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Fight the
witch-
hunt

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TGWU gives green light to boycott missile bases



Rail: to be slugged to the 'profitable' lines?

Under the hammer

THE announcement of the Tories' increased majority on June 9 had auctioneers, asset-strippers, stockbrokers and bankers reaching for their calculators and licking their lips at the prospects of new and richer pickings from the state sector.

The second reading this week of the Bill for the privatisation of the enormously profitable British Telecom underlines the breakneck speed at which the process of privatisation of priceless assets is taking place.

The last four years saw the City line its bulging wallets with the profitable privatisation of Cable and Wireless, Associated British Ports, British Aerospace, BR Hotels, the National Freight Corporation and Britoil. In addition, hundreds of thousands of council homes have been privatised through enforced sale at bargain prices — to force more and more people into the grip of mortgages and the private housing market.

The Tories are now pledged to sell off chunks of British Steel and BL, along with Rolls Royce, British Airways, British Shipbuilders and as many airports as possible.

They are being publicly egged on to go still further — and flog off the National Coal Board, British Rail, the Central Electricity Generating Board and the Post Office.

These plans offer profits to the employers; and they will please the hard-line ideologists in the Tory camp.

But their main purpose is *practical*: to fragment and destroy trade union organisation and press home the attack on jobs and working conditions.

The privatisation proposals are thus integrally linked to Tory anti-union laws and Tebbit's new plans to undermine the unity and democracy of the unions.

The fight for action against privatisation is the fight to defend the very essence of the gains and organisation built up over decades of workers' struggle.

CONFERENCE "HOW
TO FIGHT TORIES" p3



NHS: sell-offs could decimate union strength

Under the axe

WITHIN days of the Tories' reelection, the sharpened axe began once more to swing — biting deep into jobs in the state industries, and vital health and social services.

On July 5, Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin inflicted a vicious £280 million package of penalties, falling mainly on "overspending" councils wrestling with the social problems of the slump-hit inner cities. The GLC suffered a £129 million cut in grant; seven London boroughs were hit for a further £50 million; big cities for another £80 million, and shire counties for millions more.

These figures translate into further decimation of education and social services, further misery for the elderly, the unemployed, the youth, the homeless, the ethnic minorities and the needy. But they were only an opening shot in the resumed Tory war on local government services.

A further list of 40-50 "over-spending" councils has now also been drawn up for Tory treatment. Jenkin has told the Times that his objective is to bring about "a large measure of redundancy" among council staffs, particularly in London. Thousands of teachers could be the first to lose their jobs.

They will not be the only casualties of this new war of attrition. The new NHS spending cuts, announced with bland cynicism only weeks after the election, could translate into the loss of some 20,000 jobs (some 70% of the NHS budget is labour costs) and the decimation of services across the country as hospital closure plans (in some cases suppressed at government insistence until after the election) are implemented.

None of this will safeguard jobs elsewhere. Mercenary axeman Ian MacGregor is set to lay waste "uneconomic" NCB pits, at the cost of thousands of miners' jobs. Steelworkers face still further attacks. And in the private sector, too, the heavy toll of "rationalisation", redundancies and speed up continues to tighten the screws on the shop floor.

There is scarcely a worker — employed or unemployed — who will not directly suffer the blows of this renewed Tory onslaught. The task however is to challenge the capitulation or tokenistic "opposition" of the trade union and Labour leaders in order to create conditions for a solid and widening fightback based on strike action and occupations.

A vital first step is to force our union leaders to break from their top-level collaboration with the Tory government and employers.

A SHOCK of alarm and fear has shot through millions upon millions of people in the last two years. They have understood that nuclear war is really possible.

Millions now think it probable if not inevitable — and soon rather than something that might happen 'one day'.

Barbarous

Millions have suddenly become aware that humanity — under the barbarous worldwide rule of capitalists and Stalinist bureaucrats — is trapped in a nuclear minefield. That everything and everybody we know and care about, all our concerns in the present, and all our hopes and plans for the future, face irreparable destruction. That humanity itself faces annihilation.

The new Cold War and — in the West — the publicly-discussed plans for 'limited' nuclear war, together with the development of 'tactical' nuclear weapons are the events which have brought home to millions the terrible threat under which we live every day of our lives.

Everyone knows that even if the superpowers could manage a 'limited' nuclear war it would not be 'limited' for Europe. That Europe would be reduced to uninhabitable radioactive ruins.



TGWU's Ron Todd

The result is a tremendous rebirth of the movement for nuclear disarmament, not only in Britain but in Europe and much of the rest of the world too. The call is growing throughout the world "Disarm the warmongers".

That is the cry in the British labour movement too. Most unions are now for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

By John
O'Mahony

The recent conference of the TGWU went further than merely calling on the British state — under Thatcher! — to abandon nuclear weapons.

Conference pledged maximum union support for any TGWU branch which boycotts development work on nuclear bases or "any other weapons of mass destruction".

Ron Todd expressed the mood of conference when he said that the present international situation and the dispute between America and Russia about 'who is ahead in the nuclear arms race' was 'like two men over a reservoir of petrol arguing over who has got the most matches.'

Talk

He reminded conference that governments now considered nuclear war inevitable and plan in terms of this inevitability.

"There is no defence against nuclear weapons" he added, "especially with Britain an American aircraft carrier run by the Bonnie and Clyde of the nuclear age — Reagan and Thatcher."

A resolution instructing branches to black work on nuclear bases and committing the union to organise such blacking nationally — that would have been much better. It's true that union officials like Todd talk better than they fight. And the conference rejected a motion calling on Britain to get out of NATO, which relies on nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless despite these weaknesses, inadequacies and confusions, the largest union in Britain is now committed to support local branch initiatives to oppose, disrupt and undermine work on nuclear bases. This is a tremendous development.

Convincing

At the least it gives the anti-nuclear movement the green light to go to the rank and file of the union with a much better chance of convincing them to take such action. It gives us

Continued page 15

INSIDE: Interview
with TONY BENN

EDITORIAL

Get the other Goldings!

