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Claimants and strikers 10p.



JOBLESS KEY TO WAGE-CUT PLAN

TORY plans for the next wave of attacks on the working class involve using the unemployed, the sick and the elderly as battering rams to break down living standards.

They plan to slash unemployment benefit in order to force a further lowering of wage levels across the board; and they plan to destroy the state-funded NHS in order to pressurise workers towards private medicine and force individual families to shoulder the burden of care for elderly relatives.

Chancellor Lawson has lost no time since the election. With a speed that has caught the breath of even some of his bone-headed monetarist cabinet colleagues he has embarked on a whirlwind series of cuts, postponed by Sir Geoffrey Howe until after the election.

The first round of these cuts — £500 million — was announced last week. In the NHS alone they could mean 20,000 lost jobs and drastic cut-backs in services.

Further cuts — of anything up to £5 billion — can be expected as the Tories try to contain public spending while tax revenues — hit by the recession — fall below expectations.

Lawson has made no secret of the fact that he wants a chunk of those cuts to come from the £34 billion social security budget

By Harry
Sloan

which provides a meagre subsistence to the millions of unemployed and destitute victims of Thatcherism. He wants benefits cut substantially enough to force the jobless to take the lowest paid jobs.

Lawson believes that the Tories have not yet cashed in sufficiently on the unemployment which they have so expensively fostered.

He smugly argues that one of the causes of mass unemployment in the 1930s was the relatively high level of unemployment benefit — and that the Tories in the 1980s should not make the same mistake again.

Cutting unemployment benefit would both save money and lower the 'floor' level of wages paid by the most ruthless employers, he believes.

Arrogance

This view is summed up in the cynical arrogance of Sir Alfred Sherman of the Centre of Policy Studies. "You could bring five million Indians here tomorrow



and they'd all get jobs. There is a level of wages at which there would be no labour shortages and no unemployment."

Sherman — knighted in Thatcher's recent honours list — makes no secret of the Tory ambition to destroy the living standards established by decades of struggles by the labour movement, in order to drive up profitability for the capitalist class.

It is with this in view that the Tories are so avidly pursuing Tebbit's £25 per week "Youth Training" Scheme which will drive out employed workers and lower the wage expectations of millions of young people.

They have abolished "Schedule 11" which provided for rough parity between compar-

able workers in each locality; and by September they will have scrapped the Fair Wages Resolution which since 1891 has provided comparability in pay between State and private sectors.

The stage is all set for the full exploitation of the unemployed to break down hard won conditions and living standards of those still in work.

able workers in each locality; and by September they will have

No guarantee

Horrible as it may be, the Lawson plan has no guarantee of success even in its own terms. Even under "ideal laboratory conditions" — under the guns of Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile — the monetarist theories advocated by the Thatcher cabinet have failed miserably.

Despite a halving of workers' living standards, the actual demolition of state-funded health care, cuts in education which leave 30% of Chilean youth without schooling, the privatisation of 500 state firms and banks and the ruthless suppression of trade union and political rights, the Chilean "miracle" proved short-lived. The economy now faced 30% unemployment, 30% inflation, an impossible \$18 billion foreign debts, and an unstoppable tide of imports, with domestic industry in ruins.

Pinochet's experiment has failed: and it could only have been imposed by vicious military methods.

Plainly some Tory ministers fear that Lawson's draconian plans could provoke a new wave of mass resistance — and have attempted to tone down his proposals.

Our problem remains the fact that the labour movement which should be preparing and organising this resistance is saddled with leaders who would rather crawl to the Tories than wage a fight.

We must insist that the leaders and organisations of the labour movement must break their links with the Tories and stop collaborating with them. But whatever the leaders do, the rank and file of the unions and the shop stewards' committees and the Labour Party must themselves organise now for a fightback. We must go out and organise to mobilise the unemployed against the Tory attacks. We must link them to the employed against whose wages and conditions the Tories plan to use them. And out of the employed, unemployed, oppressed women and youth and all the other victims of this capitalist system we must forge a movement that will confront and defeat Thatcher's vicious class war Tory government.

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... and his reactionary fore-runners.

Heffer

Why we should support him by Reg Race and Gerry Byrne

Kent's appeal to troops

BRUCE KENT has appealed to soldiers of the Queen's Own Royal Highlanders deployed at Greenham Common not to obey their officers in certain circumstances.

"The possibility of the wounding or even killing by British troops of unarmed non-violent members of the peace movement at some time in the future cannot now be totally excluded," he writes.

Appealing to soldiers' individual conscience, he draws attention to the Hague and Geneva Conventions and the British Manual of Military Law which states "... members of the armed forces ... cannot escape liability, if in obedience to a command they commit acts which ... outrage the general sentiment of humanity."

EDITORIAL

Solidarity?

WHEN the press bays at Arthur Scargill the best rule is to support him first and ask questions later.

Scargill is not only the best trade union leader in Britain. That wouldn't be difficult. He is a consistent advocate of class struggle politics. He was a leader in some of the most important struggles of the '70s.

In Britain right now he advocates policies the labour movement needs if it is not to be beaten into the ground by the Tory offensive.

Indeed it would be more just to criticise Scargill for reckless wildness and ultra-leftism than for any of the usual vices of the average sort of gutless, complacent, dim, and time-serving British trade union leader.

The press have attacked Scargill for the NUM decision to send five miners to Moscow on a trade union course, and for Scargill's attempt to set up a new world mineworkers' federation.

But the questions do need to be asked. And they need to be answered in plain and blunt language.

The NUM's and Arthur Scargill's attitude to the workers in the Stalinist states is a scandal and a betrayal of the interests of the international working class.

Scargill has denounced Solidarnosc, the only genuine trade union in any Stalinist state, and he has supported its suppression. He attacked it at the recent Communist Party rally.

The NUM has accepted the official Russian explanation of why Ukrainian trade union activist Vladimir Klebanov is imprisoned in a mental hospital — that he is insane!

Now the NUM Conference has endorsed Scargill's initiative for the new world miners' federation which will include the Stalinist 'unions'.

International trade union unity is a good thing. The problem is that there is no such thing as a real trade union in any of the Stalinist states except Poland.

The 'unions' there are labour-fronts, organs of the State to control and repress the workers. Strikes and all independent working class activity are forbidden.

The problem with sending British miners on a trade union course in Moscow is that the last real trade unions in Russia disappeared five or six decades ago.

The real trade unionists, like Vladimir Klebanov, are harassed, jailed and tortured for trying to create genuine trade unions.

After the experience of Solidarnosc there is no good ground for anyone in the British labour movement not to understand this.

It is not a matter of capitalist press propaganda but well attested fact.

In 1980 the Polish workers rose in revolt in a mass strike that lasted a month. The official 'union' was pushed aside and a real workers' organisation created. In every one of the known working class struggles in the Stalinist states, the official 'unions' have marched behind the tanks and stormtroopers the workers have had to face.

It was so in the East German uprising of 1953 which was triggered by a mass strike of building workers in Berlin and it was so in Poland in 1980: during the mass strikes the official 'union' leaders threatened the strikers: go back to work or we'll have you shot down.

Scargill says he wants to put an end to Cold War divisions. That's good but it won't be done by pretending that there is a labour movement in the Stalinist States.

The British labour movement, whose foreign policy has long mirrored that of the ruling class, does need its own foreign policy. That policy must have as one of its central goals active support for workers everywhere, including in the Stalinist States, to create and maintain their own independent labour movement and to throw off their oppressors whether they be capitalists or Stalinist bureaucrats.

Scargill's foreign policy mirrors the viewpoint of the anti-working class ruling bureaucracy in Moscow. He accepts their viewpoint precisely where it is most murderous at odds with our interests — where they suppress and systematically destroy independent working class organisations, as in Poland where striking miners have been shot down.

Working class solidarity is the most basic notion of even the most primitive of labour movements. Even the right wing pays lip service to it for countries like Chile.

It is left to some of the better sections of the left to deny it where one-third of the world's workers are concerned, workers who are among the most oppressed in the world.

Miners shouldn't stand for it. Scargill's militancy and anti-Toryism, yes! Arthur Scargill's Stalinism — no way!

London councils band together to fight cuts

By Alan Clinton

FURTHER effort to begin a defence of local authority services against the devastation of the Tories was seen in the foundation on July 5 of the Association of London Authorities.

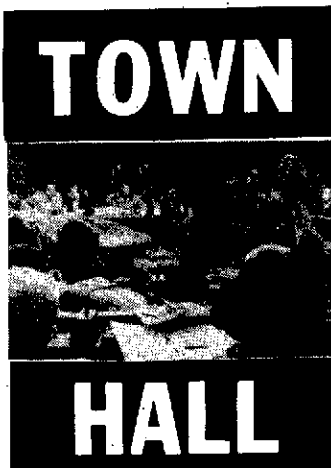
We were concerned at that time with the need to discuss common problems with other local authorities and with the inadequacy of the established machinery for this purpose, particularly because the London Boroughs Association was being used by hard line Tories for reactionary attacks on the GLC and on the policies of Labour authorities.

The Association of London Authorities is not a revolutionary organisation. However, its foundation does represent the fact that many local authorities are finding it increasingly difficult to operate within the parameters set by the past and by the Tories, particularly in the aftermath of the latest £280 million penalties.

Socialist Organiser supporters will be moving this resolution at the London Campaign Against the Cuts Conference called by the Southwark Campaign Working Party on Sunday July 17.

THIS meeting recognises that:

1. With the latest measures of the Tory government, Labour local authorities have no option but to confront the government



It will naturally engage in lobbying and discussions. But it will also be a campaigning body and I hope will be able to play its part in and our corner of the battle against the government's schemes to devastate our public sector.

the banks and finance institutions, the immediate demand must be more money from central government to maintain local jobs and services.

3. Confrontation requires action by trade unions and local communities as well as by councils.

4. The job of the labour movement is therefore to prepare the basis for confrontation, by agitation, education and organisation. Labour councillors must see themselves primarily as part of this labour movement effort, rather than as administrators.

The meeting therefore resolves to:

1. Set up a coordinating committee of delegates from CLPs, from Labour Party workplace branches, from council Labour groups, and from trade unions at branch and shop stewards' committee level.

2. To plan a recall conference for December, as councils enter the budget-making process.

3. To urge all local Labour Parties to begin campaigns of:

- a) Door-to-door canvassing, asking residents to sign letters of protest to the government.

- b) Workplace meetings with local authority trade unionists, whose jobs and conditions will be immediately at risk.

- c) Meetings on estates, where tenants face the prospect of

further big rent increases. Such campaigns should be followed up by local conferences of labour movement organisations, community and tenants' groups, to discuss local plans for confrontation.

The coordinating committee should be responsible for circulating information and permitting an exchange of experience.

4. To urge all Labour councils to break from the Tory-dominated associations of councils for the purposes of negotiations on wages and conditions with employees.

5. Within local campaigns, to urge delegates to fight for a perspective of:

- a) Refusal by Labour councils to cut services — that is, a decision by councils to create an unbalanced budget for 1983-4.

- b) A call from Labour councils to council workers to follow the council's policy and to 'black' cuts imposed by senior council officers who refuse to implement an unbalanced budget.

- c) A call from Labour councils for rent and rate strikes, backed up by one-day industrial strikes, against cuts budgets imposed by senior council officers in defiance of democratic council decisions.

- d) Maximum coordination of such action on a London-wide basis.

Out of your misery...

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

By Patrick Spilling

happen it doesn't last long.

That pensions mean that more people have to live with old age. It is a fact that before pensions were invented a much higher proportion of the population were younger.

Of course it was well meaning liberals who brought in all these things. Well meaning liberals who got us where we are today.

Socialist Organiser does not shirk its duty. We've heard all the arguments about 'taking care of the sick' and 'looking after the less well off in society'.

Far right

We've heard those arguments until we are sick of them. If there was not something seriously wrong with these people they would not be sick, or old or handicapped would they?

It is time we stopped thinking all the time about people who are wrong and started thinking a little more about the people who are right. Far right.

Of course the weak-kneed moaners are always ready to make your heart bleed with sob stories about unemployed people with families to support.

They don't talk so much about their victims do they? The ones who are not loafing around all day with nothing to do. The ones who can never forget that they have to get up and go to work.

So we say 'Hurrah' to the brave men and women who are prepared to do for us what we

are not prepared to do for ourselves.

Axe unemployment pay.

Chop expensive hospitals.

Cut the average age at a stroke.

The MPs — worth every penny of their rise.

TALKING of the death penalty — which we weren't — one award should go to the super, soaraway Sun for its in-depth probe into 'alternative' death-styles — Is hanging the best way to kill.

It took the Sun, always one of Britain's staunchest defenders — to point out that for centuries the British people have used the best, most efficient form of execution, the Rope.

The Sun looked frankly at some of the revolting ways that foreigners kill — complete with a Time to Die assessment.

America has some nice touches like three levers to drop the cyanide tablet in the gas chamber. That way none of the three officials can be proved to have killed.

Quickness

But as the Sun pointed out, "Critics say the method is much too slow to be humane." And when you are killing people, doing it quick is obviously the most important thing.

After all we might want to chop your bleeding head off. But

let's make sure we don't behave like savages while we do it.

Savages like those in the Middle East who use a sword — which can bring instant death where the execution is not botched. But in the Sun guide to butchery this too scores low. "The ceremony, often watched by a baying mob is rated as utterly barbaric."

Likewise the 'vile' garrotte. The firing squad scores low too — but usually because foreigners are pulling the trigger — and we all know foreigners can't shoot straight.

The electric chair "even journalists are invited to watch", is described as grisly.

Only two methods come out top of the Sun pops. One is the lethal injection where you get to be killed while you are asleep, so it hardly counts. There is another nice touch too. "The victim... is positioned with his (!) right arm through a hole in a partition so he cannot see the executioner, who watches the operation (!) through a one-way mirror."

The other is good old fashioned British hanging. You will be glad to know that not only is one set of gallows kept in full working order but that "strenuous tests are made in the days leading up to the execution to make sure the gallows are working properly."

On the actual day in question "a high speed routine goes into action to get the ordeal over as quickly as possible."

"Time to Die: Up to 20 minutes for the actual death and the heart to stop beating. But the condemned person is unconscious a split second after he (that man again) drops through the trap-door."

Of course there are those who claim that Sun readers have been unconscious since a split second after they opened their first copy of the paper. It may not look nice, but I assure you they don't even notice the poison at work.

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THE SOUTH LONDON SOUTH LONDON

'NHS is safe with us' fraud exposed

London Health in front line of Tory cutbacks

OVER 50 hospitals closed, 5,000 beds lost and 9,000 jobs jettisoned. That is the bleak picture of the Tory onslaught on London's health. And these figures are based on meeting cash limits before last week's additional round of cuts of £100 million was announced. It means the devastation of health care in London.

The Tories, following the election are confident in their ability to ram through any policies they choose and now, only a month after the election, are dropping all pretence of protecting the NHS. Thatcher's "the NHS is safe with us" speech is confirmed as a crass lie. The battle plans are drawn and London is the front line.

While Thatcher and her ministers sit in their fashionable and wealthy surroundings, using private hospitals for their health, the working class people of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, Lambeth and other boroughs wait for years in pain, for routine surgery, and then go home before they are ready to damp and inadequate housing with no community health services available. This is the Tory version of "protecting the NHS".

Explosive

The Working Group on Inequalities in Health was set up in 1977. It reported to Patrick Jenkin, then Secretary of State in 1980. The report was explosive. It showed that inequalities in health care are getting worse and not better.

After careful researching the Black Report pointed out that working class people suffer more ill health, do not have equal access to facilities and particularly would benefit from more preventive health.

In his forward to the report Jenkins noted that:

"... the group has reached the view that the causes of health inequalities are so deep rooted that only a major and wide ranging programme of public expenditure is capable of altering the pattern."

He then went on to give clear notice that the Tories had no intention of doing anything about it.

"I must make it clear that additional expenditure on the scale which could result from the report's recommendations... is quite unrealistic in present or any foreseeable circumstances [my emphasis]... I cannot therefore endorse the group's recommendations."

Then he attempted to suppress the report, releasing only 260 duplicated copies.

The problems highlighted by the Black report and the devastating attacks being made on the inner city areas of London converge to show the lengths the ruling class will go to in order to preserve the crumbling facade of capitalism. The health of the working class must be sacri-

First part of a round up on the cuts and a look at the policies needed to fight back.

By Andrea Campbell

ficed for the wealth of a privileged few.

London is the battleground in the war to save the NHS. The fights we have already seen — Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Hounslow, St. Benedicts, will look small compared to what lies ahead.

This year under the continuing of the Resources Allocation Working Party (RAWP) formulas London will lose £33 million to the green belt areas. In a service already cut to the bone the Tory way to 'save' is by closures and job losses.

Throughout the general election campaign we heard the nauseating statements from the Tories that they had spent more on the NHS than the previous Labour government, and that growth money was available and would continue to be available. This is nothing but lies.

Of course they spent more money on the NHS. But that is because the existing services cost more to provide with inflation. The NHS has not grown under the Tories and everyone knows that.

This year districts have been given between 1/2 and 2% "growth money" by the government. But there will be no growth — only decline. The cash limits which Health Authorities are told they must adhere to (or be surcharged, disbanded and possibly jailed) are based on an inflation rate of only 5.6%. If inflation runs higher no extra money is made available. That is one way of using the so called growth money.

The second stage of the growth myth lies in the fact that just to maintain services it is essential to increase budgets by 1% annually to cater for the ageing population and by another 2% (again only to maintain services) for the increasing cost of technology.

Shrinking

Given that London's inner city areas have rapidly growing ageing populations and also have most of the top teaching hospitals (not funded separately) specialising in high technology the growth is rapidly stunted giving a shrinking and dwarfed service.

Although there has been the closure in 1980 of one teaching hospital in central London (St. George's, Hyde Park Corner) the rest have been spared the axe — and no one would argue

that they should be cut.

However, the teaching hospitals usually treat people on a national basis and receive no recognition from the budget for this.

This furthers the inequalities of health because people who live locally are often deprived of their local hospital while the teaching hospital is maintained.

For instance Hackney (recently highlighted as the most deprived borough in England) is lumped with the City of London for health care. St. Barts, a major teaching hospital is in the City.

Its services are used by the people who work in the City (but live in the suburbs). It is virtually inaccessible to people in the north and east Hackney.

But faced with overspending the District have said that a local Hackney hospital, St. Leonard's, must close. It is small, friendly, well liked and well placed in the borough. It is essential for the health of Hackney.

