arming our class to take power into its own hands and rebuild society on new foundations, and devoting as much as possible of their meagre resources to the international extension of the revolution, all this in the face of unrelenting military

and economic pressure from Yankee imperialism.

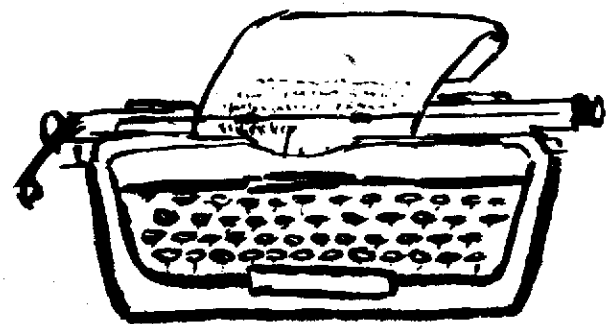
And it is against the lies, threats and aggression of imperialism that Larry Seigle's offending article is directed, like all the SWP's coverage of and activity around Central America. Sloan's article, written in the imperialist country whose government supports and participates most actively in the US war drive, is directed against — the FMLN and the SWP! Sloan directs his fire at the wrong target; so not surprisingly, he ends up serving the interests of the wrong class.

Comradely,
A Very Angry Reader



FMLN: "the new generation of vanguard revolutionary fighters"

Writeback



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

Trotsky's method: a 'senile vision'?

I WOULD like to support the views of Joyce Brown and Noel Hibbert in the SO letters column recently.

Tony Richards' letter (SO 131) is typical of the quasi-religious approach that has little in common with Marxism but has dogged "Marxism" for decades. Hagiographic references to Trotsky cannot replace real political analysis.

I would suggest that the experience of European socialists since 1945 has confirmed the ultra-left utopian nature of the so-called "Transitional" approach. Recourse either to the Programme of 1938 or "Trotsky's method" is a comfort for those who cannot break from abstract apocalyptic visions of socialist revolution but who do acknowledge the need to "relate to the workers as they are".

If we assume (as Tony Richards and Gerry Healy do) that the working class can seize power in the foreseeable future by mobilisation around "transitional" demands, we do not need to address the (admittedly difficult) questions of how we win the ideological battle with Thatcherism and how we mobilise a largely demoralised, or at least atomised, working class.

Surely as socialists committed to the self-activity of the working class our "demands" (in so far as such things are needed) in any struggle should be developed flexibly and creatively, not drafted in from the senile visions of a figure from another era and another political world?

Yours fraternally,
ALBERT ROSS
Stockport

Political turn leads to Iranian pogrom

"That man has all the class consciousness of a potato!" exclaimed one angry car worker after seeing Stan Crooke's original article in SO 131 following news of the brutal torture and impending massacre of leaders of Iran's Tudeh (Communist) Party.

In a 600 word article Stan managed a mere half sentence defending the Tudeh against the purge, failed to oppose the torture of Tudeh General Secretary Kianouri, and simply utilised the occasion for a well deserved but disproportionate attack on the Tudeh's politics.

In an effort to rectify this lopsided balance, and elaborate rather more on the context of Khomeini's latest round of blood letting, I wrote an article in SO 132; it did not quarrel with Stan's political points.

Yet in reply, Stan has effectively denounced me (SO 134) as

a... Stalinist! What is all this nonsense about Harry Sloan "imbibing yet again (!!!?) from the poisoned pages of Soviet Weekly?"

Does anyone read Soviet Weekly? Can't Stan Crooke conduct a debate without slanders and absurd caricatures?

He goes on to question my analysis, effectively arguing that there was never a mass movement pushing Khomeini's leadership towards the Soviet Union. Where has Stan Crooke been for the last 30 years? Was there not after 1979 a massive anti-US, anti-imperialist movement on the streets of Tehran which we all saw on television?

Has it not repeatedly been the case since World War 2 that petty bourgeois (or even bourgeois) nationalist leaderships confronted by such movements have turned for assistance in

containing them to the world's most adept counter-revolutionaries, the Stalinist gang in the Kremlin?

Even if we thought such an alliance unlikely in Iran, it was obvious that the US imperialists have until recently regarded Khomeini's regime as leading towards Moscow. They have not viewed the Islamic Republic as an "ally" in their project to stabilise the Middle East, but as a potentially explosive, 'revolutionary', disruptive element. To deny this is ridiculous. To accept it as fact gives no automatic credibility to Khomeini's regime.

