

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist ORGANISER

Fight the
witch-
hunt

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Claimants and strikers 10p.

BLACK OUT CRUISE!

"THE world can't go on as it is without some fool or some maniac or some accident triggering the kind of war that is the end of the line for all of us."

— Ronald Reagan

THE decision of the NUR conference to support unilateral nuclear disarmament and to affiliate to CND, means that almost every major union in Britain (with the exception of the AUEW, EETPU and APEX) is now against the Bomb.

In particular, every transport union is now unilateralist.

But conference resolutions are one thing — real action quite another. For instance, following the NUR conference decision, general secretary Jimmy Knapp was insisting to reporters that this would not commit the union to blacking the transport of nuclear weapons or supplies.

Already, vital equipment for the Cruise missile base has been installed at Greenham Common. Protestors outside the base say a large transport plane landed there recently.

Action

Missile launchers are expected to arrive any day now and Cruise missiles are due before the end of the year.

The kind of action that could stop the Tories' nuclear war plans is being demonstrated most dramatically by rank and file members of the National Union of Seamen.

They are refusing to take the "Atlantic Fisher" out of Barrow to collect nuclear waste from Sharpness for

Turn union votes into action against Cruise, Trident and 'civil defence'

By Jim
Denham

dumping at sea, 500 miles off Lands End. The NUS leadership is backing the action and has sent a circular to all branches advising them not to sail in vessels being used for dumping.

And the TGWU executive has sent out a telex instructing members to black the movement of nuclear waste (almost all of which comes from weapons).

Other promising developments recently include announcements from both

NUPE and the FBU (Fire Brigades Union) that they will boycott the government's schemes for dealing with the aftermath of nuclear war.

FBU General Secretary Ken Cameron — backing up the union's recent conference decision for non-cooperation

with civil defence exercises — commented, "we see it very much as a matter of there being no life after death."

Similarly, NUPE is advising ambulance staff to boycott exercises like that proposed by Wessex Health Authority (on instructions from the DHSS) to "prepare plans for survivors" of a nuclear war.

NUPE national officer Roger Poole said they would not be party to the "deceit" of pretending that a nuclear war could be survived.

At its conference earlier this month, NALGO took a similar position, voting to support members who refuse to cooperate with civil defence regulations.

The vital task now is to build on action like the seafarers', and translate all the excellent unilateralist resolutions and speeches at union conferences into rank and file action.

The best way to stop the bomb once and for all is for transport workers to refuse to move equipment or supplies, for building workers to black the installations, for public sector workers to boycott all "civil defence" exercises, and for workers like the seafarers to refuse to carry away the deadly waste!

Blockade of Greenham Common USAF base starts 6am Monday July 4, and continues until 6am Saturday July 9. Women only. On arrival please go to the Orange Gate. More details: 01-251 3133.

Page 2... GAY RIGHTS

This Saturday (1.30 at Speakers' Corner) is the Lesbian and Gay Pride march. Stephen Spurdon reports on the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights.

Pages 8-9... YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME

First of two features on the Tories' plans.

Page 14... TGWU BDC

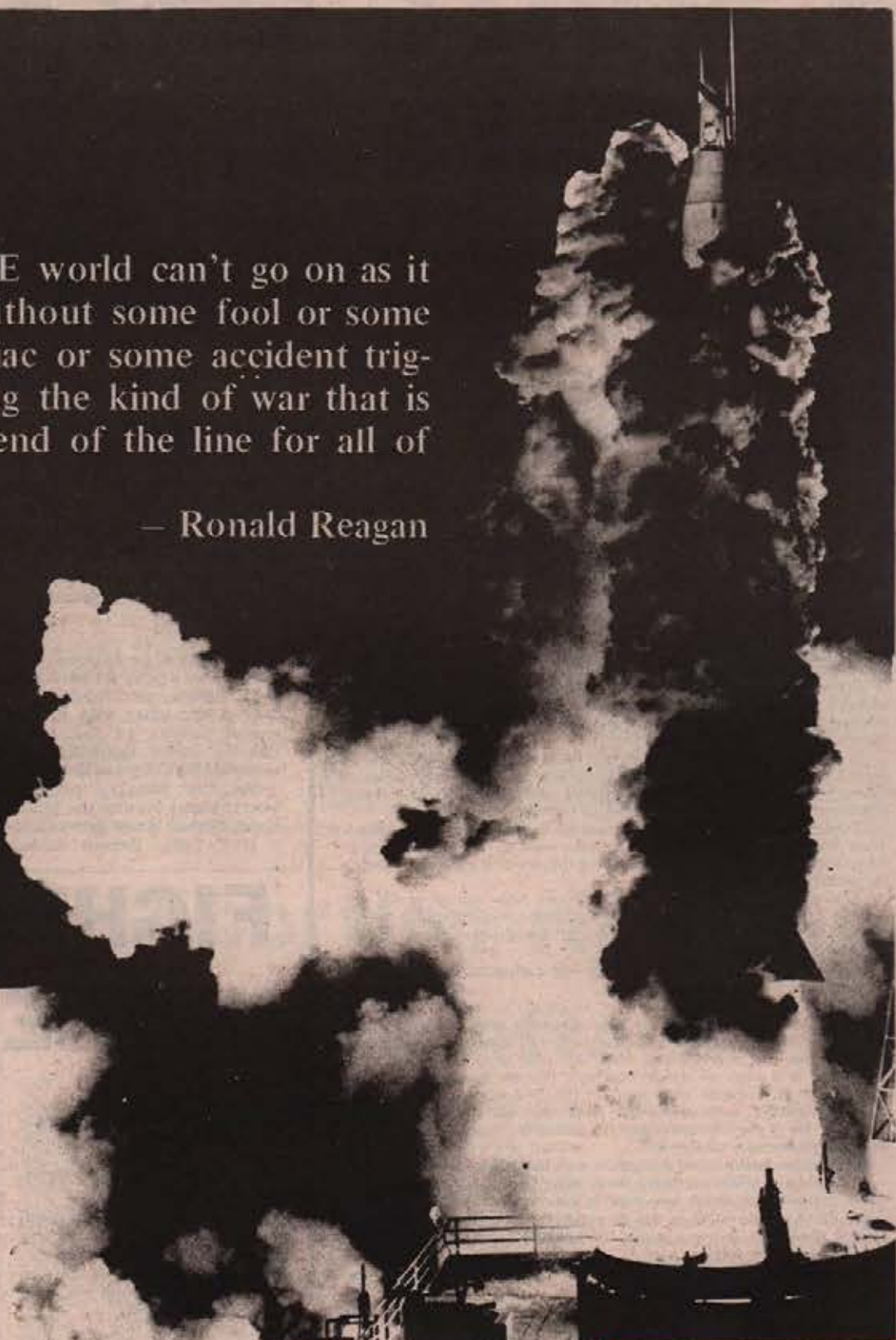
Starts July 4. Alan Thornett looks at the agenda.

Page 4... WHY LABOUR LOST

Our coverage on the election defeat continues with comments from Reg Race, Peter Tatchell, and Jonathan Hammond.

Pages 6-7... CHILE AND BOLIVIA

Reports by Santiago Fortin and Harry Sloan.



EDITORIAL

Time to break the cartel

THE right wing, the soft left and the union barons lost us the election. Must we now let them shanghai the leadership of the Party?

They had the leadership stakes fixed from day one. Now they reckon it's all sewn up. That everything is cut and dried. That the rank and file of the Party and the unions have been carved out of the game. That discussion on their electoral fiasco has been stifled.

We won the right to participate in the election of the Party leader two years ago. Now they think they can organise a PLP-union bosses cartel to stop us exercising it.

Don't let them get away with it!

Why should the rank and file accept that it has to be either Hattersley or Kinnock? Or Kinnock and Hattersley? Because the wielders of the Big Vote have spoken? Spoken brutally out of turn, before anyone else had a chance to speak and in order to stop the Party speaking.

The big problem with the labour movement is that these characters have had too much to say and too much control for too long. The rank and file of the Party and of the unions must insist on having their say.

What serious claim can Neil Kinnock have to lead the Labour Party? The claim of a career-conscious left trimmer who showed what he was made of when the left was on the offensive to win the Deputy Leadership for Tony Benn. He sabotaged our campaign.

The claim of a man who joined the purgers and witch burners when they divided the Party on the eve of the election: he voted to expel the Editorial Board of Militant.

The claim of a man who was Michael Foot's personal deputy and heir apparent in the disastrous election campaign.

The claims of a specialist in soothing blather and phrase making, a maker of verbal bridges between incompatible political positions at a time when the movement desperately needs seriousness, frankness, and an honest attempt to sort its ideas out.

And Hattersley? The one thing in Hattersley's favour is that he stayed with the labour movement when his pink Tory friends ran away to form the SDP. He is as politically bankrupt as Labour's discredited old right wing is — and you can't get more bankrupt than that even in Margaret Thatcher's Britain.

Shore is a right-winger who once gained some credibility with sections of the anti-Common Market left because he is a narrow-minded English nationalist. The good news is that he now seems to have lost it.

If a Kinnock-Hattersley leadership is the "dream ticket", lots of people have undernourished imaginations as well as insensitive stomachs. In fact, it is the Cartel Ticket of the muscle-bound if not moribund monopolist power-brokers of the labour movement.

Tribune has called it by its right name: it is the 'nightmare ticket'. Their dream; the nightmare of those who want to reshape the Labour Party into a Party capable of defending the working class and fighting for socialism.

The worst thing that can happen right now would be for the Labour Party rank and file, depressed by the election defeat, to let the union barons and the PLP foist this nightmare ticket on us without a fight.

Eric Heffer's candidacy offers the left a chance to try to break open the cartel and to rally the Party.

Even if we should fail, for now, to defeat the cartel, a vigorous campaign for and by Heffer would prepare the rank and file for the battles of the future when the nightmare side of the "dream ticket" comes to the fore, as it will.

Heffer is a man of the serious left though Socialist Organiser would have differences with him. In the mid-seventies he resigned from the Wilson government on what was for him a matter of principle. He is the one candidate for leader to oppose and condemn the plans of the witch burners.

The serious left must now organise around Heffer's campaign.

We need a new version of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee — the left coalition which spearheaded Benn's deputy leadership campaign. What we did then we can do again. A new series of mass rallies up and down the country would do wonders for the morale of the movement and the left.

Eric Heffer should make up his mind now to take the fight to the rank and file and to campaign.

Tony Benn should come out clearly for Heffer and help organise the campaign.

We must take the fight into the unions, most of whose leaders do not plan to consult the rank and file on the issue. The barons have to be challenged there if the labour movement is ever to change for the better.

Michael Meacher must be supported for deputy leader. But for the left to focus now on the mere deputy leadership would be ridiculously unambitious!

Coming soon: Tebbit 3

IT's seconds out for Tebbit 3. The latest and most lavish extravaganza from the Saatchi and Saatchi stable is the most important of the Tory projects unveiled in the Queen's Speech last Wednesday, 22nd.

This bruising, blockbusting sequel to the 1980 and 1982 Employment Act will:

■ Open your union to actions for damages unless you have voted in a secret postal ballot before you go on strike.

■ If the strike is (as the majority are) initially unofficial, open your union to damages unless it either holds a secret postal ballot or disowns the stoppage — in which case you yourself can be hauled before the courts.

■ As the first step to imposing secret postal ballots on all union elections from shop steward upwards, impose them for the election of union executives and for the five-yearly election of union presidents and general secretaries.

■ Most probably force every union to hold a secret postal ballot to see if its members wish to continue with a political fund and affiliation to the Labour Party — an exercise to be repeated every ten years.

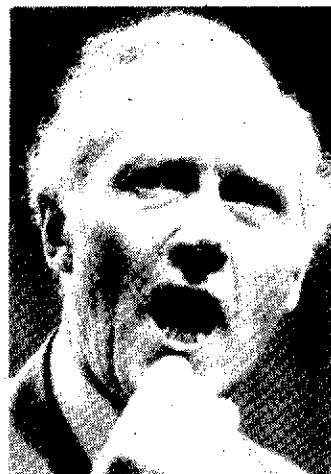
■ Possibly change the existing rules so that political levy payers will have to opt in, not, as now, opt out.

Last week as he splashed out £261,000 on a party for 54 closed shop victims, the Saloon Bar stallion who slugs with all the animal ferocity of the great Roberto Duran expressed his contempt for Congress House.

But the punchy, paunchy heavyweights leaving the plush Great Russell Street gym talked a good fight: Basnett stated



Murray



Basnett

By John McIlroy

"We must take steps as individual unions and the TUC to defend our organisation, our rights and our finances against the legalistic attack." Ken Cameron commented: "we will not accept restrictions on the right to strike. We will continue to use our own procedures to decide how to act."

Geoffrey Drain asserted: "This persistence in interfering in the internal affairs of unions will continue to be rigorously resisted."

The resistance coming from the Board of Control looks laughable from the small halls. When TGWU members voted to black Atlantic Yarns, a customer of Aire Valley Yarns, to help the workers on strike there, the directors took out an injunction under Tebbit 2 against the local

TGWU official Peter Booth. He agreed to accept the order.

TGWU policy is to fight Tebbit but when he clammers through the ropes, they take a dive.

In the Lady at Lord John strike in Liverpool, the threat of an injunction under Tebbit 2 led the full time officials to back-pedal on picketing.

At Admin Litho in North East London, NGA members have been on strike for three months because the bosses won't give them a closed shop, insisting they ballot under the provisions of Tebbit 2 — provisions that it is specific TUC policy to boycott.

The members of Admin Litho are supporting the TUC. The TUC are doing precisely nothing to support them.

Verbal resistance is coming

from the top. They are doing nothing to even publicise, let alone generalise the action that is taking place at the grassroots.

Instead Murray and Co spend their time talking on joint bodies with the Tories — and getting results like Tebbit simply quashing the miserable £1.45 increase proposed for YTS trainees.

And blaming the members!

The Observer reports over the election: "Congress House is angry with the trade union rank and file... Murray says that this is not the first time the TUC General Council has given a lead to trade union members who are lagging behind..."

These remarks will be greeted by workers actually struggling against this government at British Telecom, Cammell Lairds, Birkenhead, and at Greenings, Warrington, with a grim hilarity unparalleled since Brian London's famous "I'm only a prawn in their game" remark.

We must make no mistake. Tebbit 3 is a deadly threat to the labour movement. But the leadership of that movement is in no shape for the battle.

The rank and file must take the gloves off now.

With a post-election redundancy rush getting under way, and with 70 pits and 70,000 jobs up for the chop, we have to convince the ranks of the necessity for a general fight back. We must argue urgently but patiently in workplaces, stewards' committees, branches and Labour Parties, for breaking off all talks with the Tories and expending all our energies instead in uniting and extending industrial action over the two issues which threaten every single worker in Britain today — job loss and the anti-union laws.

FIGHTING FOR GAY RIGHTS IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

by Stephen Spurdon

(Labour Campaign for Gay Rights)

But it has not been all roses. There have also been some thorns and a load of dung — and it hasn't all come from the right wing of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions!

The Militant Tendency, for instance, has a deplorable 'line' on gay rights. Unfortunately, they don't only oppose us with turned backs or ill-informed argument. Sometimes their opposition takes on a more ugly form.

At the recent Labour Party Young Socialists conference at Bridlington, for instance, we were told that GYS members had to suffer 'verbal abuse and threats of violence'. However, GYS delegates saw this as some form of progress for, in previous years, people who have come out for gay rights have been actually kicked at and spat upon by other delegates at what is recognised as a Militant-dominated event.

Talking to some ordinary Militant supporters, however, we have found that they are often embarrassed at Militant's official attitude on gay rights. Perhaps Militant will turn out to be susceptible to grass roots pressure after all.

Well, either that, or we'll have to wait for Ted Grant to garotte himself with a badly aimed hand movement, as heir-apparent Peter Taffe is said to have a slightly more open mind.

Certainly, at the constituency level in the Labour Party we

can say that we have growing and enthusiastic support. And I suppose the very fact that the rights of gay men and lesbian women were mentioned in the Labour Party manifesto is some form of success.

However, some people have chosen to include this extremely limited paper commitment as one of the reasons that the manifesto failed to appeal to the mass of labour voters.