This pattern is being repeated all over London — the South London Hospital must close for St. George's to keep going, East Ham closes for additional money to run a new nucleus hospital. St. Mary's W9 shuts for St. Mary's W2, Midmay Mission and Bethnal Green must subsidise the London Hospital.

What becomes clear is that there is no real planning for health. There is no question of consulting local people, or even taking their needs into account. Everything must be done to make the budget balance. Now, faced with too few beds and trying to say that there are too many beds Fowler has come up with a new scheme — "productivity and throughput".

"Throughput"

Discussing closures recently a union member asked but where will they put an extra 200 beds if the hospital closes. The answer is nowhere. The beds are not being replaced; instead "throughput" in existing beds will be increased. A tiny word which describes a series of miserable manoeuvres.

For throughput means discharging people from hospital very quickly, usually before they are medically fit — to increase productivity. This coupled with the inadequate housing conditions and lack of community services in inner city areas will mean increased suffering and ill health for the working class.

It is okay for Fowler to spout his rhetoric: but when was the last time he was in Hackney or Lambeth to see the despair that his policies cause? When was the last time he saw a pensioner weeping in pain waiting in the cold for an ambulance which did not come because of the 20% cuts in the Ambulance Service budget?

When did he see a man with two artificial hips in agony carrying his shopping across his



The occupation of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital delayed closure for three years

shoulders in carrier bags tied together with a handkerchief, taking two hours to walk a few yards to the shops and back? No home helps available because of Fowler's cuts.

The DHSS creates scenes like this but it does not consider them when deciding to cut. It just cobbles some statistics together, multiplies and divides, and comes up with 'norms'. These norms, originally meant as crude guidelines, have now

become an administrative bible.

You make cuts to fit in with the norms, even though the norms do not fit the area. The 'norms' become the ultimate instead of just guidelines — therefore apply the 'norms' and cut the existing services.

That is what is about to happen in London. The Tories have made their intentions clear — to dismantle the NHS in London. But, London has a long and strong history of fighting

against hospital closures.

We must decide now how we will fight them and mobilise quickly to do it. There are increasing calls for "extra parliamentary activity", strikes and occupations, to stop the Tories eroding the welfare state.

The trade union leaders and reformist politicians will shy away from this kind of action, but it is the only way to defend the working class and the only way to save the NHS.

Labour movement CONFERENCE

September 17

September 17, 10.30am-5pm
University of London Union
Malet Street, WC1

Called by
Socialist
ORGANISER

How to fight the Tories



*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 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 LABOUR PARTY who had fought for left policies and accountability 'fell silent' during the election — despite the right wing sabotage. How can we develop an organised, and politically confident left in the Labour Party 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? How should the unions respond to the new threats posed by Tebbit's so-called "Youth Training Scheme"?

*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.

Open to delegates and observers from all labour movement bodies.

Credentials (including discussion papers) £2.50 (employed), £1.50 (unemployed).

Please send me details/credentials for the September 17 conference. I enclose £...

Name

Address

Send to: Socialist Organiser, 28, Middle Lane, London N8. (Please mark the envelope "September 17 Conference".)

Platform and workshop speakers include:

Jeremy Corbyn MP; Reg Race, Joy Hurcombe (Labour CND)*; Val Dunn (Manchester Labour councillor)*; Andrea Campbell (COHSE Group 81)*; Colin Talbot (POEU Broad Left)*.

*In a personal capacity

Workshop discussions, coupled with the showing of videos, will cover a wide range of topics and current struggles, and enable everyone present to contribute in debate on policies for the way forward.

CRÈCHE FACILITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE ALL DAY

Post-election debate Labour's record to blame

MOST explanations of Labour's defeat advanced from the Left are based on false assumptions. We may disregard those that are the product of a massive denial, for example that Labour's defeat was really a major success as never before have 8½ million of British electors voted for what is claimed to be a socialist programme.

The more fashionable assertion, however, namely that the electoral defeat was due to the half hearted way the Labour leadership put over some Manifesto policies is only marginally less insane. It seeks to explain a situation produced by the interaction of several often unrelated factors, by singling out one and ignoring the others. Here once again the Left has yielded to the opportunist temptation to score debating points instead of making a serious attempt at a genuine analysis.

There is in fact no evidence that elections are won or lost as the result of a few weeks of campaigning on no matter how good a programme. Whether they consciously realise it or not, the great majority of electors does not decide on how to vote by reading the manifestos of the various parties. They decide on the basis of their cumulative experience of many years.

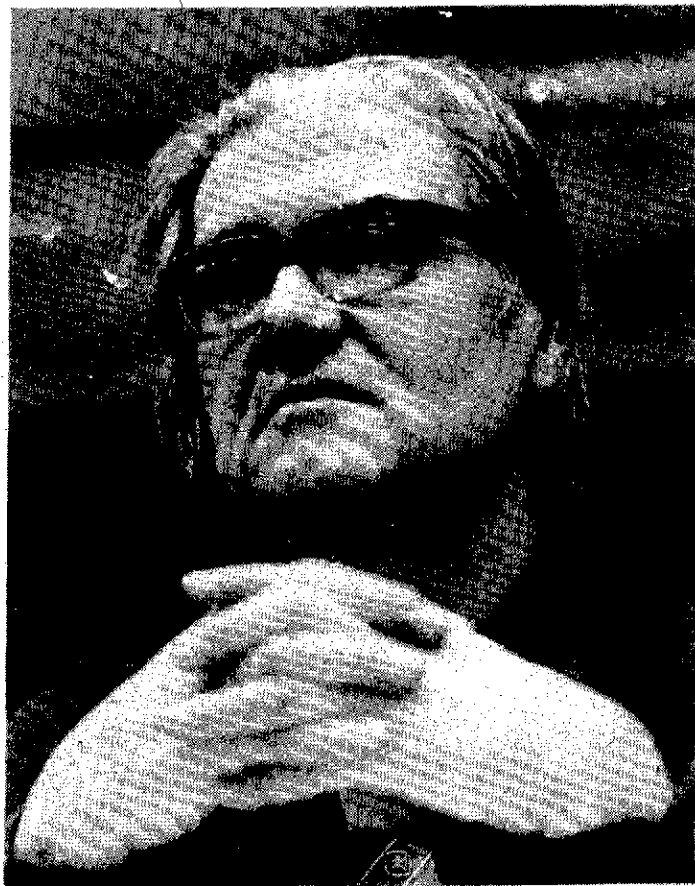
The main source of the loss of Labour's credibility as an alternative government should therefore be traced to Labour governments 1964-70 and 1974-79, and not to what the two Labour ex-Prime Ministers have said during the election campaign. It was the record of these two governments which convinced even many of those who

VLADIMIR DERER of the CLPD presents his views, continuing our series discussing the outcome of the election.

continue to vote Labour that a Labour government is incapable of effectively tackling Britain's economic problems. Thatcher's strength derived precisely from the opposite impression, namely that she has broken with the past Tory (and Labour) practice of tinkering with the economy.

It would have taken Labour several years of systematic and relentless political education to have succeeded in convincing the electorate that Britain's present economic difficulties are rooted in the capitalist structure of the economy itself and that the only way to bring about a lasting industrial revival would be through a government directed investment programme carried out on the basis of a major extension of public ownership in the crucial sectors of the economy. Those responsible for Labour's policies, including the Bennite 'Left', consistently shy away from this vital conclusion. Thus up to a point, they have capitulated before the anti-Labour propaganda about the unpopularity of 'nationalisation'.

The issue of defence is in a slightly different category. True, the parliamentary leadership was only partially identified with the demand for unilateral



JOHN HARRIS

nuclear disarmament. Yet it cannot be seriously argued that the electors were confused about what Labour's defence policy was, or that they would have viewed it more favourably had Callaghan, Healey and Hattersley been converted to unilateralism.

Attitudes

Socialist politics is not solely about declarations of attitudes, no matter how 'principled' or about rational argument. If this were so the battle for socialism would have been won long ago. Socialist politics must take into account the prevailing state of consciousness of the masses, consciousness which under capitalism is inevitably a false one. It must also take into account the fact that the great mass of people can partially free themselves from that consciousness only when confronted with concrete choices in concrete situations and not as the result of abstract arguments.

When it comes to the choice of immediate demands such as are embodied in the Party's

Manifesto, it means emphasis on and mobilising support for demands that are acceptable to potential Labour voters and which, if implemented, would create a new situation more favourable to the achievement of socialist objectives.

So far as the nuclear issue is concerned, the rejection of the Trident, of the Cruise missiles as well as the removal of US nuclear bases from this country, seemed to be acceptable to potential Labour voters, whereas as a formula that in their eyes would have left Britain defenceless was clearly not. To ignore this was to abandon politics in favour of preaching.

Confidence

But despite the weakness of Labour's position on defence, the unilateralist issue could never have played the part in the election campaign it did, had it not been for the general loss of confidence in the Party's ability to deal with the problem of the economy and unemployment, which was the issue the electorate were most concerned about.

"By their deeds shall ye know them" — rather than by their words. By their votes should the Labour leaders be judged and especially the candidates for Leader and Deputy Leader. The CLPD has analysed the voting records of key leaders, including Kinnock, Hattersley and Heffer.

NEC VOTES ON CRUCIAL ISSUES.

Although John Golding and Jo Richardson are not standing, their votes are nevertheless recorded as an illustrated typical response by the opposite sides of the Party spectrum.

KEY TO SYMBOLS

F = FOR
A = AGAINST
O = ABSTENTION
— = ABSENT OR NOT VOTING
* = NOT ON NEC THEN

DUNWOODY
HEFFER
KINNOCK
GOLDING
RICHARDSON

1) No action against Militant (Dec 80)	*	F	F	A	F
2) Oppose 'shortlist' of one (May 81)	*	F	A	A	F
3) For trade union rights for Youth Opportunity Programme Trainees (July 81)	*	F	—	A	F
4) Support NEC commitment to 'remove nuclear weapons from Britain' (July 81)	*	F	F	A	F
5) Endorse Peter Tatchell (Dec 81)	A	F	A	A	F
6) No enquiry into Militant (Dec 81)	A	F	A	A	F
7) Endorse Pat Wall (Feb 82)	A	F	F	A	F
8) Immediate ceasefire in the Falklands (May 82)	A	O	A	A	F
9) Keep the commitment to 'unilateral disarmament' in Labour's Programme 1982 (May 82)	A	F	F	A	F
10) Reject Militant Tendency Report (June 82)	A	F	A	A	F
11) Keep the commitment to nationalise clearing banks in NEC statement to conference (July 82)	A	F	A	A	F
12) NEC should not oppose Conference amendments calling for removal of NEC's arbitrary powers over pressure groups and calling for impartial conditions for the operation of pressure groups (Sept 82)	A	F	A	A	F
13) Total opposition to incomes policy and support for guaranteed minimum wage (Sept 82)	A	F	A	—	F
14) Keep Benn, not Golding, as Chair of Home Policy Committee (Nov 82)	A	F	O	A	F
15) Carry out 1981 Conference decision to allow CLPs to carry out a full re-selection in the event of boundary changes (Feb 82)	A	F	—	A	F
16) Against expelling the Militant Editorial Board (Feb 83)	A	F	A	A	F

Why workers won't buy the AES

WHY didn't the Alternative Economic Strategy convince working class voters?

Certainly it didn't. If Labour's plan for jobs had won their confidence, no amount of media attacks and diversions could have produced the big swing away from Labour that actually took place.

Not too much weight can be put on opinion poll figures, but they confirm this conclusion.

The first reason for working class voters not to believe Labour's promises was the record of the 1974-9 Labour government. Unemployment was 600,000 in 1974, 1½ million in 1979 — even though the 1974

manifesto contained much the same promises as 1983's.

So talk of 'tried and tested' policies rang hollow. Yet the national leaflet "What Labour offers you", read:

"We'll invest in Industry, Transport, Housing, New Technology.

It's a tried and tested way to create new jobs and reduce the dole bill.

With jobs again, people can buy things again. To produce them, industry takes on even more people.

We'll also help the economy to grow by spending more on Pensions, Education, Health, Child Benefits.

By Martin Thomas

And we'll help firms take on extra workers."

Even if voters were prepared to forget about 1974-9, this was not very convincing.

More state spending? But that means increased taxes, or more public borrowing. More public borrowing tends to mean more inflation.

More demand for goods? That means more imports, more balance of payments problems. The leaflet also promises lower interest rates — which tend to mean money flowing out to where it can get better rates.

The leaflet doesn't mention these difficulties or try to answer them directly. It does, however, answer them indirectly by including promises of price controls and import controls. (Exchange controls were also part of the manifesto).

But price controls were a sham under the last Labour government. Capitalism is a system which depends on the relatively free movement of prices to balance supply and

demand. Price controls must be sham under capitalism. The only possible exception is war economy conditions, when price controls go together with tight state regulation overall, including wage controls and rationing.

Import controls, at 'best', are a way to export unemployment rather than fight it. But it is doubtful that they would even do that.

Foreign trade takes 30% of Britain's national income. In a crisis-stricken capitalist world, Britain could not impose sweeping new import controls without other countries replying in kind.

The net result would be a decline in trade, and a worsening of the slump in heavily trade dependent countries — like Britain.

Labour's plan claimed that capitalism would work better for everyone — bosses and workers alike — if only the government took a few simple measures. But the plan would not work in capitalist terms — that's why the hard-headed capitalists oppose it! And it proposed nothing to go beyond capitalism.

Some local Labour Party material did talk about 'control of capital'. The Islington Labour Parties, for example, mass-distributed a special issue of their paper Islington Voice which

declared:

"Under the Tories funds are being invested overseas, at the rate of £1,700 million a year. A Labour government will keep those funds in Britain.

By setting up a National Investment Bank and by putting pressure on the big banks, we will get that money invested.

Planning and new public enterprise will channel the investment to where it's needed the most.

We will also control the way that firms use the money through growth plans agreed with workers and management."

The problem of nationalism arises again: if investment by British capital is a Good Thing, why shouldn't other countries have the benefit of it as well as Britain?

Aside from that, some questions are begged. How will the Labour government enforce these controls? What if the big banks are not swayed by mere 'pressure' from a Labour government? What if management doesn't 'agree' the 'growth plans'?

More fundamentally: can capital be controlled by labour without ceasing to be capital? Capital is not machines and equipment: it is the accumulated

profits of past exploitation, constantly seeking to expand as fast as possible through new exploitation and new profits.

The means of production and distribution are forms of capital only so long as they serve the purpose of profit-making. If they are owned and controlled by the working class — and that is the only way that the economy can really be planned and decent jobs for all secured — then they are no longer 'capital'.

The economy can be democratically planned, or run for profit — but not both simultaneously.

Moreover, not even the 'control of capital' was put in terms of class struggle — workers' power against the power of the bosses and bankers.

Almost every voter I spoke to while canvassing who gave a positive reason for voting Labour said something to the effect that s/he regarded Labour as the party of the working class.

Yet neither the official leaflet nor the more left wing local material even used the words 'working class' or 'class struggle'.

No wonder Labour wasn't convincing.

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.

New turn in Greenham fight

HELEN JOHNSON, one of those arrested last Friday reports: Greenham Common: On Friday 8 July the Greenham Common protest took a new turn. Women around the base cut down 20 feet fencing in the morning, making it impossible for the convoy of workers to get into the base.

A group of 20 women from Halifax decided they would block the road about a mile from the base which the convoy would use on its way to the base.

The idea was that the tail-back of traffic would build up which the police would have to move before the convoy could get through.

Unfortunately the coach drivers got lost and we didn't arrive before the convoy was in sight.

We got out of the coach and blocked the road. The convoy went across the grass and we went in front of it again.

Unexpected

The police weren't expecting this sort of thing to happen.

Two of us were violently arrested and harassed by the police.

After being dragged along the grass for about 200 yards one woman was handcuffed to the inside door of a police van for refusing to chat to the police.

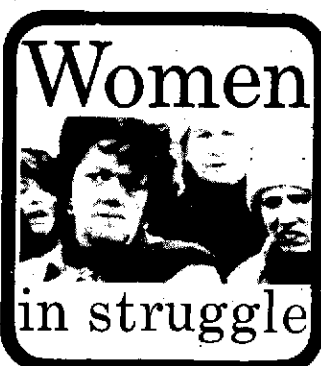
The others were arrested in a more usual manner.

The women were all charged with obstruction.

If the protest is to succeed we must change our tactics just as the police are organised and flexible enough to change theirs.

The cutting down of the fence by the women around the base kept the convoy out for about 2½ hours. Other ideas like this must be tried to ensure that the police and other state forces never can know exactly what action they will have to deal with next.

Left slate of women - picked by men!



By Mandy Moore

ture and power of the women's organisation.

In the past, a great amount of soul-searching has gone on by women on the left, active in the

women's organisation as to what to do about this situation.

We have discussed the matter ad nauseam with the small group of men on the left who have taken it upon themselves to draw up the slate; and in the past have grudgingly acquiesced.

This year, however, even this small amount of lip service to democratic decision-making has been abandoned and the slate for the Women's Section has been drawn up not only without much consultation, but actually against the wishes of many active women on the left.

Last year, we accepted the slate (we were told it was a 'one-off' thing!) to present a united front to try to keep control of the NEC - this year we are now told a slate is needed to try to win back control.

Last year, we had Frances Morrell on the slate, the only woman on it who was fully com-



The "women's slate" is a travesty

mitted to the women's organisation in the Party - this year, for reasons which are far from salutary, Frances has been left off.

The women's slate is a travesty.

Men in the Party have drawn it up - after closed discussions with men in the unions. Men will vote at Annual Conference for the Women's Section; and it is to men that those women elected will be beholden.

It is time the left 'put its money where its mouth is' and began to really fight for women in the Party. The fiasco of the

Women's Section slate has got to stop, and real account taken of the views of women.

The Women's Action Committee will not be supporting the slate. We shall only support those women on it who fully support the constitutional changes for women in the Party; and if other women on the left are nominated who do support WAC and its aims, we shall call for support for them instead.

The Women's Section slate is just the most blatant example of a much wider problem, and women have decided to say no.

TGWU women rout platform officials

'WOMEN'S CAUSE a Triumph for Men' trumpeted the Guardian headline.

They were of course writing of a major triumph for women at last week's TGWU Biennial Delegate Conference, when women delegates twice persuaded the conference to reject statements from the powerful General Executive Council.

It all began with the submission of five resolutions on women's Rights. One in particular, Resolution 447, called for the union to initiate and support measures which would promote the equal participation of women in the union and Labour Party's policy and decision making bodies.

Now the General Executive Council of the TGWU prides itself on being a progressive body, packed with left-wingers, (all of them men of course). And so when the officers recommended that they not accept the resolution, they found themselves in something of a pickle.