Argue

Stan goes on to argue that the expulsion of Soviet diplomats and the pogrom against the Tudeh Party do not signify anything new. There is no sudden turn to Western imperialism, he argues, since American businessmen have been in Tehran "for eight months or more".

Stan sensibly does not argue they have been selling anything! As recently as November the Khomeini regime boasted that Iran now imports nothing from the USA — while imports from Eastern Europe and the Third World had risen to 33% of Iran's total.

More recently the Times (June 3) confirms this, and points out that two British trade missions had been to Iran this year, "the first since Ayatollah Khomeini came to power." The message was that: "with the United States, Russia and France out in the cold, the prospects for Britain look even better."

The fact is that Khomeini's (unbroken) clandestine links with imperialism are being publicly strengthened and acknowledged. A political turn is taking place.

And part of that turn involves the regime engaging in the ritual slaughter of the — yes, wretched, reactionary and legitimately despised Tudeh Party leadership.

The fact that a Communist Party is committed to reactionary politics and composed of craven Stalinists does not however free socialists from the obligation to defend it against an impending massacre by rabidly anti-communist regimes — any more than we could stand by and applaud the torture and execution of CP leaders in Chile after 1973 or even Frank Chapple and his merrie men by an authoritarian regime in Britain.

Finally Stan appears to go completely off the rails. Agreeing with me that the necessary mass struggle against Khomeini's regime must include defence of the rights of all sections of the oppressed — women, national minorities and gays — he upbraids me for not spelling out a programme for educating the Iranian masses against anti-gay bigotry.

If I could give a detailed

answer to that question, my article in SO 132 was not the place for it: but even if I couldn't Stan Crooke leaves us none the wiser.

What does he propose? Should we just shut up about the slaughter of homosexuals in Iran until we can step in and solve the problem?

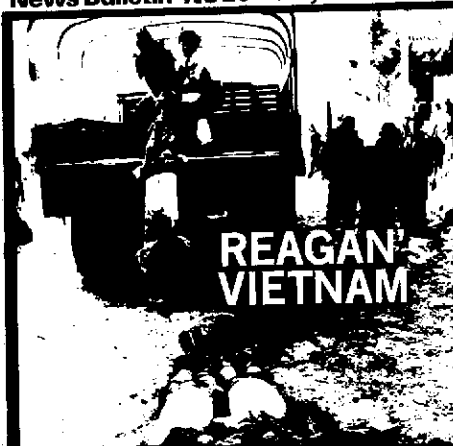
"What," Stan concludes, "of all the other oppressed groups in Iranian society infinitely more in need of a solidarity campaign than the Stalinist gangsters of the Tudeh?" What does he expect me to say?

Of course we should support them all; we should certainly carry more articles on Iran. Perhaps Stan could write some of them. But let us ensure that we defend all the organisations — however deformed or degenerated — of the workers' movement, including the Tudeh Party, while we argue politically for a line of working class struggle for the overthrow of Khomeini and the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government in Iran.

HARRY SLOAN

EL SALVADOR

News Bulletin No 20 May-June 1983



El Salvador Solidarity Campaign

El Salvador Solidarity Campaign: affiliation £5 for individuals and £10 for organisations, from 29 Islington Park St., London N1. (01-359 2270)

Idris Davies

THANK you for publishing my article on Idris Davies, the Welsh poet.

Any of your readers who wish to purchase "The Collected Poems of Idris Davies" can do so by writing to Oriell Bookshop, Charles St., Cardiff.

The Collected Poems cost £2.50, but postage and package must be added.

I have one small grievance about my article — and that is the title you gave it — "The Bard of Abertswyg Colliery". Idris Davies only worked a few years at Abertswyg and, as I

said in the article, all his poetry dates from the time he left the pit. Still, thanks for publishing, all the same.

Idris Davies is, sadly, ignored by many contemporary writers and critics — for example the Oxford University Press selection of "Welsh Poetry" contains not a single line by Davies. Maybe my article will help to stimulate some interest in his work.

Fraternally,
JOHN CUNNINGHAM
Sheffield

CLASS FIGHTER



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Knives out in Morning Star tussle

Death agony of Stalinist daily?

by Harry Sloan

WHO would you prefer to run the Morning Star: a team of Stalinist party hacks, or a combination of party hacks with Stalinist trade union bureaucrats?