DON'T just elect new leaders. Watch them, call them to account, demand that they fight and where necessary replace them when they don't.

The labour movement can only be turned into a real fighting machine if these lessons are learned. And the struggles for left wing policies and leadership in the Labour Party can only be won insofar as the fight is waged in the unions.

The removal of John Golding, "Political Organiser" of the Post Office Engineering Union from his trade union seat on Labour's NEC vividly illustrates these points.

The POEU Broad Left secured a majority on the Union's Executive at this year's conference by winning the support of an increasingly radicalised rank and file concerned to fight the Tories' privatisation of British Telecom.

But within the Broad Left there remained great trepidation on how to proceed. Its campaign on privatisation has been far from a total, dynamic switch of line from the previous course of the right wing.

And there were those on the Broad Left who shrank from a confrontation over Golding's nomination to the Labour NEC. Some — including Communist Party members — favoured nominating him in order to avoid "going too far". Only a small minority was firmly committed to oppose Golding.

Appalled at this prospect, and keen to test the mettle of the new leadership, leading Broad Left activists called them to order, and made it clear that the nomination was a crunch issue. Those Broad Left members on the Executive who failed to vote against Golding would be publicly criticised and opposed.

Having thus been put on the spot, ten of the Broad Left members on the POEU Executive were eventually mustered to vote down Golding.

Key to this fight were the bigger London branches of the POEU, which have made big strides towards widening the involvement of rank and file members in union activity, with mass attendances at branch meetings held during working hours. Golding has not been ousted by any conspiratorial clique, but by the representatives of an awakening membership that is seeking the means and the leadership to defend its jobs and working conditions.

In this, the POEU offers a valuable model to the workers' movement. The participatory workers' democracy of well-attended branch meetings is the polar opposite of — and the best answer to — Tebbit's model of "democracy" based on balloting the most passive and ill-informed sections of the membership.

Equally, the success in putting at least a temporary stop to Golding's role on Labour's NEC shows the need to fight in other unions for opposition to the witch-hunt and for control over "delegates" and "representatives" who cast block votes and organise without reference to the unions' rank and file.

The Labour Party right wing, largely isolated from the rank and file in the constituencies, relies for its power not on force or quality of argument, but upon the stitched-up bureaucratic support from trade union figures such as Golding.

To chip away at the foundations of this corrupt trade union base and establish accountability could bring Golding's fellow witch-hunters crashing down, and fundamentally alter the conditions in the labour movement as a whole.

But this cannot be done without a sharp fight. The right wing will not simply roll over and play dead. The POEU experience shows that even within Broad Lefts there is still a need to struggle for a firm line and against compromises which could neuter the fight against the right wing.

These and related issues will figure prominently in the discussion on Broad Lefts at Socialist Organiser's "How to Fight the Tories" conference on September 17. We urge all readers to attend.



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

Logic of Tory "right to buy" BUY - OR ELSE!

By Maureen Doyle

WANDSWORTH Council is something of a pioneer: right up front in the scramble to drive us back to the Victorian era and beyond.

They have forged ahead with the privatisation of anything that moves, introduced the novel concept of selling off council housing by the block, and now they have announced in a paper to the housing policy committee "a very cautious first step" — to municipalism.

They are targeting five local estates as "sales areas" whenever a home becomes vacant on one of these estates there will be no possibility of another tenant renting it, it will immediately be put on the open market.

Tenants on these estates will also be given more rapid transfers to other properties so that their homes can be sold. Naturally these estates are on the more desirable end of council property — pleasant, brick-built houses, many with gardens, rather than leaky tower blocks.

Now it doesn't take much imagination to foresee the consequences of this policy.

Families desperate for a transfer from high-rise blocks, damp and squalid accommodation or vandalised estates will stand no chance of moving on.

The waiting list will grow. Mothers with small children will be forced to stay longer in bed and breakfast or temporary accommodation.

Already 4,000 properties have been sold off, the majority not to sitting tenants. Where on earth are the tenants in these "sales areas" who do not want or can't afford to buy their houses going to be "encouraged" to transfer to?

And the prospect of cleansing these areas of awkward sitting tenants has a sinister ring to it. How soon will it be before this bright new policy turns into a "buy or else" ultimatum?

During the election, many of us became aware that the Tories' sales policy was an effective vote-winner — or more accurately vote-buyer. For individ-

ual workers the prospect of buying their homes at a massive discount, rather than paying for them ten times over in rent, does mean an immediate and substantial improvement in their general standard of life. It takes a lot of disinterested principle to say no to such a tempting offer.

However, for the Labour Party to reverse its policy on sales, as some on the woolly left have suggested in order to win back those votes would be criminal.

It would also, I think, be counter-productive. The problem lies not with the policy, which is as basic to any view of socialism as a free health or education service, but with how it was (or wasn't) argued and Labour's rather murky history on housing.

We are not against council house sales on some moralistic rejection of any kind of private property. There's nothing wrong with individuals owning the home they live in. And there's a quite healthy side to working class people wanting to improve their living standards any way that is offered.

We oppose the sales because

our priority is to house the homeless and ensure everyone has an adequate place to live, before we give hand-outs to those who do have a roof (or two) over their heads.

Our counter to the Tories' policy should be for more house-building.

There would be little incentive for tenants to buy, were it not for the history of bureaucratic management, poor maintenance and services, and astronomical rents which council housing has entailed. Labour councils bear equal responsibility for that. In a sense, the Tory voting house-buyer is the pay-off for Labour councils' refusal to fight any more than half-heartedly for more funds from central government and to take the Tories head-on.

Wandsworth is indeed a pioneer and like those early pioneers bearing gifts of plague-ridden blankets to the Indians, this policy will poison our communities. There must be no retreat on Labour policy. We need to stop being defensive and build a strong campaign on our terms.

