

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist ORGANISER

Fight the
witch-
hunt

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Claimants and strikers 10p.

Scargill gets it right

BREAK LINKS WITH TORIES!

"LET's talk to the Tories" is the chorus emerging from a succession of right wing trade union leaders as they run up the white flag of abject surrender.

One after another they issue their humble appeals for Tebbit to see reason, and pour scorn on those, like Arthur Scargill, who correctly insist that only working class action can halt the Tory steamroller.

Len Murray describes political strikes as "plain daft"; Terry Duffy denounces those who want to fight as "fools". NUM right winger Sid Vincent agrees they are "bloody silly" and suggests "we should be in there talking to the Government and trying to sort something out."

Sort what out? There is no doubt as to the Tory plans: to pursue their root and branch attacks on jobs, public services and trade union rights, and stick the boot into the elderly, the sick and the unemployed.

Even since the election we have seen the pensioners robbed by an autumn increase which will be below inflation, and we have seen announcements of further cuts in NHS spending.

The cabinet is reportedly discussing new plans to cut dole payments for the millions they have put out of work, while Thatcher, quizzed in Parliament on whether existing payments are enough to allow the unemployed to buy as much food as a year ago, contemptuously replied "That would depend very much on their choice of food. How they use their supplementary benefit is up to them."

Thatcher also appears to believe that life is "easy" for unemployed youth:

"It's too easy for some of them, straight out of school, to go straight on to social security at the age of 16. They like it [!]

By Harry
Sloan



Len Murray

they have a lot of money in their pockets [!]"

And the new Chancellor, Nigel Lawson, having leaked a probable 2% pay limit has claimed that "plenty of job vacancies" are available, but that "some people are making the deliberate calculation that they are better off on the dole."

What is the purpose of union leaders trailing along to talk to such a government? Scargill is quite right to point out that with its impregnable 140 majority,

"This totally undemocratic government can now easily push through whatever laws it chooses. Faced with possible Parliamentary destruction of all that is good and compassionate in our society, extra-parliamentary action will be the only course open to the working class and the labour movement."

Scargill is also right to point to the need for a union leadership that will "politicise" and "re-educate" the workers' movement.

"Don't blame the workers for the situation we find ourselves in after the general election.

To do so would be a fundamental error. The real responsibility is the lack of real positive leadership by the trade union and labour movement over the last 20 or 30 years."

But to give such leadership and make extra-parliamentary action more than a phrase to be bandied about between right wingers and the left, requires more than conference oratory and fiery press statements.

It is good to see that Scargill's NUM speech — in among some rather extravagant passages — acknowledged that he had been too ready in the past to take for granted the wholehearted support of his membership.

If the next coalfield ballot on strike action against the new proposed pit closures is to produce majority support, it is vital that statements of militancy at the top are backed up by systematic information and education of the rank and file in a way which did not occur on previous occasions.

It is easy for bureaucrats like Murray — who have never led anything more than a life of unbridled backroom careerism — to pour sarcastic scorn on calls for mass action, and urge extended collaboration with the Tories.

It is less easy for militants, in conflict with the government, employers, the mass media and the right wing TUC and Labour leaders — to rally the confidence and class unity needed to confront and defeat the Tory attacks.

But as Tebbit sharpens his carving knife for another slice of union rights, and as the same miserable TUC leaders whose demoralising, irritating and alienating actions and inaction lost us the election urge us to sit on our hands and wait five years before fighting back, the message must be hammered out loud and clear from every union branch, committee and shop



THE Tories are frank about it. Chancellor of the Exchequer Lawson has said it openly and clearly. They want to make life on the dole completely unbearable and unlivable.

They plan cuts in the dole to make it even more uncomfortable for the unemployed than it is now.

This will be another instalment of Mrs Thatcher's 'Victorian values' and standards.

Back in the 1830s the ruling class built great prisons for the poor, known as workhouses. Conditions there were deliberately made as hellish as possible. 'Outdoor relief' was abolished. You had either to starve or 'go to the workhouse'.

The Tories' new slogan is going to be — starve on the dole or work outside your trade, below the rates and job conditions to which British workers have been accustomed for decades.

It is simultaneously an attack

on the unemployed, on wage rates, and on trade unionism.

Thatcher has been encouraged to try this on the unemployed by the stunned docility with which millions in the last three years have accepted being thrown onto the scrapheap — by the failure of the labour movement to organise the unemployed into an angry army to campaign against Toryism. Unemployed marches have been very much a minority activity.

The new Tory attack can change all that. The millions of unemployed are faced with the choice of fighting back or being ground down even further.

It can change the whole political climate and make it possible for us to build a mass campaigning unemployed movement.

Thatcher promises cuts in the next Budget. The fightback and the drive to organise for it must begin now.

stewards' body:

*Break off all talks with the Tories!

*TUC withdraw from NEDC, the Manpower Services Commission, Nationalised Industries Board and other 'tripartite' collaboration with bosses and government!

*Prepare for action to defend jobs, wages and services!

*Tory hands off the unions! Defend the political levy, the closed shop and picketing rights!

*For workers' democracy, against postal ballots and media election of union officials!

Defeat anti-CND gang

Joy Hurcombe, secretary of Labour CND,

comments on the campaign to break Labour from unilateralism launched by Terry Duffy, Bill Sirs, and Frank Chapple.

I'm not surprised that the trade union right is organising against us. We have always known they would organise against socialist policies.

This new 'anti-CND' campaign proves that we have no room for complacency.

In fact unilateralism was already under attack during the election. Many decisions were made during the election that in practice cut against party policy on unilateralism and undermined it. That's apart from the open sabotage of Callaghan and Healey.

For example, there was no party political broadcast on unilateralism. There was no morning press conference on Cruise. We should have invited the Greenham Common women to share a platform with us, in the same way we did with OAPs. I know they would have been willing.

The Party should go out and campaign for unilateralism not modify it in deference to the media! In the election we vaguely expected people to understand the party's commitment to unilateralism when they hadn't even heard the arguments and the leaders of the party refused to campaign on it. The party didn't seriously try to get it across.

If we do this we are in for electoral defeat anyway. People will see through the shallowness of a party that abandons its convictions under pressure. There will be no reason for anyone to believe we will keep to any of our other commitments either.

We have no reason to be surprised at Duffy, Sirs and Chapple. What's important is to know we are under attack. We must defend party policy. Now people will have to make an active decision to fight for that policy.

INSIDE



Interview
with Eric
Heffer

EDITORIAL

Whose law? Whose order?

SO WHO do the hanging lobby want to hang?

Not the soldier whose plastic bullet murdered 11 year old Stephen McConomy; nor his army and RUC colleagues whose guns, boots and batons continue to kill, maim, and terrorise civilians in the six counties of Northern Ireland.

Not the policeman who murdered anti-fascist Blair Peach, nor his colleagues who accidentally failed to kill Stephen Waldorf: not the gun-toting, truncheon-wielding cops in whose cells last year one person died every ten days from 'non-natural causes'.

Not the prison screws who killed Barry Prosser; nor their colleagues, who daily brutalise the inmates of Thatcher's overflowing gaols.

Not the monetarists whose ruthless policies have brought a rising toll of unemployment and human misery — violence on the streets and in the home, wrecked lives, shattered hopes and suicides.

Not the ministers whose spending cuts mean poverty, suffering and premature death to the elderly and the sick.

Not the employers whose lust for profit makes them skimp health and safety precautions, killing or maiming thousands each year, destroying and polluting the environment with toxic wastes.

Not even the warmongers, slashing health spending, but ready to spend £8 billion on new, more lethal Trident missiles — weapons of mass murder on a scale never dreamed of by Crippen, Peter Sutcliffe or even Adolf Hitler.

Certainly not! The hanging lobby, the self-styled 'law and order' lobby, includes the most strident supporters of the status quo, and opponents of those who would fight for democracy or social progress.

But even then their arguments for institutionalised murder of those who break their rules lack any logical force.

* They claim hanging would 'protect' their soldiers on the streets of Belfast and Derry: yet as long as the brute heel of military rule and injustice remain, there will be forces from among the oppressed who will defy the odds and fight back. Hanging has not crushed the black guerrillas in South Africa.

And as Stephen McConomy tragically discovered, troops need neither evidence of terrorism nor the sanction of the courts to mete out the death penalty on the streets.

* The hanging lobby saw it would 'protect' the police. Statistics from the USA disprove this claim. British figures show a mere handful of police murdered over the last decade: far more people have been directly killed by police, who are to be further reinforced by the Tory Police Bill.

Thames Valley police chief Peter Imbert has strongly defended the wholesale detention of claimants in the Oxford 'Operation Major'; Manchester's Anderton has given vent to his reactionary views, while Sir Kenneth Newman of the Metropolitan police has issued his own political broadside against those who argue for democratic controls over the police: who will protect the rights of the majority against these extremists?

* The 'deterrent' of hanging is supposed to protect us against people who run berserk and against callous criminals ready to kill. Yet all evidence — comparative figures for different states in the USA which have or do not have the death penalty, crime trends for Britain before and after the abolition of hanging, and an international survey recently done by the UN — shows that this 'deterrent' doesn't work.

Particularly in the great majority of cases — where the victim is someone the killer already knows — fine calculations of possible penalties do not figure at all at the point where fury or despair boils over into murder.

Hanging is not a way of fighting or limiting crime: it is a defence mechanism to preserve Thatcher's hypocritical, decaying society that spawns, perpetuates and institutionalises crime.

Thatcher's Britain idealises material wealth and 'individual' achievement, freedoms, and rights; but it denies to millions of young and adult workers the slightest prospect of wealth or achievement — by casting them onto ever-lengthening dole queues. And then it rubs salt in the wounds by branding claimants as 'scroungers' and handing lavish tax cuts, perks, and fat salaries to the wealthy few.

Thatcher's Britain ignores the theft of billions through tax evasion, yet waxes indignant over petty crime by those it has robbed of hope.

Thatcher's Britain ignores and perpetuates racial violence and discrimination, yet exploits racist stereotypes in peddling fear of 'black muggers'.

Thatcher's Britain schools men from boyhood to regard women as subordinate servants, possessions and sexual objects, bombards the senses with sexist advertising, 'soft' and hard pornography: yet cynically exploits the rising tide of sexual violence to promote its reactionary campaigns for 'law and order'.

In Thatcher's Britain the lust for profit turns inner cities into barren wastelands of despair; then Tories play on the fears and concerns of the old people they have abandoned there to support the 'hanging' campaign.

There is no fear of the death penalty by rack-renting Tory landlords, asset-strippers, spivs, speculators and stockbrokers: it is *their* law and *their* order they seek to protect.

The Tory values and policies which got us into this vast unrelieved social and economic crisis can multiply the number of victims and even hand sacrificial corpses from gallows, but they can never get us out.

Only the fight for a new social order, a socialist society, can create conditions where the majority can live free from fear of crime or violence.

For an independent inquiry into the death of Colin Roach!
Roach Family Support Committee, 50 Rectory Rd, London N16



Hit list councils counter Tory cuts

REPRESENTATIVES of local authorities threatened with enforced cuts in services met in Sheffield last Friday to discuss their reaction to this new Tory offensive.

During the General Election, the Tories issued a list of local authorities who put up rates last year by more than 8% and whose expenditure was more than 25% above Grant Related Expenditure.

This is a level of spending arbitrarily determined in order to penalise those deemed to 'overspend' — in other words to attempt to provide decent services.

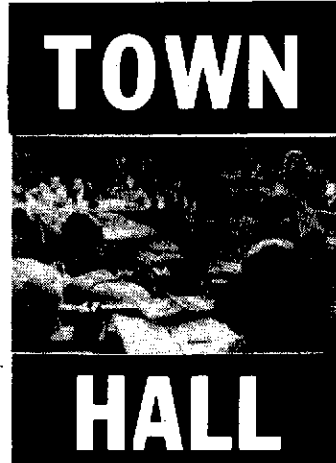
This list includes seven inner London boroughs, the GLC, Inner London Education Authority, South Yorkshire Metropolitan Authority, Sheffield, Manchester, Newcastle and Merseyside.

Virtually all of those affected were represented at the Sheffield Conference which covered — as Ken Livingstone pointed out — most of the main English urban areas and about 40% of the population.

Those present heard Scottish councillors describe how Lothian had been compelled to cut, and how Glasgow and three other Scottish authorities are currently faced with orders from the Tory Secretary of State for Scotland to cut their services.

As Maria Fyfe for Glasgow pointed out, the Tory Secretary of State was issuing dictates to a city which had no Tory MPs and precious few Tory councillors.

A lobby in London is planned later in July when the necessary



By Alan Clinton

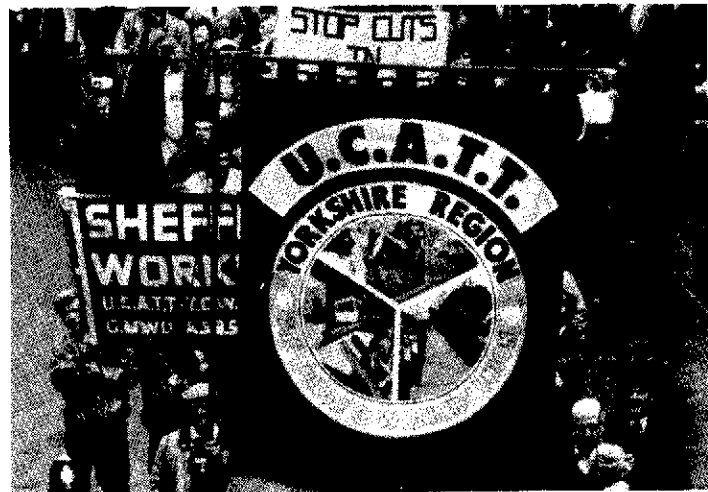
(Chief Whip, Islington Council)

regulations are placed before Parliament.

South of the border, similar enforced cutting is promised by the Tories and a White Paper is expected soon.

There can be no doubt that the Tories plan a ferocious attack on Labour-controlled local authorities not only because of their efforts to slash all public spending but also because of their political dislike of all that these authorities stand for and do.

The fact that the Sheffield



Sheffield hosted the anti-cuts conference

meeting took place outside the 'normal machinery' of the local authorities association was an indication of the breakdown of many years of consensus in local government.

This is despite the fact that many Tory authorities are clearly worried by the threat of their autonomy posed in government plans. Naturally they still support the economic and political imperatives which have brought these policies about.

However, the real opposition to the enforced cuts will only come from action in the Labour and trade union movement.

A number of speakers at the Sheffield conference emphasised the need for close cooperation in defence of jobs and services with local authority unions, and also with unions outside the public sector where members benefited from housing, schools

and other services.

The general tone of the conference was quiet and undramatic, and there can be no doubt that many of those present would consider retreat long before any serious battle with the Tories.

However the meeting did take place, and those present indicated that they did not accept the slashing of services and facilities at the behest of a government which had won little support in the urban areas they represent.

The necessary steps to campaigning had been made. The inaugural meeting of the Association of Local Authorities due on 5 July as we go to press, should provide a further step in efforts by elected representatives to provide a call to defend the services so painfully built up by the labour movement over the years.

YCND march on TUC

YOUTH CND will march from Manchester to the TUC conference in Blackpool in September. And it will stage a march outside the Labour Party conference a month later.

by Tom Rigby, editor, 'Second Generation'

We will be demanding action from the labour movement to stop Cruise missiles being sited

in Britain and to put an end to the warmongering system. These were amongst the most important decisions of last week's YCND conference in Manchester.

Unfortunately the TUC march isn't going to be demanding 'Britain out of NATO'.

Supporters of Revolution Youth lined up with the more apolitical elements of YCND to block this. The reason given was that it would 'alienate' trade unionists who would otherwise support us.

This is a serious error. YCND needs the support of the militant rank and file in the trade unions, active support capable of physically stopping the war machine, and not just a few friendly pats on the head from the odd left-talking bureaucrat.

Sponsor

If we go to the trade unions but do not challenge the politics of the existing leadership, who nearly all support NATO, then we will not be able to organise the kind of action needed.

Despite the inadequate politics, maximum support possible should be built for the march, particularly in the labour movement. Get your local ward or trade union branch to sponsor a marcher and help try and set up local labour movement reception committees on the route from Manchester to Blackpool.

An effective and well-organised march will give a clear message to those like Len Murray who don't want to organise extra parliamentary action against the Tories, and also to Duffy and Co., who are doing their best to get the TUC to drop unilateralism... No way!

This year's conference was smaller than last year's. But the 'Rock the Bomb' festival this May was huge.

YCND has tremendous potential for building a mass anti-nuclear youth movement. It needs to get itself together. That's what we'll be trying to do in the coming year.

Daily Mail
EXPRESS
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
Press
Gang
THE Sun

MICHAEL Foot has come out in firm support of Arthur Scargill and committed the Labour Party to extra-parliamentary activity.

by Patrick Spilling

Labour's defeated leader has acted to subvert the democratic wishes of the people by infiltrating hard-baked Marxists into power and influence through the back door.

But Mrs Thatcher, ever alert to the Soviet menace, has acted quickly to stop his plans by vetoing his list of lords.

If Mr Foot had his way, died-in-the-wool reds would infiltrate raw socialism into the system through their emine-lined seats in the Lords.

Reds like David Ennals. True, Ennals massacred the Health Service. He axed services left, right, and centre. But that was just to cover his tracks. Did he axe the service as much as was necessary? That is the question the British people will be asking.

Reds like Robert Maxwell. Maxwell, it will be remembered, hit the headlines with his plan to allow SOGAT members a drastically shorter week — cut at one stroke from 39 hours to nothing.

Not content with this permanent holiday on the state for thousands of printers, Maxwell has a reputation for creating left wing extremists wherever he goes — particularly amongst people who work for him in his companies.

Mrs Thatcher has outsmarted her opponents. She has proposed 11 new Labour peers to be created as part of Norman Tebbit's youth training programme.

The new peers would be paid £25 a week to learn how to become part of the real Establishment.

Market rate

Mr Tebbit, supporting the move, said, "There is no shortage of candidates from old Labour Party hacks to become members of the House of Lords, and £25 is easily more than the market rate."

Harold Wilson himself has already decided to accept elevation to the House of Lords under Mrs Thatcher's list, which also includes that ever-popular figure in

Northern Ireland, Gerry Fitt, who was unelected in the recent parliamentary election by the vote of a tiny handful of extremists.

Mrs Thatcher is understood to insist that the clear Conservative majority means the Labour membership in the House of Lords must be decided by her. She plans to appoint Lord George Brown leader of the Labour Party in the Lords.

She suspects that one or two people on the Foot list have not yet completely rid themselves of all traces of Labour Party rhetoric. The retraining programme, complete with a list of acceptable policies, is designed to deal with that.