It wouldn't look too good opposing the women would it? On the other hand they were impressed by the officers' reservations. What were they to do?

Dive for the rule-book, was the answer. The TGWU has a very unusual union rule that enables the Executive (or at least the officers) to draft a 'statement', which overrules the motions on the agenda in any particular debate, and which renders all those resolutions null and void should the statement be accepted.

This statement is kept a complete secret from the delegates; indeed very few executive members get to see it. Then it is read aloud to a completely unprepared conference by a full-time union official!

When Marie Patterson rose to read the Statement on Women's Participation in trade union and

By a BDC
delegate

Labour Party affairs, there was a mood of anticipation amongst women delegates in the hall. Rumour had it that the statement was a 'good' one, that it went a long way to meeting the demands of women delegates.

But this anticipation was soon quashed by Ms. Patterson's firm announcement that the union could not support the demand that the women's conference of the Labour Party (or the TUC) be allowed to submit resolutions or elect the women's section of the NEC.

If this statement were carried, it immediately became clear, then the TGWU would be casting its million plus votes against rank-and-file women in the Labour Party.

As this realisation dawned, women delegates went to the rostrum to protest at the manner in which the statement had been presented to Conference and at the double standards contained in it: on the one hand it was an enthusiastic endorsement of Positive Action, on the other a rebuttal of positive action measures that would go some way in transferring power to women in the labour movement.

One by one male delegates rose to support them, until the tide of protest became a flood, and the Statement was overwhelmingly rejected, with just a handful of delegates supporting the executive.

The rejection caused visible consternation on the platform. The rule-book now permitted the resolutions to be moved individually and fully debated.

Hurriedly they conferred, while women were given a second bite of the cherry and proceeded to move the vital

resolution 447. In replying to the debate, Marie Patterson was forced to concede defeat and to recommend support for all the resolutions on women's participation.

While motion 445 calls for the establishment for the first time of a national women's advisory committee to meet quarterly, and report to the executive, motion 447 calls on the TGWU to do two things: first, to extend and formally constitute effective women's organisations within the union and the Labour Party.

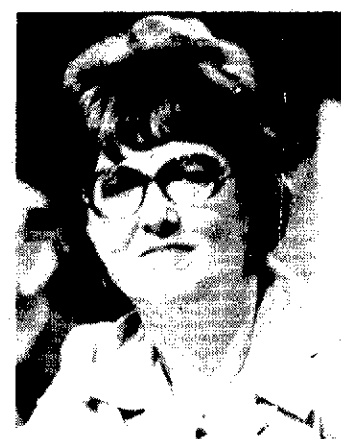
This means that at this year's Labour Party Conference the TGWU must lend its support for resolutions calling for a rules conference for the women's organisation.

Second the resolution calls on the union to 'promote the equal participation of women in the union and party's powerful policy and decision-making bodies, i.e. the Annual Conference and the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party.'

Finally it calls on the TGWU to 'initiate and support positive action proposals designed to improve women's access and participation in the activities of both the union and the party.'

This must mean that the TGWU should support WAC's two demands that the Labour Party Women's Conference be empowered to elect the women's section of the NEC; and that it be entitled to submit resolutions to the Labour Party's Conference.

On the following day, Marie Patterson rose once again, this time to read a statement on Abortion rights, child-care facilities etc - a statement relatively uncontroversial. But women delegates were still angry at the Cavalier manner in which they



Marie Patterson

had been treated, and once more urged the Conference to reject the statement so that individual delegates could move resolutions framed by their branches, and not by the full-time officers.

This time the tellers were called in, and although the vote was a narrow one, the women had won again, and Marie Patterson had been defeated for the second time by her own women members.

The outcome of these two debates had a major impact on delegates at Conference; it renewed their confidence in their own power, and it made the question of women's rights a central issue of the male-dominated biennial meeting.

For full report on TGWU conference - see p.15

HARD TIMES

From Pluto Press:
an analysis of
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from regular Socialist
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Bob Sutcliffe. £2.50
from bookshops, or
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Torrano Avenue,
London NW5.

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.

International news

Student grouping moves towards Trotskyism Left wing draws a balance sheet on Iranian revolution



THIS paper provides only a brief introduction to the recent split in the OIPFG and among its supporters abroad. In the future, we hope to publish more articles on these and related questions. We urge you to contact us with your comments, criticisms and questions.

We are members of the student organisation, Iranian Students Association, Socialist Tendency (ISA, ST). We are former members of the ISA, Supporters of OIPFG, known as the minority in some circles, a term which emerged from an earlier split in the OIPFG/ISA, over the nature of the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian revolution of February 1979, put a swift end to 50 years of a strong central state run by the Pahlavis. The Shah and his father governed in true Persian fashion — allowing no other arena for the exercise of power, whether in the bazaar, whose hold on commerce the Shah always sought to undermine, or for the ethnic minorities whose languages were forbidden, or even in the mosque. All governing bodies had to answer to the Shah himself. Censorship was universal. The Shah's dictatorship was a prison and the long years of it had unforeseen and fatal effects on the ability of its former inmates to sustain a forward motion once he was gone.

No experience

No-one in Iran had any experience with democracy. No free press, 90% illiteracy among the women and 40% among the men, schools but straitjackets for the mind, a prison sentence for owning a book by Marx or Rosa Luxemburg. No one had any experience in the marketplace of ideas. Trained to wait for orders, never having learned the give-and-take of debate, self-management came hard to both the left and the workers, once the opportunity arrived.

The active left was small. Some sank from view in clandestine work, prison and martyrdom. Most emerged from the universities, from the tens of

AS THE Khomeini regime in Iran has tightened its grip on the left and the working class, debate has sharpened in the ranks of the divided Fedayeen opposition over the nature of the regime and the tactics necessary in the next period.

While the Majority of the Fedayeen has been drawn towards the Stalinist politics of the Tudeh Party, a minority, the Organisation of Iranian People's Fedayeen Guerrillas, has fought in opposition to Khomeini.

We reprint here a statement from the Socialist Tendency of the Iranian Students Association in the USA, an overtly socialist split from the OIPFG. The Socialist Tendency has moved towards Trotskyist positions, and publishes a paper called 'Socialism and Revolution'. (Reprinted from Workers Review)

thousands of students at home and the hundred thousand abroad, who poured back into the country on the eve of the February uprising.

Throughout 1978, sector after sector became mobilised, for one reason or another. Earlier, the international drop in the price of oil — the Shah's black gold — had weakened the foundations of the monarchy. In September 1978, the oil workers went on strike, demanding political reforms and, finally, an end to the dictatorship. They stayed on strike until the Shah fled the country, deciding among themselves how much oil to pump for domestic consumption. They revealed the vulnerability at the heart of Iran's economic miracle and brought down the Pahlavi state.

It was the demonstrations and strikes, not military action or parliamentary manoeuvre, that brought down the Shah. The street demonstrations in December, January and February were among the largest in contemporary history. Thousands of women participated; whole fam-

ilies went out on the streets, day after day, unarmed, braving tear gas and bullets. A general strike was proclaimed in January; all transport ceased; and the bank workers published the details of the ruling circle's financial affairs. Nobody could live through such a tempest without having their social relations tested and changed. It was an intensive lesson in new political possibilities, on a truly mass level, increasing daily as the Shah's power broke down.

Moment

For a brief moment, the left had an enormous mass following. All things were possible. The prisons were opened, neighbourhood committees kept order and distributed food, soldiers went over to the rebellion, workers kicked out their managers and took over. Tehran University became a centre for the revitalised left and the left itself expanded beyond its gates. More books were published in the first months of 1979 than in 50 years of darkness. Arguments about the proper management of society broke out on street corners.

The power vacuum left by the disintegrating state was filled in a variety of ways, revealing both the soaring of the newly freed imagination and all the limitations hardens in years of obscurity.

The left neither values nor understood the popular nature of those spontaneous new attempts by the movement's rank and file. They plunged into the fray with all the ferocious energy of the young. They confused the slogan 'Down with the Shah' with a conscious understanding of the nature of his government and its backers. They underestimated the variety of viewpoints united under that banner. Flush with their own secular educations, they underestimated the depth of Khomeini's appeal, a call to a simpler, preindustrialised time, when women knew their proper place.

Those of the left who avoided the euphoria of optimism fell into an equally dangerous pessimism. They gave up on the masses as hopelessly backward and incapable of groping their own way into the light. So they substituted themselves, with their half-digested sophisticated educations, for the untrained rank and file leadership redirecting them, gutting their usefulness as schools for the masses, and unwittingly destroying the only genuine alternative to Khomeini's own popular mobilisation.

Accepted

Another factor in Khomeini's favour was the decision of the major capitalist powers — then facing problems of their own — to make the best of a bad situation and accept Khomeini.

The fluid situation did not last long. The new ruling bloc, backed by the liberals, wasted no time. They shot up and dispersed demonstrating workers and gradually replaced the embryonic organs of popular power — the shuras — with their own hand-picked 'Islamic' councils. The prison gates were lowering once again.

Demonstrations for women's rights, numbering tens of thousands were organised to protest the imposition of Islamic



Demonstrations for women's rights were set on by men with knives...

dress, behaviour and morality. They were set on by men with knives, insulted and fired upon. Kurds, Turks and every other national minority demanded recognition of their autonomy and were denied; all-out war was launched against the Kurds. Censorship was reimposed; the universities were shut down; the civil service was purged of all non-Islamic elements. The jails began to overflow. Every left group, every organisation that was not wholly in agreement with the Islamic Republic Party, was driven underground, its members dispersed, imprisoned, tortured, murdered and sent into exile. Such is the record of counter-revolution in Khomeini's Iran.

Only the working people, only the same force that overthrew the Shah, can reverse this heart-breaking defeat.

Our task is not to dwell on history in an academic way, but to examine the present predicament so that we can, as Marx said, change it. What should not be done? What were the main errors of the left during the crucial period?

The Shah and his father had absolute power for nearly half a century, except for the brief nationalist uprising in the early '50s. The left has never had an opportunity to practice the free-ranging discussion and open debate that were so critical to its healthy development.

They were further burdened by the model of left organisation they had inherited from previous generations, where heroism was exalted over common sense, centralism valued more than democracy, and the ability to think critically and creatively — with all the stops and starts that this entails — were sacrificed in the interests of organisation. So it is not surprising that Stalinism came to dominate the left during the Shah's period and has continued through today. Ultimately, the carelessness of the leftists where their

own democratic rights were concerned paved the way for the success of Khomeini's wholesale attacks on everyone's democratic rights.

This last is particularly poignant given the depth of the longing for freedom that united the movement against the Shah.

Most of the left suffers from sectarianism and self-centredness. Unable to engage in sincere criticism/self-criticism, intellectually stifled, it lacks a realistic analysis of both the state and society. It has had to function day-by-day, flying by the seat of its pants.

We believe that Marxism is again in crisis, mired in the accumulated weight of unadmitted defeats and unanswered questions. Only open struggle will save us, only a thorough re-examination of our entire orientation will determine what can be kept and what can be discarded.

Split

This organisation, which enjoyed enormous popularity during the uprising, has shared in the general defeat. Soon after the uprising, the OIPFG split into two organisations, OIPF which supports the Khomeini government, and OIPFG which opposes it.

As Khomeini's campaign against the left increased, some people in the OIPFG began to realise how bad the situation was and to criticise their own past errors and take responsibility for them. New ideas grew up inside the organisation. These new ideas, however rudimentary, came into conflict with the economist views of the leadership, for whom the revolutionary agents — the proletariat — and situation — economic crisis — were fixed for all time.

As the new tendency matured it became obvious that the majority faction would split the organisation to safeguard its dominant position. So they did,

and there are now two distinct organisations. The new organisation in Iran is called Revolutionary Socialist Tendency.

Parallel events took place in the student organisations abroad, surprisingly without any correspondence between the people inside and outside Iran.

Internationalists

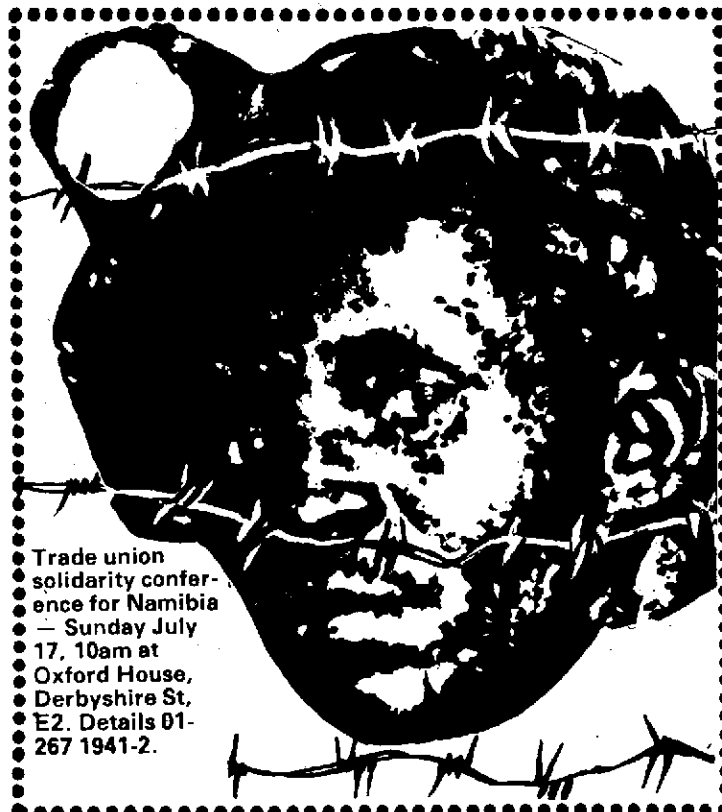
As internationalists, we will participate in anti-imperialist struggles wherever we are. Inside the US, we look forward to friendship and cooperation with all interested progressive movements.

We want to initiate dialogue, both with other progressive Iranian groups and with progressive movements from other countries. We also want to participate in the ideological struggle in Iran and to assist as much as possible the revolutionary left which is operating under such difficult circumstances.

We plan to study critical social-political issues from a new perspective to advance the growth of new revolutionary theory. Some topics of interest to us are: the current situation of world capitalism, the relationship between imperialism and the state in various social systems, and different national liberation movements. We also want to learn about the United States and various progressive movements here, such as the anti-nuke, ecologist, anti-militarist, feminist, lesbian, gay, black and minority movements.

We would like to better understand the nature of these movements and their impact on imperialism. We will of course share what we learn with our comrades in Iran, as well as sharing the experience of the Iranian revolution with our international friends. We realise that we have been less than thorough in the past about developing these ties and hope to catch up in the near future.

April 1983



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

Stalinism came to dominate the left under the Shah

International news



North and South

by Paddy Dollard

A LIKELY result of bringing back the rope would be communal civil war in Northern Ireland — and in the near rather than the more distant future.

The politics of political martyrdom in a form probably even more emotive than the hunger strikes would be made a permanent and ever-active force for destabilisation in Northern Ireland. An endless stream of republicans would face the hangman. (So would some loyalists).

Judicial execution and retaliatory IRA execution of hostages would massively intensify the Catholic/Protestant polarisation.

The hunger strikes did this in 1981, mobilising one community to support them and the other against them. It came close to the explosion point while the ten men starved to death and immediately afterwards.

All those concerned with British rule in Northern Ireland understand this and are alarmed by it. Fitzgerald knows it too.

Yet the main Unionist parties want to bring back the rope and their 15 members in the British House of Commons will vote for it. Many of this year's 12 July Orange marches will pass resolutions in favour of it.

Some of them want it because they think it will force the British government into a full-scale "showdown" with the Catholic community. Most of them just want eye-for-an-eye vengeance.

When Northern Ireland's powerless Assembly debated capital punishment recently John Cushman of the non-sectarian Unionist organisation Alliance reminded them that the hunger strikers by their deaths had created hundreds of IRA militants to take their places.

But the true voice of the Protestant community on this issue — combining Old Testament severity with Boys Own comic psychology — came out of the mouth of Gregory Campbell from Derry, moving the Democratic Unionist Party motion:

"Those who are against us and those who say terrorists should be imprisoned are saying that the IRA are not afraid of the rope. When we think of the IRA explosions at La Mon, Warrenpoint, Bloody Friday and Ballykelly, who dares in this House to say that these vile, inhuman monsters are anything but craven cowards?"

The demand to ban plastic bullets which so far have killed seven children and a number of others continues to unite Northern Ireland Catholics. The six Catholic bishops in the Six Counties appealed to the British government to ban them.

But the British government was not impressed. Back came the reply: "It is the government's view that plastic baton rounds are the most effective means of controlling serious rioting, consistent with the use of minimum force."

Bishop Edward Doherty of Derry, where 11 year old Stephen McConomy was killed last year, commented that an appeal by all the Catholic bishops in the province "deserved a more considered response than that."

Meanwhile in Dublin, Taoiseach Fitzgerald refused to meet the parents of the seven children who have died by British plastic bullets.

The parents of Stephen McConomy, who had the back of his head blown off by a plastic bullet fired at close range, are bringing a civil court action against the Ministry of Defence, claiming damages for his death.

Three weeks ago a jury in Derry brought in a verdict that Stephen McConomy was killed "without justification" by the British Army.

Four years ago Lord Mountbatten and three others were blown up in Mullaghmore Harbour, Co. Sligo. Last weekend Sinn Fein and the IRA held a rally there to commemorate the ten IRA hunger strikers who died in 1981.

There was an outcry from the press. And the 26 County government expressed such loud disapproval that it was thought they might ban the rally. In fact they were only shouting so that the British government would hear them.

The rally attracted 800, many from the North. They chanted "IRA, IRA, IRA" and gave clenched fist salutes as they passed Classiebawn Castle, which was one of Mountbatten's homes.

The main speaker was Owen Carron, former abstentionist MP for Fermanagh/South Tyrone. Of the rally's critics he said: "They fear the hunger strikers and their comrades. They fear that they will bring about a situation in the 26 Counties like that in the North where the hunger strikers have fuelled the imaginations of the young who were no longer prepared to accept the collaborationism of the SDLP."

He called for a radical new solution to the Irish problem. Whether it will be peaceful or violent lies with the British government, he said. "It is they who have introduced violence to the struggle because we want peace."

But it was not a united demonstration. Declan Bree, a socialist member of Sligo Corporation and County Council, a scheduled speaker, was shouted down when he tried to speak from the platform.

Some of the crowd were hostile to him for standing in the 1981 election when a hunger striker also stood (and almost won).