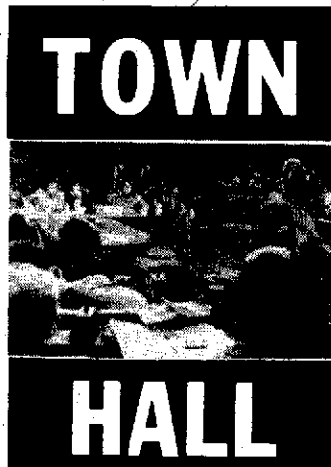
The Southwark fightback

"Either we destroy essential services and add to unemployment. Or we massively increase rates which our electors cannot afford. We are no longer prepared to make this choice!"

"The government has consistently reduced its spending on local services. Now we intend to force the government to foot its share of the bill."

Southwark councillor Steve Marsling summed up the mood of delegates from six London council Labour Groups, local parties, trade unions and tenants groups who attended the London Campaign Against the Cuts conference on July 17.

Southwark councillors, who hosted the conference, have already begun a campaign against the Tories' threat to further slash council spending



through a Campaign Working Party which involves the Council, Labour Parties, trade unions

and tenants groups. It was unanimously agreed to urge Labour Parties and Labour councillors in other London boroughs to follow the same model to build a 'grass roots' campaign against Tory cuts, and to work to link together the campaigns into a powerful all-London movement.

Proposals from Socialist Organiser supporters for councillors and Labour Parties to tour council workplaces to involve trade unionists in the fight against government cuts, and to build workplace Labour Party branches to overcome the traditional divisions between manual and officer council unions were enthusiastically supported.

Delegates all stressed that we need the type of door-to-door campaigning that will take

the issues of the Tory attack on councils out beyond the committee rooms and council chambers.

Though the conference was small, it was a first step that could be vital. The first moves have been made early enough to get action before the Tories ram through their legislation and then great cuts.

A co-ordinating committee was set up to build a further conference in the autumn and — more urgently — to publicise the type of anti-cuts work done by groups in London and work to link them together.

If a real campaigning base is built, the Tory trap of letting labour councillors raise rates to stave off cuts — but still hitting workers' living standards — can be avoided... we can take them on!

It's Parkinson's law

DID you see Cecil Parkinson's reaction to a suggestion after the hanging debate that the matter should be settled by referendum?

The Tory front bench looked askance at the question and launched into a defence of Parliamentary democracy, saying that MPs must have "decision by debate".

Other Tory front benchers also stressed that the only way to resolve major problems was to vote on them after debate (maybe forgetting the existence of the whips).

The Left in the unions pressed for elected official for years — exactly on the basis of 'decision by debate'.

We have called for the elections, and decisions on strikes to be settled by the widest number of members possible after meetings where the issues are thrashed out.

Instead the Tories want to pass a law which will make the elections and strike decision subject to postal ballots, where there will be no debate — except that conducted by the media.

It just shows once again that the word 'democracy' can be used to cover the most undemocratic procedures. The Tories' idea of democracy for the unions



By Patrick Spilling

is that we vote after the press tells us what to think.

Unions which use postal ballots for elections cannot boast much about the turnout — often well under ten percent. Yet where mass meetings can be arranged for strike votes, turnout of over 75 percent are common.

We might assume that the MCC is a Tory-style body. Its members stem from old-style blimp Tories to new style Tebbit Tories — with just a thin sprinkling of David Shepherd-style clergy.

Their exercise in 'democracy' on the question "shall we send a team to racist South Africa right now or shall we wait a bit?" also went the way of the rope — with a defeat for the radical right.

Yet even this august assembly, stuffed full of 'responsible' people filled brim full with civic

responsibility managed a turnout of less than 50 percent on its postal ballot — more than 1,000 of whom voted at a special (dare-we-say-it) mass meeting.

On hanging it is really quite surprising that we did not get a story something like this:

"Militant extremists infiltrated a mass meeting of MPs yesterday and swung a vote in favour of letting murderers go scot free."

"MPs were swung by demagogic speeches to vote in a way that they know will not do them or their families any good."

And on the South Africa tour: "Moderates who stayed at home rather than attend a rigged mass meeting, let militant extremists railroad their organisation into victimising misunderstood South Africa."

One reason why these stories did not appear may be that the press itself was divided over the

issues. At heart the gutter press is in favour of both executions and touring South Africa (preferably at the same time, through a tour by the public hangman stringing up 'dissidents' along the way).

But on hanging they were caught by fear of mass reaction to hangings in Northern Ireland.

And on South Africa they were not yet sure that the tour would not produce whites-only cricket which would not draw in the crowds, or therefore the money.