Responding angrily to Mrs Thatcher's moves, Michael Foot declared:

"This great movement of ours has always held, from the time of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, that the existence of a House not elected by direct universal suffrage is not in the best interests of the British people. But our policy for abolition of the House of Lords has been maliciously misinterpreted by our friends in Fleet Street to mean we should not have a House of Lords. That of course is nonsense."

Growing fight against witch-hunt

LABOUR Against the Witch-hunt's standing as the campaign representing the militant minority of CLPs prepared to openly defy any attempt to expel socialists from the Labour Party was confirmed last Saturday at its first National Council meeting since the election.

It was reported that 58 CLPs have now affiliated to the campaign, and that 69 CLPs signed the recent advertisement in Tribune declaring resistance to expulsions.

Introducing the discussion on the situation in the Party after Labour's defeat, LAW vice-chair Reg Race pointed to three major issues facing the rank and file.

We must, he said, combine resistance to the witch-hunt with a campaign to prevent the right wing 'modernising' Party policy and to stop their attempts to reverse the democratic reforms recently won in the Party. Already the Shadow Cabinet had discussed how to overturn mandatory reselection.

This had to go with a renewed push to use mandatory reselection "to clear out those members of the PLP openly opposed to Party policy."

Jeremy Corbyn, who was

LAW MODEL RESOLUTION.

"We... are appalled at the procedure adopted in the enquiry into Manchester City and Wythenshawe Labour Parties and the decision to suspend Wythenshawe CLP."

We call on the NEC to reinstate Wythenshawe immediately and in future act by the laws of natural justice in dealing with allegations or actions against CLPs, viz:

*Accused parties must know what the accusations are, who is making them and be allowed to question those who are making them.

*Proper notice must be given and it should be up to the accuser to prove the allegations, not the accused party to disprove it.

We support actions taken by Manchester Wythenshawe in refusing to attend the NEC's enquiry after their request for and adjournment to permit them to hear charges and prepare a defence, and Manchester CLP's decision to refuse similarly after their request for a solicitor to represent them was denied.

We agree to invite a speaker to hear the City and Wythenshawe Labour Party to hear their case."

THE LEFT SLATE FOR THE CLP SECTION OF THE NEC.
N. Atkinson, T. Benn, E. Heffer, M. Meacher, J. Richardson, D. Skinner, A. Wise. If Meacher is elected Deputy Leader then David Blunkett will take his place on the slate.

by John Bloxam

elected as a LAW vice-chair at the meeting, insisted that the Campaign Group, numbering 30-40 MPs also had to turn outwards. The MPs must link up both with campaigns like LAW, and with working class resistance to the Tories — whether the fight be against privatisation of British Telecoms, or to stop the threatened closure of 53 London hospitals. This point, and the importance of the fight in the unions, was underlined by Andrea Campbell, delegate from Hackney COHSE branch.

Much of the discussion focussed on the elections for Leader and Deputy Leader.

The National Council unanimously voted to back Eric Heffer and Michael Meacher as the only two candidates who had stood out and voted against the witch-hunt and to help organise a campaign for them in both the Party and the trade unions.

For the anti-witch-hunt campaign, the most important elections will be those for the NEC. Accepting the need for a left slate opposed to the witch-hunt, the meeting decided to back the Bennites and CLPD slate for the CLP section of the NEC (see below).

But the meeting condemned the NEC slate that had been cobbled together by some of the same people for the Women's Section. This had been done without consulting women in the Party, and they have excluded from it one of the party's foremost and bravest advocates of women's rights, Frances Morrell. There was overwhelming support for Mandy Moore's resolution that LAW should support a slate that is being organised by the Women's Action Committee.

Alf Holmes, chair of Wythenshawe CLP, which is now suspended by the NEC, gave a detailed report on the running battle to oust right wing Labour councillors that had led up to the conflict with the NEC.

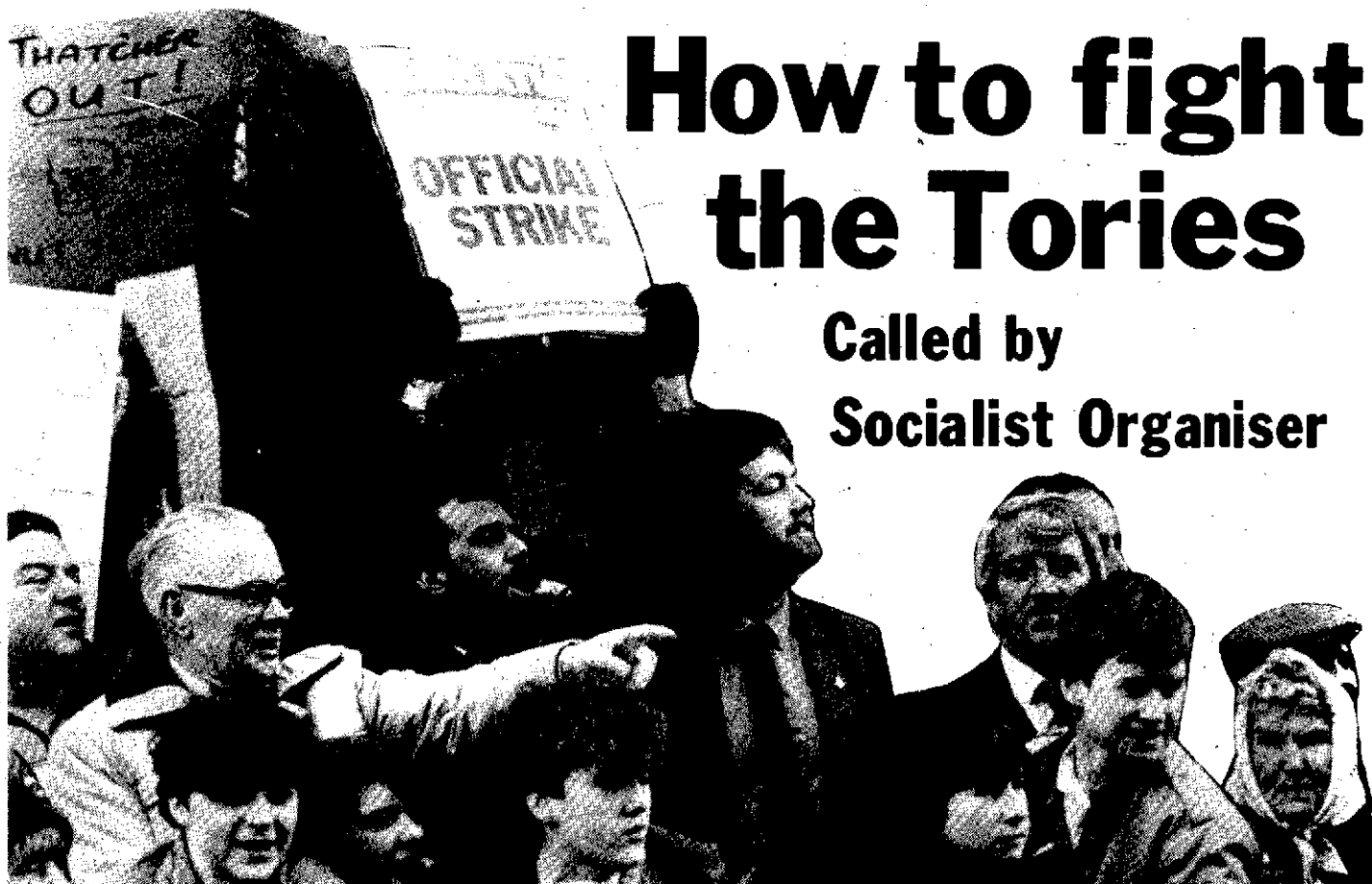
Other major reports at the meeting included an assessment of where the trade unions now stand on the witch-hunt. Union leaders had managed to squeeze resolutions against the witch-hunt off union conference agendas in the run-up to the general election. The meeting thought that it still might be possible to get a majority for the constitutional amendment from Greenwich CLP if it is backed by this week's TGWU conference. But even if that goes down, there is likely to be substantial support for ending expulsions. Although the NUR AGM voted against the Greenwich amendment, it also heavily defeated a resolution calling for wholesale expulsion of Militant supporters.

The date of the LAW AGM was set for November 26.

Labour movement conference

How to fight the Tories

Called by
Socialist Organiser



*So the Tories are back. The bland phrases in their Manifesto are already turning into renewed attacks on jobs, on union rights, new cuts and the privatisation of vital services.

*Already even as Tebbit prepares new ANTI-UNION LAWS — the TUC right wing have run up the white flag. But Arthur Scargill and Ken Livingstone have correctly pointed to the need for mass, direct action by the labour movement on the streets and picket lines. Our conference will focus on the problems, policies, and tactics for achieving this kind of fight.

*Against previous CUTS, many union leaders wrongly argued we wait for a returned Labour government while Labour councils blamed lack of union action for implementing Tory policies. A new 5-year mandate for Thatcher makes this a plainly useless policy: instead we need occupations, supporting strikes, the extension of struggles on a national level — and we must learn lessons from such struggles in the past.

*PRIVATISATION in British Telecom, the NHS and other services threatens jobs, working conditions and union organisation. But the action against privatisation so far has been either localised and isolated or largely focussed upon protest. We need a plan of action NOW, before the whole public sector is carved up by the bankers.

*The SHOP STEWARDS' MOVEMENT has come under fire in the engineering industry — but has developed in the NHS in the course of last year's pay fight. What policies and politics are needed to rebuild and extend the

Speakers include:
Jeremy Corbyn MP
Reg Race, Joy Hurcombe (Labour CND) * Andrea Campbell (COHSE Group 81) * Colin Talbot (POEU Broad Left) * plus workshops, videos
CRECHE * in personal capacity

stewards' movement and defend its independence of full-time union officials and management propaganda?

*New, more radical, BROAD LEFTS have been emerging in many unions: but under fire from employers and the right wing, some — like the CPSA Broad Left — can crumble. How can we link Broad Left activity at national level to day-to-day struggles in the workplaces and develop a consistent, principled leadership?

*Many on the left of the

capable of standing ground under pressure? What kind of perspective should be put forward by the left to go beyond the limited "Alternative Economic Strategy" which so plainly failed to convince a sceptical electorate?

*With five more years to work on restoring "Victorian values", Thatcher's blows will again fall hardest on WOMEN. Why won't the Labour Party and unions develop the special strengths and fighting capacity shown by women workers, and take their special problems seriously?

*BLACK WORKERS too are beginning to organise against tacit and open racism from the bosses, the state, the police and — most scandalous of all, from the labour movement. How can we help develop that struggle?

*Thousands of YOUTH are now faced with another 5 years — seemingly a lifetime — on the dole. Millions of adults are on the same scrapheap. How can we act at rank and file level to remedy the criminal failure of TUC and Labour Party leaders to organise and mobilise the unemployed.

*OUR CONFERENCE "How to Fight the Tories" will attempt to promote discussion and give some answers to these and other questions facing the labour movement.

Briefing goes nationwide

by Dave Spencer

SUPPORTERS of Labour Briefing groups from six areas met in London last Sunday to set up a national network. We decided to produce a national Briefing supplement every month which will focus and organise around national and international issues. This will be added to the local Briefings already produced.

We elected a national committee to edit and produce the supplement. These include supporters of Socialist Organiser such as John Bloxam.

The editorial board will consist of representatives from each

area, and from national Labour campaigning groups where possible. The aim is to have an open editorial policy to stress campaigning and turning the labour movement outwards to actual struggles.

We also decided to hold a conference early in 1984 to assess the progress made by different sections of the radical left in overcoming divisions and organising together within the Briefing structure, with a view to further strengthening the structure.

The six areas represented at the meeting were London, Brighton, Merseyside, West Midlands, Stoke on Trent, and Swansea.



How to fight the Tories
September 17
University of London Students Union

For more details, including discussion papers and leaflets, send s.a.e. to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8. Please mark the envelope 'September 17 Conference'.

LABOUR PARTY

AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT!

Join LABOUR AGAINST THE WITCHHUNT
Membership open to Constituency Labour Parties, trade union organisations, Labour Party affiliates, and individuals.

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

CLPD Get set for Brighton

by Francis Prideaux

WHAT gains for Party democracy from this year's round of Union Conferences? Less than might have been if the general election had been earlier (or later).

The ASTMS Conference marked three major gains in the area of positive discrimination, supporting (despite platform opposition) the mandatory inclusion of at least one woman on every parliamentary shortlist, the right of the Women's Conference to elect without male assistance the (so-called) 'women's section' on the Party's NEC.

These demands will not be won within the Party as a whole without more support from the very largest unions (TGWU, AUEW, GMBATU, and USDAW — only NUPE of the big five is so far in favour), but the pressure from women members is growing all the time. One of the strongest speeches at ASTMS was from a woman who said she had been against positive discrimination for over 20 years and was only now convinced of its real necessity.

A second major area of debate at Brighton should centre around the democratisation of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Finally, on the central question concerning the rights of pressure groups within the Party, the only real change of position (prior to the TGWU Conference) involves the NUR. Their AGM admittedly failed to demand the positive reinstatement of the Militant 5 — but they overwhelmingly threw out an amendment supporting the NEC's attacks on the comrades who support that Tendency.

The NUR's uneasy search for some kind of 'status quo' on witch-hunts could find a number of adherents from other unions — though it must be said that there is no evidence at all that the current majority of the Party NEC are satisfied with the only five scalps which they have so far collected.

In all three policy areas the prospects of a proper debate in Brighton will be enormously enhanced by the maximum submission of appropriate Conference amendments. Suggested drafts will shortly be available from: Women's Action Committee, 39 Caldervale Road, London SW4 (01-622 3983); Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 (01-458 1501); Labour Against the Witch-hunt, 11 Wilderton Road, London N16 (01-802 1709).



What happened to the left-wing campaign?

ON March 7 'Socialists for a Labour Victory' was set up at a large, enthusiastic meeting in London.

Ernie Roberts, Jo Richardson and Joan Maynard were there, and Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner sent apologies; Nigel Williamson was there, from Tribune, Ken Livingstone and Dave Wetzel, from the GLC; Peter Tatchell from Bermondsey; and a number of comrades from London Labour Briefing and the left wing of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

The plan was the SLV would provide an alternative voice for the Left — to make sure the radical policies passed by Labour conference were put across loudly, clearly, and vigorously in the election campaign.

But come election time — it didn't happen. What the SLV achieved was far less than what had seemed possible on March 7.

Why? What went wrong? Where did we fail? What are the lessons for organising the Left now?

To explore these questions, Martin Thomas from Socialist Organiser spoke to John Bloxam, a member of the SLV steering committee, former national organiser of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy, and secretary of the Socialist Organiser Alliance; Andy Harris, joint secretary of SLV and a GLC councillor; and Rachel Lever, a member of the SLV steering committee and of the London Labour Party Executive.

RL: It was too little, too late.

JB: If all the people who came to the first meeting had continued to work for the SLV, it would have been OK. But they didn't.

MT: Why did the Left drift away from the SLV? I think the Labour right wing effectively scuppered the SLV by putting most of the conference policy in the manifesto and then not campaigning for it.

Once the campaign document and the manifesto were out, most of the Left had a policy of keeping their heads down so that the right wing would be the ones who stepped out of line. The SLV was left high and dry.

RL: All the SLV was doing was producing slightly better leaflets than came out of Walworth Rd — or sometimes slightly worse ones!

I disagree with the emphasis put by most of the Left on the argument that the leadership didn't have their heart in it. They have never had their heart in it. It

was the old method of never doing anything boldly, the method of appeasement. Whenever someone says boo, you run.

And that went on locally, too. For example, in Islington: there was a fuss about the council, so we weren't even supposed to mention that Chris Smith [the Labour candidate in Islington South] was a councillor. Someone said the words gay centre, and then we weren't supposed to mention that either...

JB: There were two approaches in the SLV: one to see it just as a ginger group to get the best manifesto possible, the other to see it more as an outward-looking campaign. Those who saw it as a ginger group won out — mostly by inertia.

Given the nature of the manifesto, was it inevitable that everyone would lapse into defeatism? I don't think it was.

But the problem is that as soon as the manifesto came out, a lot of the most influential people on the Left backed off and started saying it was the best manifesto since 1945, and so on.

RL: There's more than that. The SLV set itself the task of organising an enormous campaign which it didn't have the apparatus for.

JB: But the apparatus of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee was nil, and that organised a big campaign.

RL: You had an alliance of organisations which could be relied on. And you and Jon Lansman were working on it full-time over a period of months.

This time, it was a matter of weeks, and no-one was putting the work in.

JB: I thought the argument about the nature of the SLV — ginger group or a genuine campaign — could best be sorted out in practice by going ahead and doing things. I underestimated the extent to which inertia could prevent that happening.

The SLV could have made much more impact given a few very simple things like, for example, publicity in Tribune. It didn't get those things. It was labelled very early on as something for the far left.

RL: The point is that you've got

to have a very clear and simple political line; whole organisations committed to it, like with the Rank and File Mobilising Committee; and a sense that these are the here-and-now issues.

The following year, the RFMC alliance would have fallen apart completely if it were not for the Deputy Leadership campaign. And then after that the rout began.

JB: The crucial element missing in the SLV was the group around Benn and the new Tribune.

It wasn't the organisations as such that were crucial to the Rank and File Mobilising Committee. The LCC and the ILP weren't able to stop the Benn Campaign Committee. Their attitude only became effective when the Bennites were pulled in the LCC direction, away from high-profile organising.

With the SLV, not even the Campaign Group of MPs would support it. They were not prepared to organise a rank and file campaign that might be seen as divisive. Perhaps there was also an element of anti-Trotskyism.

MT: I think John is right about the crucial role of the Bennites. But there's more to it.

The play-safe attitude during the election campaign did not just come from a few leaders on the Left. It ran right through the Labour Left, down to rank and file level. As Rachel said, we had it in Islington.

It reflects fundamental problems of the politics of the Labour Left. And given that the political problems with the broad Left should have been predictable, did we on the far left do the best that could have been done?

The SLV was more or less based on the assumption that the manifesto would be in glaring contradiction with Labour conference policy. That's why the right wing were able to scupper it. Shouldn't we have allowed for other possibilities?

The SLV wasn't only weak compared to the RFMC; it didn't even manage to do as much as the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory in 1979. I think perhaps one of the problems is that we were too inward-looking.

We tended to take our point of reference too much from conference policy, and not enough from what was needed in terms of the relations between local Labour Parties and voters. Instead of measuring campaign activity in terms of the outside world, we tended to measure it too much in an inward-looking way, against conference policy.

But the fact is that it was possible to run the most dull, anemic campaigns while remaining entirely in line with conference policy.