If that is the case then the Labour Party should take a lead in educating people on the issue of sexual politics and not simply drop it as a 'vote loser'. There is a sizeable gay vote to be won and it cannot have escaped the attention of politically-aware gays that the Labour Party manifesto was the only one to even mention gay rights.

LCGR is committed to keeping gay male and lesbian rights to the forefront of the attention of the Labour Party, which will of course include a major campaign at this year's conference. We will also be active in seeking support at the Trades Union Congress.

The unions are seen as being especially important as there have been a number of cases where gay men and lesbians have been sacked simply for being gay.

A number of unions, such as NALGO and NUPE, have recognised this and have adopted gay rights policies. NALGO, for instance, actually blacked a company that sacked a gay employee. This goes a long way to helping gay people believe that they are indeed part of a union.

But these unions are the exception rather than the rule. We in LCGR are committed to changing this situation and, indeed, some members have been instrumental in setting up gay groups within their own unions. I, for instance, am currently attempting to form a gay group in the NUJ.

I think it is significant to note that I had thought about starting such a group for some time, but it was only the encouragement and support of my comrades in LCGR that enabled me to actually take the step forward.

This highlights one of LCGR's most important functions, that of acting as a support group for gays and lesbians in the labour movement.

For myself, I can say that my comrades in LCGR have transformed my commitment to the cause of socialism from mere talk into something like action. And for that they will always have my gratitude and love.

National meeting of Briefing groups

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



To join or affiliate, write to Chris Richardson, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DS. £5 for individuals, or for affiliated organisations, per 1000 members. £2 for low-waged individuals. £1 for unwaged. Add 50p if you want the special issue of Gay Socialist.



Labour movement conference HOW TO FIGHT THE TORIES

September 17
University of London
Students Union

THREE weeks after the general election, and the fight back against the newly triumphant Tories is already underway.

Engineers in British Telecom are on strike over privatisation. From July 4 a new blockade will surround the Cruise missile base-to-be at Greenham Common.

On July 17 Labour parties, Labour councillors, and trade unionists in London will be meeting at a conference called by Southwark Labour group to begin discussion on resistance to new cuts and attacks on local government.

How fast these struggles will be able to develop and wipe the smirk off the face of the Parliamentary victors, we can't tell. But for sure there is an urgent need for discussion and planning in the Labour and trade union ranks on how to get the labour movement in shape for a fight; on how to break the treacherous links that sap the movement's strength by tying it at the top to collaboration with

the Tories in 'tripartite' bodies; and on policies to guide Labour's comeback.

At our EGM last Sunday, 26th, Socialist Organiser decided to take the initiative for a conference on 'How to Fight the Tories' this autumn.

We are inviting labour movement organisations to join us in sponsoring the conference, planning it and deciding the details.

The conference will focus on struggles actually underway — against privatisation, against missiles, against cuts. We will also need to discuss items like: how to rebuild the Labour Party and organise Labour Party workplace branches; women against the Tories; organising the unemployed and the YTS schemes due to start in September; rebuilding shop stewards' organisation; rethinking the 'Alternative Economic Strategy'; and many others.

If you want to get more details, to sponsor the confer-

ence, or to get a speaker to your trade union or Labour Party branch to explain the plans for the conference, write to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8, marking the envelope 'September 17 conference'.



Press Gang

Daily Mail
EXPRESS
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
THE Sun

by Patrick Spilling

AS Wimbledon hysteria reaches its climax and the echoes of the World Cup cricket die away, it is time to defend competitive sport.

Defence it needs, both from the hysterical vapours of the back pages of the tabloids and the disfavour it appears to have fallen into amongst radical circles.

The fact that sport has been captured by the baddies does not mean we should give it up without a battle.

Its shameful commercialisation, its rampant sexism, its endemic racism are not built into competitive games or sport — but built into the societies in which they are played.

Take tennis. The sports pages have been filled with demands for action against McEnroe — yet McEnroe is the human embodiment of sports journalism — spoilt, loud and self-obsessed. Tennis is the perfect game for capitalism. Individual effort, short bursts of activity, broken up by arguments. Tennis as a game induces a spirit of mean self pity in those who play it. The vast sums of money to be won have stoked the fires that blaze across Wimbledon's centre court every year.

Cricket is quite the opposite. The gutter press is as a result completely incapable of understanding cricket.

Cricket is nearly the perfect team game, depending on co-operation and a degree of organisation and common effort. Even when one player is apparently making a giant individual contribution to a game he is depending on the support of his

colleagues.

Cricket has another asset in that it does not depend on brute physical strength and there is no reason other than conditioning why men and women cannot play on equal terms.

Of course in a society in which women are taught to scorn sport there is every reason.

Contrary to popular belief cricket is also a riveting spectator sport once you know what the hell is going on.

The press can poison any sport. Sport is used as an opiate; big TV events dressed up in importance to the level of politics and designed to keep millions stuck by their tellies when they should be out building barricades.

Cricket

The world cup cricket series just ended showed perfectly the difference between the real game and the game as it is presented in the press.

The final — at Lords — was predestined to be between England and the West Indies (the West Indies being the best team in the tournament and England going through on the strength of the Royal Family).

When India beat England in the semi-finals the press greeted the result with dismay and jeered the England performance as pathetic. It wasn't. The Indians who have been racially pigeon-holed as gutsy little players not good enough to face fast bowling, had sent an outstanding team, with enough self-confidence to believe they

could win.

They proved the result was no fluke by comprehensively out-playing the West Indies in the final — a team with some of the greatest cricketers who have ever lived.

The Sunday Times described the scene as the Indian and West Indian spectators flooded onto the pitch to greet their heroes at the end of the game and charged towards the MCC members' enclosure.

It said that some of the older members in the MCC were gazing in horror at the masses surging towards them and reliving their worst colonial nightmares from years ago.

Maybe one day the symbolism will become reality.

Socialists have no right to sneer at sport. Competitive sport at all levels from competence upwards is creative. When skill and talent is given an edge of real striving it always adds a creative edge. Capitalism does not add competition to sport. It dictates that competition must be based on ownership, money and individual heroics.

We have no difficulty in seeing this in arts or music, or even in cerebral games like chess.

Why then affect to be ashamed of the passions that sport can rouse, the benefits from playing it, and the vicarious pleasure from watching it.

The real issues in sport, no less than the real issues in politics are done no service by the fantasies of the back page which pass for sports coverage.

It's about time we got behind our team. Let's hear it for the Reds.

Abortion rights under attack

HAVE YOU noticed that the anti-abortionists are on the march?

Last Saturday about 25,000 women, men and a lot of kids, walked around London carrying very well-produced (expensive) placards saying, 'Adoption not abortion'.

It is likely that Catholic schools and churches booked and paid for the coaches, and Mother Theresa's advertised presence undoubtedly helped to mobilise the troops.

But the amount of support the demo attracted is a warning — SPUC and Life are doing well.

In the past couple of weeks, fund-raisers have been held,

there was a full page advert in Sunday's Observer, and the Glasgow SPUC have the author of 'Abortion, the Silent Holocaust', an American priest, over on a speaking tour.

The National Abortion Campaign is picketing these meetings.

Purpose

NAC presumes that the campaign is timed to coincide with the Private Members' lottery which takes place this Thursday. And, given the government's majority, it seems quite likely that the winners will be Tories,

and that one will present an anti-abortion bill.

But there is another side to the abortion laws: their implementation. With the tightening up of abortion administration, and with cuts in hospital services making it harder to get an abortion after 20 weeks or on social grounds, perhaps the anti-abortionists don't need a bill at all.

In any event the need to prepare and mobilise the labour movement in defence of abortion rights has grown with the Tory election victory.

Contact: NAC, 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.

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.

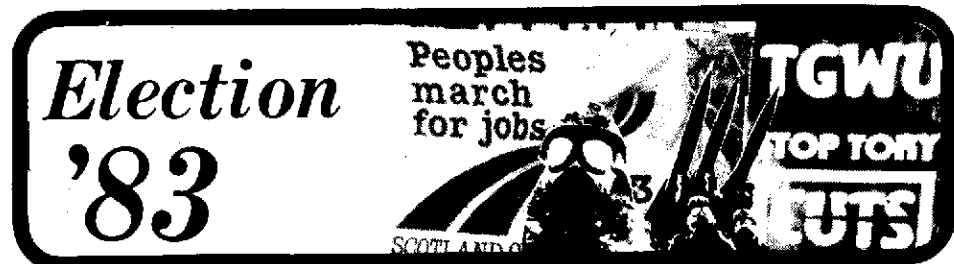


CND

Youth conference

Youth CND conference: July 2-3, UMIST Student Union, Manchester. Open to YCND members and to visitors.

Delegates from YCND groups: 1 delegate per 4 members. Visitors must notify YCND office before conference. Registration fee £1.50 for visitors and delegates.



Discussing the lessons of June 9 Wilson's failure started the rot

By Reg
Race

A GREAT deal of nonsense has been written about the result of the general election. Some socialists have suggested that it is all Michael Foot's fault; other right wing Labour supporters declare that the Party will never win whilst it has a left wing programme and manifesto.

Suggestions such as these are miles wide of the mark. The truth is that long-term trends have been undermining the basis of the Labour vote since 1966: in that year, when Labour won a 96 seat overall majority in the House of Commons, Labour polled 48% of the popular vote and won 363 seats.

By 1970, our share of the poll was down to 42.9%, with further falls to 37.2% in February 1974, 36.9% in May 1979, and 28% in 1983.

This is a record of unparalleled disaster. The 1983 election result is certainly the worst for Labour since 1918: 50 years of steady electoral progress have been wiped out in a decade.

Serious-minded socialists, anxious to explain this record, need to go back to the 1960s when this process of electoral decline began. It was the abject failure of the 1964-70 Wilson government that first precipitated the decline in working class support for Labour: in those years it looked as if the Party's collective leadership were interested only in government for its own sake.

That generation of Labour leaders which included Wilson, Callaghan, Brown, Jenkins, Foot and Owen are now thoroughly and totally discredited.

And because the leadership has discredited itself by failing to implement pro-working class policies, and in some cases by defecting to other parties, it is not surprising that many people are confused about what the party stands for and mistrustful of the intentions of its top people.

There are, however, long term social trends which have also undermined the Labour vote. There has been a decline in the militancy and combativity of the working class as a whole, due largely to the impact of mass unemployment; and there has also been a substantial reduction in the blue collar trade union base as traditionally highly organised industries such as printing, coal mining, the railways and the docks have contracted.

These factors, probably in conjunction with a huge rise in

owner-occupation during the past decade have fragmented the Labour vote and eroded the solidarity of the working class.

In addition to these critical factors, the ineffectiveness of the Party leadership in the general election campaign itself was important.

Michael Foot did not express the Party's policies clearly enough on television; and it is certainly true that the leadership factor persuaded a very large number of people not to vote Labour.

James Callaghan's intervention on nuclear weapons was also a devastating blow, coming as it did after a relatively successful opening to the campaign; its psychological impact on Labour supporters cannot be overestimated, giving as it did the impression to the electorate that the Party leadership was again divided and that our policies were yet again being denigrated in public.

And this was the collective leadership that boasted of winning a million votes for Labour by expelling socialists from the Party!

The direct appeal of Thatcher and the values she stood for obviously had a major impact on working class voters. The appeal of populist authoritarianism – the genteel British version of the "Führer prinzip" – was enormous amongst the 25% of the electorate who now read the Sun newspaper.

That simple Thatcher message of blaming the blacks, the trade unions, women and the world recession, was enormously successful – and can only be countered by a Labour Party that campaigns for a clear set of socialist values.

What should we do now? First, socialists must build the Party – with the objective of winning a million new party members in a year.

Second, Labour must take the media seriously. The drip, drip effect of a hostile Fleet Street on the attitudes and allegiances of working class voters can no longer be ignored. The movement should start a development fund to prepare the publication of a national daily newspaper.

Third, we must win a socialist leadership that will support the Party's policies and articulate them clearly.

Fourth, we must destroy the illusion that in order to win we have to jettison our policies, trim our ideology, and appeal to moderate opinion. Our task is to win the argument for socialism.

Fifth, we must undermine the credibility of the SDP as a major party. This is of critical electoral importance: for if the opposition to the Tories remains divided, we may be in for more than a decade of Thatcherite rule.



'Labour must not only support struggles like Greenham, but initiate them...'

Thatcher: 'the Führerprinzip'

Win workers to Marxism

THE COMING period, after Labour's biggest election defeat since the war, paradoxically gives us in the Socialist Organiser Alliance the best opportunity we have ever had to win converts in the trade union and labour movement to our interpretation of Marxism and Trotskyism as the surest way forward to socialism.

Ken Livingstone and Arthur Scargill are right to suggest that the main struggles over the next few years will be outside Parliament. According to the Cambridge Econometrics Group, 'unemployment is set to top 4 million if the Conservative government pursues its existing policies and to reach 4.3 million by the end of the decade' (Tribune, June 24). The same group forecasts that, by 1986, growth will slow steadily to about 1.3% a year with the tailing-off of North Sea Oil revenues.

If this forecast is correct, then the crunch will come for the welfare state and the Conservatives' 'hidden manifesto' will come into play. There will be great opportunities for a cohesive Marxist left wing in both the unions and the Labour Party.

So, what should be the priorities of a Marxist group like the Socialist Organiser Alliance, which seeks to integrate activity on all the fronts of the class struggle – economic, political, ideological – into a coherent strategy?

One of our main strengths, arising out of our commitment to maximum left unity in action

By Jonathan Hammond
(chair, Socialist Organiser Alliance)

wherever possible, is our openness and lack of sectarianism. We have a great deal of credibility in areas of the trade unions and of constituency Labour Parties where we are strong because of our hard work and willingness to work with others on the left while retaining our distinctive approach.

We should, first of all, take the lead and strive to create Labour Party workplace branches as a means of combining trade union and Labour Party work and reinvigorating the basis of the Labour Party. We should seek to build new SO groups and develop the ones we already have, and, within this organisational priority, determine how many people we can put forward in each area as prospective councillors and parliamentary candidates.

Within this developing organisational framework, we should fight for our policies and to call to account those MPs, councillors and union leaders who collaborate with the Tories. Labour MPs in particular should be persuaded to conduct a campaign of parliamentary obstruction.

One of the major debates at last year's TUC was over tripartism – whether the trade union movement should continue to collaborate with the Government in bodies like the NEDC. In the light of the Tory landslide, this debate is bound to recur at this year's TUC, and we should push this facet of our policy – the need to break off collaboration with the Government – particularly hard in the next few months.

In the unions, we should fight for election, and periodic re-election, of all officials by methods of direct, participatory democracy, not the anti-democratic Tebbit-favoured postal ballots.

We need to fight to remould the labour movement to be habitable for women and to be orientated towards their needs. On that basis a mass working-class based women's movement can be built, and a socialist alliance created between the labour movement and the women's movement.

The hold of the media cannot be overestimated, and any strategy for bringing about a Labour government towards the end of the decade dominated by Marxists and left social democrats (in the true historical sense of that expression) – which remains a possibility – must take that fact into account.

'A major setback'

Peter Tatchell, Bermondsey Labour Party

There's no denying that it is a major setback for the Labour Party.

In looking at the reasons for the defeat, there are many, many factors which you have to bear in mind. But overall, from the Labour Party conference in October 1981 when Benn was defeated for the deputy leadership and the Right made its first gains on the National Executive Committee, onwards, there has been an unrelenting right-wing offensive against the Left to try to reverse changes in the party both at policy and constitutional level.

The divisiveness of that witch-hunt has undermined our electoral support.

The overriding lesson of this election, as with the Bermondsey by-election, is that you cannot conduct witch-hunts and expect to win elections.

The anti-Tory vote held up well. The trouble is that for too long the Labour Party has relied on an anti-Tory vote to get it into power and now there's another anti-Tory party, the Alliance. We have suffered because we have not argued strongly enough for our positive alternative policies.

It pre-dates the last Labour government and even the one before that. The Labour Party has taken its traditional support for granted. We are paying the price for years of neglect.

The Labour Party now has to not only support struggles like Greenham Common, but initiate them. People are going to become politically aware through struggles. In the months to come the Labour Party has got to turn outwards and become a more campaigning party.