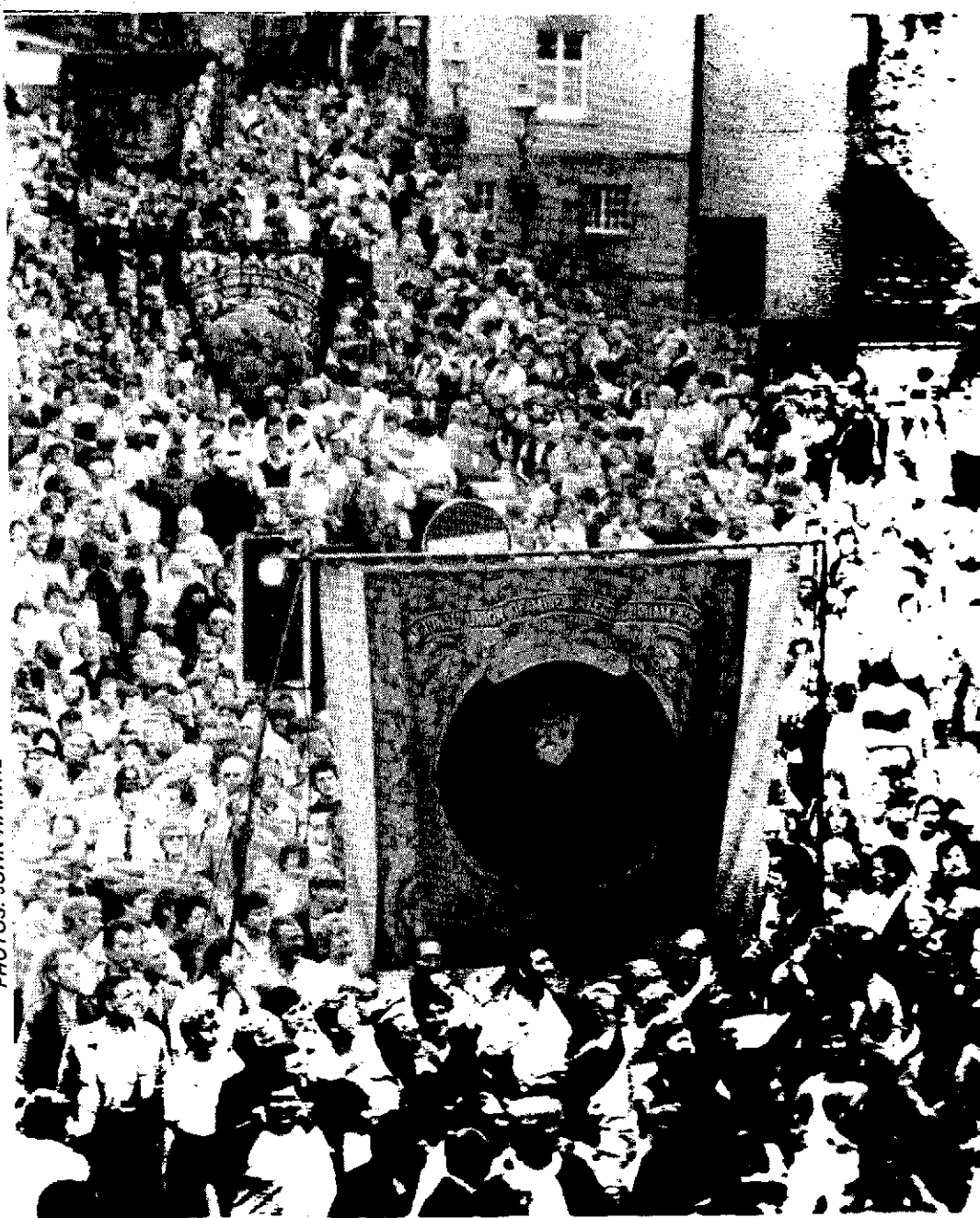
Even the Sun in the end came out against hanging, and the press by and large contented itself for calling for Leon Brittan's head for cocking up the government's major speech.

But they were full of praise for windbag Hattersley. In our own press awards at the end of the year, Hattersley, who writes about 50,000 newspaper articles a week, should be in the running for a special award for hypocrisy.

His argument that hanging Irish republicans was a form of 'special status' and would therefore be "giving in to their demands" is another inglorious footnote in the history of British Labour callousness across the Irish Sea.



PHOTOS: JOHN HARRIS



Durham Gala

GRAFFITI

By Gerry Byrne

THE TUC is all set to junk its "economic strategy" after the disastrous showing at the Election.

Quite right too, you may say; it wasn't so much a policy as a ragbag lacking credibility or radicalism.

There's no cause for jubilation however; the architect of this review, Tony Christopher of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation (Callaghan's union) wants the TUC to take a hard look at such basic tenets as full employment in the prevailing economic circumstances.

It sounds ominous. David Basnett of the GMBU leapt on the idea enthusiastically. With "re-thinkers" like this around, no great advances are likely.

And as if to confirm that radical is one thing the new TUC review will not be, the same meeting of its Economic Committee decided not to withdraw from tripartite talks with the Tories and the CBI. Moss Evans, Bill Keys and Ken Gill (whose unions have previously pushed for pulling out) did not oppose this decision.

WHOOOPS! My karma's just run over my dogma! The Tories are very keen to point out that the rate of inflation is falling. It stops us putting in for those extortionate wage increases. So they should be very pleased at last month's drop. Unfortunately, most of this is due (according to an independent economist) to the GLC's fare cuts!

WHEN trade unionists don't like a particular bit of legislation, we're cautioned that we have to put up with it, since it's the law of the land. So the case of the Fair Wages Resolution should be instructive. The story so far: Wandsworth council gave the borough's dustbin contract to

Grandmet Waste Services. Grandmet are very "competitive" and pay their workers less than in local authorities; and they work longer hours.

The dustmen took Grandmet to the Central Arbitration Committee under the Fair Wages Resolution, which states that public service contractors should pay their workers at least the equivalent of local authority minimums.

The CAC ruled in favour of the dustmen and ordered Grandmet to raise their pay by £6-£8 per week, and cut the working week by an hour.

What is the response of the upholders of the "law of the land?"

Norman Tebbit is planning to rescind the Fair Wages Resolution. And Wandsworth Council is retrospectively removing the Fair Wages clause from its contracts with private firms.

KREMLIN stooges? Disarmament protestors in this country are well-used to allegations that they are merely 'Moscow puppets'.

"In this country you have the right to protest - you wouldn't get that in Russia!" says Michael Heseltine.

In a heartening display of international solidarity, an independent Russian peace group has sent a letter to Margaret Thatcher protesting at the attacks on the democratic rights of British peace protestors.

The Group for Establishing Trust Between the US and the Soviet Union has itself suffered harassment and imprisonment for its peace activities. Its letter, condemning the arrest and jailing of Upper Heyford demonstrators was only got to the British Embassy after several attempts by the KGB to block it.

YOU might think that Durham's Miners' Gala was just another British summer spectacle like the Edinburgh Festival or the Lord Mayor's Parade.

Certainly there is a carnival, and the 200,000 people at last week's hundredth Gala took advantage of the extended pub opening hours.

But the latest Gala, like the ninety-nine before it, makes no attempt to disguise its politics.

Arthur Scargill reminded the rally that three years ago he had predicted pit closures, and has been accused of misleading people. "Who told the truth in 1980?" he asked.