RL: Yes: stodgy, turgid, defensive... No-one envisaged that what would happen would be an elec-

tion campaign formally on conference policies, but with none of the combativity needed to carry it through.

JB: But all this was part of the debate inside the SLV. Socialist Organiser did argue for an 'Anti-Tory League' concept to mobilise that combativity. That idea was there from the beginning. In hindsight we didn't push it hard enough.

I wouldn't put the Bennites and the rank and file on the same level. There is a feeling for unity in the Party which cuts against a fight in situations like the election. You have to take that into account.

But couldn't the reluctance of the Left to go out and fight have been changed if the leading Bennites had taken a different line? I would say yes.

RL: Local CLP campaigns had a very small effect compared to what was in the newspapers and on TV. The SLV was obviously cut off from making any impact in that sphere unless someone like Benn was willing to say that he was going to go out and run an alternative election campaign. Unless you had prominent people prepared to do that, all the SLV could do was a few leaflets.

We needed a major section of the Party prepared to campaign on an alternative basis. But you would have to be on the verge of a split to do that.

There would have been all sorts of accusations, and they couldn't have stood up to it.

Politically the Bennites just couldn't carry through such a campaign.

JB: Yes. It would have been difficult for that to happen. I don't think it was unimaginable. Some people would have said Benn's Deputy Leader campaign was unimaginable.

It was unlikely — but that shouldn't stop us saying what was needed, and pointing out where the Left failed.

The sort of issues Martin raises were all part of the debate on the committee. The fact is that we lost the debate.

I think the SLV was the nadir of the Labour Left. The high point was the Rank and File Mobilising Committee — and after that it went downhill, through such things as Labour Liaison 82, with a fitful interlude on the witch-hunt.

RL: We've been on the retreat since Brighton [Labour Party conference 1981].

JB: Part of that has been a conscious retreat by people around Benn and Tribune since Bishops Cleeve.

It was part of a process in which sections of the Left turned their back on open organising in the Party, and back towards stitch ups in smoke-filled rooms.

RL: What I want to know is what we do now.

AH: We've got to build a popular hard left alliance.

RL: I don't think there's a swell towards the Left. A lot of people in the CLPs are convinced that Kinnock is the solution — that we've got to pull towards the centre and drop difficult policies.

JB: That mood can be beaten if the Bennites mobilise. The problem is that they can't be relied on. An important section of the Bennite Left was against running anyone against Kinnock for leader.

RL: What I want to know is why Joan Maynard and Dennis Skinner were not seen as credible candidates. They were not seen as credible candidates because they didn't have ministerial experience. Because the position is supposed to be not a leader of the Party in battle, but a potential Prime Minister.

People had been saying that we've got to rebuild the labour movement, and fight the Tories outside Parliament — and they didn't take themselves seriously.

It's a question of different conceptions of politics — a combat party, or a foreman of capitalism. Why was it unthinkable for Benn to run an independent campaign? Why was it unthinkable to run Maynard and Skinner for the Labour Party leadership? Because their conception of politics is still parliamentary and ministerial.

They can resist pressures when they think they might win. But to run a campaign against pressures for propaganda and to fly the flag is another conception altogether.



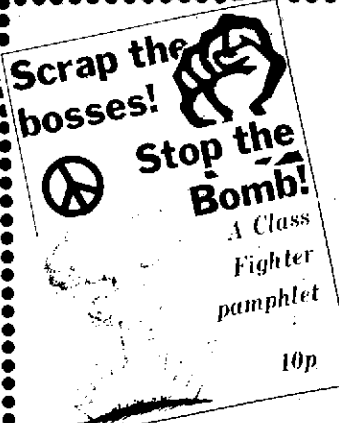
Why were the leaflets 'stodgy, turgid, defensive...?'

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Greenham comment

OVER 600 women, many from overseas, blockaded the entrance to the USAF Base at Greenham Common last Monday, July 4.

Independence was the theme of the demonstration, held on US Independence Day. CND issued a "declaration of independence for Britain" — independence from American nuclear bases.

A CND representative put like this to the Morning Star: "With US bases at Greenham Common, Upper Heyford, Holy Loch and Lakenheath and about 90 other American bases in Britain, we are in a similar position to the American colonial two centuries ago."

It is, of course, true that US bases in Britain would mean automatic British involvement should nuclear war break out, whatever the wishes of the British government of the day.

There is no sense whatsoever in which the Americans are in forcible occupation. The British ruling class has voluntarily chosen to tie itself into the nuclear alliance.

The main enemy is not in Washington but in London.

To talk and act as if the problem is "the Americans" is to confuse the issues, to misidentify the enemy and to deflect attention from the real tasks and the only way forward for the peace movement.

The task is to disarm the British ruling class and that involves a decisive turn to the working class which is the only force in Britain capable of doing it.

The demand "Independence for Britain" reflects the pernicious politics of the misnamed Communist Party and those on the left influenced by it.

Listen to the patriotic Morning Star editorialising: "If (Thatcher) had an ounce of patriotism in her she would never allow the US Cruise missiles into our country..."

Thatcher's patriotism is probably more reliable — it is certainly more genuine — than that of the Morning Star. The problem is not her patriotism but her class. That class's interests have led it to the NATO nuclear alliance and keep it there.

The alternative is not to be — or pretend to be — more patriotic than Thatcher but to organise the working class whose interest lies in breaking the nuclear alliance and in breaking the capitalist system. Thatcher is that system's representative and nuclear weapons are the product of its degeneracy and decay. We need not "patriotism" but the socialist transformation of society.



The DHA would not recognise the massive opposition to closure

We can save the South London hospital!

WANDSWORTH District Health Authority (DHA) voted by 10-6 last week to close the South London Hospital for Women by April 1984.

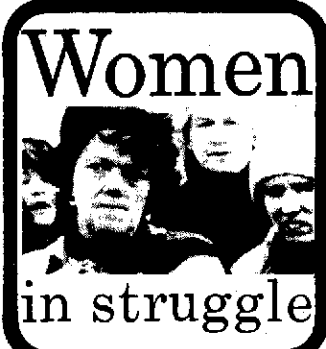
Two members of the local Labour Party (both women) voted with the consultants and businessmen for closure. One of them, Lillias Gilles, was the mover of a resolution at the London Region Labour Party Conference opposing cuts and closures in the NHS.

Over 100 people, mainly women, went to the meeting to express their support for the campaign to keep the hospital open.

For many of the women there it was their first time at a DHA meeting. They were disgusted by the way decisions about their health and jobs are taken. It was obvious that the closure has nothing to do with better facilities for patients. The South London is being closed to save money and further erode the NHS in favour of private medicine in line with Thatcher's dictates.

The staff know that, the community know that and the District Health Authority know that. However, most of the DHA would not admit it. There were long speeches from consultants with vested interests in closure, supporting closure "on grounds of good health".

Two people denounced the farce of the consultation process



by Andrea Campbell

and the unrepresentative nature of the DHA.

It was pointed out that the DHA had only four women and no black people on it. Yet women, and particularly ethnic women, would lose out most if the hospital closes.

Andy Harris, ILEA rep, contrasted the "consultation" in the NHS to the consultation practiced by ILEA and called for a series of public meetings with the chair of the DHA attending to answer local people's ques-



JOHN HARRIS



Despite the Health Authority decision, the fight goes on

tions. The DHA chair has consistently refused to attend public meetings on the closure.

One brass necked consultant claimed that there had been a poor response from the public to the consultation document and that obviously there was not much interest in the hospital. He ignored a petition against closure with 50,000 signatures on it!

The meeting proved yet again that consultations are a diversion from the real fight to save hospitals. A successful fight against closure will depend on the strength of the workers and the local community.

It is essential for the workers to organise against closure and to use the fantastic amount of support in Wandsworth to help them. The workers, particularly the ancillary workers must take the initiative now and occupy the hospital.

The consultants and senior nurses have supported the campaign up till now. But they were not prepared to voice their opinion when out and out lies were being used at the meeting as justification for closure. They were more angry at the hecklers than at the authority members.

Links have been built with

other trade unionists in the area but they need to be strengthened and promises of supporting strike action must be sought in other hospitals if any equipment or patients are moved from the South London.

Workers should watch out for attempts to work out a Tadworth-type deal for South London Hospital. This would keep the hospital open by removing it from the NHS. It would be run jointly by the NHS and charitable consortiums and the charities would eventually take over the funding.

This would be nothing more than a return to the pre-NHS years when the working class only had access to health care as charity.

Tadworth was not a victory for the NHS. The South London will not be a victory if this kind of funding is used.

The DHA made it clear at the meeting that they would welcome this kind of initiative. The consultants and administrators would also see this as a good deal for them.

The only victory for the working class will be a fully staffed and fully functioning hospital run by the National Health Service. The money is available.

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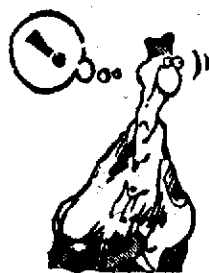
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Figures

WAITING for the economic upturn? Insofar as it is ever going to come it's here.

Over the 12 months to April or May, industrial production went up 3.7% in the US, 1.8% in the UK, and 1.7% in Japan. In early 1983 industrial production also rose in West Germany.

More spectacularly, US car production is up 31% over a year ago.

Unemployment is, however, still rising in all these countries.

28% of under-25s are unemployed in the UK. But that is not a high figure for Western Europe. Figures for other countries range from 35% in Holland and Italy to 27% in France.

West Germany has an exceptionally low rate of under-25 unemployment at 15%.

Some people on the Labour Left have made a great stir about stopping the flow of British capital overseas.

The basic idea they are driving at, quite rightly, is democratic control over the wealth of society. The picture of Britain's wealth pouring out to be 'wasted' in alien lands is, however, false.

The net result of the flows of investment and profit has for many decades been a tidy advantage for Britain's capitalists.

Direct investment into Britain was £2.5 billion in 1982. That's lower than the peak of £6 billion in 1980, but the trend has generally been a rising one.

The total stock of foreign direct investment in Britain is estimated at £25 billion (Britain's stock of direct investment abroad is about £41 billion).

Over 50% of it comes from the USA; the other leading investors are the EEC, Switzerland, and Japan, in that order.

Israeli doctors are claiming a 100% wage increase in place of the 20% negotiated by the Histadrut.

The background to this is Israel's chronic hyper-inflation - 130% last year and still rising. Wage indexation agreements automatically give 85% compensation for inflation, but no more.

The chronic inflation arises from the peculiar structure of Israel's economy, where military spending takes 26% of national income (1982), and aid from overseas contributes 14% to it.

Can truce hold the PLO together?

A CEASEFIRE has been agreed between pro-Arafat Fatah Palestinian guerrillas and those Fatah guerrillas supporting Abu Musa who have been fighting each other in Lebanon's Bekaa region.

According to reports the cease-fire was made possible by Arafat's having made concessions to the Abu Musa group. He is said to have agreed "on the need for strong adherence to collective leadership and not adopting any unilateral decision before consulting the institutions of the PLO." This noticeably does not imply any changes in PLO or Fatah structure.

Given Abu Musa's profound distrust of Arafat and his methods it would be very surprising if such a generalised "concession" were to lead to any long-lasting agreement.

The ceasefire is thus likely to have been the outcome of a number of different pressures on both sets of combatants, not least pressure from Arab regimes, from Lebanese parties supporting the PLO and fearing its break-up as well as military pressures.

Themes

Certainly "collective leadership" has been one of Abu Musa's themes from the outset. He accuses Arafat of being a total individualist, making agreements without testing the feeling among the Palestinians.

The core of Abu Musa's stated criticism of the Fatah leadership and of Arafat in particular is that for the last ten years - from the adoption of the "Provisional Political Programme" in 1974 - the PLO has drifted further and further from its commitment to militarily reconquer Palestine.

He argues that the tactical positions have become a strategy, that a West Bank mini-state has become the goal of the PLO rather than a means towards realising their goal.

The most dramatic exposure of this tendency towards the liquidation of the Palestinians' original goals came with Arafat's personal agreement to seek a "solution" within the terms of the Reagan plan, to agree to establish a Palestino-Jordanian confederation under King Hussein.

For Abu Musa this liquidation goes hand in hand with a downgrading of military activity, the withdrawal from Beirut and the more recent appointment of Abu Hajim and Haj Ismail - both accused of cowardice in the face of the Israeli invasion - as commanders in Lebanon further testify to this liquidation.



Arafat

Abu Musa sees Fatah's leadership as increasingly corrupted by wealth and their diplomatic contacts, as increasingly distant from the guerrillas themselves and from the Palestinian people as a whole.

These criticisms are doubtless generally correct. But by themselves they do not mean that Abu Musa stands to the left of Arafat.

It is not clear whether he represents a purely "physical force" tendency or a tendency evolving leftwards.

The fact that the left trends within the PLO, the PFLP and the DPFLP, have apparently kept their distance might indicate that they do not see any leftward evolution possible in the Abu Musa group.

At the same time there has been talk of these two organisations merging. This could lead to a very big realignment within the PLO.

Syria and Libya have had a considerable hand in these developments. For some years now Syria has been pursuing a dual tactic - trying to contain the Palestinian struggle militarily while at the same time trying to increase her influence within its ranks.

Two organisations, el Saiqa and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (General Command), function as arms of the Syrian state. Should Syria gain influence within a major section of Fatah, it is possible that the PLO will tilt considerably towards Damascus.

The danger lies in the fact that Syria is quite ready to smash the Palestinian struggle - if it can - in order to establish better relations with US imperialism.

The tour now being undertaken by Secretary of State Schultz should be seen in the context - among other things - of the US trying to find out what new terms Syria might be proposing given her newly strengthened position within the PLO.

As Syria seeks to become the mistress of the Palestinians, she herself is subject to pressures from her paymasters and protectors, Saudi Arabia on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other.

At the same time, Iraqi-backed organisations within the PLO, like the Arab Liberation Front and the Abu Nidal group - the latter ostensibly agreeing with the criticisms of Abu Musa - are trying to organise opposition to any growth in Syrian influence.

State terror in Sri Lanka

POLITICAL suspects, members of the minority Tamil community in Sri Lanka, have been held incommunicado under the country's Prevention of Terrorism Act and tortured both in army camps and by the police, according to Amnesty International in a report of the findings of an inquiry conducted in Sri Lanka in January and February 1982.

The victims are advocates of an independent Tamil state.

Detainees have been kept in solitary confinement for more than eight months after arrest. Torture includes hanging victims upside down from hooks, beating them with metal bars and driving needles under the toe-nails and finger-nails.

For example, on 10 April this year a young farmer from Trincomalee, K. Navaratnarajah died in custody after being held without charge for two weeks. Twenty-five external wounds and ten internal injuries were found on his body during the post-mortem examination.

Of the individual cases examined by the mission, in at least six the detainees are still being held without trial, more than two years later. Since then, arrests have continued. At least 65 people are estimated to be in detention now.

Former detainees, released without charge, told the Amnesty International delegates they had been kept for as long as six months chained to an iron grill at Elephant Pass Army Camp. One said he had been handcuffed and kept lying on the

floor for five months.

At another camp soldiers are said to have forced a detainee to crawl on broken glass, then stuffed hot chilli powder up his nostrils with a nail. Needles were driven under his finger-nails and into his arm. After ten days a captain told him: "We took you in custody on suspicion. Now we find you are innocent. So you can go."

The mission also investigated the deaths of Tamils apparently shot or beaten to death by security forces in June 1981, following the shooting of two police officers. Two young Tamils rounded up at the time said they were taken to lonely spots, one of them near Jaffna burial ground, shot by a police inspector and left for dead. Both survived, but one is now physically handicapped. The government has taken no action in any of these cases.

The report makes 12 detailed recommendations which, it says, would bring the treatment of detainees into line with Sri Lanka's constitutional human rights guarantees and United Nations standards. These include: informing detainees of the grounds for arrest; disclosing the place of detention to relatives and allowing immediate and regular access to lawyers; establishing independent machinery to investigate torture complaints, with published findings and proceedings against those held responsible; restoring the normal rules of evidence in all cases so that statements made solely to the police are inadmissible in court.



North and South

by Paddy Dollard

BEFORE relations between the Twenty Six Counties and Britain went sour during Haughey's premiership, the British Army on one side of the border and the Irish Army on the other used to work very closely together. Under a secret security arrangement they used to swap details of the frequencies and voice codes each was using at a given moment, thus making it possible for them to monitor each other's wavelengths.

Legally the Southern army can act only in support of the police and at their request. That meant that the British Army in hot pursuit towards the border had to go through the RUC and the Civic Guards to alert the Irish Army... Listening to each other's radios cut out the middleman.

Haughey put a stop to it during the hunger strikes.

The coalition government has now restored the arrangement.

Gerry Roche of Dun Laoghaire, a leading member of the IRSP, Republican activist and a sometime Trotskyist, was given 18 months by a Dublin judge for demonstrating outside the British Embassy in July 1981 during the hunger strikes in Northern Ireland.

He was convicted on photographic evidence which showed him 'aggressively' holding a long pole. He said he had been helping dismantle a banner. Three witnesses, including a barrister, backed him up on that. But still he got 18 months.

Roche then commented: "I would like to thank your honour for the sentence. I have the honour to be sentenced by the same judge who sentenced my friend Nicky Kelly. It is a pity you do not bring drug offenders who wreck the lives of working people up before the court. People like that are allowed trial by jury. Yet I asked you for a jury trial and was refused..."

For this 'speech from the dock', commenting on the sentence 'with obvious contempt for the court', he was given an extra three months, and is now doing 21 instead of 18 months.

SHORTS Aerospace and Harland and Wolff have long been notorious in Northern Ireland for blatant discrimination against Catholics. It has been said that it is easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for a Catholic to get through the gates of either Harlands or Shorts.

This in turn has meant that the metal workers' unions in Northern Ireland are politically gutted, because their membership reflects this job preference.

Now, in pursuit of a £50 million order from the US government, Shorts has been forced to make a formal commitment to change its ways.

A high-powered delegation from the American TUC, the AFL CIO, has been to Northern Ireland to check up on the reports of job sectarianism. They have met with the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and the Confederation of Shipbuilding Unions in Northern Ireland.

The US government contract is not sewn up yet, but Shorts commitment to end sectarian hiring practices is expected to help.

Shorts' formal agreement with Northern Ireland's Fair Employment Agency is entitled, 'Affirmative Action Programme'. It includes agreement by Shorts to:

- * comply with the Fair Employment (NI) Act of 1976;
- * have a special personnel

manager to ensure the Act is complied with and to make regular reports to the Management Board on the subject;

* monitor patterns of applications for jobs;

* provide the Agency every six months with full details of all job applications received and of all personnel appointments;

* continue by all practical means to encourage job applications from Catholics who in the past would not have wasted time trying.