With the new Tory government, and an increased majority, the need for action outside parliament is going to become greater than ever.

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International news

Bolivian miners fight for workers' control

by Santiago Fortin

SINCE the final collapse in October 1982 of the military dictatorship established after the bloody coup of July 1980, Bolivia has witnessed accelerating polarisation and increased political tension that threaten to escape the control of the government of Hernan Siles Zuazo.

Many on the left, both in Bolivia and abroad, applauded the arrival of the Siles regime not just because it marked a return to constitutional democracy but also because the inclusion of the pro-Moscow Bolivian Communist Party and the reformist MIR was seen as confirming its progressive credentials and 'anti-imperialist' character. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Within a few months the UDP administration has introduced measures to keep real wages down and attack the people's living standards in preparation for a new IMF package that the regime has accepted in advance — even though it says it hopes the package will be 'moderate'.

Siles himself was president before in 1957. Then, he introduced Bolivia's first IMF stabilisation plan, attempted through the use of force and yellow unions to split the COB (trade union confederation), and reconstructed the armed forces all but destroyed after the 1952 revolution.

He is certainly no military dictator, but his credentials as a pro-US politico are unparalleled. This fact, allied to concern over the still booming cocaine trade explains why when all the other dictatorships in the region were receiving steady support from Washington, General Garcia's in Bolivia was consistently undermined in the knowledge that a ready-made 'democratic alternative' was



The tin mines are central to Bolivia's economy

waiting in the wings.

Reagan was noticeably less pleased when Siles, realising that he would have to make concessions to the working class, gave the ministries of labour and mines to the PCB. This astute move obliged the party to enforce government policy on a militant trade union movement of which many leaders carried party cards.

Alliance

With the MIR quickly forsaking the government to forge a parliamentary alliance with the Right, towards which it has been gravitating with increasing speed over the last two years, the 'Party of the Proletariat' found itself exclusively responsible for maintaining 'industrial peace... with responsibility' amidst an inflation rate of over 750% and a debt of nearly \$3 billion.

The crisis came quicker than expected when, early in April, the bureaucrats of Comibol, the state mining corporation, struck for higher wages. The miners' union, FSTMB, promised support so long as the employees included improvements in working and social conditions in the demands. They refused, and the

strike brought the strategic tin industry to an abrupt halt.

In response the workforce occupied the 14 state pits, the allied processing plants and foundries, the mining schools and hospitals (also closed by the strike), declared workers' control, and resumed production under a board of directors nominated by the FSTMB.

The PCB was thrown into confusion and immediately tried to sabotage the operation. One of its figureheads, the FSTMB leader Simon Reyes, argued vehemently against the occupation as 'adventurist'. However production levels were markedly increased. When the government, fearful of employing troops but eager to explore the possibilities of increasing pressure on the workers, sent the mining police into one camp, they were met by workers who were more heavily armed. The police immediately agreed to support the takeover.

Police

At the Comibol offices in La Paz, police officers saluted union leaders as they took over control. The PCB rank and file obliged Reyes to participate. On the basis of its actual

control of the country's single most important source of revenue, the FSTMB called on the regime to concede not just worker participation in management but workers' control, that is a worker majority on the board of directors with powers of veto. This is a demand that stems directly from the experience of 1952, when the miners achieved joint management and were quickly deprived of any control.

This workers' control is seen by the rank and file as an immediate necessity and not a distant, abstract demand.

Siles quickly offered participation without powers of veto. The US was terrified and piled on the pressure to kick the PCB out, bring in the troops and put an end to the nonsense.

Disarray

This Siles cannot do without destroying the very basis on which his regime is tolerated. After two months of stalemate he has just managed to hold his ground through extended negotiations. But his government is now in total disarray, and the PCB, whose participation originally identified much of the working class with the popular front regime, is thoroughly discredited.

The next dose of IMF medicine is due very soon and is sure to spur on the popular mobilisation that hitherto has been remarkably limited by Bolivian standards, largely as a result of two years of vicious dictatorship and an average cut of 60% in living standards.

Without doubt the concern not to force another military coup has affected the attitudes of the union leaders, but the occupation of Comibol is a vivid indication that the Bolivian proletariat is recuperating rapidly — and in a direction that can hardly please those who rode on its back simply to regain bourgeois democracy and 'civilised' methods of exploitation.



North and South

by Paddy Dollard

THE LANCE corporal told the court of inquiry how he came to kill the child: "He had aimed at a youth who, he believed, was trying to set fire to an army vehicle. He shouted a warning, he said, aimed and fired. When the smoke cleared he realised he had shot the wrong person".

In fact his plastic bullet blew the back off 11 year old Stephen McConomy's head, and he died in hospital three days later, on April 19 last year. He was the sixth child in Northern Ireland to be killed by a plastic bullet.

Last week a jury in Derry decided that the British Army killed McConomy "without any justification". The jury decided that the soldier had not been in any danger when he fired the 'baton round' at a range of 17 feet. (The 'recommended range', according to army regulations, is 60 feet).

"Killed without any justification"? The summary execution of an eleven-year old child would fit the facts much better.

Since the killing of Stephen McConomy one more child has died by plastic bullets in Northern Ireland.

SIGN of the times: The annual Orange marches on July 12 are the occasion for sectarian triumphalism in which the marching ranks of the Orange Orders tell the Catholics, 'Croppies lie down', because, they insist, 'We are the people'. This year there will be a new note.

Resolutions are to be moved at all the gatherings asking the government to create more jobs.

The slump has come close to wiping out Northern Ireland industry. 70,000 industrial jobs have been lost in the last decade: there are now only 77,000 left, and eroding fast.

The state is the biggest employer now: 67,000 public sector jobs have been created since 1969. Sectarian job preference made much of industry Protestant: destruction of industry is hitting the Protestants especially hard. Thus the Orange resolutions.

tion deputy Dick Spring as 'not correct' on the issue.

Labour TD (MP) Brendan Halligan has tied divorce to the North by identifying prohibition of divorce as one of the clearest pieces of Catholic sectarian legislation in the South. In fact it was one of the earliest expressions of that sectarianism: the right to divorce (for Protestants and non-Catholics: believing Catholics cannot divorce) was abolished as early as 1925, three years after independence.

It provoked the poet W B Yeats to deliver a famous speech in the Senate, during which he said of the Irish Protestants 'against whom this was being done' that 'we are no petty people. We are the people of Grattan, Tone, Parnell...'

If the poll is right, it shows that many of the Catholic people of the 26 Counties are moving closer to the outlook of Tone and Parnell.

ONE OF the strangest events of the Northern Ireland election was Gerry Fitt's vote in West Belfast.

He got 10,326 votes, roughly 5,000 each from the Catholic Falls and the Protestant Shankill. He appealed for support as the only candidate who could beat Sinn Féin's Gerry Adams. Even so such cross-communal unity is remarkable, especially for a man with Fitt's record.

It can't have many precedents, if it has any. Adams got in with 16,379 votes: the SDLP got 10,934 votes. If the SDLP, of which Fitt was until recently leader, had not split the vote, Fitt would have kept his seat.

He had mixed feelings about it. He claimed to have achieved the goal of his political life as a 'socialist Republican' by uniting the workers of the Falls and the Shankill. But at a celebration party afterwards he described the experience like this: "It made me feel like a nigger in Alabama who was voted in by the KKK".

The signs are that Fitt will end up in the House of Lords.

A THIRD sign of the times: A Market Research Bureau of Ireland poll showed that only 41% of its 1000 respondents considered the people of Northern Ireland to be Irish. 39% thought of them as both British and Irish. 13% said they were British. 5% thought they were neither British nor Irish.

In the age group 18-34 only 34.5% thought the Northern Irish were 'Irish', compared with 45% in the age group 50-64. This must reflect the softening since the '60s of the level of nationalist propaganda in the schools, which used to be very intense.

Three quarters thought that a united Ireland was something to be hoped for, but 39% believed it would never happen, and 15% were against it.

These figures express in a different way the political experience of the last 15 years. Except for brief spasms (after the 13 civilians were shot down in Derry on Bloody Sunday in 1972, and during the recent hunger strikes), and a couple of lethal explosions in Dublin, the South has remained almost a foreign country to the North and its troubles.

34% of the respondents defined the Irish nation as the 26 counties, as against 63% who thought it 32.

Campaigning on Palestine

By Andrew Hornung

THE recall First National Conference of the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine unanimously approved plans for developing the campaign's work.

After listening to Palestinian and Lebanese speakers, a slightly amended platform was adopted with an organisational structure designed to give maximum

involvement to branches.

The (re-elected) chairperson, Tony Greenstein, gave an account of the development of the campaign over the preceding year. It had been founded in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the failure of the labour movement to respond to this.

Strenuous activity last summer had given rise to the Labour Committee on Palestine. The invasion of Lebanon by Israel, the heroism of the Palestinian people in their struggle, side by side with the Lebanese national movement, against the Zionists and the Lebanese right, and finally the massacres of Sabra and Chatilla created a significant shift in popular sympathy away from Israel and towards the Palestinians.

The success of the LCP-sponsored emergency resolution at Labour Party conference marked the highpoint of this mood.

Within a short time however the campaign suffered severe setbacks.

Its first conference, in November, was taken over by followers of the WRP, marshalled by Ted Knight and other Labour Herald supporters. Those who walked out of the conference in

protest established the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine.

But if attacks came from within the pro-Palestinian movement, they also came from outside it. The Histadrut, the Israeli state 'trade union' movement sent delegates to lobby trade union leaders here to try to turn the tide of working class sympathy for the Palestinians.

Attacks from Zionism in the trade union movement were accompanied by others in the women's movement. And more recently, the pro-Palestinian movement has been disorientated by the struggles within the PLO.

Against the background of this much less favourable situation — compounded by post-electoral pessimism here — the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine agreed to continue its work in the trade unions, the Labour Party and amongst students.

Immediate plans were drawn up for backing up Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine supporters in the Transport and General Workers Union whose Biennial Delegate Conference will soon debate the question of Palestine.

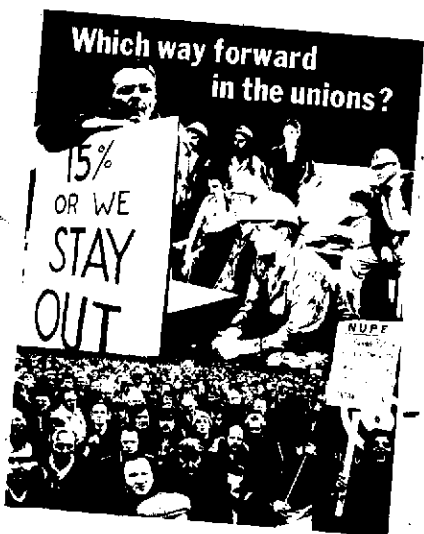
A draft model resolution for Labour Party conference was also approved.

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International news

Behind Pinochet's crisis Chile: collapse of the monetarist "miracle"

WELL into the tenth year of his bloody dictatorship in Chile, President Augusto Pinochet has run into a major economic and political crisis.

Since mid-1982 he has faced a growing tide of demonstrations, strikes and increasingly audacious shows of 'independence' in the press, by the judiciary and by other institutions previously under his thumb.

Last week, in the wake of heavy police repression of protest marches in Santiago, Valparaiso and Concepcion, a general strike was called demanding the release of arrested copper workers' leader Rodolfo Seguel.

In the event, it appears that the strike has drawn little support on a national level — indicating the extremely restricted nature of the heavily localised trade union structures that have developed under Pinochet's brutal Labour Plan.

But it is equally clear that the reawakening working class of Chile is showing increasing tenacity and militancy — and that the emergence of genuine, mass-based national-level committees to coordinate action could well take place very rapidly.

The driving force behind the recent developments is the ignominious collapse of Chile's much-vaunted "economic miracle", ushered in by Pinochet's massive repression and Professor Milton Friedman's monetarist theories in the mid-1970s.

Following the military coup of September 1973 against Salvador Allende's "Popular Unity" government, the initial period of consolidation of Pinochet's junta brought an estimated 30,000 killings, 2,500 "disappearances", tens of thousands of victims thrown into jails and concentration camps, and the flight of as many as one million Chileans into exile.

It was not until 1975-76 that Pinochet's attentions shifted from the butchery of political opponents to the restructuring of Chile's economy to meet the needs and aspirations of his key supporters — the international bankers and multinationals, and the most dominant sections of Chilean capital.

A team of Friedman-trained economists were brought in —

By Harry Sloan

known ever since as "the Chicago boys" — to set about the business of cutting and carving the Chilean economy on monetarist lines. Among them was George Schultz, now American Secretary of State, whose firm Bechtel has a Santiago office.

They already had a flying start. The impact of Pinochet's rule enabled employers to impose an abrupt reverse in working class living standards. IMF figures show that in 1972, 63% of income went to wages and salaried staff, with 37% to the propertied classes in profits, dividends and rents: by 1974 — a mere two years later — this had been reversed, with 62% of income going to the bourgeoisie and landowners and only 38% to the working class.

Nevertheless the economy as a whole was in a bad way, with a fall in copper prices, a drying up of loans from governments and the IMF, and 300% inflation.

Pablo Barahona, President Chilean Central Bank:

"More than 90% of the people are against our policies."

December 1976.

As a gesture of good faith to the bankers, Pinochet's economic minister Causas brought in a draconian April budget which slashed government spending by 20%, and government capital spending by over 50%. Chilean Gross Domestic Product fell by 15%, industrial production fell back 23%, and per capita income by another 25%, as unemployment soared — but the bankers were paid. As the Washington Post gleefully commented:

"Pinochet and Causas have shown the world's money men that they would pay their debts, no matter how much sacrifice had to be wrung from Chilean wage earners."

The world's money men were indeed central to the development of the Chilean economy which during the 1960s had run

Reagan's UN Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick:

"Our administration shares the same convictions as the architects of Chile's economic policies — that the free market approach will prove more effective in restoring fully the economic strength in the United States."

August 1981.



up enormous burdens of debt.

Successive US administrations, after the CIA had invested \$20 million in procuring the election of Christian Democratic President Frei, funnelled vast sums of aid into Chile (\$875 million between 1964 and 1969) making it the largest per capita recipient of US aid in Latin America.

This flow of cash — supplemented by investment from multinationals — was stemmed in 1970 by Nixon, who turned from the Christian Democrats to still more conservative layers of businessmen and landowners.

The election of Allende's Popular Unity government in September 1970 brought an abrupt halt to almost all aid and credit, and a de facto trade blockade, summed up by US Ambassador Korrry as:

"... not a nut or a bolt will be allowed to reach Chile... Once Allende comes to power in Chile we will do all in our power to condemn Chile and Chileans to the utmost deprivation and poverty."

[Cable to Kissinger, 21.9.70] While Allende was squeezed by the USA, the IMF and other big finance institutions — receiving no new loans through the World Bank — the USA was careful to step up military aid to build up the Chilean armed forces' top brass.

Once Pinochet had crushed Popular Unity and the workers' movement, the tap of US aid was turned back on, with \$125 million in aid in 1974 (as against only \$25 million during 3 years of Allende government).

Between the coup and 1978, Pinochet coined \$350 million in direct US assistance, \$400 million from multilateral development banks, \$360 million from the IMF, and a rescheduling of debts in 1974 worth another \$581 million in aid.

And as pressures mounted over Pinochet's brutal record on human rights, and government-level loans began to fall off, private banks began to step into the breach and loan vast sums to preserve the junta.

From 1975-76 private bank



Picket line at Goodyear: workers' struggles have continued despite the repression by Pinochet (below) and political manoeuvres (top: soldiers outside polling booths during the constitutional referendum).

back to the big landowners land redistributed in the 1967 Land Reform. They lifted price controls and froze wages. They eliminated public spending in essential services — or transferred it to police and military spending. State firms were sold off at knock-down prices. From 464 state-owned firms in 1973, the number was slashed to 70 by June 1977.

The beneficiaries were the multinationals (in 1978 Exxon bought the La Disputada copper mine for a bargain \$107 million; Goodyear bought CORFO INSA for \$36 million) and the most powerful sections of Chilean capital. By 1979 Chile's five largest financial clans controlled two-thirds of the country's 250 largest firms. The same clans bought up Chilean banks — and then borrowed money from their banks to finance other parts of their empires.