"Today, as I speak, we have the bitter facts. Twelve North-East pits have been condemned, and I say two-thirds more will be closed. Are you going to accept it on your knees? Or are you going to stand and fight against the end of your industry?"

The Gala was almost returned to its 1930s glory when Durham alone had over 200 pits and 150,000 miners.

It was called "the greatest political gathering in the world" by Sam Watson, Durham NUM Secretary for 27 years, who was commemorated for the first time on the new banner of Sacristan Lodge.

The first "Big Meeting" in 1871 passed resolutions on children's working hours in the mines and urged all miners to join the union to give them solidarity in fighting the capitalist bosses.

The Galas grew in size but the level of political discussion remained high, including resolutions on Ireland in the 1890s, state education and housing, as well as miners' pay and conditions.

Little seems to have changed. The fight of the working class against Thatcher reflects the struggles of the 1870s.

The Durham Miners' Gala is the great event of the year, but festivities are still overshadowed by the black drapes on some banners, symbolising deaths in the pit in the past year.

And the miners of East Hetton and Marley Hill had little to celebrate - the pits have just been closed and the miners transferred to long-life coastal mines.

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 rather 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 bonkers.

*The SHOE 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?

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)*.

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.

CRECHE FACILITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE ALL DAY

*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 new 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".)

Post Office Engineers

"Members see that something must be done"

Last month's annual conference of the Post Office Engineering Union saw the defeat of the right wing majority of the National Executive and its replacement by supporters of the rank and file Broad Left.

This result was caused largely by the Union's failure to organise an effective campaign of resistance to Tory plans to privatise British Telecom. At the conference, the successful proposition of no confidence in the NEC's Industrial Action Strategy Committee was moved by COLIN TALBOT, secretary of the 2,000-strong London Westminster Branch and a member of the Broad Left Steering Committee and Streatham Labour Party.

What is the up-to-date position with the industrial action against Mercury?

It's still on a very small scale, limited to guerrilla warfare in the London North Central Internal area. Eight more members of that branch have now been called out on strike this week.

What response has there been amongst the membership to the action so far and to paying the weekly levy?

Extremely good. In our branch, apart from odd individuals, people are enthusiastic and the only difficulties have been a few organisational problems. In less well organised branches and rural areas there are some problems but even there they are getting it in effectively.

What have been the immediate effects within the union of the Broad Left's conference victory?

Well, as far as the rank and file goes it is only just percolating down and the conference report has only just appeared in the union journal, but reaction has been extremely good.

A large section of the members did not see it as left versus right but that the union had not been doing anything for a year on the major issues affecting us and now see something will be done.

It will get more complicated when the right launch a counter-offensive. Golding's outburst about Trotskyists running the POEU is a small taste of what's to come.

The POEU Broad Left is made up of quite diverse political currents. How do you account for its success and how do you see its function now it has a majority on the NEC?

I think it has been successful partly because of the entrenched and thoroughly bankrupt nature of the right-wing coalition that has run the union since 1948.

The leadership particularly failed in its response to the challenge of privatisation and



Colin Talbot: he will be speaking at the SO conference on Sept 17.

also the new aggressive style of management. Besides that the Broad Left has been a broad and open coalition of left forces which has concentrated on policy issues and union democracy and not just being an election machine.

I don't think the Broad Left's role in the branches has changed at all. The tactics of campaigning at rank and file level and bringing pressure to bear on the NEC to make the right decisions should carry on as before. That will only strengthen the hand of the left on the NEC and pull them up if they start making mistakes.

Many other public sector unions are threatened by privatisation. What possibilities do you see for united action?

The record so far is not particularly inspiring but that's because, apart from one or two small-scale actions, there has been no decisive confrontation over privatisation.

If it is going to be possible to forge an alliance against privatisation the fight against the sale of British Telecoms is probably going to provide the best vehicle for doing so. That depends on the POEU going out to other unions and the Labour Party to get support.

The new NEC made approaches to the NUR about cooperation against Mercury

because Mercury intends to use BR lines for its Optical Fibre Cable network.

After four years in government and now a Tory election victory, many workers may be affected by the myth of Thatcher's invincibility. How do you see this being combatted?

By beating them! Obviously, with the so-called landslide there's a feeling of frustration and in some cases despair. Quite a lot of our members think we can't defeat the government over privatisation, but even they've been saying if we can't beat them we will at least go down fighting.

I think after the failure of the Labour Party in the election there does seem to be a tendency for people to turn to their unions as the only effective way of stopping Thatcher.

What about Labour Party workplace branches?

We're in the process of setting one up in this area. A lot of activists in my branch have joined the Labour Party in the past two or three years including a spurt of new members around the election.

Together with Labour Party members working in the clerical and telephone operators side we've seen the need to develop Labour Party organisation amongst the workforce. For the first time during the election we leafleted most of our main buildings with Labour Party leaflets.

What role do you see for the union in the internal battle in the Labour Party?

Well, if we achieve nothing else we have at least got rid of Golding from the NEC! But seriously, I think the POEU moving to the left, together with the NUR, has seriously disrupted the system of alliances between the Parliamentary Labour Party right-wing and the trade union leaderships.

I think also the changes in those two unions show the absolutely critical importance for the future of the Labour Party of the left organising in the unions as well as the constituencies.

Golding's record

By Ricky Houston

JOHN Golding's record in the labour movement as an astute, cunning and ruthless organiser for the right wing is well known throughout the movement.

In the build-up to last year's Labour Party conference he circulated every constituency to which the POEU is affiliated with Labour Solidarity pamphlets caricaturing Militant, alongside a letter which stated that all POEU delegates had been asked to support the expulsion of the Militant Tendency. This mysteriously became POEU policy after a decision by the (then right wing) POEU NEC without consultation with branches.

He has attempted to sue Militant unsuccessfully in past years for reporting his position in Parliament on the shorter working week which was at odds with POEU policy.

He is known within the union for deciding POEU policy at some regional Labour Party conferences without consultation with the elected POEU delegates.



Leadership their apparent Kinnock: will he too try to pull up Labour's grass roots to purge the left?