The hostility swelled and silenced him when he said that he was a marxist and that no one group had a monopoly on republicanism. There were shouts of "Join your bloody friend Mountbatten. You don't represent the nationalist people of Ireland." Most of the crowd joined in the shouting and heckling which finally forced him off the platform.

Harry Blaney, brother of Neil, the "Independent Fianna Fail" Green Tory TD from Donegal was given a respectful hearing.

Brazil: call for General Strike

by Martin Thomas

Brazil's militant trade unions have called a general strike for Thursday July 21.

A strike wave started on Wednesday 6, against lay-offs and wage cuts threatened as part of Brazil's negotiations with international bankers.

1100 workers walked out at an oil refinery 62 miles from the industrial centre of Sao Paulo, in what they called 'pre-emptive action'.

The military government promptly declared the strike illegal and took over the union headquarters. But the next day, Thursday 7, the refinery workers were followed by 60,000 metal workers in the Sao Paulo area.

The leading force in the strike is reported to be the Workers' Party, which emerged from the militant trade union struggles of 1979.

Brazil went through a tremendous boom between 1964 and 1981. It has overtaken Britain as a steel producer, and experts estimate it will be ahead in car production too within a few years. But in the last two years, as the debt squeeze has tightened, the economy has gone abruptly into reverse.

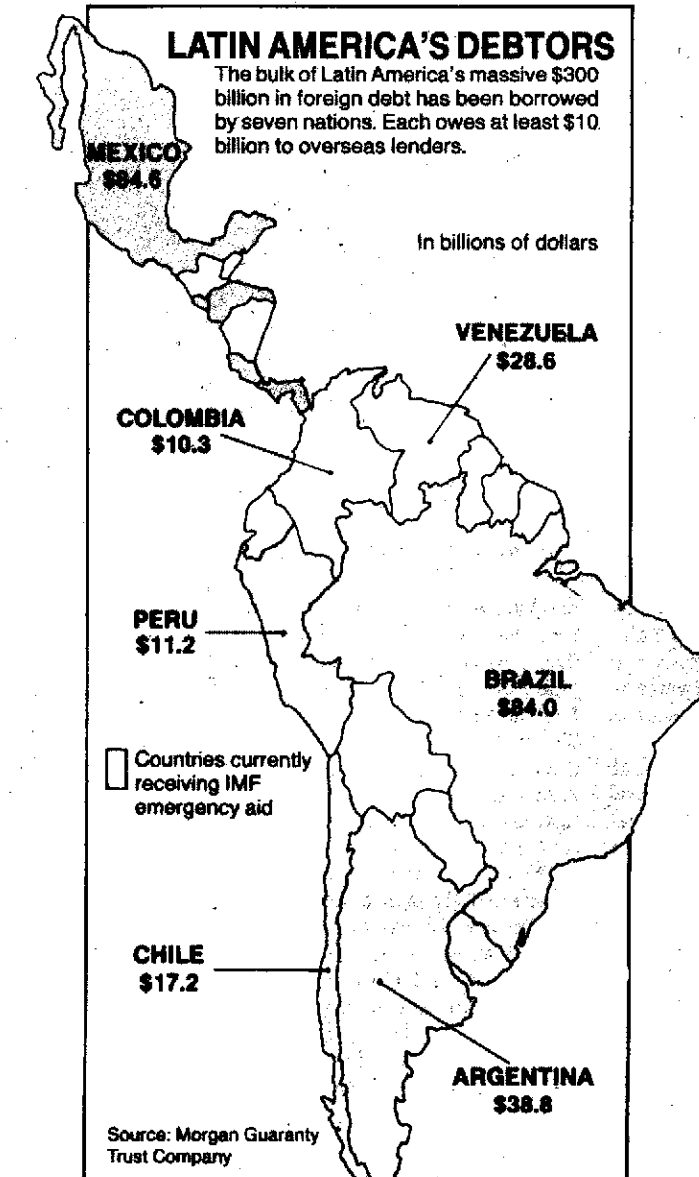
Industrial production dropped by over 10% in 1982 and is still stagnant. Although car production has recovered partly, in early 1983 tractor production was 52% down on early 1982, rolled steel production down 11%, and iron ore down 21%.

Brazil's increasingly important exports of manufactured goods have been restricted by the world recession. So, in order to establish a trade surplus sufficient to meet its huge debt payments, the Brazilian government has curbed imports drastically.

Imports for state-owned industries — central to the economy — have been cut back 35% this year.

Brazil is, however, still an estimated \$1.3 billion behind on interest payments. An IMF team is currently in Brazil negotiating further austerity measures with the government.

Wages in Brazil are state-controlled, and regulated by an



indexation system raising them periodically in line with prices. Trade unionists have long complained that the price index is rigged so that real wages actually decline; but in January, as part of a deal with the IMF, the government revised the system to reduce wage rises even more.

With price inflation at 130% over the last 12 months, this means serious cuts in living standards.

At the same time as it is challenged by the working class, the Brazilian government also

faces a hard line by the Bank of International Settlements — which on Monday 11 refused to extend Brazil's deadline for repaying a \$400 million short-term loan — and an internal crisis, with the illness of President Joao Figueiredo.

A banker quoted in the Guardian of July 12 said this 'was pulling Brazil close to declaring a moratorium on its \$90 billion debts — the largest in the world.' If Brazil does do that, the destabilising effects on the world financial system will be huge.

Stop Sicily missiles!

COMISO, Sicily, is the site of a future American air base deploying 112 Cruise missiles — it is the Italian equivalent of Greenham Common.

Its strategic purpose is to stand sentinel in the middle of the Mediterranean — available immediately to enter the Middle East conflict or to penetrate a good 800 miles south into Africa, covering the whole of Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Egypt. In other words, Comiso will cover NATO's southern flank.

The importance of Sicily in this role has increased considerably since the expiry of Britain's military agreements with Malta in March 1979. New radar stations have been established on the mainland and on the island of Pantellaria to strengthen NATO defences.

The Italian Peace Movement itself has been very active around Comiso. In April 1982 over 100,000 people demonstrated at the base, the largest

demo seen in Sicily since World War II. Over 1 million signatures have been collected on a petition calling for the cancellation of the base. This included two thirds of the population of Comiso itself, a small town of 27,000 inhabitants.

The Peace Movement is calling for support from European sympathisers throughout the summer and in particular for a mass demo on October 23.

Their main problem is the Mafia, which was allowed to grow by the Allies after World War II to oppose the Communist Party and the partisans. Already it is reported that the Mafia have bought up 8,645 acres of land in the area ready for the influx of 4,300 American airmen by 1987. One local Comiso businessman, Corifeo Biaggio, is reported to have said: 'At the moment Comiso has only 3 prostitutes and no drugs. This will, of course, have to change.'

Former Mayor of Comiso, Giacomo Cagnes, is now leader of the local Peace Movement. He claims to have had numerous telephone calls warning him to lay off the anti-missile campaign and reminding him of the fate of Pio La Torre.

La Torre was the Sicilian Regional Secretary of the PCI (Italian Communist Party) based in Palermo, and a well-known campaigner against the mafia. He was shot with his driver on April 30, 1982, shortly after the mass demonstration.

Less than 5 months later, General Dalla Chiesa, Head of the government's official anti-mafia squad, was also shot dead in Palermo.

Clearly the fight against Cruise is more than a single issue campaign. In Sicily it involves direct conflict with the vested interests of the mafia, as well as solidarity with those fighting oppression in the Middle East and North Africa.

Facts & Figures

Between 1970 and 1980, the government's share in gross fixed investment in Britain fell from 26% to 14%. The government's share in employment meanwhile rose from 18% to 22%.

No other advanced capitalist country has seen such a drop in public investment. Average figures for the advanced capitalist countries were 18% of total investment in 1970, 15.5% in 1980.

Gross fixed capital formation was 16% of total expenditure in the UK in 1981. The UK was thus putting a smaller proportion of expenditure into investment, as against immediate consumption, than any other advanced capitalist country except Denmark (also 16%).

The figures for other major countries were: US 18%, Spain 20%, France 21%, Canada 24%.

The number of unemployed women in the advanced capitalist countries increased by 7 million between 1970 and 1981, according to official figures. At the same time, however, the number of employed women increased by 23.6 million.

Around 40% of the total wage-labour force in advanced capitalist countries is now female. Exceptionally low figures are S. Ireland and Spain (28%); the highest are Finland, Sweden and Denmark (47 to 44%).

The latest Department of Employment Gazette claims that 90% of the 460,000 places required for the first year of the Youth Training Scheme have been filled.

Only 93,000 have, however, been vetted, and only 35,000 are occupied or ready for occupation.

The Department of Employment Gazette also confirms that the Tories' effort to force down youth wages has not yet been successful.

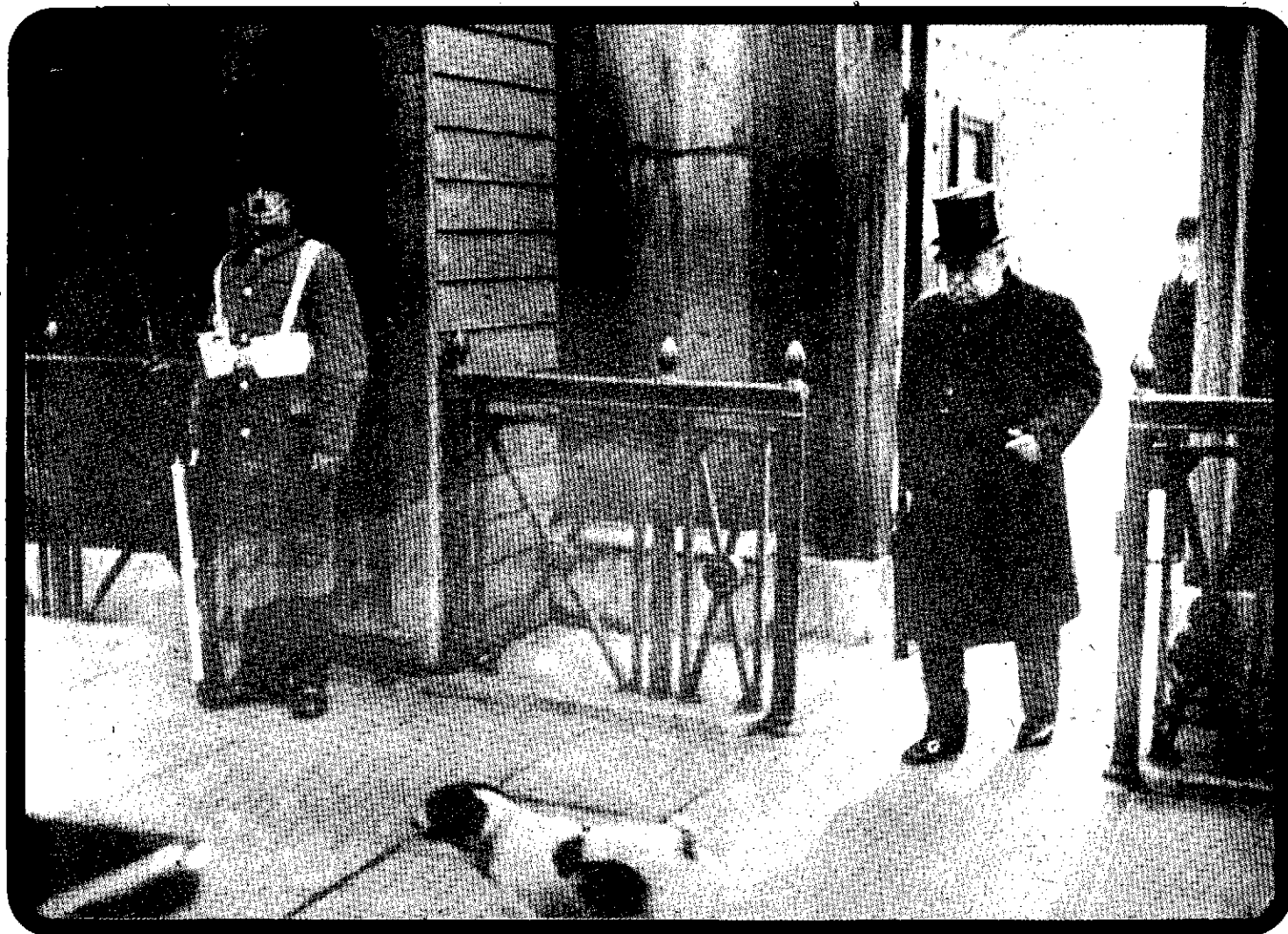
Under-21 male wages as a percentage of over-21 male wages rose from 42% in 1949 to 56% in 1975, and have since remained stable. Under-18 female wages have done less well — being around 65 to 70% of over-18 female wages ever since 1948 — but are also holding up. (All figures for full-time manual workers).

The April 1982 figures for average gross weekly earnings were £59.80 for males under 18, £53.90 for females. The YTS rate is £25.

Labour Campaign for Gay Rights

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.

Class interest and the "law of the la



Lord Halsbury — central figure in the historic Osborne judgement of 1909



The defeat of the General Strike was followed by the 1927 Trades Disputes Act

Forerunners of Norman Teb

By John
McIlroy

ATTEMPTS to weaken the labour movement by using the law to curb the political activity of trade unions are nothing new. Norman Tebbit's attempt to make it more difficult for the unions to finance the Labour Party is merely the latest offensive in a war that the Tories have pursued relentlessly since the dawn of independent Labour representation in Parliament.

Trade unions have financed parliamentary representation since 1874 when two miners' leaders, Thomas Burt and Alexander McDonald entered the Commons, on the Liberal ticket. That the unions should link themselves with the more civilised party of capital was viewed with condign complacency by the state.

A party pledged to the interests of Labour was a completely different proposition.

Time and again they have attempted to forbid or make it difficult for the unions to influence their own political party.

After the establishment of the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) in 1900 — which was the beginning of the Labour

Party — affiliated organisations were required to pay a compulsory levy to the Parliamentary Representation Fund as well as an affiliation fee. The bulk of the LRC cash came from the unions and while some of them simply paid it out of the General Funds, others set up special parliamentary representation funds and financed them by a compulsory levy of their members.

After Labour's successes in the 1906 election several unions made payments to members and officials as in those days — and until 1911 — MPs were not paid. An attack on these financial sinews as one means of crippling Labour's progress was soon under way.

The Trade Union Acts 1871-6 which had given the unions important protections had also defined a trade union as "any

combination whether temporary or permanent for regulating the relations between workmen and masters or between workmen and workmen . . . or for imposing restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business." Unions could, if they wished, register under these acts, receiving in return minor legal advantages.

In 1904, the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies said in his Annual Report, "As many trade unions are seeking to include in their objects such extraneous matters as the promotion of Labour Representation in Parliament and in other elected bodies, I have found it necessary to point out that such matters are not within the definition of a trade union contained in Section 16 of the Trade Union Act of 1876."

This straw in the wind was soon tested in the courts. Steele was a member of the South

This straw in the wind was soon tested in the courts. Steele, a member of the South Wales Miners Federation, was disgruntled because his union, after a favourable ballot, had set up a political fund to be financed by a compulsory levy. Steele objected to being forced to pay and went to court to get an injunction declaring that parliamentary representation was outside the definition of a union in the 1876 Act and therefore illegal.

The judge threw out the case. But the anti-union forces were not deterred. The Taff Vale judgement of 1901 had made unions financially liable for any damage inflicted on an employer during a strike. The 1906 Act reversed Taff Vale and gave unions some basic protections. This fuelled the flames of reaction, particularly amongst outraged lawyers and judges.

Forerunners of the National Association for Freedom such as the Anti-Socialist Union flourished. W.V. Osborne, a member of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS) (the union which had been brought to

court in the Taff Vale case) was a moving force in the Trade Union Political Freedom League.

Osborne went to court asking for a declaration that ASRS rules committing parliamentary representation of the union in advance to accept the Labour Party whip were invalid. He lost his case but the decision was reversed in the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords too found against the union.

Overruled

The decision in the Steele case was overruled. Against the vast majority of previous and future legal precedents, the Law Lords had decided that a union was a corporation and that as the statutory objectives of a union in the 1876 Act did not specifically mention political objectives, unions could not spend money on them. Osborne, who was 'liberally financed from capitalist sources' (according to the Webbs in their 'History of Trade Unionism') had pulled it off. Trade unions could no longer finance the Labour Party.

The Webbs describe what happened next:

"Up and down the country, discontented or venal trade unionists were sought out by solicitors and others acting for the employers; and were induced to lend their names to proceedings for injunctions against their own unions." Injunctions barred unions from contributing "to the Labour Party or to any other bodies or persons for the purpose of securing or maintaining parliamentary representation even if there was no connection with a political party."

Within 12 months of the House of Lords judgement in 1909, 25 unions had legal orders against them which gives you some idea of the likely impact of any legislation today.

The union leaders made the usual speeches about becoming martyrs, being lodged in New-

gate Gaol and about consuming vast quantities of prison gruel. But the court orders were accepted. Recourse was had to fund raising by voluntary means and to political pressure exerted on the Liberal Government to reverse the Osborne judgement as it had overturned Taff Vale. The Parliamentary Labour Party had close relations with the Liberals.

An important point to emphasise today is that the campaign waged for the complete reversal of the Osborne judgement. In other words, they argued that there should be no law governing the issue of political contributions. If unions wished to make it compulsory and not allow members to contract out, that was up to them.

Even the Liberal Lord Chancellor argued that he couldn't see 'what considerations of morals or policy ought to prevent trade unions from making it a condition of membership that members will subscribe for political purposes always supposing that they become members with knowledge of the terms upon which they have joined.'

This was a minority view in the Cabinet, however, and when a bill was introduced in May 1911 it proposed that a union wishing to pursue political objectives must first hold a ballot of the membership. With a favourable result they could then adopt rules to set up a political fund but these rules would have to provide that members would be entitled to opt out of a political levy and were not to be discriminated against for so doing.

Rights

The unions and the Labour Party, pointing out that they were only asking for the same rights as applied to companies which did not have to give minority rights to shareholders, refused to support the bill unless

the opting out clauses were withdrawn.

As J.R. Clynes commented, "We are told that men have consciences. I have yet to find the man who has a conscientious objection to receiving any of the benefits which our political activities secure to him. If a man receives these benefits arising from the political activities of trade unions on what principle can you say that these men shall escape paying for them."

The Bill was withdrawn but its successor was little different. The Labour leadership decided to accept it as better than nothing.