Shorts has added a 'saving clause' insisting that this agreement is not an admission that they have practised sectarian discrimination in the past. But that is exactly what it is. It is a damning self-indictment. On the other hand, the agreement is progress, of a sort.

THE SUMMER of their discontent: Fianna Fail is in militant mood. Charlie Haughey led all his deputies out of the Dail last week after a clash on Dail procedure. The example was catching: the FF contingent on the Dublin city council then walked out in protest at being passed over for the position of Mayor of Dublin.

British Labour could learn something from these Green Tories!

IN THE early days of Northern Ireland civil rights agitation back in 1969, student activists came marching down across the Border waving condoms, intent on 'fighting sectarianism' in the 26 Counties too.

All forms of contraception were then banned in the South, according to the demands of Catholic Church doctrine. In the '70s contraception was legalised - for married couples only, on a doctor's prescription.

Contraception is still an explosive issue in the South. An attempt by Labour Party Minister of Health Barry Desmond to make contraception more widely available has triggered a revolt by Fine Gael backbenchers, and may even threaten the unity of the coalition government.

Some of these backbenchers, like Alice Glenn, are also leaders of the campaign to write the present ban on abortion into the constitution.

The crying need for reform is being brought dramatically to public attention by the case of Kildare GP Dr Andrew Rynee.

Two weeks ago he was fined £500 for giving a packet of condoms to a patient who did not qualify under the present law. Rynee was once an anti-abortion activist in Canada, believing late-stage abortion to be infanticide. Unlike the Alice Glenns he wants an alternative to abortion.

Rynee says he is prepared to go to jail to expose what he calls this 'outrageous law'. He may have to.

OFFICIAL figures just out for unemployment in Northern Ireland put it at 113,411. With 1662 recorded vacancies, that makes 68 jobless for every job. The figure is 7600 up on this time last year.

In fact the figures are falsified. They exclude unemployed men over 60 and school-leaver, who together would add a further 5600 to the total.

Male unemployment is 82,931 - 26%. Female unemployment is 30,480 - 12.6%. The figures for women are grossly falsified, too, of course. They take no account of tens of thousands of women who would go out to work if they could.

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EL SALVADOR
News Bulletin No 20 May-June 1983



El Salvador Solidarity Campaign

International news



US personnel 'advise' El Salvador troops

US war effort stepped up

By Harry Sloan

AS A vast force of American "advised" Salvadorean troops continue their grotesquely named "Operation Wellbeing", other aspects of American strategy for the crushing of the workers and peasants of Central America were meeting mixed fortunes.

Salvadorean President Magana has visited Washington with begging bowl in hand, attempting to undermine the healthy scepticism in the American Congress on Reagan's claims that there are real moves towards democracy in El

Salvador.

He hopes to ease the repeatedly interrupted flow of US funds for military spending and 'economic' measures designed to isolate the liberation forces of the FMLN.

Putting on a brave face for a President whose armed forces have been consistently losing out to the popularly supported guerrillas, Magana claimed that there was no need for the dispatch of American troops to crush the left wing fighters:

"With enough military aid, we can handle it ourselves."

One of the tactics now being employed is "Operation Wellbeing", a Vietnam-style "pacification" scheme in which troops are following up a sweep through San Vicente department by staying put in the area and attempting to win the trust of the peasants and small businessmen, enlisting their aid against the FMLN.

Such tactics failed lamentably in Vietnam, and it is no more likely that Salvador's notorious butcher squads will win willing support from terrified villagers today.

But the present war on the ground is not the only means being used by the USA to crush the rebels. Neighbouring Honduras is key to plans which involve both the training of new soldiers for the Salvadorean regime — 2,400 are being trained by the US at Puerto Castilla in Honduras — and the mounting of mercenary cross-border raids into Nicaragua by counter-revolutionary forces ('contras') who laughingly call themselves the "Nicaraguan Democratic Force."

Using CIA funds — channelled through the US embassy in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa — and CIA trainers, the US now openly claims to have assembled a task force of up to 9,000, many of them former members of dictator Somoza's National Guard, committed to harry, disrupt and if possible topple the Sandinista government.

By thus going onto the offensive and beginning seriously to threaten the revolutionary gains secured with the defeat of Somoza in 1979, the American imperialists hope to multiply the isolation of the Salvadorean fighters, and force concessions from the Sandinistas that will strengthen the hand of Nicaraguan capitalists.

Faced both with a de facto US blockade which has cut off credit, loans and sugar exports, and with a US-run military offensive, the Nicaraguan rulers have been forced to look elsewhere for support.

The sugar quota rejected by the Reagan government has been taken up by Algeria.

Meanwhile, arms and equipment supplies from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are reportedly arriving at double the usual rate, in attempts to keep up the Nicaraguan army for quick-response action.

20 newly trained Nicaraguan pilots, equipped with Mig-21 fighters are on their way back via Cuba, and Cuban forces in Nicaragua itself are now estimated at 2,000, led by General Arnaldo Ochoa, who has been on active service in Angola and Ethiopia.

It is with supreme hypocrisy that Reagan's warmongers point to this limited, defensive, build-up of military forces as Cuban or Soviet 'expansionism' in Central America.

But it is also clear that under this pressure both the Castro leadership in Cuba and the Sandinistas are increasingly looking for some kind of negotiated solution involving the imperialists — whose control the FMLN fighters are challenging.

Nicaragua has urged a meeting between their Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto and US Secretary of State Schultz.

And Ruben Zamora, a leader of the Salvadorean political opposition, the FDR, has also called on Washington to help negotiate to settle the war.

But it is obvious that as long as they scent even a faint prospect of crushing their enemies in El Salvador and Nicaragua there is no likelihood that the US imperialists will wish talks to obstruct their anti-communist crusade in Central America.

Only once the left has the Salvadorean regime by the throat and has crushed the mercenary gangsters will Washington opt for talks in the hope of stemming the tide of struggle and minimising their losses.

The objective must not be talks, but the defeat of imperialism and its puppets in Central America — and this means aiding the development of struggles until now heavily repressed in Honduras and Guatemala as well as El Salvador and Nicaragua.

To assist that fight, the workers' movement in the imperialist countries — in particular the USA and Britain — must step up the fight for political and practical solidarity with the workers and peasants of Central America.

Uranium robbery aids apartheid repression

THERE are currently over 100,000 South African military personnel in Namibia, a ratio of one to six with the civilian adult black population.

In 1983/4 Rossing will become the largest single taxpayer to the illegal regime maintaining this horrific rule.

Up until now, Rossing has paid income tax, sales tax, rates and non-resident shareholders tax, but has been deferred company tax, the largest portion of tax.

This is because Rossing's shareholders like RTZ are still getting their initial capital investment back (approximately £200 million). However, in 1983/4 Rossing will have to pay £30 million or more in company tax according to local newspaper estimates.

Payrolls

This will be spent on the South African occupation army and police payrolls, on subsidies to white farmers in the war zones and on quasi-military and Bantustan infrastructure (roads, fencing, etc) and personnel (security guards etc).

Over and above this, Rossing is directly involved in helping South Africa's war effort

through its maintenance of a 65-strong 'security force' at the mine "To maintain a state of preparedness against civil or labour or terrorist attack", according to a leaked Rossing 'security document' which the RTZ chairman has confirmed is true.

During previous strikes at the mine, Rossing has used this force and the South African police to brutally put down legitimate protests of the black workers and their efforts to get recognition for the National Union of Namibian Workers, a suppressed union which supports SWAPO.

ROSSING mine, with an annual production of 5,200 tons of uranium oxide, is the largest uranium mine in the world, producing about one-sixth of the world's supply.

Rio Tinto Zinc, Britain's largest mining company, owns just over half of Rossing and manages the mine. The other main shareholders are: the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa (13.2%), General Mining of South Africa (6.8%), and Total of France (5%).

Rossing has currently 4% of RTZ's total investment, but



There is one South African soldier to every six black adults in Namibia

earned 26% of RTZ's profit in 1982. RTZ claim that it has less 'voting' shares than the IDC but won't reveal any figures.

The UK contract began in 1968 between RTZ and the UKAEA, but changed in 1974 to a Rossing-British Nuclear Fuels Ltd contract.

In 1980 the CEBG took over the UK contract from the BNFL. When this happened, the UK government admitted that the contract had 'two agreements'.

It is not known whether this refers to the original order of 6,000 tons, plus the 1,500 added in 1971, or whether, as

has been speculated, the Tory government increased these again in 1980. Clearly, however, secret new 'agreements' can be made to increase the contract.

The government have admitted however, that far more uranium from Rossing over and above the CEBG contract is clandestinely imported into Britain for processing and re-export. Edmonsons, a small anti-trade union lorry firm based in Morecombe, delivers the material to BNFL at Springfields once it has been brought from Namibia by ship.

Will Cuban troops pull out?

UNDER sustained pressure from the South African military machine and American imperialism, the Angolan government appears ready to agree to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from the country.

The Cubans have been supporting the forces of the embattled MPLA regime against a consistent South African-backed offensive by guerrilla forces of the FNLA/UNITA.

UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi is known to have collaborated closely with the Portuguese in the days of colonial rule, and was backed by the CIA and South Africa as a pliable stooge "nationalist" to take over after the Portuguese withdrawal.

His murderous activities have been assisted by South African troops and planes, sometimes under the pretext of waging "hot pursuit" raids after

SWAPO guerrillas across the border from Namibia.

The apartheid regime has refused to discuss withdrawal of troops from Namibia unless this was 'matched' by a withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola.

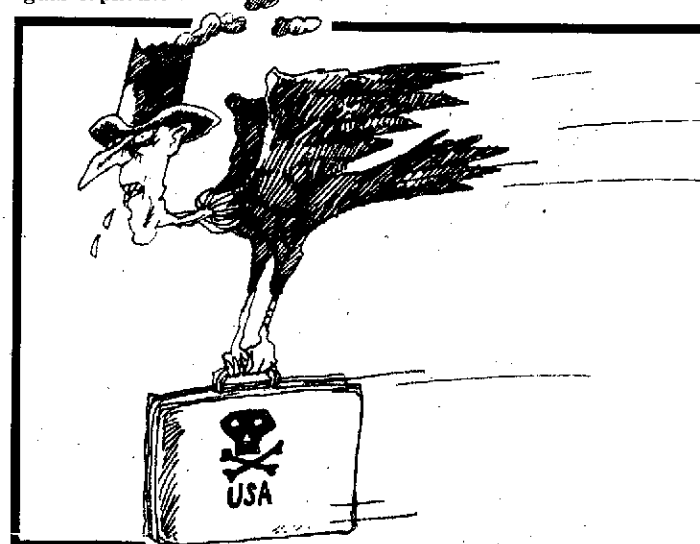
Yet the South African army is an aggressive army of occupation, while the Cubans have been there on the invitation of the MPLA.

While the USA is confident that the new 'withdrawal' plan will break the long deadlock over Namibia, there is no reason to believe the South African regime is at all willing to take any chance of losing control over Namibia, or to renounce the activity of its sponsored guerrillas inside Angola.

Until now, the South Africans have effectively sought a Cuban withdrawal as a precondition for further moves. It remains to be seen if this has really changed.



Trade union solidarity conference for Namibia — Sunday July 17, 10am at Oxford House, Derbyshire St, E2. Details 01-267 1941-2.



Interview with ERIC HEFFER

"I'm against expelling anyone for left wing views"



Eric Heffer is challenging the Kinnock/Hattersley 'dream ticket' for the Labour Party leadership. John Bloxam and Martin Thomas spoke to him.

JB: Why are you standing?

EH: I wasn't very happy to see that certain trade union leaders, without consultation with their membership, had begun to stitch the thing up. Clearly a number of them had got together - probably through the TULV - and it was almost getting back to the old days of Lawther and Williamson.

I thought this was wrong. It seemed to me that there was a whole section of the Party that would not be in any way represented. I immediately consulted a number of Parliamentary colleagues, my own constituency party, and others, and there was a general feeling that I ought to stand.

There ought to be a genuine choice in front of the Party and the trade union movement.

Contrary to what a lot of people are saying, there is a lot of support - not for me, but for the ideas that I represent, that's the important thing. And that's beginning to show itself.

MT: A lot of people in the Party see the witch-hunt as a central issue in this leadership election. The other candidates for leader have declared themselves very much in favour of the measures taken against Militant. How do you see that issue in your campaign?

EH: I have consistently fought against the expulsion of the Militant editorial board, and in fact of anyone else. I wasn't even in favour of chucking out the SDA until they said they were going to put up candidates against the Party.

I'm against the expulsion of the five Militant editorial board members. I would be against further expulsions of anybody because of their left wing views, no matter which particular group or tendency or paper they support, and, as far as I'm concerned, we have got to reverse the expulsions and find a way for those members to come back into the Party.

JB: Is that going to be an important issue in your campaign?

EH: I'm standing very clearly on that position, and I do in my initial



statement. I make it clear that all internal matters within the Party must be settled within the Party, not by administrative measures. That's what I mean by that. It's one of the points in the initial statement.

MT: Another major issue for Labour Party members now is how the Labour Party is going to recover from the defeat we have had in the election. In your statement you talk about building a mass party. What ideas will you be putting forward on that?

EH: In certain parts of the country the Labour Party has degenerated into purely an electoral machine. It has got very divorced from the lives of the people. So you've had a development of tenants' associations, of campaigns on this, that and the other, and the Labour Party has not always been central in those campaigns.

I think that's wrong. In the old days, when I first joined the Party, it was considered by the people to be their Party. They might have had criticisms of it,

but they went along to the local Labour secretary and they told them what was happening, and immediately the Labour Party would become involved.

I think we have to get back to that, but back to it on a more developed scale. We really have to have a Party which is integrated with the life of the people at all levels - primarily, of course, with working people - so that the Labour Party is naturally looked to whenever there is an issue of importance, like a diversion of a road, or the building of a block of flats, or any one of a million other issues.

The Party has got to be a tribune of the people, very much integrated with the life of the people.

And not only that. It's got to be the tribune of the people in relation to the problems of the ethnic minorities. It's got to clearly make a stand about discrimination against women. We have said it in our programmes, but I don't think we've got involved enough.

I see us building a mass party on that basis, so that the people in each area feel totally identified with the Party.

MT: The trade unions face major struggles with this newly re-elected Tory government. What role do you think the Labour Party can play in relation to those struggles?

EH: One of the most important things we have to do is to build the Party in the factories and in the places of work.

The idea of workshop branches has now become far more important. In the past you could rely on the trade union branches as being in many respects the voice of the Labour Party, but whilst that is still important, I think that the Party itself has got to have a real presence in the workplaces. We can do that by building up the workplace branches.

We have to be seen in the factories and in the workplaces as part and parcel of the leadership of the workers in those workplaces in their struggles for better conditions, improved wages, and so on.

If Tebbit gets away - as he's unfortunately likely to - with a change from opting out of the political levy to opting in - that could have a very bad effect on the income of the Party and on the strength of the Party. I think the Tories want an American-type scene, where the unions support individual representatives in Parliament, rather than the total integration of the unions in the Party that we have in this country.

In order to ensure that that doesn't happen, we have to build now more than ever the workplace branches, and give a positive lead at all levels of the trade union movement.

If a trade union decides to take some militant action, we have to be involved in that militant action. Having been a trade unionist all my life, and, before I

came into the House of Commons, having been involved in many, many industrial disputes - I've never seen the struggles of the workers in the factories and on the construction sites and in the shipyards as anything different from the political struggle. Politics and industrial struggles, as far as I'm concerned, are just two sides of the same coin.

MT: Another increasingly important part of the Labour Party is the women's organisation. What will your campaign have to say to women in the labour movement?

EH: I'd like to see a development of women's sections on a bigger scale. I do have some worries about the idea of the Women's Conference electing their representatives on the NEC.

I'm not happy about the way they're elected now, but the danger is that if you get the idea of each conference electing its own representatives, sooner or later a number of people will use this as a way of changing the basis for the election of the constituency section, and introducing a local government section, and so on.

If that happens, the power will be taken away from the Party conference. We could get a totally unrepresentative NEC.

So I have reservations about the proposal for the Women's Conference to elect the women's section of the NEC. I agree with it in principle, but I think we've got to work out a bit more closely how it would be done to make certain that my fear does not come into effect.

JB: But at the moment the women's section of the NEC is the only section that is elected by the conference as a whole.

EH: I agree that's wrong. I don't necessarily think that the women's section of the NEC should be elected by the Women's Conference as such. I think it should be elected at conference, but I think the method of doing it now is wrong. I think there should be some way for the women having a representation at the Party conference as such, and electing their representatives at the conference.

MT: What about the other proposals that have come forward recently from the Women's Conference, like the right for the Women's Conference to put resolutions directly on the agenda of the Party conference?

EH: I wouldn't have any objection to that.

JB: And positive discrimination?

EH: I'm a bit worried about positive discrimination. It depends what you mean by it.

Certainly we should have far more women involved in the Party at every level, and I would hope if we developed the women's sections properly, and they have more rights at Party conference, that would happen automatically. I would prefer to see it

'There is everything to play for in the unions'

done that way, than to suggest we should have a quota system.

JB: How do you see your campaign being developed in the trade unions?

EH: I have written to the general secretary of every trade union that is affiliated to the Labour Party, and I've had some very interesting letters back.

I've had a letter from ASTMS in which they say that they've already decided, and I've written back saying that I have read the press, but I have asked that my statement be put not only to the National Executive Committee but also to the membership.

But CoHSE, for example, has said that they intend to ask every candidate to write 1000 words and to circulate this to their membership, for the membership then to decide. NUPE are also consulting their membership as a whole. The Steel Trades have suggested that all the candidates should meet the National Executive.

And I do know that in other trade unions their conferences are meeting and there will be comrades there who will be urging that my candidature should be supported.

Of course, while I was consulting people about whether to stand, others were getting their names around. Small groups of people were already trying to decide how the thing should go. And it has had some success. There is no point denying that.

But there is still everything to play for in the trade unions.

JB: Do you think that it will be an issue in the election as to whether the democratic reforms in the Labour Party should be consolidated and pushed forward, or rolled back?

EH: Whilst there may not be much public discussion about it, I do know that there is quite a strong body of opinion amongst certain leading people that they would like to see the reforms rolled back.

As far as I'm concerned, I'm strictly, clearly in favour of the gains that we have made, and I would like to see further gains made.

MT: Looking back, how would you see the changes in the Labour Party since 1979? Obviously some people in the Labour Party see it as a period of madness which led to the election defeat...

EH: I think the changes were absolutely necessary.

Of course, with the media intervention, it was presented as if the Party was tearing itself to pieces; but all it was doing was endeavouring to renew itself. Every organisation that has any historical role at all constantly has to renew itself. If it doesn't it dies. And the Labour Party had to renew itself, both constitutionally and policy-wise.