Fight Manchester witch-hunt

By councillor Pete Keenlyside

The 26 of us who were expelled from the Labour Group on Manchester City Council have all been sent a letter by the Secretary of the rump official group outlining their decision on whether to readmit us or not.

They have decided that "those who had acted against the group's decisions over several years should not be considered for readmission until next January... Those who had been elected to the Council last year should be reviewed in September... In neither case should it be assumed that they would be readmitted to the group then..."

"If any of them were to approach the officers asking for re-entry, they should be interviewed, and if satisfactory assurances, written and verbal were given, they could be considered but not before July... Any readmission would be on the condition that if their assurances were broken they would be immediately excluded from the group."

Plainly the right are trying to divide and split us up.

The rump official council group is itself far from united. The centre are known to be unhappy at the bizarre decisions taken recently to support Tories and SDPs rather than any of us in elections for council positions.

And some of the younger right wingers are looking over their shoulders to the possibility that

file members in Manchester.

The strength of the left wing councillors lies in the overwhelming support we enjoy in the constituencies and the City Party. That is why the present Right-dominated NEC are hell-bent on closing the City Party down.

What they want in its place is some tame body that has no direct trade union representation on it and which would allow the right wing councillors to get on with the job of carrying out Tory policy.

The attacks on the City Party, Wythenshawe CLP and the Left on the council show the lengths to which the right are prepared to go to defend their positions of power and influence.

What is happening in Manchester will be used as a model in other "troublesome" areas.

The right know very well what is at stake. At the last council meeting they were openly and publicly threatening us with expulsion from the Party.

That is why we need the support of as many constituencies and trade union branches as possible. In passing the LAW model resolution and in making sure the left slate for the NEC is elected at this year's conference.

This is one battle the left cannot afford to duck if we are at all serious about fighting for socialist policies and socialist leadership within the Party.

Changing EEC line-up

by Martin Thomas

A STRAW in the wind? Last Wednesday, 13th, Islington South Labour Party voted against withdrawal from the EEC.

Until very recently left-wing opponents of EEC withdrawal have been a tiny minority in the labour movement — very much overshadowed by the mainstream anti-EEC left and even by the pro-EEC Right of Roy Hattersley.

But this was a left-wing shift against the withdrawal policy. Moving the resolution, Paul Mullin put two arguments: on the level of general principle, there is no case for preferring Britain out of the EEC to Britain in the EEC — rather the contrary.

As for the case that EEC membership would prevent left-wing policies in Britain — the policies in question are those of the Alternative Economic Strategy, Keynesian, not socialist.

We should look towards genuine socialist policies, which can only be international. The EEC structure will be the least of the obstacles they face.

The argument for sticking to the withdrawal policy was also put by a left-winger, Di Udall (a Socialist Action supporter): the EEC is constructed to strengthen West

against withdrawal.

The efforts of those of us who have argued for years that withdrawal is not a socialist policy, but a diversion, had some influence in the vote. But we can't claim to have been decisive.

The EEC Parliament election next year seems to have concentrated comrades' minds. And perhaps not only in Islington South.



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Bob Fine

Enforced dependency; no basic rights. Gerry Byrne looks at the problems of

Homeless women

SOME things do grow under a Tory government! Unemployment, we all know about; but there's another boom which has gone largely unremarked: homelessness.

The reasons aren't hard to find: councils, starved of funds, are not building new houses, existing housing stock is being sold off.

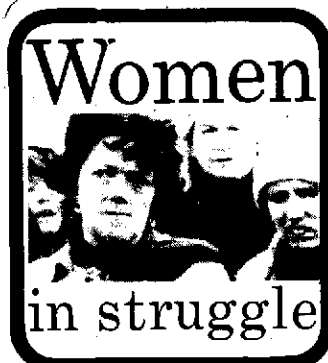
As well as that, legislation designed to offer private tenants greater security has led, in the absence of the easy profits of the sixties and early seventies, to its opposite; landlords are just shutting up shop or exploiting loopholes like "holiday lets" or "business lets" which mean the absence of any low-rent private accommodation and no rights for tenants.

Since the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act, local authorities have an obligation to house families, pregnant women and those who through age or disability can be defined as "vulnerable".

How they choose to exercise this responsibility is another matter.

In some boroughs, families can expect to spend literally years in bed-and-breakfast. Many councils operate a "one-offer only" policy: if you turn down an offer of accommodation, however unsuitable, then you're off the books and classed as "intentionally homeless". Both "intentional homelessness" and "vulnerability" are interpreted in the most mean-minded way to ensure that many people who should be covered by the Act are excluded.

But if things are bad for families, they're appalling for single people who lack even the dubious protection of legislation. Quite simply you don't



have the right to a roof over your head. Especially if you're a woman.

Here the law and general social ideas dovetail. Not only are homeless women without rights, they're defined out of existence. Women's place, as we're often told, is in the home — but it's always somebody else's home!

Women are expected to live in their parents' and then their husband's home and if they stray outside this dependency, they cease to exist in the public mind.

Unemployment

As with women's unemployment, this leads to a serious undercounting in the official figures (such as exist). If society decrees you have no right to a home, then your lack of it is not counted as important. So the official statistics — the few that there are — are seriously skewed towards men.

They miss out completely on the "hidden homelessness" — people living in inadequate accommodation or putting up with unsatisfactory relationships — because they have no choice — most of whom are women.

Even given this distortion in the figures, they show a massive, disproportionate increase in women's homelessness.

And homeless women present a different picture to homeless men. "Single and Homeless", a survey commissioned by the DoE, revealed very striking differences between homeless men and women. The men they interviewed reflected roughly the same age distribution as the general population. Two-thirds of the women were between 18 and 30.

Many more of the women proportionally, had jobs, some kind of post-school education or training, and no other "problem" such as alcoholism, ill-health, psychiatric disorders, often associated with homelessness. So the stereotype of the middle-aged unemployable, socially inadequate, drunk applies even less to women than to men.