The 1913 Trade Union Act which was the result settled nothing as far as the Conservatives were concerned. They had bitterly opposed any reversal of Osborne. During the early '20s, several Tory MPs introduced private members' Bills aimed at resurrecting it. The rhetoric as today was in terms of 'the rights of the individual', 'intimidation' and 'the overwhelming power of the trade unions'.

From the Tories more paternalistic wing came more frank analyses. One Cabinet minister cruelly undercutting the rhetoric argued "The real point which we have to decide is this. Do we wish to attack trade unions as such or do we not? . . . the major part of the outcry against the political levy is not motivated by a burning indignation for the trade unionist who is forced to subscribe to the furtherance of political principles which he abhors. It is based on a desire to hit the socialist party through their pocket. What I submit is that at least we should not delude ourselves as to our intentions."

After the defeat of the 1926 General Strike, the ascendant Tory Right were able to have their way over this issue despite opposition. Again, the real point of the exercise was laid bare by McNamara, the Minister of Labour. "They will believe and

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OF SOLIDARITY**
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Bob
Fine

A black and white photograph of a busy street scene. In the foreground, a vintage car is parked on the left, and a person is standing near a bicycle on the right. A large crowd of people is gathered on the sidewalk in front of a large, multi-story building. The building has many windows and a prominent entrance. The scene is captured in a high-contrast, grainy style.

bit

The 1927 Trades Disputes Act replaced the system of contracting out by a system of contracting in, requiring unions to collect political contributions by means of a separate distinct levy and banned the transfer of money from other funds to the political fund. Moreover, civil service unions were forbidden to affiliate to the Labour Party and to the TUC.

The number of trade unionists affiliated to the Labour Party fell from 75% to below 50% between 1926 and 1938. In the two years after the Act, party funds fell by one-third, union contributions being halved. Whilst it is difficult to measure exactly because of the general retreat and fall in membership at this period the Act undoubtedly had an impact.

Nonetheless, the unions were stimulated to raise considerable sums voluntarily. Party affiliation fees were increased and individual membership also rose. The impact of the Act was not disastrous. Labour did win in 1945 despite its influence.

Many unions largely ignored provisions despite warnings from the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies in 1928, 1936 and 1938. Unions such as the Durham Miners and the Weavers and Bleachers charged all members the same contribution. Those who did not connect in had the total sum paid to the general fund. Those who did had a proportion paid

By Bob
Fine

CAPITAL punishment once lay at the centre of the ruling class's strategies for control of the masses. Never was this more the case than in the eighteenth century, when the landed gentry — who had generally made their money through corruption in government office or through monopolies in trade — protected their property by means of an extensive array of capital statutes.

Notorious among the acts that were passed on their behalf were the so-called Black Acts. They made it an hangable offence to hunt the precious deer of the landlords, to poach, to sell game, to black one's face with the intention of poaching (thus the name of the acts), to break down the head of a fishpond, to kill cattle, to cut down trees belonging to another, to commit arson, to send anonymous, threatening letters, to try to rescue someone from custody, and so on and so forth.

The hanging itself was a public ceremony, with all the trappings of a military parade. The condemned person would be taken in an open cart from his or her place of confinement to the gallows (e.g. at Tyburn, where Marble Arch in London stands today). In full view of the public at large they would be strangled to a painful death by the rope.

The whole gruesome business was a show of power by the ruling class. It was meant to instil terror into the hearts of the masses and at the same time to make them aware that power over life and death lay at the discretion of their rulers.

As often as not, the victims could be pardoned and transported overseas on a convict ship instead; but this act of mercy, which could be left until the last moment, depended absolutely on the good grace of the monarch and his fellow rulers.

This combination of terror and mercy formed the essence of punishment at a time when the ruling class was defending its own form of domination with all its might.

In the course of the eighteenth century, however, we also find the great bourgeois reformers (Beccaria, Manzoni, Howard, Romilly etc) make their case against capital punishment as both barbaric and futile.

They declared that capital punishment violated the fundamental rights of human beings, that it was an inhuman punishment. They declared also that such punishments were useless in the modern world.

Far from deterring people from violence, they set an example of the most horrific and cold-blooded violence being given legal sanction. By definition, they cut out the very

We should oppose today's plans for legislation on the political levy by firmly arguing the necessity for the unions to be free of any state interference in what they do with the money which comes from their member's labours.

Once a democratic decision on a levy has been taken all should abide by that decision. This is a fundamental principle of trade unionism and by conceding it we only weaken our own case, not our opponents.



A gruesome show of power to terrorise the masses . . .

possibility of reform.

Juries were becoming unwilling to convict and judges unwilling to sentence, when the punishment was so out of proportion to the offence committed. The manufacturers argued that they needed certainty of punishment and not the remote threat of a dreadful punishment if their property was to be adequately protected.

On the basis of these and other arguments, the reforming bourgeoisie won. Capital punishment was reserved for a few major offences (mainly murder). Hanging was removed from the public domain and hidden behind prison walls. The torture associated with hanging was as far as possible done away with — improvements in the technology of the knot and the drop were intended to make death as quick and painless as possible.

In place of the rope, there arose the familiar institutions of the modern age, the police and the prisons.

The spirit of punishment in the new age of bourgeois rule was caught by Kant and Hegel. Hegel wrote: "punishment is the right of the criminal. It is an act of his own will . . . His crime is the negation [overturning, denial, subversion] of right. Punishment is the negation of the negation and consequently an affirmation of right solicited and forced upon the criminal by himself."

The new penitentiaries of the early nineteenth century were intended to replace physical torture by mental torture, to link vengeance on the criminal with penance in the criminal, the corporal punishment of isolation with the spiritual punishment of guilt.

This penal theory was expounded at length by the philosopher of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham: punishment must make the criminal the judge of his own crime; it must appear

that in their punishment criminals pass sentence on themselves. A whole machinery of power and control was set up to ensure that this fetish of power was sustained.

The convicts were shut behind prison walls, cut off from intercourse with the outside world, subjected to a regime of constant surveillance, subjected to an internal regime of rewards and punishments to ensure that in word and gesture — if not in their hearts — they consented to the punishments inflicted upon them.

In today's prison codes, the watchword of the prison is penitence, or the reformation of criminals into human beings. The reality of the prison is less fine: we find in fact a reinforcement of all the inhuman conditions — the deprivation, isolation, mutual competition, racism, etc — that lead men and women to commit crimes in the first place.

The crisis of modern punishment is that the reality increasingly deviates from the ideal. The right wing answer to this crisis is not to alter the reality but to do away with the ideal. Nowhere is this more evident than in the current howls for the reintroduction of the death penalty. The Tory hounds have faith that this will magically solve the problem of murder, or at least of certain kinds of murder, like terrorism or murder of police or prison officers.

What a consciousness they reveal in their choice of victims for the rope! They pick on terrorism, a form of murder which, however reprehensible, at least is committed out of an altruistic defence of a collective cause and not just out of individual demoralisation. The ultimate penalty is to be used on the murderers of those in power, the police and prison officers, and not against the vast abuse of their vast powers which the police and prison officers commit when they kill innocent civilians.

No rational argument supports the death penalty. By definition it cannot reform the criminal, and so it rolls back 150 years of the progressive spirit of the bourgeoisie which bases punishment on the desire at

least for reform.

The evidence shows conclusively that it fails to deter. One example cited in the Home Office Research Unit Study shows that the number of police officers murdered on duty has not varied as a result of the abolition of hanging in 1965.

It has remained at a constant rate of between zero and two in almost every year from 1957 onward. It has twice risen as high as three (1975 and 1982) and once to four (1966) but it was zero from 1967 to 1969. The last murder of a prison officer on duty in England and Wales occurred in 1965!

As regards "terrorism", no one in their right mind can believe that the introduction of judicial hanging into the Northern Ireland situation will answer any of the problems of that area except increase the determination of the Catholics to get rid of the English presence.

Finally perhaps we may note the huge risk of selecting the wrong victim, if the long list of those wrongly imprisoned for murders which they did not commit is anything to go by.

Why then do the blood-lust Tories want to bring back the rope? My own belief is that it represents today what it did in

represents today what it did in the eighteenth century: a massive show of force combining terror and discretion (now of the Home Secretary). This worship of power substitutes for any serious look at crime itself or the conditions which generate it.

Marx's comment upon capital punishment in his own time still holds good as a perspective today.

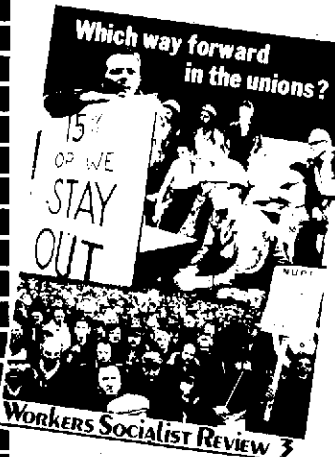
"Is there not a necessity for deeply reflecting upon an alteration of the system which breeds these crimes, instead of glorifying the hangman who executes a lot of criminals to make room only for the supply of new ones."

At the time of writing the outcome of the Commons vote is not known: we know only that there exists a fine balance weighed slightly against the reintroduction of hanging. The church is split, with the Archbishop of Canterbury coming out against and clerical rank and file in letters to the Times declaring that hanging is a Christian duty, no less.

Some of the Tories are worried about the consequence of reintroducing hanging in Northern Ireland.

Once again, the onus of consistent support for the defence of the most basic, humanitarian rights lies with us — socialists.

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The hanging itself was a public event

SPOTLIGHT

Film Review

Trivial treatment of a major tragedy

MANY people will be drawn to this film by the new Australian 'super-star' Mel Gibson: but though he is a good actor, the events depicted in the film are too important to be portrayed in such terms.

He plays a reporter in Indonesia in the run-up to the military takeover of 1965, which was one of the great tragedies in the history of the world's working class. Up to one million people — mostly members and supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) were massacred, in the bloody coup which brought the present-day Suharto leadership to power.

The PKI was at that time the biggest Communist Party in the world (leaving aside the so-called 'parties' that rule in the Stalinist states).

The PKI looked towards the 'left' talking Peking leadership rather than Moscow for its politics. Embracing Mao's reactionary policy of seeking a 'bloc of four classes', the PKI gave complete support to the bourgeois nationalist regime of Sukarno, and rejected any notion that the working class should take the leadership in the struggle for power.

The events were in fact a grotesque echo of the massacre of Chinese communists in 1926-27 after their leaders — on Stalin's orders — had tail-

Tony Richardson reviews 'The Year of Living Dangerously'

ended the 'progressive' nationalist Kuomintang led by vicious anti-communist Chiang Kai Shek.

Though Mao's bureaucratic leadership had by 1965 taken its distance from its 'big brother' in the Kremlin, it still shared a common Stalinist political heritage: its more demagogic 'anti-imperialist' rhetoric was not linked to any line for the independent struggles of the working class.

Some of the reality of the Indonesian events just about scrapes into the film — but only if you already know something about it.

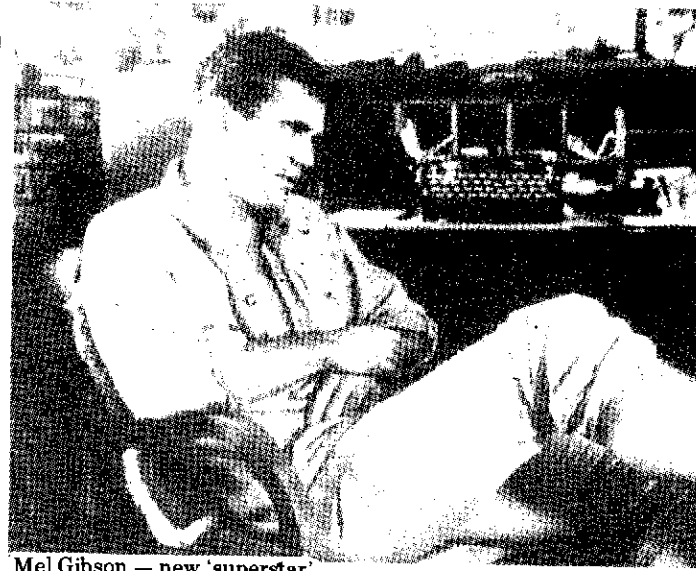
Posted to Indonesia, the journalist hero befriends Billy, a Chinese-Australian photographer who is sympathetic to the PKI. Billy is the means through which the widespread illusions in Sukarno are reflected in the film. Only at the last moment does he recognise Sukarno's real position, hanging out a banner denouncing him, and gets killed for his pains.

Gibson also takes up with Jill (played by Sigourney Weaver), who works at the British

Embassy. He publishes a story based on information she gave him in confidence — concerning a boatload of arms for the PKI.

This simultaneous betrayal of the PKI and of his relationship with Jill is of no significance to him as a professional reporter.

But eventually Gibson renounces these values, and



Mel Gibson — new 'superstar'

gets out of Indonesia with Jill just as the really 'big story' — the coup — takes shape.

Director Peter Weir takes a vaguely liberal stance, showing some of the deprivation of the Indonesian masses, and giving a sympathetic portrayal of a PKI member arguing the case for their struggle.

But Weir's film lacks the suspense of Costa Gavras' 'Missing'; its concentration on individual responses to the situation trivialises the events; and the final scenes are ridiculous.

For Mel Gibson, however, rather like the journalist he depicts, things aren't so bad: it was an acting part like any other — for which he was reportedly paid \$100,000.

Gibson can expect swiftly to improve on that fee: but someone should make a better film about the Indonesian events.

TV

'CLR James' reviewed by Frank Higgins

WE are already half way through 'The CLR James Lectures' (Channel 4, Mondays, 11.30). The first was about America, the second about cricket. Next week, the octogenarian Marxist will deal with the USSR, which he believes is state capitalist.

The cult of 'CLR' is one of the strangest things in the media right now.

In last week's New Statesman the producer of this series H.O. Nazareth ends a very interesting interview like this:

"I left James watching the cricket. I went past the Front Line on Railton Road to Brixton tube, my head buzzing... from CLR's discourse."

James is much lauded and praised in this vein and clearly sets lots of heads "buzzing", even those who don't admit it in print. Certainly he has had an

amazing life. Professional cricket commentator, Marxist, the long-lived Nestor of Black struggles over 50 years in the USA, the West Indies and Africa, associate of George Padmore, mentor of Kwame Nkrumah and Eric Williams. James was also a central figure in the Trotskyist movement in Britain in the 1930s — the leading advocate of a sectarian attitude towards the Labour Party.

He then wrote 'World Revolution', a systematic presentation of the case for Trotskyism, and 'The Black Jacobins', a famous study of the impact of the French Revolution in Haiti.

He went to America and did tremendous work organising blacks.

In 1940, together with Max Schachtman, he broke with Trotsky and with the American SWP. He rejoined in 1947, and left again in 1951.

Around 1950 he divined in the

world Trotskyist movement a struggle between what he called 'Cannonism' and 'Pabloism' — something James P Cannon of the SWP was not to discover until 3 years later.

A decade later on, still calling himself a Marxist, he was Secretary General of the ruling party in Eric Williams' Trinidad!

Personally, he is very impressive; his material less so.

Prophet-like, he reveals the 'inner secrets' of events with a lucid, clear story-line certainty that makes me suspicious.

Why was Martin Luther King assassinated? Because he expressed criticism of the US war in Vietnam. This could have led to a fusion of the Black movement and the student anti-war movement. Did this not happen just because of Kings death?

Still, I think SO readers would find the 2 remaining talks worth switching on for.

Kremlin's A-test guinea pigs

WITH all the publicity about the US and UK using servicemen as guinea-pigs during the series of atmospheric nuclear bomb tests in the '40s and '50s, it is perhaps useful for socialists to examine the record of the Soviet bureaucracy in this regard.

Straight after the Second Imperialist World War, rightly alarmed by the powerful new weapons in the hands of the aggressively anti-communist American government, Stalin ordered the development of a Russian atomic bomb in the shortest possible time at any cost. And according to Mikhail Klovko (who worked on the A-bomb in the '40s and '50s, but sought political asylum in Canada in 1961) "at any cost"

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

meant "with total disregard for the health of those involved."

The A-bomb project was pursued in a characteristic bureaucratic fashion. From a pre-war situation where some atomic scientists found themselves deprived of ration cards because their work was of 'no practical importance', in 1946

senior scientists found their salaries trebled, while those working directly on the bomb also got cars and dachas (country houses) — the carrot to which the secret police was the stick.

Klovko repeats a popular anecdote of the time reflecting the stress under which scientists had to work:

"There are two sets of government bonuses: the small set and the large set. The small set consists of a refrigerator, a TV, hypertension and a stroke. The large set: a dacha, a car and a heart attack."

The A-bomb scientists had an extra bonus — the threat of radiation-related diseases.

Klovko worked in the Kurnakov Institute of General and Inorganic Chemistry (IONKH), one of hundreds of scientific establishments pressed into the A-bomb project and he reports that when radioactive work was commenced no precautions were introduced.

Liquid radioactive wastes were just poured into the general sewage system, which

sometimes overflowed. No screens or glove boxes were used, so workers could be splashed or breathe dust and fumes. In any case, the air was already full of radioactive dust, due to the inadequate ventilation. Within a few months of the start, there were deaths from radiation sickness (caused by acute exposure).

Another occupational hazard was the secret police, whose agents were keen to finger those who complained about conditions. Of two IONKH workers arrested for this, one died in jail and one "disappeared".

In 1947, IONKH belatedly set up a "control station" to monitor contamination of people and equipment — its manager died of leukaemia.

Suffering

Medical surveys in 1947 found some 250 people, more than half of IONKH's staff, suffering some degree of radiation-linked disease. Over 100 of these were serious cases. Even workers not working on the bomb project were affected due to the general level of contamination in the institute.

Apart from deaths from radiation sickness, Klovko mentions several senior staff who died untimely deaths. Researchers at other atomic institutes also seemed to die sooner than average, often after "a long serious illness" (cancer?). But all this is the tip of a

grisly iceberg, because tens of thousands of workers were involved in the bomb project from the uranium mines to the test ground. Most of the donkey work was done by concentration camp prisoners, for whom even the most elementary safety precautions were too good!

Censorship

Facts on the scope of this unnatural disaster are hard to come by due to police state censorship. The first discussion of radiation problems did not even take place until ten years after the bomb project started. Before that, even the words "radiation sickness" were taboo.

Klovko was one of the censors of work to be published by IONKH scientists and reports that forbidden information for publication included epidemics, accidents in mines, factories and testing grounds, and any kind of national disaster. This clearly covers any of the problems of radiation, and no details of radiation illness and deaths reached the Russian newspapers.