That didn't lose us the election. The way the media presented it certainly helped to create a very bad image, but the renewal of the Party and the policy changes, in my opinion, were very good things.

Now, I think, having lost this election, we shouldn't go back to the old ideas. We should consolidate what we've got and build on what we now have.

JB: Where do you think the policy needs to be developed?

EH: In relation to the Common Market, whether we like it or not, we have Mrs T here for another five years and we're consolidated in it. I think we've still got to say that coming out of the Treaty of Rome is essential, but we clearly can't make that a constant central issue.

We now have to really develop a close liaison with like-minded socialists in Europe, in the Common Market and outside the Common Market, to work out a policy in Europe for socialist ideas. That is real internationalism.

We clearly have to do it on a wider basis too, but I think Europe is important, because if we really had a European socialist strategy it could become the part of the world that rejects both the concepts of the bureaucratic state of the Soviet Union and the free enterprise capitalist concepts of the USA. We can develop a socialist Europe which could be the basis for transforming the entire world in a socialist direction.

That may seem, perhaps, far-fetched. It may seem idealistic, it may seem a dream. But it's something that I believe we now have to try and do.

So whilst I agree totally with the basic idea that the Common Market is no good for the British people, because it is a free enter-

'In certain parts of the country, the Party has degenerated into an electoral machine'

'The renewal of the Party changes in my opinion'



Silesian miners. Heffer argues: "You can't be a genuine international socialist unless you fight oppression in the Eastern bloc"

prise rich man's club and it is designed to maintain the capitalist system — whilst that is so, I think at this stage merely to say in or out isn't enough. We've got to do far more than that.

On the question of nuclear weapons, I don't think we've got to change our policy at all. I think we have to clearly say that we're opposed to nuclear weapons in this country, that we'll fight to get rid of them, and we'll fight with other European nations to have a nuclear-free zone throughout the whole of Europe.

On other issues — I think there are many detailed policies that we'll have to have a look at. For example, on council house building: I think we perhaps need a two pronged effort there.

We must build houses for rent, and they should always be kept as rented property. But at the same time, I don't see anything wrong with developing direct works departments that can build houses for sale to working people as well.

But generally I find the present Party policy totally acceptable, and one that we've got to go out and fight for.

MT: Some of us were particularly interested in what you have said about the Common Market, because we've never thought that withdrawal from the Common Market was a left wing policy.

Certainly, the EEC is a capitalist institution. But then Britain is capitalist, and it wouldn't be any less capitalist for being outside the EEC.

It seems to me that the socialist attitude should be to recognise that capitalism has moved to a higher level of international integration, and that our job is to move the socialist struggle to that higher level, not to try to turn the clock back.

EH: Years ago I was myself not opposed to us being in the Common Market. I wrote fairly extensively on that basis: that international capitalism was developing and integrating whether we liked it or not, and that therefore to combat international capitalism we needed to integrate the forces of the working class and trade union movement internationally.

I eventually came out against Britain going into the Common Market because the Market leaders had clearly laid it down that there would be no further changes in the Treaty of Rome.

I realised that the burdens, because of the Common Agricultural Policy and so on, on the shoulders of ordinary working people in Britain, would be so great that I could not, as a working class representative, agree to that happening.

But I've always believed, and never changed my view, that arguing to come out of the Market should not in any way stop us from building unity among the socialists in Europe and the trade union movement in Europe. Whether we're in or out of the Common Market, we can never solve our problems in isolation.

We can never build socialism in isolation. Any idea of that is just nonsense. It can only be done on the basis of the extension of economic development and agreement amongst a whole number of nations.

One might argue that perhaps that's a dichotomy of positions. But then sometimes in the labour movement we do get ourselves into those situations.

I'm an old-fashioned socialist'

JB: Since the election Ken Livingstone has said that there is also a need to look at the Alternative Economy Strategy from the point of view that it doesn't go far enough and we should be talking about control of capital. Do you have any views on this?

EH: I'm an old fashioned socialist who believes passionately in the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. I was only drawn to the idea of the Alternative Economic Strategy like this. Some of the right wing ideologues of the time, like Crosland had argued for competitive public ownership. Then when the Party began to develop a policy of competitive public ownership, they came out against it. It seemed to me that one couldn't go along with this opposition.

I then adhered to it, but always with reservations. I just believe in the basic policy of public ownership.

It can be public ownership in many different ways, of course. I don't think we need to have just the old bureaucratic state-controlled public corporation. Some sections have to be nationally owned in that way — but with democratic control. But there are all sorts of public ownership which we have never properly explored or developed.

You cannot build a democratic socialist society unless you take the means of production, distribu-

tion and exchange out of the hands of those who own them at the present time. All other privileges stem from that: you have got to get rid of the private ownership of the means of production in order to build a classless society.

But we haven't been arguing that case. For years we haven't been arguing it. Some of us have but the Party as a whole hasn't.

In relation to the banks and the finance houses — a number of us on the National Executive believe that we should take them into public ownership.

MT: Do you think the Labour Party should be saying more about workers' control?

EH: Yes. I think the whole concept of workers' control needs to be properly discussed within the movement, because there are many different concepts of workers' control.

You can have workers' control without actually owning the means of production. At a given moment the workers can be powerful enough to control that situation.

But what we really should be arguing for, in my opinion, is workers' self-management. G D H Cole developed all sorts of ideas on this, which were rather schematic, but his basic concept was right — the workers themselves electing their management.

MT: Going back to the question of Europe — would you have anything to say about the duties of the British labour movement in relation to the workers of Eastern Europe?

EH: I think that, unfortunately, too often in the labour movement in this country we have found people who are prepared, quite rightly, to stand up for the rights of the workers of Chile, Argentina, South Africa, and other parts of the world, but have hidden their heads when it comes to the rights of working people in the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and so on.

I don't think you can be a genuine international socialist unless you say quite clearly that not only do you fight against oppression in fascist states and capitalist states, but also in the bureaucratic societies in the Eastern bloc. We have to defend the right of workers to create free and independent trade unions, to create free and independent political organisations, to have the right to free expression, and so on.

I don't think we can have double standards on this. I've sometimes been very unpopular, and I know I've lost votes, on this matter — but whether you lose votes or not, you can't trim your

'We have to say we will come out of Ireland'

sails on this issue.

JB: I want to go back to the issue of policy. What is your view on the National Economic Assessment?

EH: The Economic Assessment was clearly a fudged thing, and I think that has to be recognised.

You clearly had those who were opposed to any form of wages policy, either voluntary or statutory, those who wanted a voluntary wages policy; and some who perhaps would have liked a statutory wages policy.

And of course the trade union movement itself was somewhat divided on this matter, although the TUC Congress has clearly come out against it, so has Party conference.

I have to say that it was a fudge, there's no doubt about that. But of course now it's lost anyway, and it's not going to come up again in some time — what we've got now is wage batten-down by the Tories, and we'll have to be fighting every inch of the way for decent wages.

It was a fudged issue, and there is no point in me pretending otherwise. I went along with it

only to try and get an agreed policy to present to the people. We couldn't go to the electorate and say: on this, so-and-so says we ought to have a statutory wages policy and Dennis Skinner and others say we shouldn't.

MT: The Labour Party now is very explicitly in favour of a united Ireland, but it seems to me that what's missing in the policy is a realistic idea of how that can be achieved.

EH: I agree. This is again a compromise policy, because the Party is divided between those who believe the British troops should be withdrawn — either quickly or on a phased basis — and those who argue that the reality is that you have the Six Counties, the million Protestants, the sectarian divisions, British troops went in originally to assist the minority, and so on...

My own personal point of view — one I've held within the Party for a long time, so I'm not saying anything different now publicly to what I've been saying inside — is that I've always believed in a united Ireland. We have to say that we will come out of Ireland, probably on a phased

basis. I don't say you can come out tomorrow, because the two communities have got to get adjusted to the fact that troops are going to be withdrawn.

The SDLP line of a discussion on a sort of Council of all Ireland at least lays the basis. I think that to work through that, plus a clear statement that we are going to come out, phased over a period of time — that should be the Party's policy. And a total acceptance of the idea of a united Ireland.

I've always believed that this was going to happen. Because even if you get rid of the violence now, for a few years, if you have not solved the problem of the Border, it's only a matter of time before it all flares up again. That is the truth, and we had better look the truth in the face.

JB: Some people have argued that your candidature is more a protest candidature than one with a chance of winning...

EH: No, it's a very serious candidature. Apart from anything else, I think that the policies I stand for are the policies not only of the Left but of wide sections of the Party.

In this last couple of weeks, I've had many letters from ordinary working people which have given me a tremendous personal feeling that I'm doing the right thing. I'm not just talking about Party members — I've had lots of letters from Party members, of course, but also from ordinary people who are Labour voters.

I think it's a real contest. Out there, there are millions of people in the labour movement who would say: 'Yes, he does represent the things that I believe in'.

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TV Review

It's our civilisation too!

THE BBC is re-running Kenneth Clark's commentary on 'Civilisation' (Friday, 7.45pm, BBC2). Clark, who died in May, made the 14 part series in 1969.

The first programme, last Friday, covered the Dark Ages — the period from the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the face of the Germanic invasions in the 5th century, to the beginnings of the new feudal order under the empire of Charlemagne, in the early 9th century.

Clark presented John Ruskin's opinion as also his own: that, of humanity's words, deeds and art, the latter is the decisive test, measure and substance of a civilisation. This is a rather narrow and elitist view of civilisation, though it is true as far as it goes.

Clark also identifies 'civilisation' exclusively with West European civilisation, and the identification has a particularly distorting effect for this period — the run-in to Western Europe

by Martin Thomas

in fact becoming the most advanced centre of civilisation, rather than the relatively backward area it had been in Antiquity.

The partial preservation of the cultural heritage of Antiquity by the Christian Church was Clark's theme, and it is part of the truth. (Though he gave the misleading impression that Christianity in the Dark Ages was confined to small pockets: in truth the Germanic invaders were converted very rapidly).

The other part of the truth was the creation, amidst the terrible collapse of previous civilisation, of a new, more dynamic social order.

Much else of the same sort could be said. But it would be wrong to lose sight of what's

valuable in the series amidst a heap of such criticisms.

Socialism is not about negating past civilisation, but making its fruits more widely accessible and building on it.

Some of us got dribs and drabs of education on the art and culture of the past at school — but how many of us remember any of that? With even the sketchiest idea of a Marxist view of history in our heads, the whole story becomes more meaningful, but by then we have forgotten most of it.

It would be difficult to find a more accessible way of learning or re-learning some of that story than this series. Watch it if you can.

And if irritation at Clark's commentary drives you to try to find out more about the real processes behind the art and culture, all the better. The first programme set me re-reading Perry Anderson's book, 'Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism', and I recommend it.

'Framed Youth'

'FRAMED Youth — Revenge of the Teenage Perverts' is a 50 minute video tape made by young lesbians and gays about themselves and their friends, aimed primarily at young audiences in schools, youth clubs and community groups.

The video documents the personal experiences and problems of young lesbians and gays — their first relationships, coming out, parents, school, physical violence, and the future.

At the moment of a right wing resurgence in British politics, it attempts to capture a new mood and outlook after a decade of the women's and gay movements.

The project was started a year ago, funded by Channel 4 and the Greater London Arts Association; to give an opportunity to young lesbians and gays to learn about video and make a tape for distribution. The video was researched, filmed, scripted and edited by young lesbians and gays. Over 25, aged between 18 and 23, have been involved, who had no previous experience of video.

Over 80 young people were interviewed for the video.

Particularly significant is the fact that the project was conceived as a mixed lesbian and gay venture.

Rather than just another documentary of a minority, the video will hopefully communicate with a young audience as a strong and angry statement about themselves and their situation.

The video is available on VHS and Betamax from Albany Video, the Albany, Douglas Way, London SE8, telephone 692 0231, for sale or hire.



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 low-waged individuals, £1 unwaged.

Film Review



Jerry Lewis and Robert de Niro

'The King of Comedy'

by Andrew Hornung

AT the centre of most Martin Scorsese films there stand obsessive, often violent, men — people at once fearful and pathetic. Driven by the will to get out from under — thrashing about in the dark ignorance of that "under" world — they strive for the promise of the American dream.

The central figure of 'The King of Comedy', once again played by Robert de Niro, is Rupert Pupkin. Rupert has drunk the American dream so long he has forgotten what non-liquid food looks like. His idea of success is to be a famous comedian.

If Pupkin is gentler than the hero of 'Taxi Driver' or 'Raging Bull' he is no less compulsive. Forcing his way into comedy star Jerry Longford's taxi, he gets Longford to agree to listen to some material. But Pupkin doesn't know the difference between the words 'fame' and 'failure'. Finally he hijacks Longford in order to get himself a ten-minute spot on his idol's show.

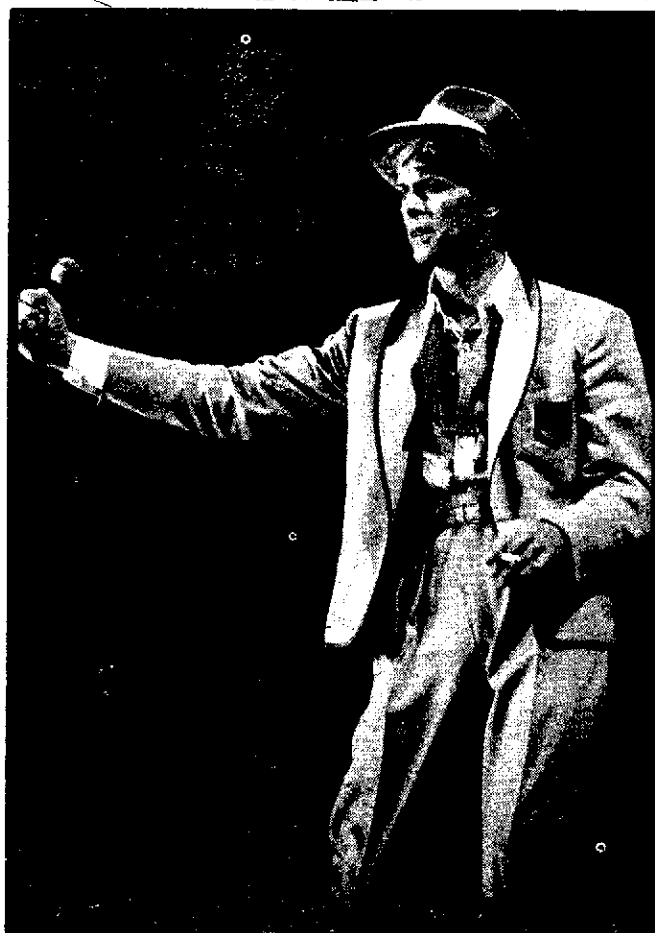
As in 'Taxi Driver', the hero's crime itself leads to popularity: the heroes are no different from the public and the public lives through its heroes. Life isn't a dream, but the life of dreams alone offers redemp-

tion. Of all Scorsese's films this is the poorest. It is psychologically and socially the most threadbare.

The hi-jinx plot coupled with the zany characters (like Pupkin's girl-friend Marsha) are too over-the-top to achieve any serious purpose. You cannot depict the crushing impact of 'the American dream' on an individual or on human relationships if you fail to depict any believable individuals or human relationships.

It is not the humour itself — 'Mean Streets' is, I think, a much funnier film although it is by no means a comedy — but the lack of any developed context for the humour which makes the laughs hollow.

In any case, the funniest thing in the film is de Niro's characterisation, and de Niro as Pupkin is just the same as de Niro of 'New York, New York', the de Niro of 'Raging Bull' and the de Niro and Harvey Keitel characters of 'Mean Streets'. Scorsese's best films shimmered with brilliant observation. 'The King of Comedy' manages some amusing send-ups of the chat-show and comedy-show format but it is not developed enough to go beyond such easy targets. The strengths of the earlier films is thus sacrificed for light-weight spoofing.



Yes, human after all!

by John Mullings

YES, David Bowie is a human being after all. After years of everybody thinking that he was either super-human or sub-human (after the ghastly scene involving the Nazi salute at Victoria Station in 1976), Bowie came through at Milton Keynes as emotional, funky and enjoying every minute of it.

It is quite a feat for somebody to go through a doldrums of drugs and decadence for such a long period and to come leaping into the arena as though nothing had happened.

This is not to say unscathed. He ignored requests that he comment on the current political crisis in Britain and simply mentions unemployment and poverty in the songs Ricochet and It's No Game respectively without tackling the questions involved.

This can be attributed to the deadness of Bowie's personal life until fairly recently, as a result of being cocooned in the super-star life-style.

Life-style

As was evident at the start of the show, this sort of life-style is not fun. The group were noticeably tired after travelling and performing at thirty-five venues all over the world.

The Beat, who were supporting, don't have this problem and were lively and clear throughout their set. The beat in Bowie's group had obviously been mislaid in What in the World, and the shots weren't fired until Fashion.

Catching up with Bowie's enthusiasm was the problem with the group, but once they were relaxed the dancing took hold.

Bowie's songs in the past have always had a distancing or alienating effect.

Angst-ridden to the point of despair, the LP Scary Monsters and Super Creeps confronted that feeling and could not cope with it.

For him to sing these songs with his new found confidence and optimism, seemed almost an impossibility and occasionally I was not convinced.

Roughness of finish didn't compensate for guilt in: 'Time and again, I tell myself I'm staying clean tonight But the little green wheels keep

following me
Oh no! not again!"
of Ashes to Ashes.

Funk and feel lifted in Fame, the brass/horn section being a noticeable improvement on the synthesised "look we can play the dots" tour of 1978 (recorded on 'Stage').

Also, here, and on the recent LP Let's Dance, are the first time where guitar solos are not boring — thank you Earl Shik and Stevie Vaughn.

Soulfulness and little more focused sax and vocals rang true in Young Americans. Holding back in these moments, particularly in Space Oddity, paid off for the energy and electricity generated was astonishing — fiery and erotic in Let's Dance and Stay.

Lou Reed's White Light, White Heat didn't seem dated, Bowie's new intensity helping out here, highlighting the intimacy of the show.

Reed's songs had always been flippant and close to audience and the added technology of a huge video screen, make this as possible as it can be with an audience of tens of thousands.

How a song writer can rely on such simple structures and still make a new noise is mystifying but Bowie has proved that it can be done as long as the terms of reference are not simply musical.

Left Press

By Tom Brown

In two minds on talks?

ARTHUR Scargill's militant stance for mass action and against talks with the Tories hit the headlines of Saturday's Morning Star, coupled with an interview in similar vein.

One might have thought that this daily paper of the Communist Party would be fearlessly promoting this line and strongly attacking those who oppose it.