While the bank loans kept coming and the price of copper held up, Chile's artificially cheap exports went up, and the so-called "economic miracle" of 1977-81 took off.

But at what a price to the working class! As living standards were slashed, consumption of basic foodstuffs actually declined.

State spending on education has declined to the extent that at least 30% of Chilean youth now receive no education; and by 1976 health spending was down to half the 1973 figure.

Ernesto Medina, president of the Chilean Medical Association estimates that "Two-thirds of the Chilean population are not able to pay the very high cost of medical care."

Malnutrition is endemic in working class children: there is a huge housing crisis. The working week has been extended and retiring age raised.

Such attacks could only be carried through by brutal means. The heaviest repression came significantly in 1975.

By 1977 the wave of bankruptcies produced by Pinochet's squeeze on small and medium business brought an outcry even from the Christian Democrats who had welcomed the coup — and the Party was banned.

In 1978-9 the dictatorship was institutionalised, with the introduction of Pinochet's "Labour Plan" which allowed restricted trade union rights only at local level; this was followed by the new Constitution of 1980 which established Pinochet as President until 1989.

All political parties and political activity remain illegal; rigid censorship of the media remains in force; and the only authority in the land is the junta which alone can pass laws and amend the constitution.

But as the constitution came into force, so too did the laws of gravity on Chile's economic house of cards.

The world recession brought a drop of 50% in the price of copper, while cheap imports cashed in on the virtual abolition

of protective tariffs and flooded into Chile. The balance of payments crisis grew, Chilean companies collapsed, and the peso had to be devalued by 30%.

In the midst of this, the flow of loans that had kept Chile's "miracle" going became a millstone of debt around the neck of the junta: at \$17 billion, Chile's per capita debt is one of the world's largest. Unemployment is 30-40%; inflation, too, after the collapse of the monetarist experiments, is now up to 30%.

The string of bankruptcies — well over 1,300 in two years — has brought crisis to the banking system and forced Pinochet to step in and reestablish state control. Three finance ministers have been sacked in the past year. The first to go, Sergio De Castro, had declared that the only way out of the crisis was to cut nominal wages in the public and private sector by 30% — including the army!

But with the working class already driven to desperation and large sections of the middle and capitalist classes alienated by the impact of the crisis, and the world's bankers insistently demanding still more be squeezed from the Chilean people, Pinochet has no easy answers to the current situation.

His orgy of privatisation has brought no corresponding rise in investment: instead multinationals have stepped in to pick the bones of collapsing Chilean industries. 65% of the textile industry has been wiped out, along with car plants, steel plants, canneries and lumber firms.

For Chilean workers the task is to forge the necessary clandestine links between plant level unions and construct a leadership capable of learning the lessons of the catastrophic Popular Unity period.

Only by fighting independently of the Christian Democrats and other so-called "democratic" bourgeois forces who seek only to fill their own wallets can the workers' movement mobilise its full strength to oust Pinochet and the bloodthirsty capitalist system he represents.

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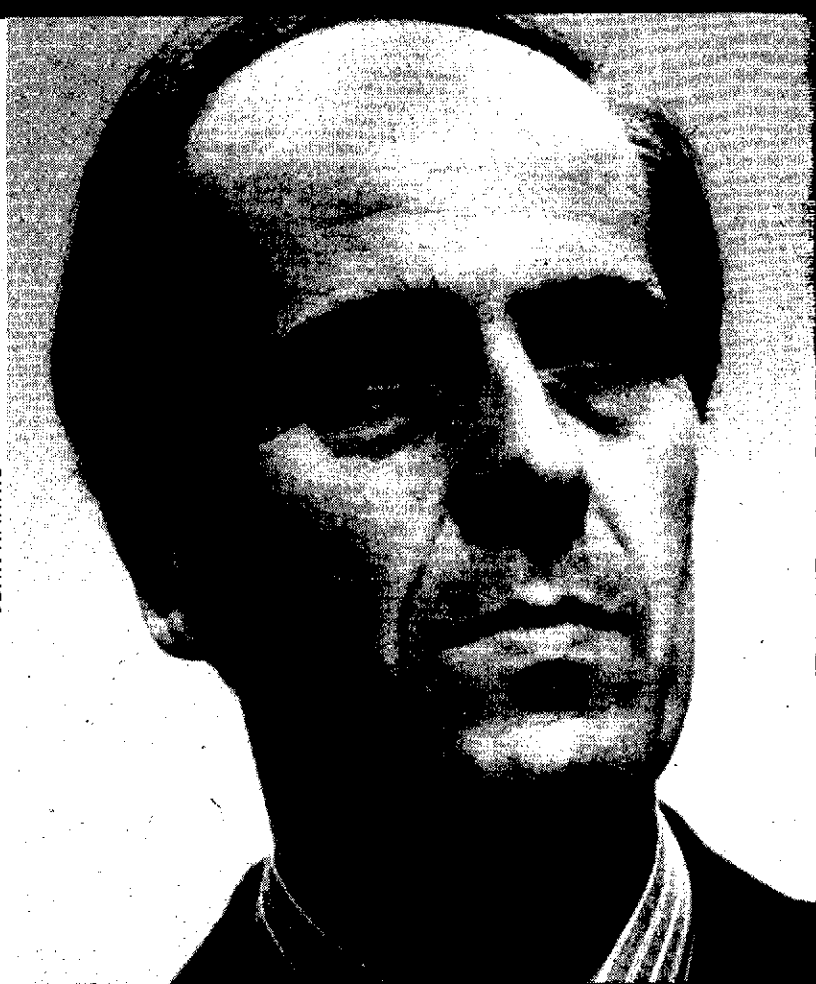


Tresham Gregg reports

The unacceptable face of the Tory Youth Training Scheme

First of a two-part investigation

JOHN HARRIS



Tebbit: out to create a pool of cheap labour

Training for capitalism

THE Youth Training Scheme which the government hopes to launch in September of this year has already received some critical attention from the socialist press in this country.

Very largely this criticism has limited itself to a certain denunciatory rhetoric; a cheap labour scheme designed to undermine union rates and of course a means of manipulating the unemployment figures and thus disguise and falsify the real extent of joblessness in the United Kingdom.

Just as these criticisms are, too great an insistence upon the vulgar propaganda activities of the state and its government can obscure more fundamental strategies that the government is pursuing in the field of education, and in the field of reproducing, replenishing and retraining labour itself.

"I am confident that industrialists want to get closer to the teaching professions" is not the banal utterance of a bilious busi-

nessman but a managing director speaking at a recent conference on the YTS scheme organised by the Department of Employment.

For industry to intrude at an early stage and directly shape working class education is a central purpose of both the Youth Training Scheme and its companion, the New Technical and Vocational Education Initiative for 14 to 18 year olds at school. Thatcher's crusade to roll back the creeping socialism of the post-war settlement (as she and her supporters see the Welfare State) is directed as much at the achievements of patrician Tories like Butler and Macmillan as at the anaemic social democrats of the Attlee/Wilson variety.

The imposition of Victorian values demands the repudiation of a generous liberal approach that provides higher education for all who can benefit from it. Instead we have a narrow imparting of practical

skills that will fix working class children in their place at the earliest possible moment.

Speaking at a national training exhibition in Birmingham last year the Chairman of the Manpower Services Commission claimed that:

"What we do in the fourteen months before the start of the Youth Training Scheme, in the next two years in the reform of apprenticeships and in the rest of the decade in the provision of adult training and retraining will not only reshape our 80s and 90s but our future prosperity well into the next century."

In an attack on the present apprenticeship system David Young, the MSC Chairman, continued:

"... how can a system in today's world of rapid change that confines entry to 16 year olds who serve a set term and then achieve craft status, that imposes on employers who wish to recruit apprentices the need to predict skill needs four or five years in advance, do anything else than produce skill shortages in new areas and people over-trained in obsolete skills."

With less than four months to go before the Scheme becomes fully operational the details of how the government intends to meet the challenge posed by David Young in Birmingham last July are starting to emerge.

While the Youth Training Board has responsibility for overseeing the Programme at national level, the Manpower Services Commission will be implementing the scheme. The MSC intend to control and grant approval to individual schemes through local Area Manpower Boards, of which 54 will be set up to cover England, Scotland and Wales.

The MSC hope to have over 400,000 places on the scheme available by September. Of these 100,000 — nearly a quarter — are "good quality" places from the presently running Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) which is being superseded by YTS. Another 100,000 places are being taken up by companies such as Sainsbury, GEC, London Clearing Banks, the Hairdressers' Association and British Rail.

This leaves the MSC with barely half the places it hopes to offer. Cheap labour though the scheme may be, unskilled workers are of limited value in a recession while there is no extra demand for their products. Nor are the grants that the MSC will pay out to employers all that attractive.

For employers to take part they need to set themselves up as a managing agency for the scheme and then submit for the approval of their local MSC Area

Manpower Board their scheme for work experience and off-the-job training. Smaller companies might come together to form an agency or they might join with a local education authority or voluntary organisation. The MSC is actively encouraging all these possible combinations.

Some companies will merely offer work experience while leaving the off-the-job training — a minimum of 13 weeks in the year — to outside bodies. The training agencies that are expected to rise up to provide this "service" are viewed with some alarm by the teaching unions and are seen by some as an advance raiding party on the state education system.

Wages

For each trainee a managing agency will receive £1,950 from the MSC. Out of this they will have to pay the trainee's wages. At present these stand at £25 a week, though unions and employers are permitted to negotiate improvements.

The fees for off-the-job training must also come out of that £1,950. With YOP, Further Education Colleges charged the MSC £22 per hour for the courses they provided. Just before Christmas the MSC managed to negotiate a third reduction to £14.70 per hour on each course Further Education

Colleges will provide for YTS trainees.

Clearly the direct financial inducements to the employer are rather limited. With a wage bill of £1,300 and college fees of £400 there is a bare £250 left, not to mention the costs of administering the scheme.

A rather more attractive proposition for employers is the notion of what the MSC scheme calls 'additionality'. The idea is that for every three YTS trainees that an agency takes on they will receive a grant of £1,850 for each of two trainees they would have taken on anyway. A number of employers will doubtless be encouraged to come together in one agency to take advantage of this 'additionality'.

But additionality has clearly failed to attract the degree of employer support upon which the MSC banked. And if the 300,000 target of employer-sponsored places (Mode A) is not realised the MSC will be obliged to compensate by raising the number of Mode B places — places provided by local authorities, community and voluntary organisations.

YTS is supposed to be a real training scheme, much more substantial than YOP. But on present evidence it is doubtful that the MSC is able to provide a fundamentally different scheme from the Youth Opportunity Programme (YOP).

CLASS FIGHTER

Organising youth to fight the Tories

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The horrors and hazards of Y

IN 1981-2 some 60% of the places on YOP schemes were provided by employers in the private sector of the economy, while the private percentage in Work Experience on Employers' Premises was much higher at almost 90%. Of 371,200 YOPs on work experience schemes over the same period, 334,000 were in the private sector, the majority, according to Youth Aid's analysis "concentrated in small, low-paying, non-unionised workplaces."

A remarkable feature of the YOP scheme was all these young workers who between 1979 and 1982 went to work for employers were denied the humble status of 'employee'. As a consequence cases of racial discrimination came to light where no redress could be sought through either the Race Relations or the Sex Discrimination Act.

The Guardian of 28 October 1982 highlighted the case of a

young black woman working in Lipton's Stores who was moved from counter service because a customer had objected to being served by a 'coloured girl'.

While her allegation was not disputed the tribunal chairman, Justice Neil, said her problem was that she had no legal employment contract with Liptons or the MSC. Consequently there was no one against whom she could lodge her complaint.

This lack of employee status also worked to deny YOPs legal protection against unfair dismissal. Young workers who were taken on full-time by an employer after a stint as a YOP found they had to start from scratch to build up the 52 week continuous service requirement.

Both the benefits of the Industrial Injuries legislation and the protection of the major parts of the Health and Safety at Work Act were denied to young workers in this way.

Five YOPs killed between July 1980 and June 1981, and 23 who lost an arm or a leg, brings home the reality of the Youth Opportunities Programme.

It should be said that there were Environmental Health Officers and Factory Inspectors

who tried to protect young workers from the dangers that the MSC had cynically subjected them to. A Mr Shaw in Sheffield repeatedly visited a DIY Store where he suspected an unguarded circular saw was being used despite a prohibition notice he

Hazards of being a YOP	July 1980 to June 1981
Minor Injury	1563
Fracture of skull/spine/pelvis	6
Other fractures	357
Amputation of hand/foot	23
Hospital admission (24 hours)	52
Deaths	5
Severity unknown	5
TOTAL	2011

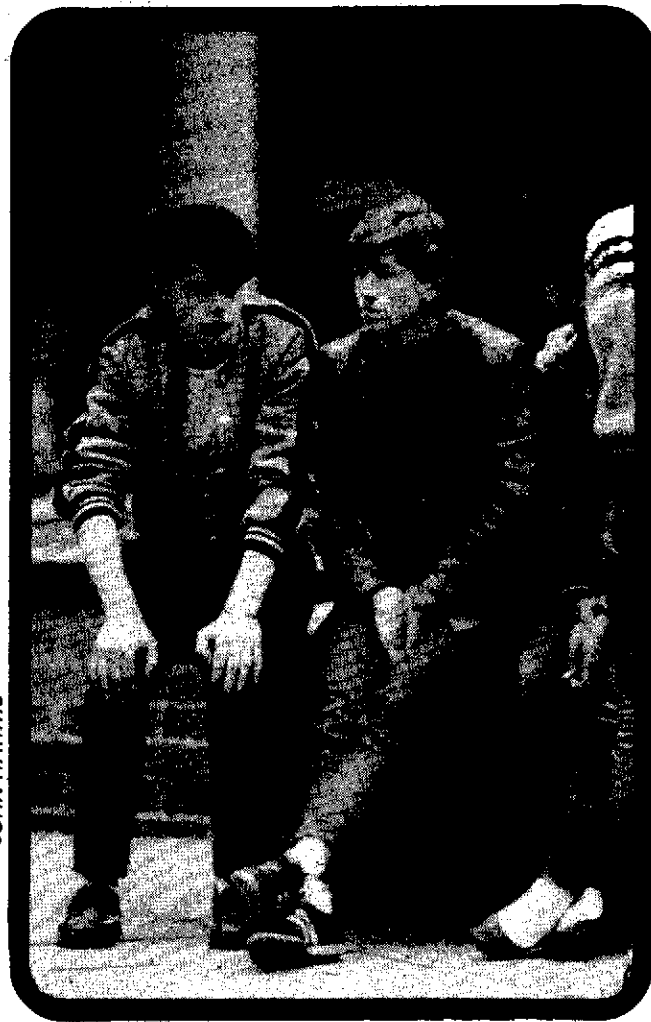
Thousands of schem



YTS looks like being not much different from YOPs



No jobs on the board....



JOHN HARRIS

Most youth didn't vote Labour - but what had Labour done for them?

Youth labour, cheap labour

THE Tories' aim is to restructure Britain's economy and workforce, to make British capitalism competitive in world markets on a new basis.

Reducing youth wages, and creating a new pool of mobile, cheap, easily disposable but trained labour, is central to this strategy.

The business magazine Economist reckons that "Britain's job-providers will need to pay a lower real level of average wages - particularly to young people". The state-funded National Institute of Economic and Social Research complains, "the incentive to provide training is much lower for British employers than for German or Swiss ones. They have to pay trainee wages as a proportion of skilled worker earnings which are twice or three times those in the two Continental countries."

There are two prongs to the Tories' plan. First, they are encouraging the decline of apprenticeships, to be replaced by YTS trainees. Second, they have tried to cut youth wages directly through the Young

Workers' Scheme.

Under the YWS the government gives £15 a week to employers for each young person on wages below £40, and £7.50 for each on between £40 and £45.

So far it has had little success. In September 1982 the government reported that 100,000 workers were employed under YWS subsidies, but the total under-18 labour force is over 1.1 million.