Klovko estimates the total death toll, including victims of the Urals nuclear disaster of 1958 (where a fire or explosion at a nuclear waste disposal plant spread radioactive fall-out over a large area), may exceed the deaths due to the Nagasaki and Hiroshima bombs together! Information: New Scientist.

Left Press Changing views on EEC

By John O'Mahony

FOR over 20 years opposition to the EEC has been an article of faith on the left.

In the last seven or eight years it has been twinned with the protectionism of the Alternative Economic Strategy and explained as necessary to it. But it goes back much further than that and has at other times had different rationales.

The entire British ruling class had at first opposed the EEC, cherishing their own special links with the Commonwealth and with the USA.

But by the start of the '60s they knew they had no choice but to join. Britain was too weak to stand on its own.

Labour leaders like Gaitskill opposed it because they remained committed to the Commonwealth. For the same reason they opposed the 1961 racist Immigration Act.

All that soon changed in the mid-'60s and Wilson tried to join in 1967.

The Labour Left and the communist Party opposed the EEC from the beginning. Naturally the "ideological leading role" was the CP's. Long-time specialists in preaching British patriotism and anti-Americanism they denounced the EEC as an international pro-NATO, anti-USSR conspiracy. The Tribune left, led by patriots like Michael Foot followed.

The various Marxist groups — all of them without exception — at first scorned and denounced this assessment of the EEC, advocating European workers' unity with slogans like "In or out the fight goes on".

Then under pressure most of them changed.

They felt it was imperative "to stay in line with the left".

Whereas the original EEC had 15 years of tremendous economic boom which knitted the EEC countries economically together before the economic crisis of 1970 rolled across the EEC, Britain only joined in 1972 on the eve of that crisis. It remained possible in Britain to blame all the economic problems of the '70s on EEC membership. Anti-Common Market politics remained "the left position".

Withdrawal was itself the goal not an option in face of EEC obstruction of a future left wing British government.

Now, with remarkable speed, almost like a wall crumbling and collapsing, all that is changing. Neil Kinnock has dropped it. Eric Heffer now says European workers' unity is the decisive thing to aim for, not withdrawal. Stuart Holland want a European AES (though he has yet to understand that this is incompatible with withdrawal. Give him time!).

The latest straw in the wind is in this week's Tribune in an article by Dennis MacShane, a one-time anti-Marketeer.

He rightly says: "There is not a single socialist, communist, Trotskyist, Maoist political party in Europe... that wants to see Britain out of the EEC."

He advocates closer ties with the European labour movement and that use be made of the European Parliament to expose Thatcherism.

Whatever the motives of such as Kinnock and however much confusions there may still be in sections of the Left, these moves away from Little Britainism and towards the quest for European workers' unity are tremendously encouraging.

Especially to those of us who always refused to believe that the anti-EEC position was serious left or working class politics.

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



1953: a purger purged

The rise of Nikita Khrushchev

The first part of this article looked at the events immediately following the death of Stalin in March 1953, which included the ousting of Lavrenti Beria, head of the secret police. This concluding article looks at Beria's rise to power and the change of style in the Kremlin which accompanied his removal.

Stalin looked upon the most experienced generals and officers of the Red Army as a political link with Trotsky and with the old Bolshevism. And this was a link he was determined to break.

20,000 to 30,000 officers were liquidated; 90% of generals, 80% of colonels, three out of five Marshalls, 13 out of 15 army commanders, 57 out of 85 corps commanders and 220 out of 406 Brigade commanders were seized and shot by Stalin's secret police.

In these crucial years leading up to World War 2, as Hitler gathered strength in Europe, the Red Army had been stripped of 80% of its general staff! The price to be paid was millions dead and the near extinction of the Soviet state when Hitler invaded in June 1941.

It was in the midst of this carnage that Beria got his chance. The completion of the 1938 Moscow Trial left Yezhov knowing too much: he too was bundled aside, and Beria took over at the head of the purgers — a post he held until 1953.

Cattle trucks

He had plenty to do. After 1940 Stalin began to doubt the loyalty of some national minorities in North Caucasia. They had suffered an estimated 120,000 arrests in the 1930s.

As the Red Army reconquered these areas in 1944-45 these people, along with the Volga Germans, the Crimean Tatars and some Asian minorities were packed into cattle trucks and forcibly deported into the remote Eastern parts of the USSR — some 1.5 million people in all.

Estimates are that up to

By Harry Sloan

500,000 — mostly the elderly and very young children — died as a result.

This wholesale and wanton action, taken in the midst of a full-scale war effort, was a flavour of things to come in the post-war period.

Purge followed purge. The entire Leningrad leadership of the Party was wiped out, accused of plotting to move the Russian capital from Moscow to Leningrad.

A vicious anti-semitic campaign annihilated the able Jewish leaders who had run the Soviet war propaganda, drove Jews from posts in industry and banned them from the high command of the army, the foreign office and the party leadership. Early in 1953 the "doctors' plot" was announced, accusing Jewish doctors of planning the murder of Stalin and his closest supporters.

Parallel purges were mounted in the Communist Parties of the Eastern European "buffer zone" — reaching right to leadership level, with show trials framing up, executing, jailing or disgracing no less than three CP general secretaries (in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Poland) a state president, deputy premiers in four countries, dozens of ministers and leading officials, around 100 generals, and thousands more at

lower levels. In all some 2.5 million people were expelled from East European Communist Parties, with up to 250,000 of them imprisoned, as Stalin — particularly after the 1948 break with Tito — set out to ensure complete and servile obedience.

It appears that in his final years and months Stalin was contemplating purges even more terrible than any previous: a wholesale extermination of the older members of the Politburo — Voroshilov, Molotov, Mikoyan, Beria, Bulganin, Malenkov and Khrushchev — together with a "final solution" to the "Jewish problem" — their mass deportation to Siberia. He even dreamed of sending with them the entire population of the Ukraine — a total of some 50 million people!

Stalin's sudden and unexpected death in March 1953 may not have been unconnected with one or more of his leading prospective victims learning of these plans.

His decease lifted the immediate danger from all but Beria. But the problem before the new leadership was to retain the structures which preserved their own power and material privileges within the Soviet Union — and consolidate a new authoritative leadership — while at the same time exchanging the more authoritarian aspects of Stalin's regime for more subtle and less constrictive methods.

There had already been clear signs of unrest among the prisoners in the labour camps which exploded in 1953 into a 250,000-strong general strike in the Vorkuta camp which had to be put down by military force.

Khrushchev was in every respect a Stalinist. He had been brought into Stalin's inner circle as early as 1934, and held onto his head and his position while hundreds and thousands around him were losing theirs.

In 1938 Khrushchev himself headed purges in the Ukraine. Between 1934 and 1939 he watched the 71 full members of the Central Committee he joined decimated by 9 executions, 12 secret executions, and 24 "disappearances". Of 68 candidate members, 14 had been executed by 1939, 34 had vanished, nine had been declared 'enemies of the people' and two committed suicide.

In total 35 had survived out of 139. One of them was Khrushchev, who was brought to tears by the death of Stalin but then made haste to secure his position, and the continuity of the multi-million strong Soviet bureaucracy.

The ousting of Beria ran alongside the emergence of a new leading "troika" — Khrushchev, Malenkov and Bulganin.

Some of the trappings of



Khrushchev meets Castro at the UN in 1960: pressure from US arms drive forced shifts in Soviet foreign policy

Stalin's cult of personality were pushed aside, and Khrushchev put an end to the practice of conducting administrative work at night and the small hours of the morning which had arisen from Stalin's peculiar pattern of sleep and work.

A handful of Stalin's victims were cautiously rehabilitated — about 1,000 by the end of 1953.

But the news of Beria's execution in December prompted a spate of demands for the rehabilitation of prisoners and victims of decades of terror.

As investigations began, the close involvement of Malenkov in many of the more recent purges became a growing embarrassment.

By late 1954 he was clinging on to office without visible means of support, and early in 1955 he was removed as head of state and replaced by Bulganin, while Zhukov stepped in as Minister of Defence.

The new "troika" — Khrushchev, Bulganin and Zhukov — was firmly dominated by Khrushchev, but in 1956 the hard line of Zhukov could be seen in the initial moves towards a military crackdown on June strikes in Poland, and the brutal military repression of the Hungarian workers' uprising in October.

Secret Speech

Earlier in 1956, Khrushchev had played his most risky card of all — his "secret speech" to the 20th Congress of the CPSU, in which he lifted the lid on a fraction of Stalin's crimes, and launched a frontal attack on the "cult of personality".

To a shocked assemblage of bureaucrats, many of whom owed their positions to Stalin, Khrushchev spoke of the illegal mass repression, tortures and forced confessions.

He revealed Lenin's suppressed testament — calling for the removal of Stalin as General Secretary. He pinned on Stalin (and on his slaughter of the Red Army command) the prime responsibility for the severe defeats at the start of the war and the Nazi occupation of huge areas of the USSR.

He spoke openly of Stalin's collapse and desertion of his post as the Nazis tore up the Stalin-Hitler pact and invaded in 1941.

To many of the most compromised and bloodstained old guard Stalinists — including the representatives of other Communist Parties in China, Albania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia — such a speech must have seemed like a nightmare, and a body blow to their own power and authority.

To the millions of middle ranking placemen at local level in the CPSU, the whole affair

was utterly bewildering while to countless millions of workers, peasants and prisoners who had languished decades in the Gulags of the East, the speech opened up a sudden hope of freedom, the chance to see again long lost friends, relations, comrades.

During 1956 special commissions undertook the task of the mass liberation of millions of political prisoners from the camps, and the rehabilitation (often posthumous) of many of those unjustly imprisoned or executed.

This step proved to be Khrushchev's trump card in the struggle for stable power and influence at the head of the Communist Party.

The denunciation of the cult of Stalin, and the release of prisoners secured him a solid mass base of support while multiplying the discredit and disgrace of his rival Politburo members most complicit in the purges and closest to Stalin.

Conspicuously, Khrushchev's moves for the rehabilitation of those politically framed in the Moscow Trials did not extend to the rehabilitation of Trotsky and the Left Opposition, who had been incessantly and falsely accused of links with the fascists.

Khrushchev had no intention of allowing the emergence of political opposition to the bureaucracy in the USSR: he merely sought less heavy-handed means of holding down his opponents.

Though a flowering of literary and intellectual expression could not be prevented in the immediate period following Stalin's death and the Secret Speech of 1956, it was expected to remain within strict limits.

When students in Moscow University became too critical and asked awkward questions about the 1930s, Khrushchev personally visited the campus and ordered 200 expulsions. In 1957 defiant Moscow writers were summoned to a garden party where they were told that if they did not toe its line, they would find out there was such a thing as force.

1957 also saw Khrushchev exploit his cultivated network of well-placed supporters and his mass popularity to beat back the most concerted attempt by the Stalinist old guard to displace him.

Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich and others were demoted from their leading positions and shunted off to factory management and academic posts — leaving Khrushchev undisputed leader of the Soviet Union.

The death of Stalin and ousting of Beria therefore signalled the beginning of a substantial change in the outward

trappings of bureaucratic rule.

And there were some switches too in foreign policy as the new leadership moved swiftly to procure an armistice in Korea, to seek a deal in Vietnam, and to heal the rift with Yugoslavia and with Mao's leadership in China.

As Korea and Vietnam showed, the overall objective of the Stalinist bureaucracy remained unchanged — to protect its own privileged position through suppression of working class opposition at home, and through the containment of revolutionary struggles to preserve a policy of "peaceful coexistence" with capitalism internationally.

Already under Stalin the early 1950s had seen the development of a specifically and avowedly reformist orientation for the Western European Communist Parties — exemplified in the "British Road to Socialism".

But at the same time the Soviet Union was coming face to face with new problems in a changing post-war situation.

The consolidation of the anti-Soviet NATO alliance was met by the formation of the Warsaw Pact in 1955. And there were attempts to court the various emergent and "non-aligned" nationalist leaderships of Nasser in Egypt, Nehru in India (to the displeasure of Mao's Chinese leadership), Burma and Afghanistan.

It was to be the pressures of the imperialist-led arms race and Khrushchev's attempts to keep pace at minimum economic cost which were to break this general pattern of class compromise in Soviet diplomacy and bring the Cuban missiles crisis of the early 1960s.

In this setting, the contradictions of the new leadership which kicked and punched its way to power after Stalin's death are best summed up in the counterposition of its main events of 1956.

On the one hand came the liberation of the millions of victims of Stalinist terror over nearly three decades; on the other, the ruthless artillery bombardment of the working class areas of Budapest and the crushing of the proletarian uprising. The bureaucratic leopard had not shed its spots.

Stalinism since Stalin has proved to be more flexible in its forms, but consistent in its purpose.

It can be ended only by the working class, organised under revolutionary leadership for the political overthrow and destruction of the bureaucracy and its degenerate, reactionary state machine, and the establishment of a government of workers' councils.

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.



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 rent and rates.

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

*The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MI5, 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 bosses.

Agenda

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.

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.

AUGUST delegation to Ireland 1983. If you are interested in joining the delegation write to PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

Public meeting to inaugurate Birmingham Unemployed Workers Association. Speaker: Harry McShane [active in Unemployed Workers Movement in the '30s]. Wednesday 27 July at 7.30 pm at Society of Friends Meeting House, Bull St., [by Lewis's].

LONDON Labour councils, CLPs, and trade unions ag-

ainst 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.

LABOUR Coordinating Committee conference: 'Has Socialism a future?' July 22-24, Manchester Poly Student Union. Fee £12 waged, £8 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).

Chile Solidarity Campaign: 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7 7QG. (01-272 4298)



Chile: National demo Sept 11

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, 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. "Where is Chile going?" 21 July, 7.30 pm. WEA, Cartwright House, Broad Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. Local Chilean speaker, former member Chilean Socialist Party.

• YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

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.

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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 Wharfedale 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.

Covenry. Contact Keith White 75433. 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. Next meeting, 22 July 'Ireland', with Alan Clinton.

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).

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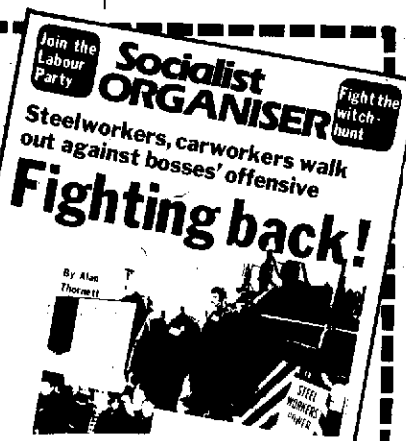
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To the Knackers' yard?

THE major reason for the re-election of Thatcher must lie in the terminal crisis of old Labourism. For generations this lumbering carthorse, plodding along on its economic and political plates of meat, has refused even to contemplate taking a jump over the preliminary fence on the road to socialism.

It has neither been for a genuine working class democracy under a system of workers' councils, nor for an efficient running of capitalism. A mundane commitment to wage-based militancy, wrapped in the wafer-thin wrapper of 'socialised' state capitalism, has simply accentuated the appeal of a more charismatic individualised consumerism.

Many skilled workers don't

want to be identified with sectionalised, monolithic unions headed by pot-bellied gauleiters who are paraded before them by the media's the B Team for Advanced Capitalism's First Division Squad.

Perry Anderson discussed many years ago how the pathetic intellectual servility of British Labourism to the establishment was a product of the non-development of a virile, organic working class intelligentsia that could fire the arrows of a withering scientific critique at the very foundations of bourgeois institutional and ideological power.

Now, for the umpteenth occasion we are treated to another Harold Wilson look-alike, Roy Blubbersby, calling for a return to traditional

mediocratism. "If we repeat the essentials of the capitalist programme often enough and obsequiously enough, then we might get a look-in" he says.

As an intellectual and member of the "professions" I protest. For the social basis of this mindless pragmatism is the failure of Labour's educational policy over the last two decades.

Instead of creating a free-thinking corps of critical-minded intellectuals committed to developing socialist culture, the universities and polytechnics have simply churned out layers of conformist functionaries who see their role as "keeping their heads down" and "doing as they are told", committing acts of what Sartre

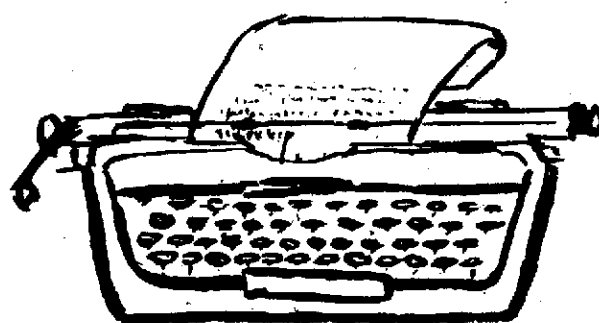
called "bad faith".

Criticising their superiors behind cupped hands and locked doors, ever willing to whip themselves in self-abnegation before their employers, a sub-intelligentsia of bank clerks written large across the social fabric has become a real obstacle to the growth of progressive forces.

Call it the SDP, or their footsies in the Labour Party around Neil Cynnock, these forces have been detached from the socialist project. In contrast, we, the Marxist left, must continue the struggle, bringing the fruits of Lenin, Marx and Gramsci's struggle to bear in pushing away the dead wood blocking the road to socialism.

JOE ROURKE

Writeback



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

Protestant workers and Irish politics

SOMEWHERE alongside the railway line between Liverpool and Kirkby is painted the legend "Paisley is a dickhead — Ian, not Bob". Such sentiments sum up the repulsion most ordinary workers in Britain feel about Ulster Protestants in general, and Protestant politicians in particular.

The political situation in the North of Ireland is seen as an anachronism — something which pre-dates the class politics of British society.

From this general background many on the far left derive a position of support for the national struggle, which equates the Irish nation with Vietnam, Palestine, Algeria, Zimbabwe, etc. It sees the Protestants as a monolithic pro-colonialist block to be driven from Ireland in the same way as the white Rhodesians, or the Pieds Noirs from Algeria.

Alistair Todd (SO 133) adopts this approach when he asserts the primacy of the national struggle. Anyone saying otherwise — trying to insist on the primacy of class struggle and the development of socialist politics in Ireland — at best is chasing after the will of the wisp.

Unfortunately, real world situations are more complicated than the romanticised perceptions of national struggle held by young and not so young British lefts who sing 'The Merry Ploughboy' in cosmopolitan ale-houses after closing time on a Friday night.

The heroic nationalist population in republican communities is in a situation today of political isolation and impasse because of objective developments which have taken place since partition.

Hostility

They not only face the hostility of Protestants and the repression of British and Irish state forces, they are also suffering the neglect, apathy or hostility of the various political and social forces in the 26 county Irish state.