Not so. The Star's coverage during the preceding week had seen its Industrial Correspondent deftly tip-toeing through the tulips to avoid offending right wing union bosses.

Friday's Morning Star chose the bizarre headline "Murray backs action to defend rights outside Parliament" to conceal its report of the speech to the NUR conference in which Murray attacked Scargill as "plain daft".

This was no sub-editing blunder. Wednesday's Morning Star had attached the headline Unions must fight Tories to an account of a speech by outgoing Confed President Pam Turner (GMBATU) which actually called for talks with the Tories.

The Star went even further and deleted the key passage from its report of the speech: only readers of the capitalist press could discover her carefully phrased offer that:

"We are prepared to work with any democratically elected government — but not on our knees."

The Morning Star, for its part, appears to be prepared to present the "best" side of any existing union leadership — if necessary on its knees.

Who does Tribune support in the Labour leadership elections? A Comment article in the June 24 edition makes it clear that they oppose the "nightmare" combination of Kinnock and Hattersley: but says nothing of whom they do support.

Kinnock is generously described, Hattersley denounced: but none of the other candidates is mentioned. Nor, significantly, is the issue of the witch-hunt, to the pursuit of which both men are equally pledged, and which is opposed only by Eric Heffer and Michael Meacher.

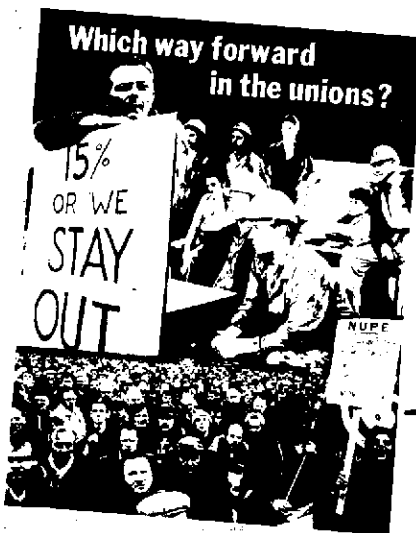
So where does Tribune stand on Eric Heffer's challenge to Kinnock?

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Part two of a report on the Youth Training Scheme

Fighting the YTS rip-off

SOME trade union bodies have adopted a position of simply refusing to cooperate with YTS.

The National Union of Journalists Annual Delegate Meeting urged its NEC to instruct NUJ chapels not to cooperate and to campaign for the TUC to cease its involvement. The National Graphical Association has enforced a policy of total non-cooperation with YTS.

Birmingham Trades Council has likewise said it will support any trade union branch opposing YTS. Its policy, however, also argues that the labour movement cannot simply 'refuse to recognise' YTS.

YTS will be a fact, come September, and the labour movement has a duty to fight for the interests of the hundreds of thousands of youth who will go into it.

So Birmingham Trades Council has formulated a list of conditions to fight for where YTS is introduced:

1. Topping-up of pay
2. Guaranteed jobs at the end of the scheme
3. An increase in the holiday allowance from the 17½-day minimum provided by the YTS
4. The right for trainees to join a union; trade union recognition; the right for trade unions to recruit trainees
5. A minimum of 13 weeks off the job training in public sector education establishments. The training to provide recognised skills and qualifications.
6. Equal opportunities
7. Provision for the disabled

Young people on YOP: entrants by scheme type.

	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82
WEEP	138,900 (76%)	242,200 (79.5%)	371,000 (80.5%)
CP	35,900 (20%)	50,300 (16.5%)	74,100 (16%)
TW	7,300 (4%)	12,000 (4%)	16,200 (3.5%)
TOTAL	182,100	304,500	461,500

WEEP: Work Experience on Employers Premises

CP: Community Projects (formed in 1981 from an amalgamation of the 'Community Service' and 'Project Based Work Experience').

TW: Training Workshops

8. Employee status, proper grievance, disciplinary and complaints procedures

9. A minimum of 5 days off the job training on trade unionism and health and safety, to be provided by the TUC education service

10. Full employee rights under health and safety legislation. (At present YOP trainees are covered by some parts of the Health and Safety at Work Act, but the MSC insists that union safety reps cannot represent 'non-employees'.)

11. Right for trainees to make complaints through the careers service that referred them to the scheme or through a trade union

12. Every trainee to be given a card outlining his/her rights

13. Training of supervisors and trainers to be done in the public sector

14. No job substitution.

The Trades Council has also decided to lead a campaign among trainees, and to organise a conference on YTS once the scheme is in operation.

In South London, the South-west Unemployed People's Act-

ion group has formulated the following list of conditions:

1. Guaranteed job at the end

2. Employee status for trainees

3. Relevant trade union involvement at all levels - i.e. full collective bargaining over conditions and 'topping-up' of wages to union rates

4. Training of a better standard than laid down by the MSC. Adequate staff to carry out training. Off-the-job general education. The training must end with a trade union approved qualification

5. Discrimination in favour of disadvantaged groups, i.e. women and blacks

6. Youth trainee schemes to be accompanied by re-training schemes for adult workers

Hackney Trades Council has put the following demands to the local Labour council:

1. Trainees' pay to be 'topped

Campaign for the TUC to withdraw from the MSC

up' to £60 per week

2. Proper contracts of employment

3. Proper training for permanent jobs

4. Full health and safety, equal opportunities, and trade union participation and control

In Islington, the Labour council has adopted a policy of:

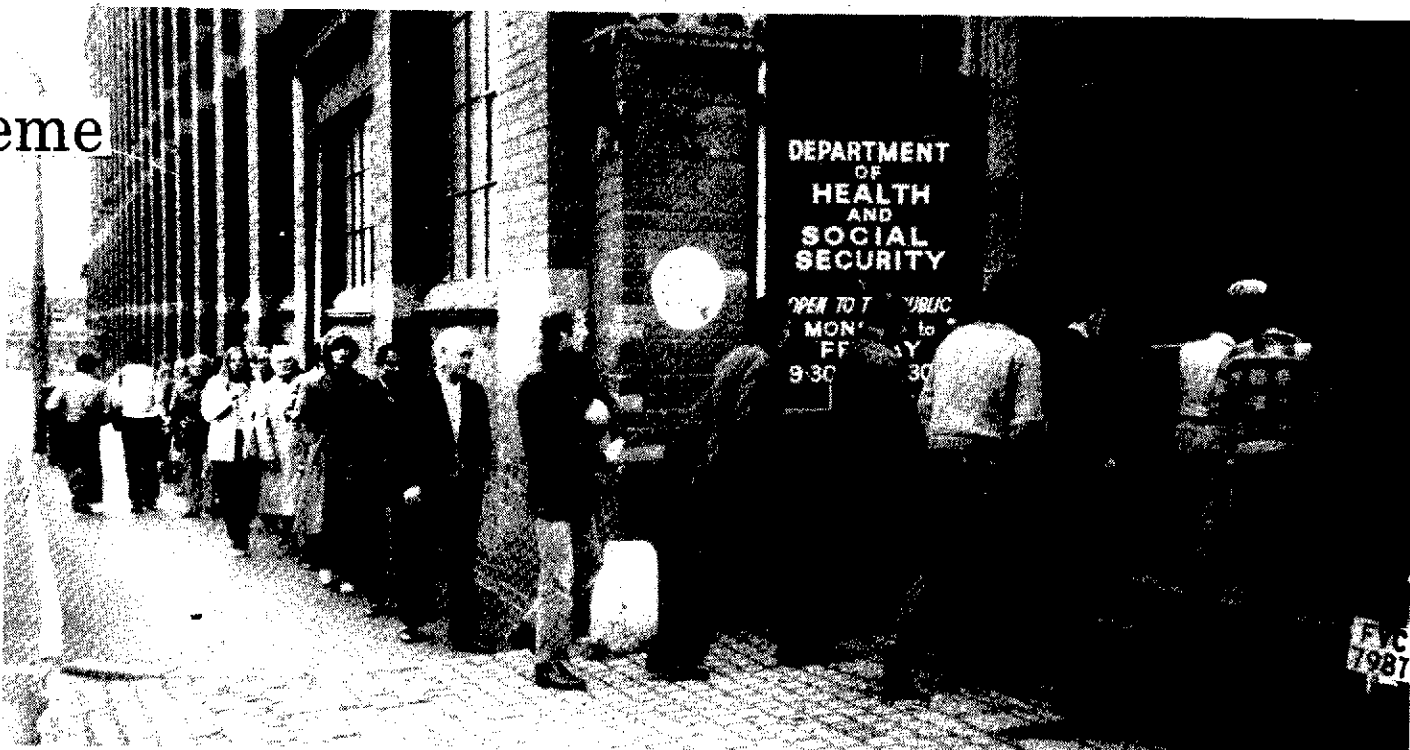
1. Wages topped up to union rates

2. Union agreement before implementation of any scheme

3. Employee status under health and safety legislation

4. No job substitution.

Pat Longman, a Labour councillor and Socialist Organiser supporter, told us: 'The crucial issue of a job at the end is still not resolved'. She thought that pressing for these conditions was a better approach than the straight non-cooperation policy favoured by her own union, the NGA - which results only in YTS trainees being concentrated in unorganised workplaces.



YTS: off the dole queues - for a year's cheap labour and then back again...?

Number of apprenticeships in manufacturing and engineering (000s).

	1967	1973	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
All manufacturing	242.6	155.5			149.5	147.6	123.7
Engineering	171.6	105.8			101.3	104.9	87.8

Decline in Manufacturing Youth Trainees and growth of YOPs

Manufacturing Trainees (excl. apprentices)	201.9	157	116.3	111.3	90.0	62.9	56.0
YOP entrants			162.2	216.4	360.0	550.0	630.6

THE role of the MSC also looms large in the government's attempt to phase out the system of time-served apprenticeships. ICI set the pattern last year when it unilaterally repudiated the agreement it had with the AUEW.

Under that agreement it would normally have taken on 50 apprentices. Instead they took on 192 school leavers as trainees for one year.

As with YTS, the year contains three months off the job and nine months on-site training. The company reduces the apprenticeship allowance, previously agreed with the union, from £54 to £40 a week. At the end of the year there will only be 50 apprenticeship places available for the second year, thus placing the 192 young

workers in intense competition with each other.

In selecting which 50 of the 192 young workers to retain it can be assumed that manifestations of independent thinking or a pronounced commitment to trade union and socialist principles will not score high marks. As a recent issue of Labour Research put it:

'The net result will do nothing to cut unemployment. It will merely add 142 well-trained 17 year olds to the Cleveland dole queue in September.'

The straight bat cry of 'defend our apprenticeships' is a hopelessly inadequate response.

As the above figures show, traditional apprenticeships have been in irreversible decline for over a decade. Indeed, to persevere with time serving appren-

ticeships in a period of rapid technological change is to produce workers with out of date skills while guaranteeing shortages of the skills for which there is a demand. This is the reason why employers increasingly prefer flexible programmes.

Instead of making their stand on the ground of a mythical golden age that was far from free of abuses, many trade unions are already recognising that they must fight on the terrain of reality and the future. Here the issues are:

- 1) Control of syllabus content.
- 2) Control of trainee intake.
- 3) Trainee rights including trade union rights.
- 4) Wages and conditions.

NALGO, the Town Hall union, will be heavily involved in YTS schemes run by local authorities. Its policy is to demand the following conditions:

1. Topping-up of wages. (NALGO is, however, likely to set targets below the present minimum entry rate of £52 a week in local government.)

2. No job substitution

3. Trainees to be fully covered by local and national conditions of service on hours, sick leave, etc., and to have full rights to join a union

4. Allowances for clothing, footwear, safety equipment, and travel

5. Trainees to be given an equal opportunity for any permanent vacancies within six months of the end of their year

NATFHE, the tech college lecturers' union, is particularly concerned about YTS from two angles.

First: privatisation of education. A lot of the off-the-job training for YTS is to be done by private firms like Pitmans, Sight & Sound, and Link. Training of YTS trainees in North London is to be done by STC.

Second, to fit in with the schedules of YTS, where colleges do the off-the-job training they are being required to work a 48 week year.

The union nationally supports YTS and has accepted the 48 week year - but some colleges have not. Activists in NATFHE are also concerned about lack of any action by the union on privatisation.

The call for trade unions to withdraw from the Manpower Services Commission is part of the struggle for the labour movement to break links with the Tories.

But where this demand has not yet been won, members should insist that union representatives on Manpower Boards report back to their union on a regular basis.

We should call for all schemes to be vetted by Area Manpower Boards (and the necessary staff to be hired to make inspection of all schemes possible); for Trades Councils and union branches to be informed of all schemes within their areas; for employers' applications for approval of schemes to be fully detailed, and for the right to join a union to be a condition of any scheme being approved.

In the discussion on the Left about how to fight the YTS, the three basic points of agreement are therefore:

1. To campaign for the TUC to withdraw from the Manpower Services Commission and to with-

draw its endorsement for the scheme

2. To formulate a list of demands to be fought for by the labour movement as conditions for the introduction of YTS in workplaces

3. To campaign to organise the trainees themselves into unions so that they can fight for those and for other demands.

Among activists we spoke to, the contentious issue seemed to be whether we should focus on stopping the scheme wherever possible (with demands on conditions as a fallback when that fails); or whether such an attitude is ultimately a useless moral gesture, which cannot stop YTS but only hinders the fight to organise the trainees and improve their conditions.

What do readers think?

Get out of that armchair and into the country!



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

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

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.



Agenda

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.

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.

ROACH Family Support Committee public meeting: 'Why there must be an independent public inquiry into the death of Colin Roach'. Speakers: Roach family, Mike Mansfield, Ron Smith. Friday July 8, 7.30 at Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, E8.

LABOUR Coordinating Committee conference: 'Has Socialism a future?' July 22-24, Manchester Poly Student Union. Fee £12 waged, £6 unwaged, to LCC, 9 Poland St, London W1.

POLISH Solidarity Committee (Glasgow): working conference on the opposition in Eastern Europe. Saturday/Sunday September 17/18, in Glasgow. Contact Glasgow PSC, Gordon Morgan, 59 Durward Ave, Glasgow G41 (041-649 8958).

Labour CND prepares for Brighton

THE Labour CND model motion for Labour Party conference acquires added importance given the new offensive against unilateralism by the right wing. It reads:

Conference reaffirms the disarmament decisions of the annual conferences of 1980, 1981 and 1982, to:

- refuse Cruise missiles,
- cancel the Trident programme,
- reject any fresh nuclear weapons and bases and unconditionally remove all existing nuclear weapons and bases, including Polaris, from British soil and British waters,
- bring Britain's military expenditure as a percentage of the Gross National Product into line with that of the average of our major European allies,
- dismantle the Defence Sales Office,
- introduce the neces-

sary institutions to assist in the conversion of the defence industry to socially useful goods, thus utilising the skills and resources of the industry.

Conference recognises the need to discuss the implementation of this programme with our allies, but stresses that this shall not weaken our commitment to, or our time-table in, securing a non-nuclear defence strategy for Britain.

This conference deplores the increasing commitment of the Conservative government to militarism, demonstrated by the introduction of military training under the Youth Training Scheme, an increasing defence budget, and new civil defence regulations designed to compel locally elected councils to obey central directives on war planning, and its total fail-

ure to support disarmament proposals at the United Nations.

Conference therefore resolves that an urgent and continuous campaign should be launched inside and outside parliament to present and implement this policy. Conference therefore:

- instructs the NEC to set up an anti-nuclear weapons campaign committee to organise demonstrations and activities, and provide publicity material in order to encourage continuous public campaigning on this issue in every constituency. When the case for unilateral nuclear disarmament is clearly presented it succeeds in winning majority support.
- demands that the Parliamentary Labour Party exploit parliamentary procedure to the full to explain the case.

Conference demands that in our continuous cam-

paigning and in the next general election manifesto we make it clear that a future Labour government will unconditionally scrap all nuclear weapon systems immediately on taking office. From now on our task is to mobilise massive public support for this policy and to emphasise that:

- abandonment of nuclear weapons will increase our security,
- our policy of industrial conversion will increase secure employment.

Conference supports the CND demonstration on October 22 and emphasises that our priority — in co-operation with the TUC and CND — is to step up campaigning against the installation of Cruise missiles.

* Labour CND, 11 Pembury Road, Worthing, Sussex.

Where to find Socialist Organiser

SCOTLAND

Glasgow. For details of meetings contact paper sellers or Stan Crooke, 300 Langside Rd, Glasgow G42. SO is sold at Maryhill dole (Tuesday mornings) and Rutherglen shopping arcade (Friday lunchtime).

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

* NORTH-WEST

Rochdale. Meets second Monday of the month.

Rochdale. 'After the election, what next?': public meeting Monday July 11, 8pm, Castle Inn, Manchester Road.

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 (328198).

* YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

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

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

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

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

York. Contact 796027. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, outside the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings.

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

* WALES

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

* MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Meets alternate Fridays, 7.30pm, the Hen and Chickens, Constitution Hill. Next meeting: Friday July 8, on 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 Blackthorne Books, High St.

Northampton. Contact 713606.

Nottingham. Meetings 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 St. Contact: Pete Radcliff, 585640.

* SOUTH

Oxford. SO is sold at the Cornmarket (Saturday 11-1) and outside Tesco, Cowley Rd., Friday 5-7. Also at EOA Books, Cowley Rd.

Basingstoke. Business meetings July 15, 29. All meetings 7.30 at Chute House. SO is sold at 'Good News' in London St.

LONDON

North-West London. Readers' meetings first Sunday of month. Phone Mick, 624 1931, for details. SO is sold at Kilburn Books.

Hackney. Contact Andrew Hornung, 76 Carysfort Rd, London N16.

Haringey. Contact 802 0771 or 348 5941. Meets every other Thursday, 7.30, Trade Union Centre, Brabant Rd.

Hounslow. SO is sold outside All Saints Church,

Hounslow High St, Saturday 10.30-12.

Islington. Contact Nik, 278 1341.

Southwark/Lambeth. Next meeting Wednesday July 20, Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. Business 7.30, Open forum 8.30.

South-East London. Tuesday July 12: business meeting 7.30, at the Lee Centre, Aislbie Rd, SE12. Open forum 8.30, with speaker on Chile.

Newham. Contact via 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Tower Hamlets. Public meeting Monday July 11, 7.30 at Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road: Jeremy Corbyn MP and John Blosam on 'After the election, how to fight the Tories'.

Regular meetings fortnightly on Fridays, 6.30-8.30. Contact 377 1328 for details.

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

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.