Surveying 1981-2 wage agreements, the Labour Research Department found that young workers had generally maintained their position relative to adult wages since 1978. Official figures for 1982 showed that average earnings for under-18s were £59.80 for males, £53.90 for females.

The drive to reduce youth wages had however scored some successes. In electricity supply, young workers and apprentices received no increase at all.

And with a new term in office the Tories will be determined to make sure that more successes follow.



Chapple: has signed deals cutting youth wages

TUC rubber stamp for Tory plans

YOP workplaces

had slapped on it. When he finally caught them he prosecuted the owners for no less than 17 separate offences, including twelve violations of the Woodworking Machine Regulations, and instructed the MSC to close down the scheme.

But the Health and Safety Executive is grossly understaffed and has also been the recent victim of government cuts. So much so that in a recent memorandum to the Employment Secretary, the Health and Safety Commission warned that government cuts now threatened its ability to discharge its statutory obligations under the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act.

In any case the MSC is supposed to have its own system

for safeguarding young workers. Its area boards upon which trade union nominees sit are supposed to investigate schemes. In fact the MSC defended the YOP scheme against a variety of criticisms on the grounds that its monitoring procedure would eliminate the abuse of 'cheap labour', 'job substitution' and inadequate or non-existent training.

Yet an article in the New Statesman of May 1981 revealed that the MSC had built up a backlog of 11,982 schemes that had not even been visited. In the same month an internal report by MSC officials conceded precisely what it was denying in public, "the expansion of YOP and the relatively small number of staff have shown us it is not possible to maintain a monitoring pro-

gramme that treats all schemes alike." By September 1981 the number of unvisited and hence uninspected YOP schemes was admitted by the MSC to total 36,496.

To cope with this growing backlog the MSC adopted the expedient of classifying schemes into those requiring a visit to check suspected abuse within three months of starting and less suspect (?) schemes that could wait 18 months for inspection. The MSC declined to disclose by what criteria schemes were to be classified as more or less hazardous but having established its new classification system the MSC then simply wrote off 36,000 visits from its backlog.

Even then there was no great improvement. Members of the civil service union CPSA calculate that by the beginning of 1982 only a third of the schemes due to be visited under the new criteria were actually visited, and telephone calls to employers were 'counted' as visits.

es go unchecked

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1953



Allies against Beria: Khrushchev (holding potato) and smiling Malenkov.



At Stalin's funeral: Khrushchev (right) next to Beria and Chou En Lai

THE arrest on July 9 1953 of the head of Stalin's secret police, Lavrenti Beria, marked a change in the methods, if not the underlying politics, of the ruling Soviet bureaucracy.

Beria had risen to Politburo rank in Stalin's party and headed successive bloody purges in the closing years of the war.

At the time of Stalin's death in March 1953 he was the most powerful single figure in the bureaucracy, standing at the head of the MVD-MGB which had branches and men in every organisation and department in the country.

He controlled the guards who protected the Kremlin, along with all the members of the Soviet government and the Party Presidium. Under his command were the frontier guards and ten divisions of MVD troops which had been moved in close to the capital at the time of Stalin's funeral. He had a vast network of spies and informers.

Beria himself clearly intended to seize control in the Soviet Union, and instal his closest friends and deputies alongside him.

But he had made powerful enemies, who for reasons of self-aggrandisement or simple self-preservation were not willing to see him step into Stalin's shoes. Among those with axes to grind were Molotov, Malenkov, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Mikoyan and Khrushchev.

Khrushchev

Between these leading figures, whose servile readiness to "obey orders" had enabled them to rise through the ranks of Stalin's Party, trampling on the bodies of purged and murdered comrades, there were rivalries and disagreements: yet they shared a common interest in preventing the consolidation of power in Beria's hands.

Nikita Khrushchev, one of Stalin's inner circle, appears to have been the prime mover against Beria, securing the early agreement of Bulganin. Initially, however, he bided his time as a compromise collective leadership was established immediately

Khrushchev's rise, Beria's fall

The scramble to succeed Stalin

By Harry Sloan

ly after Stalin's death, and Beria reelected once again to control the MVD and MGB.

Khrushchev himself took the key position of Secretary to the Central Committee, effectively in charge of the entire Party apparatus and CC departments. Bulganin took control of the armed forces.

To preserve the fiction of unity and normality, the new leadership announced an amnesty for non-political prisoners, and a series of price reductions of foodstuffs, clothing and vodka. Behind this confident facade, Beria was assembling his support, while Khrushchev too was manoeuvring for position.

Khrushchev was the most successful. He enlisted the support of Malenkov, the nominal head of government, who was irked — and no doubt alarmed — by Beria's lack of deference towards him. Arrangements were made to arrest Beria at a

meeting of the Central Committee in the Kremlin.

Khrushchev arrived at the meeting carrying a gun. He had arranged for a group of soldiers led by General Zhukov (the successful World War 2 commander, pushed to one side by Stalin), to be waiting in the next room, with a document authorising Beria's arrest.

As the meeting opened, Malenkov called Khrushchev to speak.

Using precisely Beria's own method, he claimed that 15 years previously it had been revealed to the Central Committee that Beria had been in the pay of British intelligence since 1918! The source of the information, Grigori Kaminsky, had then been arrested, said Khrushchev, who went on to accuse Beria of favouring the promotion of fellow Georgians in the MVD at the expense of other nationalities. Beria, announced Khrushchev, with supreme cynicism, was not a communist but a careerist, for whom there was no place in the Party.

This speech was dutifully echoed by other speakers. But before the motion proposing Beria's immediate dismissal from all posts was put to the vote, Zhukov and his ten armed men were called in and marched Beria out of the room under guard. He was taken away from the Kremlin and held under tight surveillance.

Zhukov had organised support from two tank divisions to ward off any MVD attempt to free Beria. MVD troops were swiftly replaced on guard duties, and Beria's key supporters in commanding positions in the MVD were searched and arrested both in Moscow and in the republics.

The operation was thorough

and long-lasting: the secret police apparatus was placed firmly under the control of the leading Party committees (which in turn were to fall increasingly under the control of the rising Nikita Khrushchev).

Beria was held prisoner for six months before being brought to a secret "trial" and sent to the firing squad on December 23, 1953. His execution was agreed as desirable from the first moment of his arrest: the delay appears to be due in part to his refusal to make the required "confessions" while secrecy of the trial appears to be due to the amount Beria could have revealed about the criminal involvement of Khrushchev and the new leadership with Stalin's purges.

Few tears will have been shed for Beria, who as much as anyone epitomised the callous, dog-eat-dog careerism of the bureaucratic climbers who survived and prospered in Stalin's party from the late 1920s onwards.

Though Beria had become active as a Bolshevik organiser in 1917 and first acquired the skills as a policeman on the side of the victorious workers' revolution, his rise up the ladder in the GPU and the Party began simultaneously with the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union and the consolidation of Stalin's power within it.

As the brutal repression and drive to "liquidate the Kulaks (middle peasants) as a class" generated millions of prisoners and casualties in the countryside the net was soon thrown wider among Stalin's actual or potential political opponents and rivals.

In 1931 Beria was transferred from his post in the Caucasian State Police to become second, and then first secretary of the

Georgian Communist Party, charged with stamping out "deviations" inside the Party organisation.

In 1934 he was elected to the CPSU Central Committee as Stalin began what was to be an escalating series of mass purges and show trials which were further to wipe out the old Bolsheviks who had fought alongside Lenin and Trotsky in 1917.

It should be remembered that even by the 1930s the Party of Stalin bore little relationship to the revolutionary party that had overthrown capitalism in the October revolution.

By 1928, fewer than 10% of the Party's membership were veterans of 1917. And the working class element too had been crushed. Whereas in 1930, 49% of the membership had been workers, by 1934 this had fallen to 9.3%. In Lenin's party in 1923 only 23% of factory directors had been party members: Stalin's party of careerists saw that figure rise to nearly 100%.

The purge trials and mass arrests which began on the pretext of the murder of Stalin's sidekick Sergei Kirov in December 1934 (arranged by Stalin himself) were further to sever any link between the CPSU and its revolutionary past.

This delighted the most conscious imperialist observers, one of whom reported back to Whitehall that "Stalin is getting rid of the hotheads."

Kirov

By the mid 1930s, many of the victims of the Moscow Trials were in fact far from hotheads: they were broken, cowed relics of Lenin's Central Committee, smashed and destroyed by Stalin's political pressure and by physical torture.

First victims were Lenin's comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev, who were accused of complicity in the murder of Kirov as part of a "counter-revolutionary plot" involving Trotsky.

Jailed for this in 1935, they were again put on trial in 1936, this time accused of conspiring with the Nazis.

With the hysterical disregard for truth or even common sense, the Stalinists began to link up "Trotskyism" with "fascism", concocting weird and terrible intrigues and plots as a pretext for an ever-widening sweep of repression, persecution, imprisonment, torture and death.

Many years after these terrible events, Khrushchev was to reveal the methods of Stalin's Commissar for State Security in Leningrad, Zakovsky.

"With unbelievable cynicism Zakovsky told about the vile mechanism for the crafty creation of fabricated 'anti-Soviet plots'. 'You yourself,' Zakovsky said, 'will not need to invent anything. The NKVD [secret police] will prepare for you a ready outline for every

branch of the centre; you will have to study it carefully and remember well all the questions and answers which the court might ask... Your future will depend on how the trial goes and its results... If you manage to endure it you will save your head and we will feed and clothe you at the government's cost until your death."

With such techniques, and special 1934 legislation to provide for trials to be held in secret without defending counsel (later to be used against Beria in 1953) Stalin's selected victims were framed up and forced to "confess" to the most bizarre plots.

The main Moscow Trials took place in 1937 and 1938. They decimated any remaining possible opposition to Stalin — and turned the "Trotsky-fascists" into scapegoats for immense economic problems in the Soviet Union.

Behind the facade of the Show Trials, went truly massive arrests, imprisonments and executions and the extension of the "gulag" slave camps.

Presiding over the beginning of these proceedings was GPU chief Yagoda. For ten years he had been Stalin's chief confidant and ally in his efforts to stamp out political supporters of Trotsky and the Left Opposition.

But Yagoda himself was to be among the victims of the purges when he showed himself reluctant to extend the slaughter too widely amongst his personal friends and old Bolsheviks. He was arrested, declared an "enemy of the people", and replaced by Yezhov, who in turn subjected Yagoda to the now routine tortures and pressures.

Between them Yezhov and Yagoda also initiated what was to be in every way a devastating purge of the Red Army — which had been built by Trotsky after 1917 in the heroic battles to defend the world's first workers' state against the combined imperialist and white armies.

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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Film review: 'The Ploughman's Lunch'

A peep behind the headlines

LIKE IT or not, these are the guys and girls that turn out the news we are fed each day on TV, radio and newspapers.

James Penfield, Radio 4 news editor, is the central figure of 'The Ploughman's Lunch'.

Impervious to external events, he drifts through his selfish, cloistered, cosseted and unscrupulous existence with an eye for nothing but the clock on the studio wall

by Terry Smith

and the main chance.

Not overtly political himself, he simply conforms to the pressures of the conservative establishment which controls or owns the mass media.

A few months of his halting progress up the social and professional ladder are traced in the film against the vivid backdrop of



Tory conference 1982: 'the starkest horror'

Britain during the Falklands war.

Skilful combinations of old soundtrack and pictures from the summer of 1982 create an impression of reality which reaches its starkest horror with the wide-screen - life-size - shots of the Tory Party conference.

Penfield - for reasons best known to himself - fancies charmless snooty TV executive Susan Barrington. He is introduced to her by her old friend Jeremy (a newspaper journalist) who is also James's best friend.

His pursuit of the understandably unimpressed Susan runs alongside his work on a book on the Suez crisis of 1956, a key source of material proves to be Susan's socialist historian mother, who herself has a half-completed book on it.

He visits her - hoping that in

a combined operation he can come away with both her notes and her daughter - and masquerades uncomfortably as a socialist. To his surprise he finds her mum more forthcoming in every way - and beats an ungainly retreat.

The clinching (illicitly filmed) scenes take place at the Tory Party conference, where Jeremy and Susan are working, and James has tagged along. As Thatcher's speech reaches its climactic war-whoop, James sees Susan and Jeremy embrace and realises that he has been elbowed aside.

As an expose of the shallow, selfish and reactionary characters who pump out the news each day, 'The Ploughman's Lunch' is sharp if not particularly new or deep.

Much of it remains on a purely personal level - indeed James's nastiness is laid on with a trowel.

Nobody can doubt that most Fleet Street and national news journalists are careerists. But it does seem unlikely that all of them, like James, leave their bed-ridden old mothers to die unattended.

But perhaps we should just be grateful that the film spares us the hypocritical soul-searching and moralising by individual journalists which so many previous films on newspaper and radio journalists have concocted. James Penfield, soulless hack, is much more a reality than the crusading journalists and tortured individuals of standard fiction.

The film is expertly made, but somehow the story line is not quite up to the technique. Rather than a Ploughman's Lunch, it is more like a long cheese and onion sandwich.

'To subvert tyranny'

June 20 1983 was the 220th anniversary of the birth of Wolfe Tone, the father of Irish Republicanism. He died by his own hand while in jail waiting to be hanged after the failure of the Irish uprisings in 1798. This short account by Tone of his principles is taken from 'Freedom the Wolfe Tone way', edited by Sean Cronin and Richard Roche.

By 'Protestant' Tone means Anglican, and by 'Dissenter', Presbyterian. The Northern Ireland Presbyterians were at that time ardent Republicans, in open sympathy with the French Revolution.

TO SUBVERT the tyranny of our execrable Government, to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country - these were my objects.

To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter - these were my means.

To effectuate these great objects, I reviewed the three great sects. The Protestants I despaired of from the outset, for obvious reasons. Already in possession, by an unjust monopoly, of the whole power and patronage of the country, it was not to be supposed they would ever concur in measures, the certain tendency of which must be to lessen their influence as a party, how much soever the nation might gain.

To the Catholics I thought it unnecessary to address myself, because, that as no change could make their political situation worse, I reckoned upon their support to a certainty; besides, they had already begun to manifest a strong sense of their wrongs and oppressions; and finally, I well knew that, however it might be disguised or suppressed, there existed in the breast of every Irish Catholic an inextinguishable abhorrence of the English name and power.

There remained only the Dissenters, whom I knew to be patriotic and enlightened; however, the recent events at Belfast had showed me that all prejudice was not yet entirely removed from their minds. I sat down accordingly, and wrote a pamphlet addressed to the Dissenters, and which I entitled, 'An Argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland', the object of which was to convince them that they and the Catholics had but one common interest, and one common enemy; that the oppression and slavery of Ireland was produced and perpetuated by the divisions existing between them and that consequently to assert the independence of their country, and their own individual liberties, it was necessary to forget all former feuds, to consolidate the entire strength of the whole nation, and to form for the future but one people.



Wolfe Tone

Debate

EEC withdrawal: left or right?

NEIL Kinnock has switched his position on the EEC, abandoning the call for withdrawal.

For labour movement activists it will be a new warning that Kinnock cannot be trusted an inch. For Kinnock's vocally anti-EEC trade union backers like Clive Jenkins and Moss Evans, it will be an embarrassment.

But it may also help to raise broader questions. Some of us have argued for many years that there is nothing left wing about British withdrawal from the EEC - but we have been very much in a minority.

Now, in the election for Labour leader, the main pro-withdrawal candidate will be Peter Shore.

Eric Heffer, questioned on the EEC issue in Tribune last week, was a bit evasive but eventually said what some of us have been saying for a long time:

"I would think that rather than us getting bogged down in an argument about being in or out of the Market, what we really ought to be doing is building up connections with European socialists and developing a programme for a socialist Europe on a wider basis."

These shifts are a response to the widespread hostility from working class voters on the doorstep to Labour's EEC withdrawal policy.

Arguments against EEC entry, and then for withdrawal, have been pumped out for over 20 years. Until quite recently they had a majority of working class opinion behind them.

Voters saw EEC withdrawal as leading to a disastrous loss of trade for Britain. They were fundamentally right. Over

by Martin Thomas



Kinnock

30% of Britain's national income is foreign trade; and over 40% of that trade (as against less than 20% in 1965) is with the EEC.