This was the bewildering 'choice' on offer to the shareholders in the People's Press Printing Society (PPPS), whose final leg of their Annual General Meeting took place in London on Monday 13th. They chose the second option.

There were two rival slates for the three vacant seats on the PPPS management committee, to join editor Tony Chater, Derek Robinson, and Jenny Williams.

Bureaucrats

On the one hand, the outgoing committee recommended the election of three union bureaucrats: Ken Brett (AUEW), Terry Marsland (Tobacco Workers) and George Willoughby (SOGAT 82).

On the other, the Executive Committee of the Communist Party was lobbying hard for its own team of Party officials — George Matthews (a former Star editor), Dave Priscott, and Bert Pearce. There were two nominees who were not on either slate: but all but one of those nominated were members of the CP. So why all the fuss?

The CP Executive argued that as the founders of the paper, and the only political party committed to the (unrewarding) task of selling the Star, the CP as a party should have a decisive voice on the management committee of the paper.

Clashes

The past year has seen a number of clashes between the 'Eurocommunist' politics of the majority of the Executive and the more traditional Stalinist politics championed by Tony Chater.



On the losing side, CP General Secretary Gordon McLennan

The Party's former Industrial Organiser, Mick Costello, more inclined to Chater's politics, having been publicly rebuked by the Executive, resigned his Party post earlier this year — and shortly afterwards took on the position as Industrial Correspondent for the Star.

The paper had become a last bastion of the old line, fiercely defending this stance under the guise of 'editorial freedom' against the increasingly public attempts by the Executive to bring it into line.

And Costello and Chater turned for support to Costello's cultivated crew of cronies in the trade union bureaucracy.

In response to this, it is ironically the rightward-moving 'Eurocommunist' majority of the CP (flirting with ideas such as wage controls and political alliances embracing the SDP) who through the Executive have sought to crack the whip of 'Bolshevik orthodoxy' and re-establish party control over what is — in all but name — a party paper.

Two-faced

These are the same two-faced Stalinists who have stood firmly behind Martin Jacques, the 'Eurocommunist' editor of Marxism Today magazine, as he has wrested it firmly from the clutches of formal party control, and turned it into a free-floating sounding board for the radical and not-so-radical left.

The questions of 'principle' are reversed in each case: the issue is not abstract principles but a struggle for political influence and control by two antagonistic wings of an utterly degenerate and declining party.

The differences that separate Chater and Jacques are not differences between a 'correct' and 'incorrect' line. Both are strident advocates of the bankrupt cross-class politics that made such a farce out of the People's March and which trace their history back to the 1930s betrayals of the Stalinist movement in Spain and elsewhere.

Terminal

In this latest conflict — in which round one was won on points by Chater's team, securing all three vacant posts — we cannot take sides, but only witness what may prove to be the terminal agonies of a crisis-ridden and bankrupt paper which may soon cease to give daily misleadership to the working class.

POEU face Tory auctioneers

AFTER Thatcher's landslide victory the whole of the public sector will be under immediate and heavy attack.

The last four years will appear as the Garden of Eden if the Tories, full of confidence and class hatred, can carry through their 'final solution' against the organised working class in this country.

The decision of the POEU will put us in the forefront for the defence of the public sector. The POEU is now pledged to begin an immediate campaign of industrial action. Parallels can be drawn with the position of the organised workers of British Steel after the 1979 election.

Redundancy threatens every worker in BT. The unions have no real tradition of militancy, but what could prove to be a crucial difference is that the major union in BT, the POEU, has returned a left wing dominated executive and that a real shift towards fighting privatisation through industrial action has begun.

The rural areas, where the branches tend to be small and/or scattered over enormous geographical areas, are the areas where the profit-driven privatisation will hit hardest. The cost of providing telephone lines and service in these areas is enormous. It is doubtful if the full cost of line provision is returned in many of these places even after ten, twenty or more years.

The right wing's dominance of the union has traditionally been rooted in the rural areas but it is evident that loyalty in some areas had been stretched to the limit on the threat to jobs became known, and the leader-

ship which had depended upon their loyalty was shown to be completely lacking.

Jobs in the cities are also under attack as 'streamlining', which BT's management envisage as being the complement of new technology, begins to appear on the horizon.

The POEU's new national executive will need to turn to campaigning hard amongst the membership. The right wing have declared war, and still have roots amongst many branch officers.