It's clear that the only "problem" homeless women have is society's treatment of women — low pay, enforced dependency and lack of basic rights.

Women are defined as belonging to the family, under the control of fathers and husbands and when these pressures become intolerable, it's the women who have to move out.

Another irony of progressive legislation rebounding is the Domestic Violence Act, which gives the victims of violent husbands the right to stay in the marital home. One of its unforeseen consequences is that women who do move out, through fear for themselves and their children, or unwillingness to drag their personal lives into the glare of the courts, are seen to have forfeited their rights to other accommodation.

They're told they do have a home and it's up to them to get the husband ejected. Nor is it any great help to women stuck in a relationship that's intolerable but not violent.

When looking for housing, women are again at a disadvantage — not only because they're financially worse off, though that's important, but also because of the assumptions that underlie both the design and the allocation of housing.

The "natural" unit for housing, as for so many other things, is the two-parent heterosexual family. But a large proportion of homeless women are so because they are running away from "home" and "family", husbands and parents.

There is no provision in public housing for young women, lesbians, women without men. Single mothers face poverty, isolation and the lack of any community services.

Home-owning is out for most single women for reasons of economics and prejudice; private renting is extortionate and insecure.

Women's unemployment until recently was invisible, not an issue, but vigorous campaigning has forced both the women's movement and the labour movement to take the question "on board". In the process, both the immediate jobs crisis and the oppressive structures underlying it have been revealed.

We need to do the same for



Alright for some women: Thatcher's pampered rich can revel in an outdoor meal.

women's homelessness, which is invisible for the same reason women's work is invisible, women are invisible, because of their role in the family, their assumed dependency.

We need to fight for a solution

to the immediate housing crisis which has thrown many thousands literally onto the street, many of them young women who leave home in search of jobs and independence and face poverty and worse.

But we also need a programme which encompasses choice in housing, that offers people alternative ways of living and that makes life outside the "family" a viable proposition.

Get ready to defend abortion rights!

By Mary Corbishley

AT THE end of June over 20,000 anti-abortionists demonstrated in London for restrictions on abortion rights.

The rally in Hyde Park followed on from months of campaigning by two anti-abortion campaigns SPUC, (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) and Life.

SPUC took out full page advertisements in a number of national newspapers. Over Easter there was mass door-to-door leafletting of anti-abortion leaflets.

And there has been an increase in advertising by the anti-abortion pregnancy counselling agencies.

But perhaps more importantly, SPUC now has a special trade union liaison committee and has been trying to undermine the tremendous successes that the National Abortion Campaign has in gaining support in the trade union movement.

SPUC successes to date have been very limited. Motions to disaffiliate from NAC in Brent and Haringey NALGO were defeated; disaffiliation from NAC was passed through Strathclyde NALGO but failed to make it to conference through Scottish District Council.

On our side the main health service union COHSE once again overturned its leadership and voted to affiliate to NAC at its last conference.

With a large Tory majority in Parliament the question is now whether there will be a fresh attempt at legislation to restrict abortion rights even further through a Private Members Bill.

The National Abortion Campaign think this is unlikely as the probable Tory MP has already planned to introduce a

Private Members Bill on another issue. However it is not a foregone conclusion.

Even without such a Bill, access to abortion has been severely curtailed due to the Tory campaign to weaken the NHS.

In 1969 68% of abortions in England and Wales were done on the NHS; in 1980 this had dropped to 38%.

The variation from area to area is dramatic. In 1981 94% of North Tyneside abortions were on the NHS but only 3% in North Warwickshire.

Alongside this goes the whole threat to the Family Planning Service.

Oxfordshire District Health Authority has closed three clinics. Kingston and Esher want to reduce sessions at Family Planning Clinics by a third.

The Family Planning Association have identified a further ten health authorities which are considering cutting family planning services. With fewer NHS abortions and access to contraception only through GPs in some areas there will be an increase in the numbers of unwanted pregnancies and unwanted children.

Our choice of contraception will narrow: not all GPs have the time or the training to provide advice on contraceptive methods. Many women especially young women do not want to go to their GPs for contraception. Young unemployed women will be especially affected by these cuts.

The possibility of positive legislation to amend the 1967 Abortion Act to guarantee a

woman's right to choose is remote.

Nevertheless the campaign around these demands must continue.

And with SPUC and Life on the offensive we must be ready to fight any attempts to reintroduce anti-abortion legislation.

Conference

The gains made by the National Abortion Campaign and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign in the labour movement must be strengthened.

On October 1 and 2 NAC will be holding a national conference to discuss the future of the campaign.

It is vital to build for the largest possible attendance with affiliated labour movement bodies well represented.

Further details: NAC, 374, Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BB.

HARD TIMES

From Pluto Press: an analysis of capitalism in crisis from regular Socialist Organiser contributor Bob Sutcliffe. £2.50 from bookshops, or (with 50p post and packing) from Pluto, The Works, 105a Torrington Avenue, London NW5.

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International news

Bankers screw more from Brazil

46% of the capital of the USA's nine biggest banks is accounted for by loans to Brazil.

On the other side of the negotiating table, Brazil's economy depends heavily on world trade. About 70% of its imports come from the USA, the EEC, or the MIDDLE East — mostly equipment and oil. Nearly half of its exports go to the USA and EEC, the home countries of the banks that are squeezing it.

Those are the powerful pressures that drove the IMF and Brazil to a deal last Friday and will form the background to negotiations now due to follow between Brazil and the commercial banks.

Neither the world's bankers

By Martin Thomas

nor Brazil's bosses can afford to see Brazil go bust — so they agreed on a deal at the expense of Brazil's workers. The wage indexation system, already inadequate, has been revised to give only 80% compensation for rising prices.

With inflation running at 130% a year, that means a cut in living standards of over 10%, even on official figures.

Brazil's working class is increasingly militant, embittered by the slump and made confident by the growing political weakness of the military regime.



Sign of the times: a closing-down sale in Brazil

A general strike against the IMF-ordered austerity measures has been called for this Thursday, July 21.