Unless EEC withdrawal were coupled with negotiation of some associate status which would minimise its effects (as almost certainly it would be), it would be an economic disaster for Britain.

Brussels

In the 1970s, blaming 'Brussels' for Britain's economic ills was plausible and popular. After four new years of world slump, it rings very hollow. The clock of international capitalist integration cannot be turned back. Like the rest of the 'siege economy' Alternative Economic Strategy, British withdrawal from the EEC

is now seen by more and more workers as an irrelevant and gimmicky response to capitalism's crisis.

Another reflection of this is the recent proposals from West European Socialist or Labour parties and trade unions for a 'European AES' - promoted most strongly in Britain by Labour MP Stuart Holland.

Holland still calls for British withdrawal, arguing that this Euro-AES means "joint progressive action by countries in and out of the EEC", but the progressive idea contained in the Euro-AES (amidst, in my view, a lot of muddle) - i.e. the need for a common strategy by the European labour movement - contradicts Holland's own key argument for EEC withdrawal, "regaining autonomy". The project of British 'autonomy' is utopian and diversionary.

Backward

Kinnock, characteristically, could only find the most backward nationalist terms in which to express a new position: "our policy must make the interests of the British people paramount. We cannot accept anything less than Gaullist reformism as our policy towards the EEC."

But perhaps the new shake-up in labour movement thinking on the EEC will lead others to internationalist conclusions: that the answer to European capitalist integration is not British withdrawal, but cross-European links between workers; not 'capitalism in one country', but a European workers' government; not British sovereignty, but maximum Europe-wide integration of the fight for workers' sovereignty.

Left Press Sunshine on the Star

By Tom Brown

LAST week's fine weather enabled Stalinism to put on its most sociable and sunny face - in the London "Marx with Sparrs" rally and in Prague at the catchily-titled "World Assembly for Peace and Life and Against Nuclear War".

The hardline Czech leadership had orchestrated an elaborate display of conviviality, which involved large meals, lots of dancing by well-drilled children, visits to showpiece farms and factories, and stage-managed "anti-war meetings" in towns and villages.

As dissidents from Charter 77 attempted to introduce a note of reality, they were brutally clubbed by Stalinist police.

But most 'delegates' were from Stalinist-ruled states, where such behaviour is routine. Others were from Stalinist-dominated parties and liberation movements in the Third World who have been educated to see things Moscow's way.

Some, however, were simply carried away by the well-rehearsed emotionalism and rhetoric of the occasion - failing to grasp that the official "peace" movement in Eastern Europe is an arm of the state, while genuine movements representing the independence of the working classes - like Solidarnosc in Poland and Charter 77 - are brutally repressed.

The Morning Star's "Marx with Sparrs" event at least was hosted by a section of the labour movement rather than by a ruling state machine.

There were no truncheons in evidence for the several thousand who participated in the Alexandra Palace festivities.

But only a few weeks ago the friendly shirt-sleeved people - some sporting "Ask me about the Communist Party" rosettes - had been brutally intimidating young workers on the People's March.

Just as the Prague event was camouflaged by the attendance of delegates from liberation forces actually fighting imperialism, so the Morning Star event was lent a spurious left wing credibility. It secured co-sponsorship from Tribune, and non-Communist Party speakers included Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn, Judith Hart and Tribune editor Chris Mullin. There were also representatives from a range of liberation struggles.

The Star on Monday was able to retail quotes from Mullin "If anybody thinks the Communist Party is dead, then they should look at this great rally" and Tony Benn: "If only every Labour voter read the Morning Star, Tribune and Labour Weekly, the recent history of this country would be very different."

With CP and Morning Star influence in the unions being thrown behind the witch-hunting Neil Kinnock for the Labour leadership, and the paper committed to an extension of its wretched "bishops and brickies" concept of a 'broad democratic alliance' against Thatcher, any growth of Star readership and support could in practice help to undermine the policies and democratic reforms both Benn and Tribune have argued for in the Labour Party.

Fortunately, there are no grounds to expect such a revival in the flagging fortunes of the CP or its crisis-ridden daily paper. Were it not for the misguided support lent to them by sections of the Labour left, the Stalinists would face even sooner the financial bankruptcy their politics so richly deserve.

Agenda

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).

LIBERATION Network for People with Disabilities: meeting to set up a steering group to establish a London resource centre. Saturday July 16, 2pm, Room B28, Morley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Rd, London SE1. Further info: contact Micheline Mason 01-673 4310 or Neil Harvey, 01-318 2002.

PALESTINE Solidarity public meeting: 'Lebanon, one year on'. Friday July 8, 7.30 at County Hall, London SE1.

LONDON Labour councils, CLPs, and trade unions against the Tories: conference called by Southwark Labour group. Sunday July 17, 11am, Southwark Town Hall. Delegates invited from CLPs, council Labour groups, and trade unions in London.

SILENCED Women: an evening presented by the Writers' Guild and Index on Censorship. Friday July 15, 7.30 at the Little Ship Club, Bell Wharf Lane, Upper Thames St, EC4.

U.S. HANDS Off El Salvador and Nicaragua! Picket

of US Embassy, Grosvenor Sq, W1, Tuesday July 5, 4.30-7.30pm.

LABOUR Movement Conference on Ireland: July 15, from 10am at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Sponsors include Clive Soley, Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone. Delegates £3, observers £2, details from LMCI, Box 189, 32 Ivor Place, London NW1.

PREPARING for power: a labour movement conference for the '80s organised by the Revolutionary Communist Party. July 16-22, Central London Poly, New Cavendish St. Registration £10 (£6 UB40), cheques payable to RCP Association, to BM RCP, London WC1N 3XX.

Organising the fightback

MOST OF the Socialist Organiser EGM on June 26 was given over to discussion on perspectives after the election.

According to our constitution, the AGM must be held in May or June. The General Election made a full meeting impossible, so we held a short EGM and have scheduled the AGM for late October or early November.

Jonathan Hammond opened the discussion. Paradoxically, he said, after the election defeat there are great opportunities for Socialist Organiser to expand its influence.

The labour movement will be re-thinking — and the other currents on the Left are clearly inadequate to the task. The SWP has been confirmed by the election result in its blinkered orientation to factory and workplace struggles only, neglecting the wider labour movement.

Militant remains attached to its view of inevitable objective processes driving the working class to the left

and into the arms of Militant. And the Communist Party is increasingly turning to cross-class 'alliances' against the Tories — renouncing the most elementary Marxist notions of the class struggle.

The condition of world capitalism points to new, drastic crises before many years are out. We must prepare.

Jenny Fisher stressed the need to recruit more women to the Socialist Organiser Alliance. Possibly as many as one-third of all SO groups have no women members at all. In a drive to set up Labour Party workplace branches, special attention must be paid to places mainly employing women.

Jean Lane described moves to set up a Labour Party branch in her workplace — the post office in Coventry — and commented, "I think the regional Labour Party offices are scared of workplace branches."

The main conclusions from the discussion were:



Heffer

□ To support Eric Heffer and Michael Meacher for the Labour Party leadership and to make every effort possible to establish a broad-based campaign committee.

□ To schedule a 'Fight the Tories' conference for September 17, and try to gain sponsorship for it from labour movement bodies. To make building of Labour Party workplace branches an important item

□ To make a drive over the summer months for recruitment to SO groups, particularly among people who have joined the Labour Party during the election

campaign or since.

In the discussion on finance Jenny Fisher pointed to a growing list of debts and said that the best way to redress the situation is increased paper sales. It was also agreed to subdivide our £1,000 monthly fund target into area-by-area rolling targets.

The EGM decided to co-opt Brian O'Neill and Les Hearn to the Secretariat, and fixed the next Socialist Organiser delegate meeting for September 3 in Birmingham.

Socialist Organiser 'After the election, what next?' meetings

Islington. July 3, 7pm at Caxton House, St Johns Way. Speakers: Jeremy Corbyn MP and John O'Mahony.

Leeds. July 1, 7.30, Chapel-town Community Centre. Speakers: Cllrs Garth Frankland (Leeds) and Barry Turner (Bradford).

Rochdale. July 11, 8pm, Castle Inn, Manchester Rd.

Where to find Socialist Organiser

• SCOTLAND

Glasgow. Next meeting Tuesday July 5, 7.30 at AUEW Halls, West Regent St. Glasgow. 'Support Cardowan's Fight for Survival'. Speaker: Alec Hogg, Cardowan delegate to NUM Scottish Executive.

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 Lisset. 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.

Halifax. Contact 52156.

York. 'Fighting the Tories' conference, Saturday July 16, 10am-6pm. Co-Op Rooms, Micklegate, York. Workshops on the peace movement, trade unions, women, and socialist foreign policy; and plenary. For further details ring York 796027.

• WALES

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

• MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Meets alternate Fridays, 7.30pm, the Hen and Chickens, Constitution Hill. Next meeting: Friday July 8: Chile.

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 Black-

thorne Books, High St.

Northampton. Contact 713606.

Nottingham. Meets Thursday evenings, 7.30 at the International Community Centre. SO is sold outside the Victoria Centre (Saturday 11-1) and at the Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote

Where we stand

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Freeze rents and rates.

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

* The capitalist police — 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.

Next Socialist Organiser delegate meeting: Saturday September 3, in Birmingham.

Socialist Organiser Annual General Meeting: Sunday October 30, 10.30-5, County Hall, London SE1.

National Socialist Organiser day-school. Saturday October 29, in London.

St. Contact: Pete Radcliff, 585640.

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Next meeting July 6: Bob Sutcliffe speaks on his new book, 'Hard Times'.

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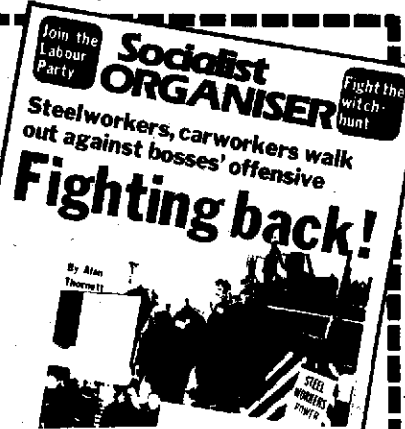
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Different views of the Irish elephant

JO QUIGLEY (Writeback, SO 137) says many true things against Alistair Todd and others. But his view that what the Northern Ireland war is about is an "irredentist" republican campaign to subjugate the Protestants into a nation they feel no part of" is, I think, perverse.

My dictionary defines irredentism as the belief that a state should include all those citizens of other states who speak 'its own' language and belong to 'its' ethnic group. It usually has implications of chauvinism and expansionism, as with Germany in the 1930s.

That is what the Catholic revolt in Northern Ireland is about?

The 26 Counties' 'irredentist' claim that its territory includes the Six Counties has never been taken very seriously even by the Southern state. In practice they have always worked hand in hand with the Northern authorities and Britain to maintain the Border, and they do so now.

The Southern schools used to teach a variant of what is now Provisional IRA nationalism? Yes, but the state, especially during governments of Fianna Fail, 'the Republican Party', also used internment without trial, special courts and the firing squad against militant republicans who tried to act on it.

In fact, the threat that the Six County majority have felt has been the threat of the Northern Catholic minority, the main victims of partition.

In so far as there has been any Southern aid to the Northern Catholics — that is not 'irredentism', but an expression of the nationalism of an oppressed people. Lenin's dictum that the nationalism of the oppressed is not the same as the nationalism of the oppressors is frequently used by leftists to excuse their own wallowings in various nationalisms. It is nonetheless an important truth.

Any criticism of elements of Catholic chauvinism in the Republican movement, and of that movement's strategy and tactics, must be put in that context or you wind up with a back-to-front view of the world, unable to distinguish between the oppressed and their oppressors.

The abandonment of federalism by the Republicans is, I think, a step away from Republicanism and towards Catholic nationalism. It leaves them no policy, even notionally, except conquest of the Protestants. But the dropping of federalism came ten years into the war — a war that the IRA plainly is not winning. Federalism was adopted when the Republicans thought they would soon win and need a democratic Republic



can blueprint for the new Ireland.

The initiative to 'withdraw the hand of friendship offered to the Protestants in 1972' (as David O'Connell described the dropping of federalism) came from Northern Republican militants, and is, I believe, an expression of bitterness and despair at the prolonged deadlock in Northern Ireland, and their awareness that the Protestants are the decisive block to their progress.

It is a response to their experiences, an attempt to solve in words and definitions the intractable problem of Protestant hostility which they can't solve in practice, not a programme they started out with.

The present war came about not as a result of any force outside Northern Ireland driving for territorial expansion or for a unity of 'race', 'creed', or 'blood' within one border. Throughout the war the South has been virtually a foreign country. 60 years after partition, a recent poll shows that only 41% in the South even consider the Northerners 'Irish'.

The energy for the Republican upsurge — which nobody in the mid '60s expected, least of all the Republicans — came from the Northern Catholic revolt. The Republicans superimposed themselves and their militarist strategy on a revolt which came from the social and political concerns of the Catholics, and from their will to break out of the Partition state.

The revolt of the Six County Catholics was a just and neces-

sary revolt against the intolerable injustice of partition, and against its intolerable consequences for the Northern Catholics.

Jo Quigley implies that the Protestants are a separate nation. The 'two-nationist' position is right now inextricably linked with the defence of the untenable and unjust status quo in Northern Ireland. Variants of it have for 100 years been a propaganda tool of Britain and the Irish Unionists against the claim of the majority of the Irish people to self-determination: how can there be Irish national independence when there is not one but two antagonistic Irish nations? The Irish need Britain to rule them: that was the original version.

Rubbish

As a definition of Irish reality the theory is rubbish. For Marxists a nation is a social complex embodying a common history, language, culture, economy, and territory. A fully distinct nation is most pointedly what the culturally and historically distinct Protestant community in Northern Ireland is not.

It is interlaced and intertwined in the same territory with the Catholic community in Northern Ireland, though the density of the interlacing varies from area to area.

'National minority' would be a possible description, but 'distinct community' is better, I think: it is a social formation with some of the features of a distinct nation which has failed to develop fully into one, and for which full autonomy of development has not been possible because it is enmeshed with another community.

To call the Protestant community as it is now a distinct nation is to fade out of the picture the complexities that arise exactly where it differs from a distinct nation, and which create the problem we must solve: where it shares the territory with the Catholic community.

Even if there were a Protestant Irish nation the Six Counties would certainly not be its natural and proper territorial expression.

An intense communal civil war in Northern Ireland, and the mass forced population movements and massacres that would be an inevitable part of it, is the most likely way that the Northern Ireland Protestants, concentrated in the areas where they are now the big majority, could become a fully distinct

nation. (And tragically it may prove to be the role in history of the present Republican movement — despite their intentions and most fervent wishes — to trigger such a development).

Jo is right to say that respect for the 'Protestant sense of cultural separateness' from what he calls 'the Catholic Irish nation' is irreplaceable. It is inconceivable that the N. Ireland Catholics could be won to that view if it means accepting the artificial Six County state within which they have been imprisoned these 60 years. The solution is to rearrange the connection between the Catholic and Protestant people of Ireland on democratic lines, reflecting the natural Irish majority and minority.

The only way the reasonable Protestant demand for recognition of their separate identity can be reconciled with the rights of the majority of the Irish people, of whom the oppressed Northern Catholics are part, would be a united Ireland with internal autonomy for the Protestants.

Perverse

It is perverse to blame the Catholics and demand that they accept the status quo: all experience has shown it to be unviable as well as unjust and destructive of the labour movement in Northern Ireland. Jo Quigley merely parallels the politics of Alistair Todd and others (just as Militant twins the IRSP).

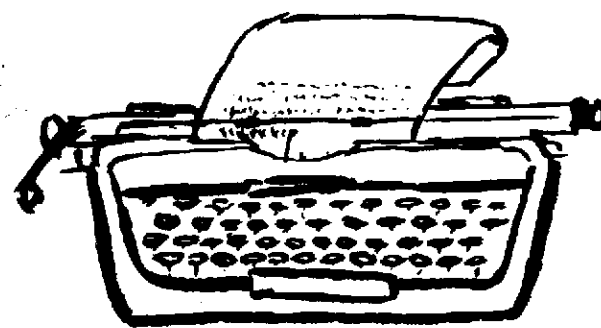
Todd says ignore class questions and focus on the national question (as if any national or other political question can exist for us apart from the class question!) Quigley says: accept the status quo, concentrate on class unity, and hope the Catholic revolt and the Orange backlash go away.