To pursue Protestant/Catholic unity is a chimera? Evidence for this is the fact that only once was there a juncture of class interests between the communities, in 1932.

But what about unity between the northern nationalist workers and the labour movement in the south? To my knowledge there has been no evidence of this since the Bloody Sunday demonstrations of 1972 — a full eleven years ago. In fact the most 'left wing' forces in the South (Sinn Fein, the Workers' Party, Socialists Against Nationalism; the Irish Labour Party)

have put themselves quite shamelessly against involvement of Southern labour in northern struggles.

It would be justifiable to say that the working class in Ireland is divided three ways — Northern Protestant, Northern nationalist, and Southern.

Does this mean that because there has been very little unity between southern labour and the Northern nationalist population in the past, this will always be the case? If Marxists adopted such an approach we would deny change in society.

To rule out a junction of interests between sections of Protestant workers and the nationalist population would also be a nonsense. We have to start from the fact that a small minority on its own cannot achieve the programme of ending British political rule in Ireland.

Somehow, conditions have to be created whereby this small minority can link up with the rest of the working class, North and South. In the creation of these conditions, nationalists and socialists must turn imperialist plans to their own advantage.

The essentially conservative character of Irish society precludes socialism as an immediate possibility. British imperialism can run a war in Ireland well into the next century if it wishes because the scale of casualties it sustains is politically acceptable and because it is fighting a community which represents less than 10% of the Irish population.

It would prefer to find a solution, however. Imperialism has four options.

1. Integration of Northern Ireland into the UK.
2. Repatriation.
3. 'Independence for Ulster'.
4. Federalism.

Even Thatcher would rule out solutions one and three because of the importance of the Southern economy and its increased political weight in the EEC structure.

Repatriation is a solution which would satisfy nobody, economically, socially or politically. The 'Federal solution' — the one cherished by the British government, by parts of the Official Unionist establishment and by the Southern Irish bourgeoisie since the 1960s — is clearly the one taken out by Northern Irish Secretaries of State every so often when conditions allow, for serious implementation.

The paradox is that the force most opposed to this 'solution' is the Protestant community which wants to restore the pre-direct rule situation.

The only alternatives they

have to this are either to leave Ireland or to recognise their 'Irishness'. I would prefer the latter. I would say that people's consciousness can change. I would say that large sections of the Protestant community would recognise a common interest with their fellow workers.

During the American Civil War, the emerging British labour movement sided with the Union against the Confederacy even though in the immediate term it was against their 'economic interests'. Since then the British labour movement has been riddled with racist and pro-imperialist sentiments.

Was the action of the Lancashire workers then an exception?

O'Mahony "fails to recognise" the social position of the Protestant workers? Comrade Todd suffers from political dyslexia. It is the fact that he does recognise them which makes his recent articles on Ireland so important. And this political recognition should aid the struggle of the Irish working class to throw off the yoke of capitalist oppression.

BASH HARDY
Liverpool

What's so bad about the Soviet Union?



Ex-KGB chief Andropov

IN YOUR pamphlet 'Where We Stand' you say "A secondary reason why the labour movement has been unable to change society is the horrible example of 'socialism' in the USSR and Eastern Europe." But also "The nationalised economy created on the strength of the 1917 Revolution still remains and is still worth defending. But socialism means a workers' revolution in East and West."

Exactly what is so horrible? Where is the defence of the economy? And where is your international solidarity with the Soviet workers?

Communism is a very real threat to Western capitalists

and anti-Sovietism has long been a part of their propaganda. We are conditioned to regard the USSR as wholly evil and dangerous. The presentation is purely emotional. Factual information is suppressed — except for emotive 'facts' about bureaucrats, dissidents and submarines.

This negative emotional reaction to the USSR is extended to communists generally. Anyone canvassing for a 'left' candidate was probably forcibly reminded of this — "I'm not voting for a communist" was a frequent reaction but it wasn't policies but the emotive label attached by our beloved pressgangsters that people reacted against.

Unfortunately the left also seem caught in the trap of emotional reaction to the USSR. This is dangerous and counter-productive. Anti-communist propaganda will soon be used by Thatcher et al to justify vicious attacks on left activists and it is not the real nature of the USSR but the horrible emotional image of it that is the barrier to winning people to socialism.

I'm not suggesting an uncritical attitude to the USSR, just a rational, analytical one — dare I say a Marxist dialectical one! Marx and Engels learnt from the

successes and failures of the Paris Commune. We must learn from subsequent experiences of socialism in action. We can only do that on the basis of facts rather than emotional rhetoric. The Tory press tells us nothing. Soviet Weekly is 'poisoned' (Stan Crooke, Writeback, SO 134). Trotsky's 'Revolution Betrayed' is excellent but what is happening now?

It's all very well calling for a workers' revolution in East and West but how can we expect Soviet workers to take up the challenge when they see themselves as part of the system — attacked by both left and right in the West?

Their reaction is bound to be defensive, to protect what is after all "worth defending" rather than challenge the system and risk exposing weakness to hostile forces and ending up further from communism rather than nearer to it.

If we are serious about winning people to socialism we must have constructive, factual analysis, admit our mistakes, learn from them and build a real and practical solidarity with Soviet workers.

Yours in solidarity,
KIT TOWNSEND



CND — a rival focus of the left?

Care on CND

YOU QUOTE "a CND representative" as giving an anti-American twist to CND policy in the Morning Star.

I think you ought to have explored this more fully. If the "representative" really did represent CND, this is a very worrying instance of a Stalinist in the campaign leadership giving his/her Party's views as those of the campaign.

On the other hand it would not be the first time (nor, no doubt, the last) that the Morning Star has appointed one of its supporters (who may or may not actually belong to CND) to being a "representative of CND" (the term being sufficiently vague that it does not have to mean an elect-

ed one).

There are of course Stalinists in the campaign, some in elected positions (though most of those who are have sufficiently divided loyalties to refrain from subordinating the campaign to the CP). And to the extent that the campaign is a rival focus for a wider left, it is in the Morning Star's interests to discredit CND by making it appear to be half Stalinist. But to the extent that unilateralism has always conflicted with CP policies (look at the French CP!) they can never, fortunately, control the campaign. But such attempts need to be watched.

LAURENS OTTER
Wellington, Salop.

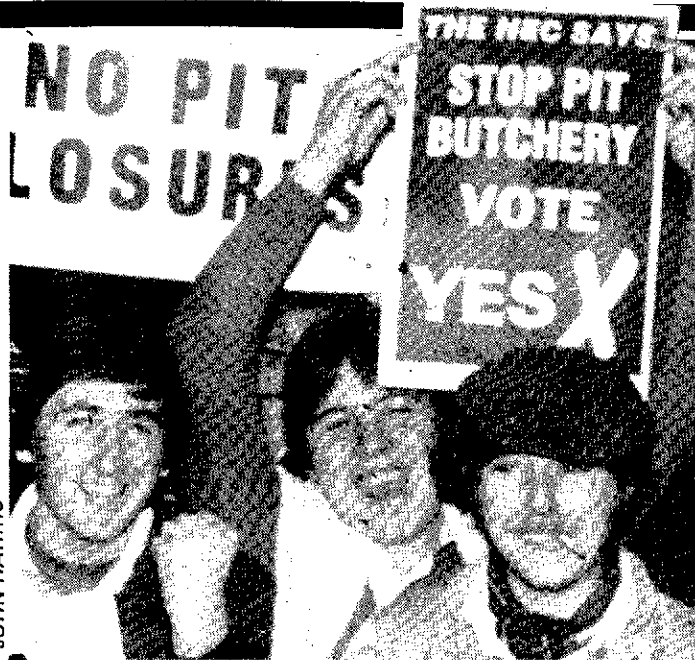
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NUM must act

by Stan Crooke

THIS YEAR's conference of the National Union of Mineworkers (held in Perth last week) was packed out with fighting speeches by delegates and members of the National Executive Committee.

Central to any fightback by miners against the Tories' attacks had to be a rebuilding of the Triple Alliance, with railworkers and steelworkers: 'The Triple Alliance must become a fighting alliance instead of a cripple alliance. Two of the cripples have already gone. We had one. The NUR had another.'

And there was no question of the union allowing itself to be hamstrung by the Tories' anti-union legislation: 'All the motions passed this week will mean nothing unless we make it clear that we will not support or abide by legislation which destroys effective trade unionism.'

A constant theme throughout the conference, whatever the issue being debated, whether it be wages, closures or anti-union legislation, was that it was not enough simply to vote for a motion. It was necessary to mount a continuing campaign among the membership to ensure that the motion could be carried out. 'It's no good being like the Labour Party', declared one delegate, 'and taking socialism out of the drawer at election time and putting it back in afterwards. We need to be campaigning against redundancies and closures all the time.'

But whilst the name of everyone from Wat Tyler through Keir Hardie to A J Cooke was invoked to underline the fact that you don't get anywhere without a fight, the contents of the resolutions before the conference - passed unanimously with an almost monotonous regularity - were not fully in tune with the rhetoric of their movers.

The composite resolution on wages called for 'a substantial increase' without mentioning

specific figures, although it did state the goal of seeing 'our miners at the top of the industrial wages league.'

More disturbing was the vagueness of the emergency resolution on Cardowan. Whilst condemning the NCB's tactics as 'vicious, bullying and blackmail', the resolution merely pledged conference's support 'to the Cardowan men and to any action which they feel is necessary to save their pit.' (The background to this motion, it should be stressed, was that the day before miners at Polmaise and Bogside pits had struck spontaneously to prevent transfers from Cardowan. Yet neither from Cardowan itself, nor from the two pits on strike, were any speakers given the opportunity to address the conference.)

Re-election

Finally, a rules alteration meant that all union officials had to stand for re-election every five years - if elected after 1st August 1983. So Scargill himself, elected before this date, does not need to stand for re-election and could have a job for ever.

The vagueness of the motions was justified as good tactics. By not fixing a specific amount for the wage demand, or a particular time for a ballot on fighting closures, the argument went, it would be easier to out-manoeuvre the NCB and prevent the NCB driving a wedge between the union leadership and the rank and file.

Emptiness

Even the emptiness of the emergency resolution on Cardowan was interpreted by Scargill as meaning that the NEC could endorse strike action in Scotland in defence of Cardowan, or any other area in defence of jobs. But the failure to use the conference to build immediate and active support for the struggles then taking place (Cardowan, Polmaise and Bogside) must place a massive question mark against both the ability and will of members of the NEC to use the free hand conference gave them to the best advantage.

Either the motions will be acted upon, with a re-forging of the triple alliance, a campaign of extra-Parliamentary opposition, and a mobilisation in head-on conflict with the government over pay, closures, privatisation and anti-union legislation.

Or the union will be savaged as never before, with its membership decimated as scores of pits are shut down, and its potential strength gutted by the Tories' anti-union legislation.

The NEC is pledged to fighting for implementation of the motions. Whilst seeking to hold them to their word, militants at rank and file level must also be to the fore in mobilising their fellow members against the Tories' onslaught.

Cops pursue NHS pickets

by Ian McCondach

DURING the health workers' dispute eight pickets were arrested and charged with obstruction during a mass picket outside Halifax General Hospital by health workers from all over Yorkshire.

Last November six of the pickets from Halifax were acquitted in the local Magistrates Court.

The magistrates judgement was that the obstruction of the highway had been for a short time and was not unreasonable.

The police were unhappy with the verdict and the legal precedent it might set and appealed against it.

Last Friday at the Old Bailey the Court of Appeal overturned the local magistrate's decision and convicted the pickets of obstruction.

The pickets will again appear before Halifax magistrates in a few weeks time for sentencing.

A campaign will be mounted by the local labour movement.

But it concerns the whole labour movement. It is through cases like this that the legal nuts and bolts of the new Tory trade union legislation are being tested and tightened. Make sure your organisation knows about the case and the campaign we are mounting.

Parometers sack strikers

ELEVEN workers at Industrial Parometers, Birmingham, have been on strike since 22 June, over their annual wage claim.

Their 1982 contract expired in January, but the company has only been willing to offer 3% from June - with no back pay. The workers were not willing to accept this, especially as they were taken for a ride last year when the company introduced a bonus scheme as part of the pay settlement, and then proceeded to manipulate it as it suited them.

The 1983 'offer' of 3% also involves two redundancies, and the permanent change of the expiry date to June.

Most of the workers have been at the company for over 20 years, and this is their first ever strike. Their loyalty has been systematically exploited by the bosses, who recently bought a £28,500 cabin cruiser and a £10,000 sports car for the managing director's son.

On Monday June 4, all the strikers were sacked, but this has only firmed up their deter-

mination. They are picketing the Lower Gooch Street factory every working day and plan to extend it to Saturdays as well. In addition, they are contacting all the company's customers (mainly pottery companies in the Stoke area, plus the Gas and Electricity Boards) to arrange blacking.

Messages/donations to: Industrial Parometers Strike Fund, c/o Eric MacDonald, TGWU House, 211 Broad St., Birmingham.

Greenings appeal for cash help

AT A mass meeting last Saturday there were only seven votes out of 300 for accepting the demands of Greenings' bludgeoning management. There was an almost unanimous vote to continue the strike until victory. The strike is now in its 17th week.

The previous Thursday there had been a meeting of national officers of the union and representatives of the Engineering Employers' Association of which the company claimed they had had lots of letters from workers wanting to return to work.

This was tested out at a mass meeting, which was addressed

by Confed District Secretary John Tocher.

As Arthur Conheeny said: 'The result was a bigger majority to continue the strike than there had been to start it.'

The issue in dispute is still management's demand for redundancies but the workers believe the real issue is that the bosses want to smash trade union organisation in the plant. They are not going to let them.

After 17 weeks out the strikers desperately need financial support. Rush donations to Len Blood, 26 St. John St., Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside.

CPSA does YTS deal

THE TUC backs YTS, despite Tebbit's decision to keep the allowance at £25 a week and to refuse union demands for £28.50.

The CPSA doesn't support it and is refusing to tolerate it in the Civil Service. CPSA conference saw it as a source of cheap temporary labour - youth exploitation rather than youth training.

Now the CPSA is working on a deal with the British Airports Authority to give 20 trainees a gross weekly wage not of £25, but of £42.93 plus full employee status.

This of course is still contrary to CPSA policy. Alistair Graham, CPSA General Secretary says it is justifiable because it is so far in advance of any comparable deal.

Battles ahead will test out NUR AGM swing to left

By Rob Dawber

THE NUR AGM decided to affiliate to CND and to include industrial action in its list of options for action against the Serpell report. If decided to oppose incomes policy and to oppose the Tories' Police and Criminal Evidence Bill.

The recent revival of a 'Triple Alliance' of Rail, Coal and Steel has been taken a step forward in that the NUR is now committed to get a national delegate conference called and to building 'Triple Alliance' links at local level. Previously the Triple Alliance was little more than a piece of paper in each union's national headquarters.

These decisions mark a shift leftward in the NUR. But at the AGM not all was done that could have been done to push the union in that direction.

A motion opposing Tebbit's proposals on 'democracy in the trade unions' was of course passed. But an amendment saying that greater participation of and accountability to the membership was a good thing was thrown out.

On the Labour Party Knapp managed to swing the AGM behind him when he argued against the witch-hunt and expulsions. But he also swung it against a motion that would have guaranteed the right of socialist groups to organise inside the party - the Greenwich amendment. He didn't like expulsions, he said, but we shouldn't try to alter the Labour Party constitution.

Defeated

A resolution to make the Labour Party accountable and obliged to carry out Labour Party policy was defeated.

On Northern Ireland the

Board and the government. It means that productivity talks will stop.

The media made a lot of the AGM's decision to use industrial action against it but if it is left with some NUR leaders they have little to worry about.

Leaflets

The NUR's propaganda campaign against Serpell so far has amounted to little more than leaflets showing the skeleton of railways that Serpell described as profitable in his most extreme option.

And if tomorrow the Tories announce the closure of all but this 600 miles of railway line even the most staunch right winger will be for industrial action.

But of course the Tories wouldn't be so reckless. That is not, in fact, what Serpell means.

Serpell means a steady rundown of rolling stock, depots and track, speed restrictions and loss of contracts because services can't be kept going, less passenger services because the coaches to carry them don't exist, lack of investment or closure or 'mothballing' of 'surplus' lines. Serpell is not going to be the Big Closure Programme suddenly announced. It is the steady drip, drip of closure that is taking place already. The time to fight is now.

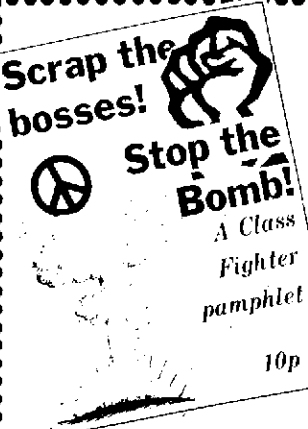
The task of the left in the NUR is to make this clear and along with the issue of guards' jobs to get industrial action on the agenda.

President

The election of the Broad. Left supporter Bob Kettle as President (though by only one vote) also reflects the shift to the left in the NUR.

This shift is due for a major test, however, as a result of another decision, which marks a major change. That is the decision to reverse the policy on driver only operation (DOO).

The NUR will now accept DOO on those lines where it already exists but on no more. No more guards jobs are to go. This decision will inevitably bring the NUR into collision course with the British Rail



10p plus postage from 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.



TGWU leaders fail to push conference to right

By Alan Thornett
(BDC delegate from
Cowley)



Evans: opposed to ending talks with Tories

The fact that the TGWU conference ended last Friday with few of its policies changed is no thanks to its leadership. They were clearly looking for a shift to the right in the post-election period — and are likely to push the Union that way despite conference decisions.

They were so determined to back Neil Kinnock that they introduced a conference procedure which effectively prevented a vote for any other candidate for the leadership position.

This was not surprising when it emerged that they wanted the conference to support the Labour Party NEC witch-hunting Register.

In the event the chair lost control of the agenda and the item was never put to conference. This leaves the register in the hands of the TGWU Executive, who have opposed it up until now.

Dangerous ambiguity emerged in the wages debate. Although the platform supported an unequivocal resolution supporting free collective bargaining, Moss Evans in his speech left room for support for a National Economic Assessment type of deal with a future Labour government. This was to have come up again in the debate on the Labour Party which was not taken.

On top of this the call for a statutory national minimum wage was pushed through. It was argued that this is "not an incomes policy by the back door". Of course that is just what it is.

Possibly the debate carrying the most immediate implications for the political situation in Britain was on Tebbit.

The Executive supported a resolution which whilst calling for the non-payment of fines

under Tory legislation made no mention of strike action or breaking off talks with the Tory government.