The campaign will undoubtedly begin with selective industrial action, the tactic of hitting financial and governmental institutions combined with a levy from all members not taking industrial action.

But the POEU is also committed to holding a Special Conference to discuss further the anti-privatisation fight.

Political differences both within the Broad Left and outside it will sharpen. Questions of whether the action should be stepped up, continued at the same level or even called off, whether to push for escalating the action to other public sector industries or keep within the boundaries of BT unions will arise.

The POEU Broad Left has consistently argued for a public sector alliance. If necessary the POEU must go over the head of the TUC if they try to block this. Certainly we must ensure that the fight does not become bureaucratised into a routine of rhetoric with no action. The public sector alliance must be built both at national and local level.

Lairds' second strike

OVER 300 welders at Cammell Lairds shipyard, Birkenhead, have now gone on strike for the second time in two weeks.

The welders, members of the GMBATU Boilermakers' section, are demanding a payment of 15p per hour for all those involved in coded welding on the accommodation rig for the Morecambe Bay gas field. The coded allowance has been paid for other rig jobs, but management have obviously now decided to keep down the money paid for allowances.

The welders' shop stewards were originally told by management that the rig would not involve coded welding. When the contract started, welders were put in for very long tests which obviously indicated that there was coded work. The welders' stewards went to management to negotiate the allowance, and were told that they would have to take the claim through 'procedure', even though it was exactly the same sort of work as on other jobs for which the allowance was paid.

The 'procedure' was dragged out by management, who obviously wanted to see the work finished before making any move to reject the claim. Six months later, the welders have had enough.

A strike started on Thursday June 2 after a mass meeting of welders. On Friday 3rd management said they would have to start lay-offs, and that they would not discuss the welders' claim until a return to work.

On Monday 6th management announced 400 lay-offs at 3pm. 300 of these were boilermakers. The stagers (scaffolders) have a policy of one lay-off, the whole department goes out — which management are aware of.

The stagers walked out. On Tuesday 7th a mass meeting of the boilermakers supported a shop stewards' call to strike in support of the welders and against the lay-offs.

Tuesday saw the management shift their line on the welders' claim, agreeing to talks on it on Wednesday. The lay-offs were withdrawn and strike action suspended by the welders pending a settlement.

Talks went on until Thursday night, with management offering 5p, then 10p. The welders came out again, lay-offs followed, and the boilermakers are taking a firm stand and have gone out.

More lay-offs are bound to take place, and the other unions, through the Confed, will have to make a decision.

To win this dispute will be an enormous boost to the confidence of the workforce at Lairds, and explode the myth that workers in the industry have no strength and can only accept management dictates.

Victory against harassment

AUDREY White won an important victory for trade unionism when she was reinstated last week. Audrey had been sacked from her job as manageress of Liverpool fashion store Lady at Lord John after complaining about sexual harassment from her area manager.

Audrey is a member of the TGWU 6/612 branch, who immediately set up a picket line outside the shop.

The shop was successfully picketed for over three weeks with shoppers boycotting the store, and a petition calling for Audrey's reinstatement received several thousand signatures.

Management first tried to buy Audrey off and then offered her two other positions in the company, both of which meant loss of pay and demotion. But Audrey stood firm.

Management then took out an injunction under the 1982 Employment Act to try and stop picketing of the store and one Saturday morning, eight pickets were arrested for obstruction.

One of them, a young woman, was subjected to a strip search, with the cell door left wide open to make it even more insecure.

When TGWU Regional Secretary, Bill Heywood, received notice of the injunction, he immediately called off the picket, but the picket remained, recognising that Heywood's action was in breach of union policy.

After three weeks' picketing and no apparent change in the attitude of management, the dispute spread to another Lady at Lord John shop, which was picketed with even more success.

The next day senior management called Audrey to a meeting in Birmingham together with union representatives. They agreed to reinstate Audrey in her old job at the same shop and to pay her wages that she lost for the duration of the dispute.

A discount for all TGWU members was also agreed.

Sexual harassment is a common problem for women working in shops. Our action shows that sexual harassment is a trade union issue. The dispute was well covered in the local press and if we had lost it would have given the green light to many managers to treat their female staff as they wish.

Now, it is a great encouragement for women workers to fight back through their union.

The labour movement must now come to the defence of the eight arrested pickets who have pleaded not guilty.

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 3UN



TROOPS OUT NOW!

Join the Labour Committee on Ireland!

BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX



Union officials give green light for new Cowley witch-hunt

THE joint management/union inquiry into labour relations in the Cowley Assembly Plant has been concluded. Not that its findings have been released to BL workers — nothing so democratic. It has however fallen into the hands of the Sunday Times who have revealed most of its contents.

Many workers expected the report to be a whitewash, in the event it is very much worse.

Every inquiry ever carried out in Cowley has been turned against the workforce, and, as we predicted, this one is no exception — although it arose out of a strike where the workers were criticising the management.

Some of the points, more minor in the circumstances, have been partially accepted. The report concedes that "cleanliness in the factory is poor"; some managers have been abusive to employees; health and safety problems are not dealt with adequately; there is a "lack of trade union facilities on the plant."

But despite these partial criticisms — very partial in most cases — the inquiry concludes that what management has been doing — ruthlessly pushing up productivity and cutting manning levels — is correct and necessary.

This is what it is all about. It is not possible to double the work effort and destroy existing working conditions and be nice about it.

In fact the report specifically argues that management were not expecting workers to work unreasonably hard or that the changes they were forcing through were wrong. It says only that the pace of the changes was too fast.

The report also makes it clear that the joint inquiry team consider that work effort has to be pushed up much further.

It criticises the unions on the plant, saying that while "accepting the need for international competitiveness", they do not have "a general awareness of the degree of change or levels of productivity that would be required to bring this about."

In other words they don't accept the company's objective of achieving Japanese productivity standards.

by Alan Thornett

Yet this report is not a management report, it is a joint effort. It is comprised of two managers and two trade union officials.

It is a testament to the collaboration of the unions with BL management that these officials can go along with such a report; but it does not end there.

The inquiry criticises the workforce for staging too many strikes under conditions where the unions have just been supporting a strike which they (correctly) said was against BL's "industrial dictatorship".

The most important part of the report, however, is the witch hunt it opens up against the shop stewards movement.

It is here that the inquiry is

ONE of the two managers on the 'inquiry' team has just been rewarded for his impartiality by promotion to the post of director covering the whole Oxford area — responsible directly to the BL board.

The two union officials concerned at TGWU regional official Bill Lapworth, who has refused to allow Cowley members to see the report, saying it goes directly to Moss Evans — and AUEW Birmingham divisional organiser Doug Fairburn, who presided over the victimisation of eight Longbridge workers in December 1980.

TGWU and AUEW members should move resolutions condemning the involvement of these officials in a witch-hunting report which further endangers trade union organisation.

turned into an attack on the shop floor movement, exactly as the inquiry report into my victimisation was used in 1974 and the inquiry report into the victimisation of four shop stewards in 1976/7.

The report asserts — without a shred of evidence — that "The political views of some of the shop stewards work against constitutional trade unionism on the plant."

Such a statement is very sinister indeed. That it can be jointly agreed with trade union

representatives in an "inquiry" arising out of a strike about management attitudes is astounding.

It is not surprising therefore that the report concludes that there should be a "fundamental reorganisation" of the trade union organisation on the plant.

Every previous "reorganisation" of the shop floor movement in the Assembly Plant has weakened the workforce against the management.

Such a 'reorganisation' could only mean three things: a further reduction of the number of shop stewards; more involvement in the plant of the full time officials and more witch-hunts against the militants.

Mass meetings in the Assembly Plant three weeks ago rejected management's "final terms" and voted to defend the 6 and 9 minutes washing up time when management move to take it away.

Similar decisive action should be taken against this report.

THE meeting between AUEW Executive member Ken Cure and Cowley Assembly Plant AUEW stewards proved to be somewhat of a damp squib. In place of the expected strongarm efforts to force the stewards into a surrender on the washing-up time issue, Cure merely asked them their position, and heard that the stewards — like all bar six workers at mass meetings of the Assembly Plant workforce — were committed to defence of the 6 and 9 minutes.

Challenge for NUR Broad Left

AT THE Third Annual General Meeting of the Broad Left for Rail Workers we had the odd spectacle of 4½ hours of speeches and only half an hour of business.

After Terry Fields (Labour MP for Liverpool Broadgreen), Lol Kirtan (ASLEF NEC member) spoke. The most amazing piece of news was that Tony Goldstein (of the Serpell Minority Report) might replace Peter Parker as boss of BR.

As Lol put it, "it's like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank."