Untenable

They won't. So then we condemn the Catholics as 'irredentist' and accept the existing Six Counties as the expression of the legitimate democratic rights of the Protestants? This is the politics of passive-conservative defence of the untenable status quo.

The discussion between advocates of 'class unity' versus 'national liberation struggle' versus 'rights for the Protestants' reminds me of the well-known poem about the 'six blind men of Hindustan' who 'went to view the

Writeback



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

Beware of ballots

ONE WEEK after the general election, Bury North constituency Labour Party held its General Management Committee.

There were no resolutions for annual conference, as the wards hadn't met since the campaign. But an emergency resolution was debated, proposing that the leadership election should be by postal ballot of all individual members.

This was passed with very little chance of debate. No-one had had prior notice that it would be on the agenda, and the rules state that decisions once passed cannot be overturned for three months.

There are many issues involved here. Foremost in many delegates' minds was that a postal ballot would cut off the trade unions from having two bites of the cherry. But this was motivated by suspicion and often hostility towards the trade union delegates.

Some members would clearly like to sever the Labour Party's traditional links with the trade unions and make it simply an individual membership organisation. Some said their concern was for the rank and file members and those unable to get to meetings.

Postal ballots in many unions have shown that they don't guarantee a high participation — and they do almost guarantee a right wing victory, because the passive members are more likely to be influenced by the television and newspapers.

Whatever the motives, and many are genuine, this postal ballot is the thin end of the wedge — and where do they stop? All decisions could be taken by referendum, avoiding distasteful debate and militant speeches.

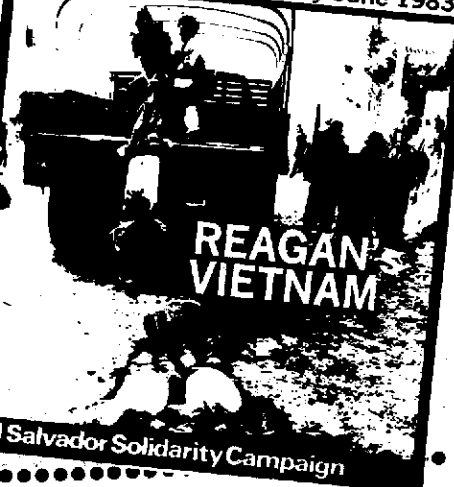
In Bury North, at least, they haven't heard the last of this.

JOHN O'MAHONY, London.

SUE ARNALL

EL SALVADOR

News Bulletin No 20 May-June 1983



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TROOPS OUT NOW!

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Science

Some like it hot

By Les Hearn

MOST living things exist within a fairly narrow range of conditions - usually about 10 degrees Centigrade to 40 C, though warm-blooded animals can survive lower temperatures and some others can survive freezing by developing their own 'anti-freeze'.

But the weirdest creatures I had heard about were those single celled algae and bacteria found growing happily in volcanic hot springs at temperatures of up to 100 C.

Now, ordinarily, the constituents of cells could not cope with such temperatures - the fats would melt, the proteins would unravel and coagulate like boiled egg white. So these thermophilic (heat-loving) life forms have developed fats with higher melting points and proteins that are more stable.

For a long time, it seemed that 100 C (the boiling point of water) was the upper boundary to life, but recently new forms of life have been found growing around cracks in the earth's crust on the ocean floor, where the sea-water is heated to great temperatures as it cools the molten rock.

Many new and bizarre species have been found living round these gushes, all depending on the energy from the inside of the earth (just as we depend on the sun's energy). But most bizarre are the bacteria found actually living in the hot water at 250C!

This is 480 degrees Fahrenheit (Gas Mark 9), 150 C above the normal boiling point of water, and above the temperature at which paper catches fire in air (according to Ray Bradbury in 'Fahrenheit 451').

So how do these bacteria survive at temperatures where not only do fats melt and proteins cook, but DNA falls apart? Part of the answer must be the enormous pressures at which they live. These pressures prevent the superheated water from turning into steam and may help to prevent these destructive changes.

But undoubtedly these bacteria have also developed unique constituents to build their proteins etc. together more strongly.

This discovery of a hitherto unsuspected life form suggests that life may have actually been able to develop when the earth was considerably hotter than it is today.

WHETHER safe nuclear power is possible is one question, but I feel it is true to say that the Pressurised Water Reactor is more dangerous than the Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactor (Magnox), the first generation of British nuclear reactors.

So it is interesting that while the CEBG is busy buying a PWR from the US, the National Nuclear Corporation is selling a Magnox reactor to the Turkish generals. Magnox reactors are very good at producing weapons-grade plutonium, worrying given the nature of the Turkish junta.

Stop the witch-hunt; stop talks with Tories

Crunch issues for TGWU

By Alan Thornett

PROBABLY the most contentious issue at this year's TGWU conference (BDC) will be who the union will back for the Labour Party leadership.

According to media reports, the General Executive Committee will propose recommending Neil Kinnock. Presumably, delegates like myself who will be supporting Eric Heffer, on account of his opposition to witch-hunts and support for the continuation of progressive policies, will find it difficult to get that option in front of the conference.

The right wing will be campaigning for a ballot, which would be fine if the union's record on that kind of exercise was better and the opinions could be adequately presented to the membership. Under present circumstances the BDC is undoubtedly the most representative body of the union, and should take the decision.

In 1981 the platform opposed allowing the conference to decide between Dennis Healey and Tony Benn. The resulting chaos discredited the union. A vote with only one option, however, will be little better.

My branch, the 5/293, has a resolution calling for a policy decision that the BDC should always decide the TGWU's vote in such elections - by means of a recall conference if an election arises in a year when there is no conference.

The BDC will also be important on the witch-hunt, particularly given the probable outcome of the leadership election. There are seven resolutions against the Register, but it will need a big fight if they are to be successful.

The reelection of the Tories makes incomes policy in the event of a Labour government, and the National Economic Assessment, less of an immediate issue. There are, however, four resolutions calling for an incomes policy and twelve calling for free collective bargaining.

It is very important that the union's opposition to incomes policy, established in 1977, is maintained.

Although there are 72 resolutions on unemployment, none put forward any policy which can seriously protect jobs and oppose closures.

The nearest approach is bankrupt policies like the Alternative Economic Strategy and import controls - on which there are eight resolutions.

The GEC resolution says it will give "every assistance" to members fighting job loss, but there are no proposals as to how this can be done.

The GEC also call for "the whole movement to defend the unemployed". Yet they have taken a decision since the last conference which effectively bans the unemployed from joining the union - a decision which must be challenged by the conference.

The biggest group of resolutions in front of the conference are against nuclear weapons, and no doubt a unilateralist line will be adopted. The fight will be for withdrawal from NATO as a nuclear alliance. There is a resolution on this.

The conference has the most extensive group of international resolutions for some years.

There are three resolutions on Lebanon which call among other things for the recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and for the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

Given that the TGWU supported the pro-Palestinian resolution at the Labour Party conference, it should be possible to get a composite of these through.

There are six resolutions on Poland, including one from my own branch calling for the union to continue to recognise Solidarnosc and not the new state unions; for the end of martial law, the legalisation of Solidarnosc and the release of political prisoners; and for practical assistance to the Solidarity Trade Union Working Group in Britain.

Nicaragua

There are very good resolutions calling for strengthened ties with the Nicaraguan trade union movement and opposition to US backed intervention both in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

A resolution from the 5/822 branch calls for the conference to condemn the "support given to the government's imperialist war against Argentina by the TUC and Labour Party leaders" and "deplores the statement supporting the war made by the General Secretary at the 1982 Scottish TUC which contradicts TGWU policy as well as supporting imperialist ventures."



Whose voice will be heard in the TGWU's vote for Labour Party leader - top officials or the rank and file?

There are three resolutions on South Africa - two at the level of protest action, calling for mandatory economic sanctions and the ending of dealings with Barclays Bank, while the other calls for solidarity with the victimised workers at Wilson Rowntree's and the sending of a TGWU fact-finding delegation.

In the six resolutions on Ireland, there is no call for troops out. The resolutions call for the right of self-determination for the Irish people and for the repeal of the PTA and the Emergency Powers Act, and the ending of Diplock Courts.

Past practice of TGWU conferences on Ireland, however,

make it very unlikely that these issues will be debated in conference.

No doubt the usual, meaningless GEC statement will be brought out to stop all discussion.

One section of the agenda which is a big step forward, is on women's rights. There was not a single resolution at the last conference on women's rights and this item was eventually taken completely off the agenda.

This year, there are nine resolutions which offer between them the possibility of a very good composite.

The same is true of gay rights. It is very important that the three

very comprehensive resolutions on this subject are debated at conference.

The 24 anti-Tebbit resolutions reflect the paralysis of the TUC in the face of legislation. Most simply condemn Tebbit and the Tories. The GEC's resolution does call for non-payment of fines, but that is all. It calls on "British trade unionists to carry out their business in the spirit of business as usual" and goes on to make the call they have relied upon for too long, for the repeal of the legislation by the next Labour government.

Some resolutions do give a lead and it is very important that they are supported. The 1/1921 branch calls for industrial action. My own branch calls for industrial action the moment anyone is victimised under the Act and goes on to call for an end to tripartite bodies.

No lead at all is given on privatisation. The public services national committee resolution "resolves to continue the general campaign against privatisation and to support our members directly affected in resisting privatisation plans and win the support of the general public to retain direct labour."

Nothing is said about how members will be supported and nothing is said about tendering, which is condemned in a resolution from the 1/1418 branch.

Strikers starved out

AS THE workers at Hodkin and Jones abandoned the picket line and took up their case for unfair dismissal, I spoke to one of the strikers.

They've starved us out. The DHSS has stopped all benefit, even to our families, until they have completed their enquiries. We can't afford to go on.

Have you had any support from other unions?

Only spasmodic. We got the British Rail wagons stopped, but only as long as there was a picket line. As soon as that went, the lorries were back in as normal.

What was the last offer from management?

Before we ceased the dispute, management had agreed improved terms but would not reinstate anybody.

What would have won the dispute, in your opinion?

Mass picketing or a sit-in. But we decided against a sit-in after legal advice from our union.

How many strikers are left?

All 24. We are intending to try to salvage jobs by forming our own concrete casting co-op.

MICK SIDAWAY



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.

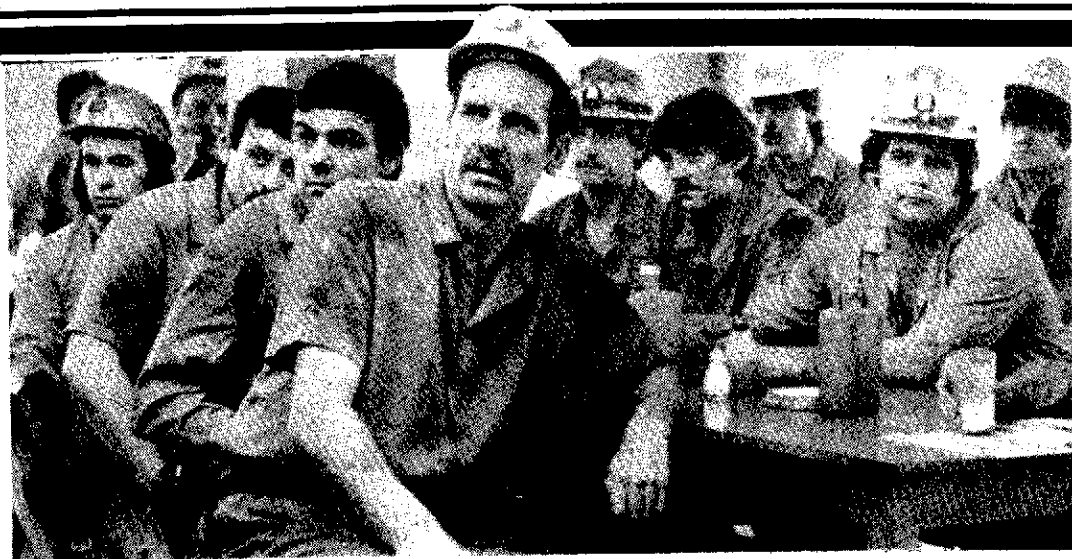
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Bob Fine



Defend Cardowan!

ON MAY 13, the National Coal Board announced its intention of closing the Cardowan Colliery in Lanarkshire, at an immediate cost of 1000 jobs.

The NCB says the pit lacks resources; suffers from poor environmental conditions underground; and is running at a loss.

The NUM estimates that there are still enough reserves to guarantee work for the next

twenty years.

Conditions underground at Cardowan are no worse than at any other pit. In fact, the dust conditions in some of the pits to which the miners are supposed to be transferred are worse.

It is clear however that Cardowan is unprofitable. The NCB claims that it loses £30 on every ton of coal mined there. According to last week's report of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, production costs per tonne of coal at Cardowan are £69.9, as against a national average of £35.6.

Initially the NCB attempted to shut half the pit within a week, and the other half within a month. This plan came to nothing when the unions appealed to the review procedure, which will probably be a protracted affair.

Then the NCB offered transfers to other collieries without giving any notice of this to the NUM, and at a time when the local union officers were absent from the pit. This too came to nothing when other collieries refused to accept transfers, save those sanctioned by the union at Cardowan.

This move was followed up by the order to shut down working VS2 face of pit number two, on the grounds that it was dangerous. (Over 40 miners were injured in a gas explosion there last year).

Two craftsmen on the day-shift refused to dismantle the machinery, and the 200 plus miners on the back-shift went on strike in support of the craftsmen and in opposition to the NCB's instructions.

The strike began on Friday June 17, but was over by the Monday. Union officials successfully called for a return to work on the grounds that the strike would not be supported by the other miners and would therefore create a weakened, divided workforce.

The union therefore accepted

closure of the VS2 face, given its potentially dangerous condition, but was not prepared to sanction the removal of equipment from the pit as a whole.

A successful campaign against the closure of Cardowan can be mounted, though the problems involved in this should not be ignored or underestimated. But winning supporting action from miners outside of Cardowan, whose pits are next for the chop, and a propaganda campaign to prevent miners at Cardowan taking up the NCB's offer of lump sum payments for voluntary redundancies, are clearly two crucial aspects.

Cardowan is the first pit due for closure since the general election, and it can prove to be a make-or-break case. If the NCB close it, then the road is obviously clear for a lot more closures, both in Scotland and elsewhere.

BL washing-up time

Leaders crack Body Plant

By Harry Sloan

AS BL Cowley management attempt to undermine the militant defence of working conditions by the workforce in the Body and Assembly Plants, they have been given a vital boost by the right wing Body Plant leadership.

Shop floor workers had been rejecting management offers of a £9 increase in bonus, and threats of disciplinary action, and clocking out three minutes before the end of each shift to take their 'washing up time'. Company moves to dock 15 minutes wages each time this occurred were met by workers clocking out 15 minutes early!

Recognising the leadership as the weak link, management then announced that washing-up time would be abolished at the end of the last week. A mass meeting was called - at which loud-mouthed TGWU District Secretary David Buckle was conspicuously absent, and convenor Bill Roche conveniently out of town.

Deputy convenor Morton gave a speech which effectively put management's case, warning of loss of bonus and took a vote without any recommendation as to action. Despite this, a clear majority voted for rejection of the company ultimatum. Morton's attempts to declare an

even vote and split the meeting failed to dispel the majority - and in desperation he called for an immediate ballot, again with no recommendation.

Despite the in-built advantage such a ballot gives to the right wing over mass meetings, a 2,700 vote produced a majority of less than 400 for acceptance - showing that with any amount of positive leadership the shop floor would have solidly backed a policy of defiance.

This sabotage of the Body Plant resistance leaves the nearby Assembly Plant workforce isolated in its defence of washing-up time, which produced a four-week strike last April.

Assembly Plant management have promptly reappraised the Plant Level Committee with new offers and pressure for them to ape Morton in holding a mass meeting with no recommendation.

This has proved unsuccessful, and the company is reluctant to provoke renewed strike action in the sensitive sales run-up to the new August registrations.