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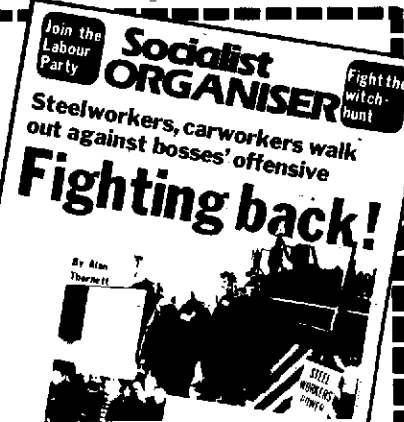
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Vatican's various allies

JOHN O'Mahony's analysis of the Church's role in Poland ('Why Jaruselski is pleased to welcome the Pope') is more than borne out by the subsequent article in the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano. The article stated that Lech Walesa should now abandon his role in the struggle for the independence of the Polish working class and that Solidarnosc should accept the counter-revolutionary military coup of the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy as a fact of life. The Polish workers should, of course, pray for better times in some unspecified future.

Only a few months ago, the Pope was touring Central

America and telling the people of Nicaragua and El Salvador that they should seek 'peaceful solutions' in the face of US imperialism's butchers.

As comrade John points out, "The Catholic Church is the oldest bureaucracy in existence..." It will support any ruling class or bureaucratic caste, however oppressive, that serves its material interests. The Church's hierarchy understands that, in a socialist world, its material base would be utterly destroyed.

It is therefore an implacable enemy of the world socialist revolution; but it has a very clear understanding of the world revolutionary process — far clearer, unfortunately, than some of our

comrades in the workers' movement.

The Catholic Church has no illusions about the world being divided into two 'camps' — one 'progressive', the other 'imperialist'. There are probably very few 'Marxists' in the Vatican bureaucracy, and even fewer students of Trotsky, but, by their treatment of the governments of different countries around the world, the hierarchy demonstrate a clear grasp of the fact that there are three distinct sectors of the struggle towards a socialist world revolution: the Vatican preaches 'peaceful solutions' to the permanently-revolutionary struggles in the semi-colonial ('Third World') countries; it cautions against the sinfulness of abandoning nuclear weapons in the rich imperialist countries; and it preaches acceptance of bureaucratic oppression in the Stalinist countries.

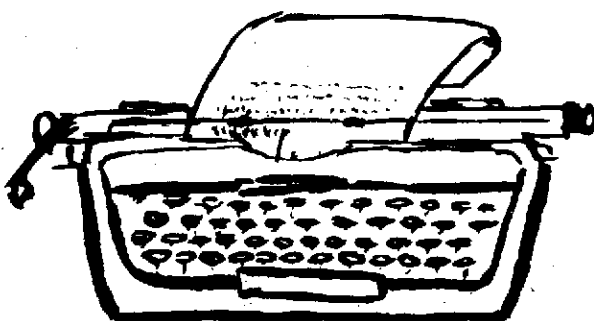
For the Church recognises what the great American Trotskyist, James P. Cannon, described in the 1940s, that "... Stalinism is essentially an agency of world imperialism in the labour movement of the advanced countries, as well as in the colonial world". We have to recognise that, whilst we must give unconditional support to the revolutionary struggles against imperialism in Central America, we will undermine those struggles and disarm our own working class's support for them, if we do not resolutely oppose their support for Stalinist positions — in particular their condemnation of the Polish workers' struggle through Solidarnosc.

The success of a political revolution, sparked off by a mass movement such as Solidarnosc, would deal the death-blow to imperialism in the colonial world and lead to mass support for revolutionary socialism in countries like Britain. Readers of Socialist Organiser should know that this is the position of the majority of Trotskyists in Britain and, indeed, throughout the world socialist revolutionary movement. The 'Angry Reader of Stockport' position is a minority one amongst Trotskyists.

JOHN NOLAN
Birkenhead

* 'Angry Reader' wrote to SO supporting Castroite politics in Central America.

Writeback



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

Digging for victory?

Harry Sloan's car worker who credits me with 'the class consciousness of a potato', SO 136, because of my recent article on Iran clearly knows very little about potatoes. And even less about Iran.

Harry Sloan's recent articles and letters about Iran would suggest that he suffers from the same political and horticultural failings.

He endorses Khomeini's claim of last year that Iran imports nothing from the USA. A minimal acquaintance with the empirical evidence shows up the fallacy of such a claim.

He tells us that Iranian imports from Eastern European countries have increased. But the jump in these imports was caused by the American trade embargo, not by some 'turn' to Moscow by the Iranian government.

He tells us that imports from Third World countries have increased. But he doesn't say what percentage of these are merely indirect American or European imports.

The real indictment of Harry Sloan's articles is the complete absence of any analysis of the contradictions within the Iranian regime, the class forces they represent, and the particular forms and level of class struggle within Iran.

Instead, the readership of Socialist Organiser is offered a factually inaccurate and politically misleading scenario: Iran's 'break with Moscow', its

'turn' to imperialism, and the subsequent banning of the Tudeh Party as a 'blow against working class resistance to the regime.'

Whilst he condemns a 'two camps' view of the world in others, Harry Sloan's scenario of Iranian politics is based upon exactly such a view. Political developments (such as the banning of the Tudeh Party) are not related back to the class struggle within Iran, but attributed to Khomeini deciding to pitch his tent in a different camp.

In no way does the Tudeh Party deserve to be defended by socialists. (The half-sentence in my original article on Iran had been added by a sub-editor; it certainly had nothing to do with me). The role played by the Tudeh Party — actively aiding the regime in the physical liquidation of left wing oppositionists — places it on the other side of the class divide.

Given Harry Sloan's position on the Tudeh Party, he would presumably have campaigned in defence of Beria after 1953. Beria helped build the terror apparatus of a 'rabidly anti-communist regime' (as did the Tudeh) and then fell victim to the regime he helped to create (as did the Tudeh).

And potatoes at least have this advantage, that I have yet to come across a potato which has campaigned in defence of Beria and/or the Tudeh Party.

Stan Crooke, alias Edward King

Hard heads versus wishful thinking?

I WAS astonished by the farrago of self-delusion and demagoguery which constituted the article by Harry Sloan on the front page of the post-election issue of Socialist Organiser.

Surely the author cannot possibly believe that Thatcher returned to office by grace and favour of 'the prosperous middle classes and [people] in rural areas.' It may suit the illusory preconceptions of sections of the Left to believe this to be the case, but it does not correspond to reality.

On page 3 of the same issue Martin Thomas refers to the findings of a Gallup Poll analysed by Ivor Crewe in The Guardian of 13 June. In this, Crewe highlighted the extent of the collapse in working class support for Labour; 'among trade unionists the Labour vote was only 7% ahead of the Conservatives', 'Labour's share of the working class electorate... was down to barely a quarter (27%)'. 'In 1959, when the Conservatives' overall majority was 100, 62% of manual workers still voted Labour, last Thursday the figure was 38%.'

Admittedly Gallup's figures are subject to all the qualifications which must be made concerning such a poll, but it is likely that they are a fair approximation to reality. It may be an uncomfortable reality for the Left to face but it is unavoidable. The task facing socialists is not to hide from these facts, but to try and explain them and derive conclusions for the future.

Martin Thomas in the article referred to above touched on some of the factors involved but they will require much more extensive analysis. Martin refers to the Falklands War being 'a decisive factor'. Here he touches upon another uncon-

fortable truth for socialists, the deep-seated chauvinism of the British working class, especially in the South of England which Thatcher's Falklands adventure stirred to life. How could it be otherwise in a nation with 400 years of imperialist conquest and exploitation behind it?

Again, the lesson is surely not to ignore such phenomenon, but to argue for the rejection of the nationalistic perspective within Labour's programme which avoids a confrontation with chauvinist instincts.

Further illusory perspective was expressed in a short piece on page 3 of the same issue of Socialist Organiser, referring to the problems now facing the SDP. It may be the case that careerists 'will now stream out' of the Alliance.

But wishful thinking is no substitute for analysis, and the reality is that in over 100 constituencies in the South of England, the Alliance now runs second to the Tories. A swing of 5% or more away from the Tories at the next general election would likely put these seats in Alliance rather than Labour hands, making the Alliance the major opposition force in Parliament.

Of course, such a scenario can easily be overturned by many other factors at play, but, again, we witness an unconvincing haste to duck the facts in order to make reality fit tired preconceptions.

Unless we face the full magnitude of the task that confronts democratic socialists, then we will fall back on ancient rallying cries that lead us to political irrelevance. Fight on, proclaims Harry Sloan, 'there is nowhere for us to run to'. Don't you believe it. Certainly there is nowhere for the working class to run to, but there can be little

doubt that we will soon witness many of the socialist intelligentsia running about like headless chickens; some will join the SDP, others will happily retreat to the ghetto-like existence of the Leninist sects, whilst others will retire to polishing up the footnotes in their neglected theses and tending herb gardens.

The massive task that confronts us is the transformation of the Labour Party and the trade unions in terms of policy, outlook, accountability and campaigning methods. Refusal to face facts and summonses to 'hard line class-war opposition' are no substitute for some hard-headed thinking on these subjects.

JOHN CAMPBELL
Glasgow

Rebuild the base

IT CAN'T simply be assumed that if last month Labour had fought on a socialist manifesto with a united leadership, then we would have won a massive victory.

To rebuild Labour's base we have to convince people that they want a socialist society. Obviously that it done through work in particular struggles, but we should also try to explain to people why we want a socialist society, and, as far as possible, what it would be like.

If we come across as negative, good at saying what we're against but not at saying what we're for, then we're not very likely to inspire people, or to convince them that socialism really is a better system.

Also, the Labour Party isn't seen often enough, except on TV and in the papers. Active involvement by the party in the community and workplaces, getting the party known as a part of everyday life, can change that.

And what's wrong with the local ward being known for good discos and for showing good films as well as for directing the tenants' association?

ALISON JEFFRIES,
London.

'Now listen, love'

Now weeks of strike had ended
And gathered for a spree
Were poor but happy workers
Who'd struggled mightily
And won two cents an hour, or
maybe it was three.

All was friendliness and cheer,
Till a simple girl began
To ask some questions impolite
Of a leading Labour man
Who was busily expounding
A ten year contract plan.

The girl was young and puzzled
A rank and filer she
'How come', she asked, 'that you
receive
Six times more pay than we?
I cannot see the reason for
Such gross disparity'.

The leader bristled as he spoke
'It is because we're able
To push the union enterprise
Around the conference table
And know our wage scales and
talk...

Make sure that mine's Black
Label!'

Another leader joined the fray
Known for his verbal darts
'And don't forget statistics, man,
And differential parts
And escalator clauses
And cost of living charts!'

'Now listen love', a third man
puffed,
A cagey little guy
Who talked to government
ministers as well
As he managed the small fry,
'Take my advice and hold your
tongue,
It's better not to pry!'

The union members were
impressed
By these superior men,
But some still said the girl had
sense,
And some said more but then
They didn't know what else to
say,
They were peaceful union men.

Now come on, let's not spoil the
fun,
Forget it! Have a drink!
A lively brother interposed, with
an impish little wink,
We'll settle this some other time,
It's later than you think.

Hear hear! Good lad! the
members cried,
Someone proposed a cheer
For wise intrepid leaders,
And all of them drank beer,
And talked about another rise
Perhaps four cents next year.

Matilda Robbins



TROOPS OUT NOW!

Join the Labour Committee
on Ireland, BM Box 5355,
London WC1N 3XX.

Greenings

IT'S WEEK 16 for the strikers at Greenings engineering factory in Warrington. The 350 workers are as determined as ever to slog it out with the bosses until they back off from their attempt to wreck trade union organisation in the factory.

Last week a three day occupation came to an end peacefully when the strikers decided to comply with a court order. They vacated the factory in an orderly and dignified manner, still determined to continue their dispute.

Last Monday there was what convenor Arthur Conheny described as 'a good turn-out' on the picket line. There are no scabs.

But the strikers think there must soon be an effort by the bosses to get scabs into the factory and open it up again.

The dispute was originally about compulsory redundancies. Three quarters of the 80 workers slated for redundancy have since gone voluntarily.

The central issue in the dispute is now management's determination to break union organisation in the plant once and for all, and the workers' determination that they won't.

It has become a clear issue of working class principle. The longer the strike lasts, the more important labour movement support becomes — support both moral and financial.

Please send donations and messages of support to Len Blood, 26 St John St, Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside.

CPSA

by Mike Grayson

"THIS IS probably the most solid strike we've ever had", declared the CPSA branch secretary following the one day all-out strike at the British Library on July 1. The strike was part of the official CPSA dispute now entering its third week.

Management have used the threat of suspensions to force through cooperation with their Staff Inspection programme — part of a campaign across the Civil Service to cut staffing levels.

Success in this dispute now depends on winning other unions on the site to take action that will force management to back down. Donations/messages to: CPSA British Library (London) branch, c/o Room 265, Science Reference Library, 25 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London WC2.

Gloomy postscript to trail-blazing jobs fight

DURING last month, Inverwear — the company that took over the Lee Jeans factory after the long and famous workers' sit-in against closure there — went bust.

Stan Crooke spoke to the former convenor, Helen Monaghan.

What were relations with the new management like when the sit-in of 1981 ended and Inverwear took over?

There was a very good relationship. We went in with the understanding that everything was going to be above board and discussed out in the open.

But it wasn't anything like a workers' cooperative?

It was a straight-forward takeover.

Did management try to take advantage of you in that period? For example, by claiming that you owed your jobs to them and should therefore give something in return, like higher productivity?

Full on the spot report of TGWU conference next week.

No. I would say that they realised the importance of communication with the workforce. In some ways it might be said that we're in the situation we're in today because they didn't take advantage of us. At times when we were out of orders, the management didn't lay people off although there was no work for them.

Did you stay in the same union [National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers] that you had been in while employed by Vanity Fair?

Yes. We thought that it was better to stay and fight than run. When did the firm start running into difficulties?

Dickie Dirt, the firm's main customer, went bankrupt in March 1982. Until then there

hadn't been any problems.

He had originally taken out an order for 10,000 pairs of jeans for three years. After he went down, we were struggling all the time for orders.

We needed new customers, and the order from GAP Leisurewear kept us afloat. But in November of last year they ran into trouble too.

For the first four months of this year there were discussions about a rescue plan involving the Scottish Development Agency, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Industrial and Commercial Finance Corporation. The plan was finalised in April of this year.

The rescue plan involved 45 redundancies. How did you see

this?

We thought that it would prevent closure. In that month, it seemed doubtful if any of us would survive.

The banks said that they would not put money into a factory the size of the one we were in then, with a workforce of 140. It had a capacity for 15,000 pairs of jeans a week, but we only had orders for about 6,000.

So to put money in would not pay.

They wanted 45 redundancies and asked for volunteers. They got some, but other redundancies were compulsory.

We were laid off for a week while we moved to the smaller premises we're in now. The same week Gap Leisurewear went bankrupt, and that was our last major customer. We moved into the new factory on the Monday (June 6) and the receiver came in on the Wednesday (June 8).

What was the difference between 1981 and now? Why was there a sit-in, a very long one, then, but no such action this time around?

Vanity Fair was a big multinational putting us out on the

street. It was not doing it because of a lack of money or orders. It was doing it because its grants had run out and it was moving on. This time, though, there was no money or orders, just debts. So who was there to fight against?

The Glasgow papers are now talking about another possible takeover, by a Scottish consortium. Do you know much about this?

No. Only that there is a consortium with a serious intention of buying the firm.

If the deal comes off, I don't know how many jobs it will involve. That depends on how many orders and customers we have.

Do you see your own closure as part of a pattern that will continue in the years ahead?

We need to fight back for a change. But wasn't the General Election about that? We could have fought back by voting. But the government has been given a mandate. People have said they want to be unemployed. Before the Election I was sure she would have lost. I can't understand how anyone could have voted for her.



The 1981 sit-in: 'Vanity Fair was a big multinational putting us out on the streets'

Victory for BL bosses

HAVING BEEN tricked back to work by an elaborate sell-out in the midst of their four week strike in April, Cowley Assembly Plant workers remained firm but never regained the momentum of the struggle in defence of their six and nine minutes per shift 'washing up time'.

As both management and union officials had hoped, the continuity of the fight was broken. But not without problems for the company, which resorted to repeated 'straw polls' of shop floor opinion and eventually moved to isolate the Assembly Plant on the issue before moving in for the kill.

The crunch came last week in the aftermath of the reluctant acceptance by nearby Body Plant workers of increased bonus payments in exchange for their washing-up time.

An Assembly Plant stewards' meeting, on June 30, called to discuss a management leaflet offering an average bonus of £25, only narrowly carried by 39-36 a resolution for a mass meeting to be held with a recommendation for strike action in the event of any company attempt to impose the speed-up.

The management next day promptly issued a wildly distorted statement, playing up the split vote, and claiming that by this tight margin the stewards had 'called a strike' over the

heads of the membership without hearing the 'latest' offer.

As local official David Buckle threatened to sue the company for libel, management reconvened the Plant Level Committee and formally presented their revised offer.

The convenors at once agreed to call a stewards' meeting for Monday — and a fleet of company cars delivered letters to stewards over the weekend.

But the feeling against the company had strengthened, and eventually the vote for rejection and to recommend strike action was carried by 79 to 3.

Management however had gauged that the time was right to force the pace, and at 1.30 on Monday announced that the deal would be implemented at once.

As angry workers on the Rover and Ambassador tracks walked off the job, a hasty mass meeting was convened for 3pm without any preparation by the trade union side. The recommendation for strike action was lost by a 3-1 margin.

Though this is a definite victory for BL, it has cost them £60 million in lost production, and throughout the dispute they have failed to crack the shop stewards' committee.

That must be the positive aspect carried forward in the disputes to come.



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.

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.



July 11 jobs crunch faces Michelin workers

by Arthur Bough

FOR the 6,000 workers at Michelin's Stoke plant it will be strike and lock-out from July 11 when the annual two-week holiday is due to end. The Lightweight Production Department is due to strike and in retaliation management will lock out the rest of the factory.

Hard class war will inevitably be the approach of the bosses towards the working class following the Tories' election victory. The management at the Michelin plant in Stoke is in the front line of the employers' offensive, along with BL and Ford.

Some months ago Socialist Organiser reported on the redundancies Michelin were pushing through at various plants in Britain and Northern Ireland. The full-scale confrontation at Michelin's main British plant in Stoke comes about because they are now following up these redundancies with 'rationalisation' and speed-up.

Speed-up is being done through the introduction of continental-style four-shift working which wreaks havoc with the home and social life of workers.

One worker already on the four-shift system explained what it is like:

"Last week I worked Monday and Tuesday on days, Wednesday and Thursday on noons, and Friday, Saturday and Sunday on nights. At the end of the week I didn't know where I was."

SO spoke to a senior TGWU branch official at the plant. His name is being withheld because of the possibility of victimisation.