Arthur Scargill also spoke. Finally we came to business. The main policy of the Broad Left is unchanged. The only challenge came from Ian Williams, about the policy of one delegate to NUR AGM per branch. He proposed that we follow the suggestion of the NUR National Executive Committee (one delegate per 2,000 members of part thereof). This was put to the vote, and was lost by a clear majority.

Emergency resolutions on Horwich and Shildon closures, against BRB rule book changes to allow DOO on all trains, on support for the nuclear protesters at Upper Heyford and on the violence of the police at these protest sites, were all passed.

With the return of a Tory government, however, the Broad Left will have to establish a much higher profile and a much more active appeal to the rank and file.



The Firth Derihon occupation was victorious

Sheffield strikes One step forward

IN Sheffield two industrial disputes have finished recently with differing results.

At Firth-Derihon a victory has been won. The management of this firm had announced the closure of the die shop and saw shop. 80 workers occupied and appealed for blacking of its products.

This appeal had a good response from Rolls Royce workers (one of Firth-Derihon's largest customers) and forced management to make concessions.

by Mick Siddaway

The closure was withdrawn and so were compulsory redundancies. Redundancies will be voluntary and spread between Firth-Derihon and another firm in the group.

This dispute had backing from the AUEW, TGWU, EETPU and UCATT.

The other dispute ended in defeat at Hodkin and Jones,

a concrete casting firm and a subsidiary of Monks building supply group.

The dispute started over changes in working practices which amounted to a 20% wage cut. The workers pointed out other ways in which savings could be made. Shortly after this 12 concrete casters were sacked.

After picketing their own firm, they went over the other side of the city and started picketing the Monks building supplies shop. So effective was this picketing that management went to court and took out a summons on Friday May 6.

They were told that the law was straightforward. The workers had broken it and it would be easier if they just stopped doing it. As one worker put it, "all our personnel records were there and we thought we were picketing our own employer." So much for the £1,000,000 fighting fund which the TUC promised to use to fight "Tebbit's laws".

Finally the management of Hodkin and Jones offered to take back the strikers — on the company's terms.

Because blackleg labour had been set on, the return to work would be conditional on an increase in demand. Isolated, the strikers accepted these conditions.

Aire Valley - week 12

THE Aire Valley Yarns strike is now in its 12th week. Twenty-one Asian workers are striking against the sacking of the shop steward Liaquat Ali.

The strikers are now building for a mass demonstration and rally on Saturday 18 June, assembling at Coal Hill Lane, Farsley, West Yorkshire at 3pm.

The company is one of the new 'hire and fire' sweat shops that have sprung up in the textile industry in West Yorkshire which mercilessly exploits mass unemployment among Asian workers.

These factories, using second hand machinery and workers who are prepared to work extremely long hours because of mass unemployment, have been able to undercut cheap imports from the

Far East.

They face compulsory weekend overtime, no health and safety regulations at the mill; no footbrakes on the spinning machines so that workers have to use their hands to stop the fast-moving spindles from rotating; carding machines — the most dangerous machines in the industry — have no safety guards.

Hence the importance of reinstating Liaquat Ali and the other workers sacked for striking in his support and for recognition of the union — the TGWU — by the management of the firm.

Messages of support and donations to the strike fund should be sent to the Aire Valley Yarns Support Committee, 34 Dirkhill Street, Bradford 7

NO CURE FOR B.L. WORKERS

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Join the Leyland Action Committee
Contact: 194 Dawlish Rd, Birmingham 29.

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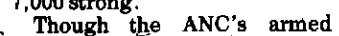
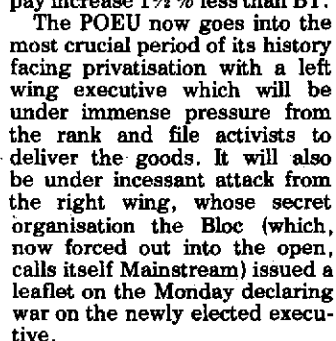
Fight for socialist policies!

The policies we fight for

Socialist ORGANISER

At the Broad Left meeting on the Monday evening, the mood

Speaker after speaker gave commitments at the meeting that the newly elected National Executive would ensure the maximum trade union democracy possible, and urged that the rank and file keep up the maximum pressure.



Trade unionists in Britain should investigate the links between their firms and the subsidiaries and conglomerates operating in South Africa, and seek to forge direct links with the embattled rank and file of the black unions, through which the most effective solidarity can be established.

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