But a leaflet put out by the company on Monday suggests that a renewed attempt at implementation is imminent.

Stewards - who are meeting as we go to press - must remain on their guard in defence of hard-won working conditions.

Greenings occupy

AS the 350 workers at Greenings Engineering factory in Warrington enter their fifteenth week on strike against redundancies, the action has been stepped up by an occupation of the offices and the barricading of the main vestibule.

At the end of last week the company issued another Edwards-style letter to employees threatening closure unless the action ended. Then on Monday 27th, the managing director, James MacDonald attempted to cross the picket line.

As convenor Arthur Conheeny said, he was "persuaded of the folly of his ways" and turned back. Up until then the gates had stayed open, but now they have been closed by the pickets.

Of the 80 workers listed for redundancy, over half have accepted voluntary redundancy payments and others have simply left. But, the strikers are determined to prevent the remaining 23 compulsory redundancies. Cheques sent out to strikers, returned to the company and then sent out again have now been lodged with the strike committee.

Messages/donations to: Len Blood, 26 St John Street, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside.

Cammel Laird strike again

ON THURSDAY June 23 a mass meeting of welders at Cammel Lairds, Birkenhead, agreed by a narrow majority to return to work.

The reason for the return to work was an offer to pay the welders their claim of 15p an hour for coded welding on a gas rig. But it was not a definite offer, only a promise by the management to look sympathetically on the claim - a trick which the welders fell for once before.

On Monday June 27 there were negotiations between the welders' stewards and management. The welders' claim was for a payment to all those working on the British Gas rig 1377 of 15p

coded welding allowance. Management are trying to include higher coding in the claim, and also to exclude certain types of coded welding.

On Tuesday 28th another mass meeting of welders rejected management's offer and decided to picket the gangways on all the vessels in the yard. Management have taken most of those working on the vessels off pay and threatened to lay off 2000 on Wednesday if there is no return to work.

The boilermakers are holding a mass meeting on Wednesday morning to decide on action. The rest of the Confed, as usual, have failed to render support, waiting for the action to come to them.

Unity on the rail?

THE newly-announced rail unions' 'Federation' (a good idea, though not a new one).

There was talk of a loose link-up last year, before ASLEF and the NUR clashed so destructively during the flexible rostering strikes. Now that Weighell has been blown out of the NUR leadership, the Federation idea has been revived and put on the rails.

As yet there is coordination at national leadership but no regional structures. Agreement 'at the top' should nevertheless ease the way towards better relations at rank and file level, and help wipe out the memory of conflicts.

Unity of railway unions is a good idea, but it has a negative side too - ASLEF tends to be less militant when under pressure from the NUR leaders. Thus ASLEF has just gone along with the NUR and accepted the ludicrous 4 1/2% pay deal.

What will give the new Federation real muscle is militant unity on a rank and file level and a refusal by the rank and file to let the leaders get away with any more deals like the 4 1/2%.

Library walkout

EIGHT members of the Civil and Public Services Association at the British Library are on strike following management's threat to suspend them without pay.

The threat follows the refusal by these members, in line with the CPSSA branch's policy, to co-operate with a Staff Inspection of their posts. Previous such inspections in the Library have proved to be exercises in cutting posts or downgrading them.

Although CPSSA has refused cooperation with earlier Staff Inspections, this is the first time that management has retaliated against the individuals concerned. The members received letters stating that unless they co-operated, they would be suspended as of Wednesday June 22.

With official backing from CPSSA headquarters, eight clerks decided to come out on strike before management could force the suspensions.

Clearly management feel the time is right for an attack on CPSSA, the most militant of unions in the Library, in an attempt to deal a body blow to union organisation in the building. However, the strikers have

strong support from the rest of their branch, which has voted to hold a one-day all-out strike on Friday July 1.

A victory on the issue of Staff Inspections would have important implications for all trade unionists in the Civil Service, since many areas face these job-cutting exercises.

Messages of support/donations to: CPSSA British Library (London) Branch, c/o Room 265, Science Reference Library, 25 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London WC2.

'Major' cover-up

THAMES Valley Chief Constable Peter Imbert has joined the ranks of the controversial Chief Constables such as James Anderson of Manchester.

That is the conclusion of the Oxford Claimants' Defence Committee from Imbert's report to his Police Authority on 'Operation Major'. The report, the committee says, is nothing more than a political justification for the joint police/DHSS swoop on homeless claimants in Oxford on September 2 last year.

Imbert's argument is that the rights of a minority were legitimately sacrificed to the 'general good'. Which minority should next expect its rights under the law to be forgotten, the Claimants' Defence Committee asks.

The Committee will be producing a full response to Imbert's report. Contact: CDC, 44b Princes St, Oxford.

DEFEND THE NEWHAM 8!

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

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

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



Roach "inquiry"

DESPITE their controversial verdict on Colin Roach, the jurors at the inquest still felt enough 'deep distress' at the police handling of the case to write to Home Secretary Leon Brittan about it.

The police, they say, were neither sympathetic nor diligent enough in their handling of the case. Which is hardly surprising given Stoke Newington police's record over cases like those of the White family (who received £51,000 compensation after being attacked by these cops) and Michael Ferreira, who bled to death without medical attention inside the police station.

Leon Brittan, however, thinks a public inquiry into Colin Roach's death would be neither 'desirable' nor 'necessary'. He would like to see 'those concerned sit down and consider carefully and responsibly how the problems of the area can be tackled'.

ONE THIRD of the workforce in the textile industry is Asian, and it is Asians who have suffered most from the dramatic decline in the industry (the workforce declined from over 80,000 in 1970 to 22,000 by 1980).

When the Lancashire Industrial Language Training Unit investigated the situation of Asians made redundant from the industry, they found that 90% of those surveyed were unable to find new jobs, according to the Morning Star of June 22.

ASIAN social worker Mohammed Idrish has won the right to appeal to the High Court against a Home Office deportation order.

His legal advisors told him that without the vigorous defence campaign that has been organised, he would almost certainly have already been deported.

Mohammed, a founder member of the Dr Barnardo's NALGO branch in West Bromwich, was also given support by his union's recent national conference. An emergency resolution was passed almost unanimously, committing the union to build and support a national demonstration for Mohammed, to be held in Birmingham in September. Further details: Barry, 021-523 8923, Ahsan 021-551 1846.

A DEMONSTRATION is being called in Haringey on July 9, to 'support the right of the community to defend itself against fascism'.

The demonstration will assemble at 2pm at Ducketts Common (Turnpike Lane underground) and march to the Civic Centre and Tottenham Police Station. There will be a rally at High Cross Lower School, Park View Road, London N17.

It is called by the 'May 3 Defence Campaign' - set up to defend those arrested on May 3, when 700 people from the local labour movement and black community gathered outside High Cross school to try to prevent the National Front holding an election meeting there. The police intervened in strength: 35 anti-fascists were arrested, many were injured, and one was hospitalised for two days.

Contact: May 3 Defence Campaign, No.5 Annexe B, Tottenham Town Hall, Town Hall Approach Road, London N15.

Socialist ORGANISER

Bosses suspend Telecoms engineers

By Pat Lally

LAST week British Telecom engineers in London were suspended for refusing to connect up the rival privately-owned Mercury system.

They acted in support of union policy. This is the first test for the new Broad Left majority on the Post Office Engineering Union executive.

The Tories have already declared their intention to reintroduce the election-hit BT privatisation bill at the earliest opportunity, with the sell-off time for autumn next year. Meanwhile the drive to establish Mercury, crucial to the Tories' strategy for smashing BT, goes relentlessly on.

Immediate plans are for the connection of six circuits, two covering London City, two London Central, and two not as yet known. The Shell Building in the City, where Mercury staff have been given a room, was the scene of the first suspensions.

The union's Industrial Action Strategy Sub-Committee is the key body responsible for conducting the campaign.

The national levy of members to finance a campaign, formally agreed but never implemented, has begun. And the first Industrial Action Bulletin has appeared.

This is important, since as well as using discipline BT management have started a high-powered propaganda campaign among BT staff, aimed at undermining union resistance.

They stress the government's electoral mandate for privatisation and argue resistance is hopeless.

The union has a special conference on privatisation scheduled for August. But the way things are going, action between now and then could well prove decisive.

This week, in retaliation for



Telecoms engineers: don't leave them without support

the suspensions, 50 members of the London North Central branch have been called out on indefinite strike.

With activity centred in Lon-

don, the main London branches are rightly calling mass membership meetings. There is also talk of a London-wide demonstration in support of those in dispute.

Support must be rallied beyond the POEU, in the wider trade union movement. Privatisation is already directly affecting many other of the public sector unions, and conditions exist for a fighting alliance, with the POEU strategically placed to lead it.

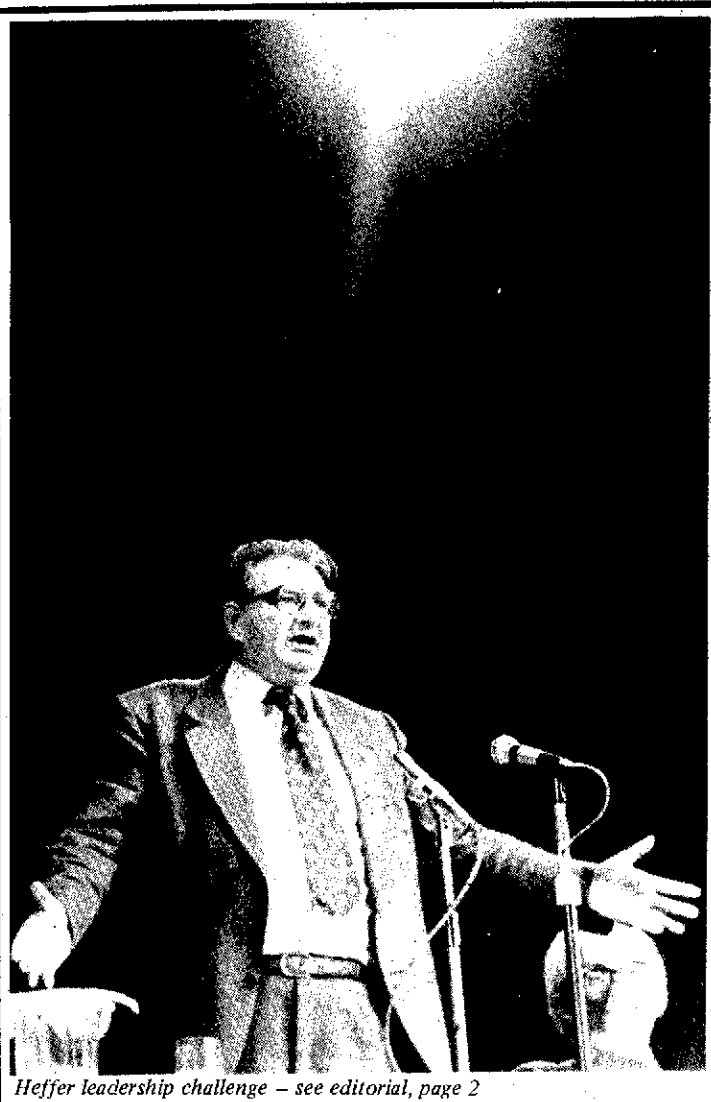
Support must be mobilised from the TUC at national level through to regional and local Trades Councils.

Pulling back

Already there is some talk within the Broad Left of pulling back from a sharp fight with the right wing - for instance over the renomination of witch-hunter John Golding to the Labour Party National Executive. Weakness like this will only give confidence to the Right.

To have any chance of success, the Broad Left Executive members must learn the harsh lesson of last year's CPSA Executive, where a Broad Left majority failed dismally. They abandoned any fighting perspective, alienated the rank and file, and were turfed out after a year.

The task in the POEU is no less difficult. Despite the Broad Left gains, general secretary Bryan Stanley and his obedient bureaucracy remain intact, to curb, obstruct and frustrate, rather like the civil service with a radical government.



Heffer leadership challenge - see editorial, page 2

Left MPs prepare for battle

By Jeremy Corbyn, MP

THREE weeks have passed since the Tories won the General election. In those three weeks the new breed of stockbrokers and city merchants have very firmly established themselves as the government of the merchant banks with the obsessive morals of the small town hypocrite.

Privatisation of much of the public sector; the continued destruction of the health service; and the end of democratic local government, are the key themes.

Internationally the Thatcherite Tories now propose to continue their colonial victors' cult 'defence' of Hong Kong and Gibraltar, and spend millions on the new airport in the Falklands, with the very obvious South African connection.

The other main planks of the Tory programme are their 'moral' proposals, with Thatcher's obsession with pushing social affairs back a hundred years. There is likely to be an enormous attack on single parent families and reversal of women's

rights.

Hanging is being brought forward as a burning issue; the Sun has done a poll of MPs and decided that this is the major issue that the nation faces and that the rope (or electric chair?) must be brought in.

But what is Labour doing? The Parliamentary Labour Party is about to discuss the election. What it should be discussing is the treacherous behaviour of Callaghan during the election and the desperate need for the party to go out and explain and fight for socialist fundamentals.

The best lesson that anyone can have is struggle; the job of the Party, and Labour MPs in particular, must face up to, is a coordinated campaign to defend the metropolitan authorities and the GLC, the Health Service, and jobs threatened by privatisation such as in British Telecom.

The Campaign Group, now of nearly 30 members, is determined to lead the battle and fight with the Left in the unions to achieve the unity of the industrial and parliamentary wings which was not achieved in the four years since 1979, leading to our defeat.

KGB course for miners?

Andropov is no friend of trade unionists!

By John Cunningham

THE NUM's recently announced proposal to send 25 members to a union school in the Soviet Union is a disgrace.

What will they learn while over there? What will they learn from the experience of the Soviet coal miners union?

Will they learn how to victimise militants who have the nerve and guts to speak out against violations of the Soviet Labour Code, poor safety conditions, management malpractices and low pay?

Will they learn to consort and work hand in hand with the secret police, the KGB, to victimise and harass those militants? Will they learn as a final resort how to obtain a phoney psychiatrists' diagnosis that labels those who disagree with you as mentally insane?

Insane

Two Soviet miners, Vladimir Klebanov and Alexei Nikitin, from southern Ukraine, are currently labelled insane by the

Soviet authorities and are being held in psychiatric hospitals under appalling conditions.

Both men dared to challenge the local mine management at the pits where they worked. Both men complained about low pay, poor safety and so on and Klebanov was a leading figure in the short-lived formation of the Association of Free Trade Unions of Soviet Working People.

Between them, both men have spent over 15 years either in prison or mental asylums. Yet what the NUM leadership proposes to do is send 25 members over to the Soviet Union to consort with the very jailers who put Klebanov and Nikitin where they are today - to give the thugs of the KGB and the bureaucrats of the CPSU the seal of approval of British miners to carry on their filthy work of repressing and jailing working class oppositionists.

All miners who respect the right of our overseas comrades, whether in Chile, Bolivia, South Africa, Turkey or the Soviet Union, must raise their voice against this disgusting spectacle.

FUND

NOT bad, but must get better! £207.35 this week closes the June Fund at £779.40: only three-quarters of the £1,000 target, but better than average.

Now the battle's on for July, to keep the weekly amounts up to the £200 mark.

And there'll be a new look to the battle in July. Following agreement by the SO EGM (see p.12) we'll be announcing monthly regional targets for the July Fund. Each month, new target amounts - and money raised - will be added to the previous month's figures. This will allow groups who stage large fund raising events, which perhaps aren't as frequent as once a month, to keep pace with the targets. And it will also identify the culprits, who aren't pulling their weight on the fund-raising. So be warned, and make your plans now.

Money to: The Treasurer, 214 Sickert Court, Essex Rd., London N1.

Thanks!

Thanks this week to: Welsh reader £100; Simon Pottinger, working at College May Bells who has achieved an early expropriation of £45; Bruce Robinson, £14.50; Orpington supporters, £10.30; Nik Barstow, £5; Elaine John, £5; Tony Biles, £2; Les Hearn and Jeff Slee, £5 raised on sale of food to SO EGM; Cheung Siu-Ming, £20.55 profit on EGM bookstall.

In next week's issue

YTS

Debate

Features

Make sure of your copy!