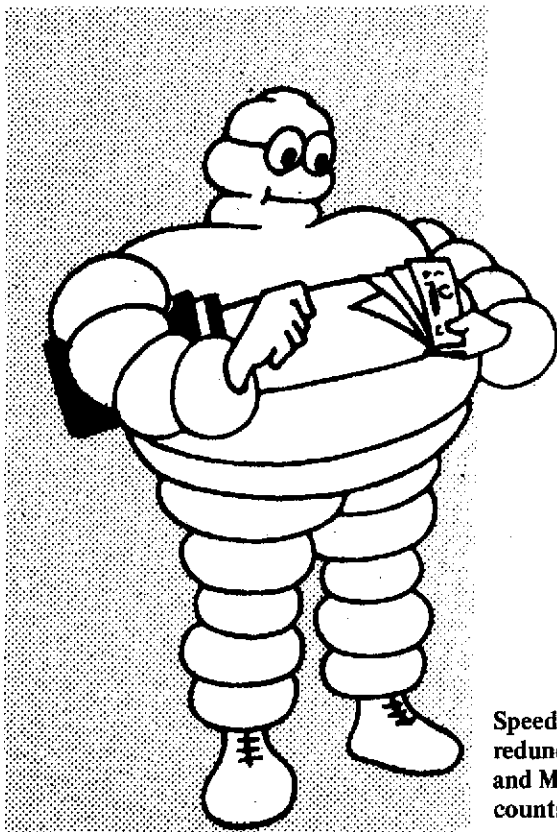
SO: What has happened about Michelin's redundancy programme?

The Belfast factory is due to close next March. The government offered money to keep it open but Michelin turned it down. Over a thousand workers are employed there, and production is to be transferred to Stoke. How many other redundancies throughout Britain have they pushed through?

About 4,000. Of these, 500 were voluntary redundancies from Stoke. The firm only wanted 250 but over 1500 people volunteered. That gives some idea of the state of mind workers are in at the factory. How did the dispute over four-shift working arise?

The introduction of four-shift working is part of what Michelin call their "Great Survival Plan". In effect it is a means of increasing productivity. With work transferred from Belfast, production will in fact be higher at Stoke but with fewer workers.

Four-shift working was first put forward for the retreading section in January. But that department didn't have the



Speed-up and redundancies — and Michelin counts the profits

IT IS vital that management's attack on conditions at the Stoke factory be beaten back, or it will be the signal for other employers to follow their lead.

The key to the dispute is probably the distribution warehouse. If that can be blacked then Michelin's UK operation effectively comes to a halt. It is a large site and picketing is likely to get rough to close it down.

The labour movement in Stoke must lend all support to the Michelin workers for mass pickets. The Labour Party and Labour controlled City Council can play a major role in mobilising support for the picket.

Newly elected councillor Arthur Bough, an SO supporter, raised the matter at the last Labour Group meeting but the

economic weight to stop the whole factory. So the stewards asked for plant support and got it.

A one day stoppage in support of the section was held. But then a mass meeting in February turned down a call for all-out action to support the section.

The other workers did not feel sufficiently involved. And the TGWU full time official Bob Lamond failed to argue strongly for plant action or to explain that sooner or later the rest of the plant would face the same threat.

As a result the workers were forced back, and the management had introduced four-shift working into a section of the plant.

Chair refused to allow discussion on the matter. Subsequently, though he agreed to write in a personal capacity as Leader of the Council to the unions to say that the Council would give whatever support it could if they contacted him.

That is a start but much more is needed. The matter will be raised at the City Labour Party for more positive action from the Council. The bosses are using the Tories' Parliamentary majority in their class war. Stoke Labour Council should throw its full weight behind the Michelin workers and declare class war on the bosses. SO supporters on the City Labour Party, and SO councillors will be doing all they can with or without the Labour Group to do just that.

What happened then?

Management then gave notice that they intended to introduce four-shift working into the main Lightweight Production Department. This is the key department. If that stops, eventually the plant stops. It is the most militant section.

The stewards this time have not called for support from other sections because these other sections not being involved could vote against plant action thus undermining the strike in the Lightweight Production Department.

July 11 is the end of the management's 12 weeks' notice that they are introducing four-shift working. It is the first day back at work following the annual two weeks holiday. Workers in the Lightweight Production Department will be out from then.

Management has responded by locking out the rest of the factory. They have undertaken no negotiations, they have just imposed their decision. They are obviously trying to divide the workforce through the lockout.

They have also gone in for another Michael Edwardes tactic of appealing direct to workers against the union, and using the union rule book. They have put up notices saying "Many employees have asked what they can do to stop the strike and work normally on 11 July." They have then quoted a section of the union rule book allowing members to call a special meeting.

Another leaflet tells workers "It is up to you, if you wish to

work, to get your union to give this undertaking", that is that they accept four-shift working. Interestingly only 19 people have signed a petition calling for a special meeting.

Some TGWU members think that the Company planned the dispute as a pretext to close the plant. Last year Michelin had a trading loss of £11.6 million and an overall loss of £53 million. Some workers believe that Michelin want to transfer production to France, reducing Stoke to just a tyre distribution centre. The example of Timex has been quoted on a number of occasions.

It is certainly true that production methods at the Stoke plant are old compared to newer factories, and that the only major investment has been in warehousing.

But Michelin is a multinational company concerned with maximising its profits, and if production costs are lower in Britain than France they are not likely to transfer production.

The present attack on conditions is an attempt to jack up the rate of exploitation which does not suggest that their goal is to close down the plant.

The international experience of Michelin also lends itself to this interpretation. An international conference of Michelin unions has just taken place in Geneva.

SO asked what was happening internationally? Is Michelin acting in the same way in other countries?

We haven't had a full report

Broad Left born in ASTMS

A NEW Broad Left has now been born in the labour movement, pledged to act not simply as an electoral machine but to campaign on policies and union democracy.

Over 70 ASTMS militants from all but three of the union's divisions attended an inaugural ASTMS Broad Left meeting in Birmingham last weekend.

A disproportionately large turn-out by supporters of Militant made itself felt in votes which limited the Broad Left's policy to "positive action", rejecting positive discrimination for women in seats for the NEC.

And the Militant presence also gave their tendency a lion's share of the temporary steering committee elected to serve until Divisional-level meetings can elect their own representatives.

Provided serious work is now done to build a rank and file base for the Broad Left, this domination will probably prove to be only temporary.

Though discussion on nuclear disarmament ran out of time and was held over to the next conference, the Broad Left has now been launched on firm objectives and aims.

SO supporter Sue Lister was elected to the chair, Dave Jones, a Militant supporter from Nottingham University is secretary, and Dave Cooke, from Leamington Spa Branch, treasurer.

Contact: D. Jones, 222 Charlbury Road, Nottingham NG8 1NJ.

yet, [the Stoke convenor has just returned from Geneva], but I've been told this. In Turin, one factory was closed because workers resisted management plans. The Company then opened another factory just across the river. In Holland, the Company will not recognise the union, and workers have to organise underground. The same is true for Spain. In fact the Spanish delegates would not give their names in case it got back. The unions are not recognised in Canada, and they have just opened a new factory in one of the Southern states in America which are notoriously anti-union. Interestingly though, in Brazil the factory is 100% unionised.

All change in NUR

by Rob Dawber

THIS time last year a strike over pay declared by a left-wing NUR Executive was called off by a right wing AGM.

This year the same executive has accepted a 4.5% pay offer while the conference has shouted down BR Chairman Sir Peter Parket and voted for industrial action against closures.

BR management have not sought to include yet more productivity strings in this year's 'offer'. Instead they will continue pushing to fully implement those already agreed. So in gratitude that BR has stopped hitting us so hard, the NEC has dropped the NUR claim of nearly 28% and grabbed the miserable 4.5% with both hands.

But they haven't really stopped hitting us. The 4.5% offer is the way they have chosen to hit us this year. 4.5% is just not enough!

Meanwhile at the AGM it is all change. The vote to affiliate to CND reportedly only had two votes against and the inclusion of industrial action as a weapon in our campaign against Serpell reverses last year's decision to rule out that option in our campaign against closures.

But probably the best sign of a new mood in the NUR is the treatment meted out to Peter Parker. The 77 delegates had accepted the invitation to Parker to address the AGM. But when he actually turned up at 10 am they decided instead to continue the discussion on redundancies, and to stretch it out a bit they also had a coffee break. When he rose to speak he was shouted down five times with accusations that he was helping the Tories ruin the railways, trying to break up the closed shop, and implementing the Serpell report.

The President, Tommy Hain, (one of Weighell's cronies), tried to get one of the most vociferous delegates kicked out but was prevented by the Secretary of the Standing Orders Committee: "There will be no vote at an NUR AGM to defend the chairman of BR", he said.

It is a pity that Len Murray did not get the same reception the following day when he said that we should collaborate more with the Tories on their anti-union legislation.

It seems the delay made Parker miss the train back. But if the NUR delays any more, we could all miss the train.



CRE report

FIFTY percent of employers discriminate against black applicants for jobs, according to the latest Annual Report of the Commission for Racial Equality.

One result of this is a much higher level of unemployment amongst black youth compared with young whites.

A CRE survey showed 59% of young West Indians as against 41% of whites.

Spot checks on 300 London based firms found "discrimination in promotion and redundancy and widespread misunderstanding and intolerance of the cultural and religious needs of ethnic minority employees."

But in the face of this brazen discrimination, the trade union movement has fallen far short of the action needed to defend its black members and combat racism on the shop floor.

The CRE suggests the unions should give a higher priority to translating conference decisions into shop floor action against racism.

Any call to implement conference decisions is normally received with horror by union leaders, and this suggestion — which would involve local and national officials, convenors and shop stewards being prepared to fight racist attitudes amongst their membership and giving a lead and support to black workers prepared to fight for their rights — will be no exception.

But the CRE report will not be any more favourably received by the government, which is urged to implement equal employment policies and to enforce clauses stipulating such practices by government suppliers. The CRE also seeks changes in the law to speed up action against discrimination.

But the Tories are no more keen to take such steps than they are to pressurise the police to investigate cases of racist violence where detection rates remain astoundingly low.

The CRE, as a largely toothless pressure group lacks any real purchase on reality: it can expose the racism in society but do little to end it. Its chairman, Peter Newsam summed up its attitude when he commented that the Tories would not need more civil servants to implement anti-discrimination clauses:

"You just need a change in the heads of the people who are running this country's affairs."

Rather we need a change in the people, and the system they administer.

In fighting to get that, the best place to start is within the labour movement itself, in the fight to remove racists from leading positions and forge a fighting unity of black and white workers in the struggle against all forms of discrimination on the shop floor.



A QUESTION OF SOLIDARITY
Independent Trade Unions in South Africa

Published by Socialist Forum for Southern Africa Solidarity. Available (at 90p plus 20p post) c/o SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

90p

Bob Fine

Socialist ORGANISER

BT strike called off

by Pat Lally

THE NORTH London Post Office Engineering Union strike is over.

After a week on strike, the members of London North Central Internal Branch (LNCI) have returned to work, by decision of the left wing union executive.

They had come out in support of POEU members suspended for refusing to work on the privately-owned Mercury System. The Mercury system is the trail-blazing pioneer of privatisation in telecommunications.

This strike was the first major action in the union's campaign against privatisation.

It now appears that the LNCI strike was never intended to last longer than a week. But this was not generally known and the sudden end, without adequate warning, has caused confusion in the union's ranks.

This is made worse because no immediate alternative action has been prepared to replace the strike. Broad Left activists in London are unhappy about it and critical of those responsible.

The union's campaign is being run for the National Executive by the Industrial Action Sub-Committee (IASC), in conjunction with branch officials. Last month a motion of no confidence in the IASC for its failings in the fight against privatisation was passed. This opened the door to the Broad Left's victory at the conference.

The IASC now includes leading left wingers like Broad Left secretary Phil Holt. Members expect a clear lead from it.

We can't afford to lose momentum in the fight against privatisation if the members are to be geared up to the showdown which Thatcher's re-election has made inevitable.

TGWU fails test of democracy

By Alan Thornett

THE TGWU conference on the Isle of Man debated the Labour Party leadership issue on Monday, its first day.

The conference was manoeuvred into support for Neil Kinnock, and has resolved nothing on the problem of the democratic administration of the block vote. Far from trying to come to terms with the challenge posed for the unions by the extension of democracy in the Labour Party, the platform simply confused the issue.

They introduced into the same debate two distinct issues: the choice of a candidate in this particular election, and the long-term issue of principle on how the union will decide to cast its block vote of 1 1/4 million at Labour Party conferences and in the electoral college.

The issue has been hanging over the union since the 1981 conference, when the chair bureaucratically overruled any discussion at all on the Benn-Healey deputy leadership contest. This time, a debate was allowed, but it could hardly be seen as an extension of democracy.

Instead of adopting the obvious procedure of debating all the candidates and then voting on them, we were allowed to vote only on those candidates subject to emergency motions in their



Neil Kinnock

support. (Last minute emergency motions are very difficult unless you know the conference procedures well in advance or a branch happens to meet just before the conference).

Since an emergency motion supporting Michael Meacher was withdrawn at the last minute, the only options in front of the conference were the Executive motion supporting Neil Kinnock, and one supporting Roy Hattersley. There was no possibility of supporting Eric Heffer - who

advocates policies far closer to the TGWU's than Neil Kinnock - or anyone else.

The Executive resolution also contained proposals designed to establish future procedures in deciding the union's votes for the Labour Party leadership. It argued correctly that the delegate conference should decide, but only if it happened to be meeting at the right time (it meets every two years). On all other occasions, the Executive would have the right to make a recommendation to the union's delegation.

I moved a motion from my branch calling on the BDC to decide, but to decide on all occasions - meeting in emergency session if the regular conference did not fall at the right time. I stressed that the TGWU must accept that the block vote has been under the spotlight since the Labour Party conference decision to elect its leaders, and that the union can no longer avoid establishing democratic procedures.

Debate

At the same time the conference had to debate a motion from the right wing calling for a secret ballot on the issue. At first this got some support in the conference, but the mood changed during the debate as the implications in relation to current Tory policy were spelled out, and the competence of elected delegates to take such decisions was argued for.

Moss Evans unfortunately argued against such a ballot not on principle but on the basis that it was too costly. The conference eventually accepted the appeal from the platform to endorse the Executive resolution and reject both my branch's resolution for full control by conference and the secret ballot proposal.

Shore loses at home

WHEN Jesus Christ returned to his home town of Nazareth and started preaching, the people scoffed at him. 'Why, he's just the son of that carpenter down the road', they said. Jesus commented, 'The prophet is not without honour except in his own home and amongst his own people'.

It won't bring him much comfort, but Peter Shore may have remembered this last week when his own party, Bethnal Green and Poplar, rejected him and instead threw its support behind Eric Heffer for Labour Party leader.

Neil Kinnock came bottom of the ballot.

This is the latest example of a slow but impressive build-up of support for Heffer in the party.

It may mean that Shore will be in trouble when he faces re-selection in 18 months' time. Much of 'his' GC is against Shore.

Party members who worked hard to get him re-elected are not pleased to hear on the media



that their MP didn't support the manifesto the Party fought on. Shore's continued attacks on the Left must further weaken his chances of re-selection.

Manchester feels the witch-hunt

By John O'Mahony

MANCHESTER Labour Party is now the theatre of war in the biggest and most intensive right wing offensive yet.

Wythenshawe Constituency Labour Party was suspended just before the election. The NEC has expelled 27 members from the Manchester City Council Labour group.

The National Executive is now on a collision course with the Manchester City party.

Last weekend both the City party and Wythenshawe refused to attend the hearings of a three man committee of inquiry into various right wing allegations. The committee - John Golding, national agent David Hughes, and Russell Tuck - tried to conduct itself like a Star Chamber. Those summoned before it were not told details of the charges against them or who the accusers were.

Wythenshawe asked for an adjournment to permit them to hear the charges and prepare a defence. Their request was turned down. Manchester City Labour Party asked for the right to be represented by a solicitor. That too was denied.

The fact that it was the NEC, and not the right wing majority of the Labour councillors, who expelled the 27, is the clue to what is going on. It is unprecedented. The Right are using their control of the NEC and its Organisation Sub-committee to strike at the Left and to organise the Right to root out the Left at ground level.

The 27 were expelled for voting in council according to national Labour policy - against rent increases and cuts in jobs and services, especially housing and direct works. The expulsions were carried out in defiance of all the rules of natural justice. They were not told of the charges against them. There were no interviews.

Graham Stringer, chair of Manchester City Labour Party, and John Nicholson, chair of Manchester Gorton CLP, have explained what is happening and why in the Labour Against the Witch-Hunt bulletin.

'[There have been] real changes at local level. Branches have



John Golding

increased membership and campaigning in support of anti-Tory policies - so the NEC has had to invent a locally-directed onslaught of manoeuvres to bypass the reselection process as well. 12-month membership rules, rearranged panel procedures, NEC inquiries and now new rules to impose councillors on branch shortlists - all have been wheeled out.

In Woodhouse ward in Wythenshawe, selection was suspended, membership was frozen back 18 months to exclude newer left-wingers, and yet the eventual shortlist was three left-wingers, one of whom was endorsed as candidate in May.

Not beaten, the National Agent promptly ordered a re-run of the selection meeting on the basis of unsubstantiated individual allegations and without consulting officers of the branch, constituency or district party.

The struggle in Manchester is therefore simply one demonstration of the real effects of the witch-hunt.

That is why comrades should move the Labour Against the Witch-hunt resolution printed on page 3 in their local Labour Parties.

Here are your targets!

THE START of the July Fund marks the start of regional targets set to bring in our £1,000. Five groups have sent in donations this week, and started the process of raising their target amounts.

£72.45 in our first week leaves us £927.55 to go, in three weeks. If every group raises their target amount, we'll be there. Rush donations to: 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Thanks to: Bruce Robinson £35.50; Alice Swindale £10; Richard Bayley £10; Ian McCalman £7; Bas Hardy £6.95; Alex Simpson £3.

Group	Target	Received		
Scotland			Harrogate	10
Glasgow	40	7	Midlands	
Edinburgh	40		Birmingham	40
North West			Coventry	80
Rochdale	10		Leicester	10
Manchester	40		Northampton	10
Stockport	10		Nottingham	10
Wirral	30		South and Wales	
Liverpool	25	6.95	Oxford	110
Hyndburn	5		Basingstoke	30
Stoke	20		Cardiff	20
Yorkshire/North-East			London	
Huddersfield	10		North-West	30
Durham	15		Hackney	45
Leeds	15		Haringey	25
Sheffield	40		Hounslow	30
Hull	40		Islington	45
Halifax	10		S.E. London	25
York	20	10	East London	30
			Lambeth/Southwark	45
			Others	10
				3