The motion from my branch stood in opposition to this. It called for strike action in support of anyone victimised under Tebbit's laws and for breaking off talks with the Tories.

It was clearly the nub of the issue. In replying to me Moss Evans argued that support could not be given in advance since sometimes things are organised by "provocateurs"; and although talks with the Tories had been a "dialogue of the deaf" we "should not end all talks".

Evans did say that in the event of the Tebbit laws being used against the union an emergency conference would be called to deal with it.

I said in reply that the time to organise for that was now, and that it meant having a perspective of direct action and an approach which would alert the members in preparation. My resolution was lost by about 2-1.

The debate on unemployment produced nothing capable of defending jobs or tackling

unemployment levels. There was no challenge to the Executive decision to ban the recruitment of the unemployed into the union. Most of the debate focussed on a resolution correctly calling for complete withdrawal from YTS — which was defeated after appeals from the platform.

The reluctance of Evans and Co to break from class collaboration with the Tory government was matched by the motion moved by Communist Party member Danny Connors of Fords proposing "workers' participation" and "industrial democracy" — two hoary old euphemisms for collaboration with management.

The general level of debate was lower than previous conferences. This seemed to be an accumulation of the election defeat, the rundown of industry, and the general offensive against the trade union movement, which mean less new militants coming forward in the union.

Open nationalism emerged in the debate on import controls ("Buy British" campaign) and in the debate on violence against

bus crews (a very serious and difficult problem in the TGWU) there were calls on Thatcher to implement her promises on law and order.

It was not all that way. The debate on women's rights brought out the contradictions.

With the best resolution ever on the agenda, the platform decided to override them with an executive statement by Marie Patterson.

Outraged women delegates (who were only a tiny minority of the conference despite the big women membership of the TGWU) successfully challenged this and the statement was rejected, requiring the motions to be debated.

The level of the debate was a disgrace. One delegate got loud applause when he said indignantly that women do play a role in the union "otherwise how would I be here with a clean shirt."

I was forced to intervene on the level of arguing that it actually is harder for women to become active in the unions than men, that working class women actually are socially, economically and sexually oppressed and that that oppression goes right through society to a conference like this where every sexist remark — which come constantly from the floor of the conference and the platform — are a form of intimidation.

The platform was by this point in disarray and recommended support for all the resolutions they previously wanted to avoid.

These included the establishment of a TGWU national women's advisory committee, reporting to the Executive and to the annual women's conference (see additional report on this, page 5).

The union's support for unilateral nuclear disarmament remained unchanged as did its support for NATO and the Alter-

native Economic Strategy. The question of the protection of jobs lost through disarmament took a step forward with a discussion on the new TGWU pamphlet "A Strategy for Arms Conversion".

The international section of the agenda amounted to one item only — Poland. I moved a resolution which, whilst not adequate gave full support to Solidarity and refused recognition to the new state unions. It was carried overwhelmingly despite an intervention from leading London Stalinist Ken Fuller, saying that Solidarity was a creation of the CIA.

Very good resolutions on Lebanon, South Africa, Central and South America and Argentina were not taken.

Ireland was the subject of an Executive statement given by the Secretary of "Region 11" — which is Ireland.

Although presented as a "non-sectarian" approach it was essentially pro-Loyalist. It argued for keeping British troops in the North, to "stabilise" the existing status quo and improve social conditions through the influence of the trade union movement.

A delegate from Liverpool who courageously opposed the statement and called for troops out, a united Ireland and self-determination was barred throughout his speech.

On Friday morning, with the agenda in disarray, a series of Executive-supported resolutions were pushed through en bloc without presentation, discussion or debate.

These included such major items as the NHS and privatisation.

Many other important issues, such as gay rights (on the agenda for the first time as far as I can remember) were referred back to the executive.



Cops joined racist attack

A DEFENCE Committee has been set up to defend Bikar Singh and Davinder Singh who are facing criminal charges because they tried to defend themselves when they were attacked by a group of 18-20 white people in Benmore Avenue, Highgate on 3 April 1983. They were visiting relatives at the time.

In addition to being attacked by the racists, they were treated disgracefully by the police officers who arrested them.

They were subjected to racial abuse by the officers who were from Belgrave Road Police Station. At one stage, Davinder was punched in the face whilst in the police car.

When they got to the police station, Davinder collapsed from the injuries that he had sustained in the racial attack and was taken to the hospital by the police.

Bikar was kept over night in the police cells and refused food when he requested it.

Bikar was kept over night in the police cells and refused food when he requested it. During the time they were in police custody, they were not allowed to contact a solicitor.

The Defence Committee was formed and has the support of many local organisations. Recently, the Birmingham NALGO branch has decided to support its work.

Davinder and Bikar are due to appear in court on August 15 (Birmingham Magistrates Court, Corporation Street).

There will be a picket of this hearing from 9 am onwards. In addition, the Committee is organising public meetings in Smethwick (5 August) and Handsworth (12 August).

Donations from individuals and organisations are desperately needed since we have little money.

CARDOWAN IN THE FRONT LINE

THE decisions taken at the NUM conference last week have ensured that Cardowan colliery in Lanarkshire is in the front line of the fight to stop pit closures. It is expected that the men will take over the pit on August 16.

Alex Hogg, NUM delegate from Cardowan told Socialist

Organiser that he believed that Cardowan had been singled out for closure for two reasons.

Because of the history of trade union militancy at the pit (at the last strike ballot 65% voted for a national strike) and because by closing Cardowan the NCB would have moved on from

By Stewart McCann

closing smaller pits to begin closing larger complexes.

The NCB have deliberately created conditions at Cardowan to "justify" closure. Investment has been deliberately denied (unlike most other pits, drillages and development at Cardowan are based on the pit's own revenue and not on area capital).

Mechanisation could dramatically increase output and make the pit more viable. Mechanisation has been supplied to other pits but not to Cardowan.

They claim that the pit has no reserves, that there are geological difficulties and massive financial losses.

But these reasons were given as an excuse to close the pit back in 1969. But there was a shortage of coking coal at the time so a few weeks later the NCB retracted these statements and said there were no geological difficulties, that there were massive reserves and that the pit had a great future!

Plainly they say whatever suits them at a given moment. In fact Cardowan has at least 20 years of reserves.

When the announcement of the closure was made on 13 May the unions invoked a national review procedure and the committee meets on 16 August. But the NCB is moving towards closure without waiting for it. Miners have been warned that

if they don't accept redundancy now the same amount might not be available later. Men have been approached to transfer to other pits without union consultation. Vacancies at other pits have been allotted to Cardowan men. Private houses have been offered on special conditions in attempts to bribe the men to move.

Yet the Cardowan miners have remained solid. Only a few have gone against the union.

Support for Cardowan is spreading throughout the coalfields. Already miners in Polmaise colliery, in West Stirling, have been locked out for refusing to work with men transferred from Cardowan against union policy, despite attempts by the Scottish Area Executive to stop the action.

Polekemit colliery (where most of the men from Cardowan are to be transferred) went on strike on Monday when the NCB asked for voluntary redundancies to make way for transfers from Cardowan.

Holidays

Frantes colliery in Fife is expected to join the fight when they return from their annual holiday because of attempts to transfer Cardowan men there.

Cardowan and the other pits urgently need money to sustain the campaign and to prepare for after August 16.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to:

J. McCafferty, Secretary, National Union of Mineworkers, Cardowan Branch, Cardowan Road, Glasgow.

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.



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Socialist ORGANISER



Jeremy Corbyn

* Excerpts from Jeremy Corbyn's speech in Parliament last Friday, July 1.

THIS IS the first time that I have spoken to the House. It seems a million miles away from the constituency that I represent and the problems that the people there face.

Islington North is only a few miles from the House by tube or bus. We are suffering massive unemployment and massive cuts imposed by the Government on the local authorities. There are cuts in the Health Service. In common with the rest of inner London, we have lost all grant funding for education.

That is a measure of the contempt with which the Government have treated Islington North — indeed, the whole borough of Islington.

Media attack

The borough has suffered an unprecedented media attack in exactly the same way as the GLC suffered because it was singled out as fair game for editorials in the Daily Mail, The Sun, and other newspapers...

[It] has suffered a stupendous loss in rate support grant since 1979. In 1979 £55 million a year was paid to Islington borough council. That was the Government contribution to the needs of that rundown inner city area.

It is indicative of the Government's determination to create massive unemployment in inner city areas and demonstrates their ignorance of the problems that people face in such boroughs that the Government grant is now down to £32 million and is destined to go down further. That is a massive indictment of the Government.

Contempt

Unemployment in Islington is as bad as anywhere else in London. About one third of those who are out of work at the moment in Islington have been out of work for more than a year. Within a few minutes of the House are areas in Finsbury Park where there are black people of 20 and older, both women and men, who have never worked since leaving school at 16.

They have little but contempt for the Government and for proceedings that are adopted by the Government in attacking such boroughs. They have little regard for a system that seems destined to force them to stay permanently on the dole.

I shall convey that spirit to the House as often as I can. The people in my constituency are bitter and angry.

Lock-out in Stoke!

By Arthur Bough

6000 workers at Michelin, Stoke, were locked out on July 11. But instead of getting together in a mass picket, the workers were directed by their leaders to the local Labour Exchange to sign on.

The Light Production Department whose plan to strike from July 11 rather than accept four-shift working triggered the general lockout is not officially on strike.

TGWU officials advised that management had preempted the strike with their general lock-out. The workers should therefore sign on at the dole. No picketing was to take place as they might be decreed to be on strike and have the dole denied them.

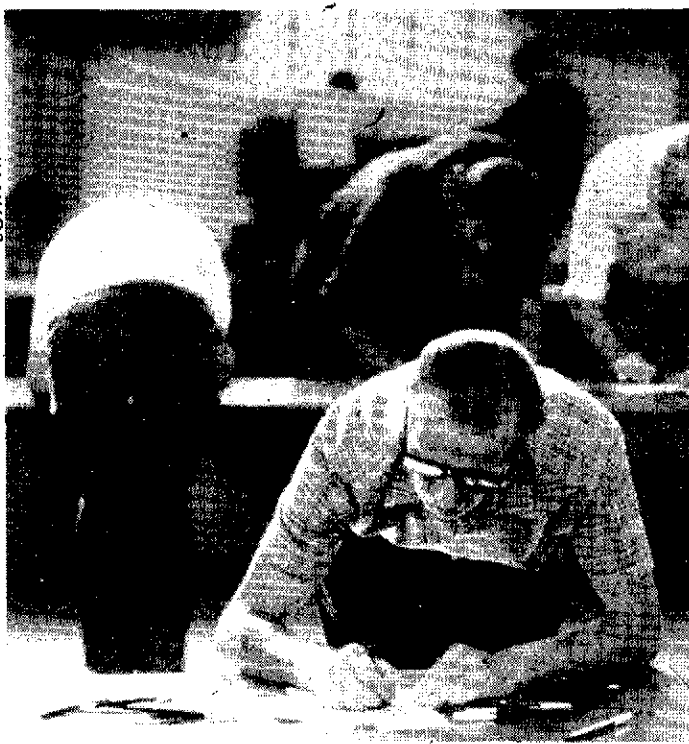
The problem with this strategy is that staff are going in to do administrative work and goods are still going out of the warehouse. The union reckons it will take two to three weeks for the warehouse to empty.

Instead of deciding to stop goods going out of the warehouse now they have opted for a waiting game.

They say that workers can best wait out the bosses if they are all on benefit and have public sympathy because locked out rather than on strike.

This is extremely short-sighted. Two or three weeks is a long time. Passivity can breed demoralisation. There is a danger that the militant Light Production Department will become isolated.

It will, if the bosses have their way. On Tuesday management asked workers in the rethread and cycle department to go back to work on Wednesday. They have sent out letters asking each worker in the Light Production Department to come back to work — under the four-shift system.



JOHN HARRIS

On Tuesday the stewards endorsed the unions' 'get the dole' strategy. Convenor Gordon Howle said they want to talk to the company and appeal to ACAS (the government arbitration service). He denounced the letters sent to workers in the Light Production Department as 'a provocation'.

A better strategy than the one in question would be to mass-picket the warehouse now. That would stop goods leaving and help prevent erosion of support and division of the workers.

stop press
A mass meeting on Wednesday decided overwhelmingly to continue to refuse to accept management's terms.

Knives out

NEWS leaking out of Monday's meeting of the Labour Party NEC Organisation Sub-committee indicates that the right wing are sharpening their witch-hunting knives again.

They apparently agreed to find out whether the five Militant EB members they had expelled were still active in their local CLPs. If so, there was talk of warning letters threatening reorganisation or disbandment.

Kinnock, amongst others, was an enthusiastic supporter of this move and continuing the purge.

Here are your targets!

£1,000 is our target — and after two weeks we have only a small proportion of that amount: £148.65.

This week's donations came from Jeff Slee, £30; Gordon Brewer, £20; Brent supporters, £5.70, including Martin Holland, £2, and Christine McKimmie, £3; Jo Thwaites, £2; Gerry Byrne, £7.50; and £11 from Coventry supporters.

Thanks to all these comrades. And now — what about the rest of you? The record will be there at the end of the month, and we'll see which groups have reached their targets. Rush donations now to: 214, Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Group	Target	Received		
Harrogate			10	
Midlands				
Birmingham			40	
Coventry			80	
Leicester			10	
Northampton			10	
Nottingham			10	
South and Wales				
Oxford			110	
Basingstoke			30	
Cardiff			20	
London				
North-West			30	
Hackney			45	
Haringey			25	
Hounslow			30	
Islington			45	35.50
S.E. London			25	
East London			30	
Lambeth/Southwark			45	10
Others				3
Group				
Scotland				
Glasgow	40	7		
Edinburgh	40			
North West				
Rochdale	10			
Manchester	40			
Stockport	10			
Wirral	30			
Liverpool	25	6.95		
Hyndburn	5			
Stoke	20			
Yorkshire/North-East				
Huddersfield	10			
Durham	15			
Leeds	15			
Sheffield	40			
Hull	40			
Halifax	10			
York	20	10		

Why vote Heffer

Reg Race :6 good reasons

WHY should the left in the Labour Party support Eric Heffer as a candidate for leader of the Labour Party?

There are six clear and compelling reasons.

First, Heffer supports the basic principles of socialism as embodied in the party constitution — including the extension of public ownership, so critical to the central conception of the Alternative Economic Strategy.

Second, Heffer has consistently supported the integrity as Party conference decisions on policy — such as those supporting unilateral nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from the Common Market, and the alternative economic strategy. He opposes the watering down of policy commitments to curry favour with the right wing of the PLP.

Third, Heffer makes it clear in his candidate's statement that he supports the policies argued for by progressives within the party on such issues as women's rights and racism.

Fourth, Heffer has taken a very principled stand on Eastern Europe: he has actively supported both Solidarity in Poland and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, and has been the driving force on the NEC on these issues.

Fifth, Heffer has supported the democratic changes within the party and believes in the continued democratisation of the party to make Labour's public representatives accountable to the movement as a whole. His candidature is supported by the Executive Committee of CLPD.

Sixth, Heffer has consistently

opposed the witch-hunt in the Labour Party around his voting record on this issue on the NEC is exemplary.

In addition to these positive reasons for supporting Eric Heffer, it's important that Labour Party members choosing who to support as leader are not misled into believing that Neil Kinnock is a left-winger. He is not.

He represents the long tradition of fudge and muddle in the party leadership. He has gone on record as advocating that the party should promise anything to the electorate in order to get elected — presumably even if those policies conflicted with basic socialist ideals.

He has consistently favoured the expulsion of socialists from the Labour Party because of their political views, and has voted accordingly on the NEC.

He has been responsible, through his votes on the NEC, for defeating key proposals to democratise the party — such as giving the NEC final control over the contents of the Party manifesto.

He has expressed a strong desire for the abandonment of specific policy pledges and has advocated the maximum freedom possible for the leadership when in government: instead, he went to the unprecedented lengths of threatening to resign as Shadow Education Secretary if the party supported policies to restore Tory cuts in school meals and milk.

Kinnock is the intelligent right wingers' candidate because they know that he can be trusted to roll back the gains made by the left in the party over the last ten years.

Gerry Byrne

puts the view of the Socialist Organiser Editorial Board.

MANY women have looked askance at the left's support for Eric Heffer as Labour leader.

Not only is he anti-abortion, he is generally regarded as the main 'block to 'Abortion on Demand' being included in the Manifesto.

Instead we have a mealy mouthed commitment to 'improve NHS facilities and respect the absolute right of individual conscience' (not our consciences, of course, but those of over-paid consultants and MPs).

He is at least co-responsible for sabotaging any chance of the Party taking a stand on the equalisation of the age of consent for gays.

And, judging from last week's Socialist Organiser interview, he is equivocal on the question of women's representation within the Party.

Isn't it yet another instance of the left making a token stand on women's rights, while in effect saying 'women can wait'?

There might be some grounds for saying this if there was another candidate for leader standing with any better record on women's rights. Or indeed a woman.

None of the other candidates has shown any great interest in women's rights at all, whereas Heffer did explicitly align himself with those fighting for change for women in the Party, whatever his personal reservations of some aspects of this policy.

And it's worth looking at where the women's movement in the Party arose from. It was out of the same dismay at the unaccountability of Labour leaderships and governments which fuelled the general democratic ferment.

It was out of the same realisation that we could not go for-

ward simply by passing radical resolutions without the mechanisms to impose them on an unwilling leadership or to push them aside.

This women's movement is indissolubly linked with the left, while often being its sharpest critic and the strongest bulwark against conciliationist pressures. It is a knot that should not be untied.

It strengthens both the women and the left.

It should be clear too, that women have the most to gain from pushing through the democratic reorganisation of the Party, and the most to lose if the right are triumphant.

Heffer is the only candidate who has stood out firmly against witch hunts and for the extension of the rights of the rank and file.

The hard right's candidates' record is obvious. But Kinnock on every crucial vote on the NEC (shortlist of one, endorsement of Peter Tatchell, the enquiry and expulsion of the Militant EB) has aligned himself with the hard right against the democratic aspirations of the Party.

Heffer has always stood by the sovereignty of conference — Kinnock has sneered at it. On policy, Heffer fought to retain labour's commitment to nationalise the banks and against incomes policy — Kinnock voted the other way on both.

It is not that women should ignore Heffer's weaknesses on abortion, for instance; but he should be made to square his commitment to conference policies with his allowing his individual views override those of two-thirds plus of the Party.

But of all the candidates, he is the only one to have fought for the changes which would let that sort of accounting take place.