Urchins

As David Lipsey put it in the Sunday Times on July 17, "the shiny offices of the multinational banks line the streets of Sao Paulo . . . Between them, run

the ragged-trousered urchins in a city where one million children are officially estimated to have been abandoned by their parents."

The anger of the people who have to go hungry in order to feed the greed for profit of those shiny offices should shake not only Brazil's generals but also the world's bankers.

Reagan's ally is Gaddafi's new royal "brother"

By Harry Sloan

If you were ranking the pro-imperialist regimes in Northern Africa, that of King Hassan of Morocco should be at the top of your list. If you were looking for likely allies of Libya, it would have to be near the bottom.

Some will remember that under President Carter in 1977 and 1978 it was Moroccan troops — (battle tested in the regime's long war against the Saharan Polisario guerrillas fighting for their right to self-determination) — who were dispatched in US planes to help Zaire's dictator Mobutu crush armed rebellions.

Since Reagan took office, however, Morocco's relationship with US imperialism has drawn even closer, with the red carpet being rolled out almost incessantly to greet a never-ending succession of top US military brass, diplomatic staff and government ministers.

As a chosen base for the Sixth Fleet and hopefully also the planned Rapid Deployment Force for use in the Middle East, Morocco is a crucial element in US strategic planning.

And, with its own desert war running since 1975, Morocco itself has — with the assistance of a \$1 billion a year handout from the Saudi royal family and extensive loans from the IMF — expanded its army from 70,000 to 180,000 in the last eight years. It is second only to Egypt as a recipient of US aid in Africa.

In reply King Hassan has

proved amenable to every imperialist plan. He was a prime mover in procuring the agreement between Begin and Sadat; his armed forces provide training and arms for the South African-backed counter-revolutionary UNITA guerrillas fighting to destabilise Angola. And he has been keen to see the US strengthen its grip over more wayward elements. In January 1982, for instance, he told the Senegal daily paper 'Le Soleil' that:

"I would close my eyes and turn elsewhere if the US tried to oust Gaddafi."

But if it is bizarre to see these two old adversaries embrace at Rabat airport,

how much more bizarre still to find a supposedly 'left' newspaper — the Newsline — enthusiastically hailing the meeting between King and Colonel as an establishment of "fraternal (!) relations" between "the two brotherly peoples".

Previous Newsline coverage of its benefactor Gaddafi had falsely painted him as some kind of "progressive" or "revolutionary" figure, whose "Green Book" spells out an "anti-imperialist" path and carries mass popular support.

Yet here is this same Colonel embracing one of Reagan's main stooges, a monarch whose rule has been backed up by brutal repression of the Moroccan masses (a General Strike and uprising in 1981 was met, by army violence that left 1,000 dead) and who is central to imperialist military plans to contain or crush the struggles of the Arab masses.

While Gaddafi postures as perhaps the most hardline 'rejectionist' of imperialist plans on the Palestinian question, he embraces the architect of the Camp David agreement. While US jets menace Libyan air space, and American forces rehearse possible invasions of his country, Gaddafi cements "fraternal" links with the King who provides them, with port facilities.

Presumably Gaddafi in a show of "brotherly" goodwill has now closed down the Libyan radio station which secured a wide Moroccan audience for its broadcasts of opposition to Hassan each night.

Gaddafi and his new-found friend apparently "reviewed their adherence to the non-aligned (!) policy of preserving national sovereignty and territorial unity". But the "territorial unity" of Morocco is at the expense of the Saharan people, who Gaddafi has now agreed should be fobbed off with a rigged "referendum" on their future.

Yet only weeks ago Gaddafi had led a 26-strong radical faction which threatened to boycott the OAU conference unless a Polisario delegation were seated at it. In the event only Gaddafi stayed away.

"Mercenaries"

Hassan has made it clear that the result of the referendum will change nothing, since he will "never hand the Sahara on a golden platter to a rabble of mercenaries."

Whatever the result of the poll, he will continue to regard the Saharan area as "an integral part of Morocco."

None of these points of course were made in Newsline. Instead its story "from our own staff" on July 5 simply reprints the communiqué issued by the Libyan news agency JANA.

At least this method drops the pretence that Newsline has any independent line on the situation in the Middle East or North Africa. Far from offering any serious politics to the workers' movement, the Newsline and its WRP authors hang on every move of anti-working class "leaders" in the Middle East.

After weeks of constipated silence on Gaddafi's role in the PLO crisis, Newsline can at last mention him again.

After all, Gaddafi pays the piper. And the Newsline is more than ready to play whatever tune he chooses.



North and South

by Paddy Dollard

IT was the worst "12th" for seven or eight years. The worst since the mid '70s in fact.

There was a rash of sectarian incidents during 12 July, the day given over to Orange celebrations of their victory at the Battle of the Boyne (1690) and on the days following.

In Donemana, Co. Tyrone, on the Derry border, 15 Catholics families were driven out after being attacked by an Orange mob. The incident was sparked, it seems, because the Catholic occupants of one of the houses played Republican songs and showed a miniature Irish tricolour as the Orange march was triumphing its way past.

Other accounts say that what really lay behind this incident was the killing of four UDR men by an IRA bomb: one of the dead men, 20 years old, was known and liked in the town.

Other incidents took place in Belfast and Derry.

At Ballinahinch, Co. Down, an Orange crowd gathered on the morning of the 12th to celebrate the 'glorious' memory of King William of Orange, the late 17th century Dutchman who, at the invitation of the English ruling class drove out Catholic King James and thus, in the words of a traditional Orange toast, "Saved us from Popery, knavery, slavery, brass money and wooden shoes."

Theirs was a traditional celebration. 500 of them rampaged through a small Catholic housing estate. The police stopped them, firing plastic bullets.

Then in the evening the RUC allowed an Orange flute band accompanied by a small 30 strong group of drunken youths to parade around the same estate!

A senior RUC officer told the Irish Times he could see no reason why the march should be stopped.

Drumaness is a small village only ten miles from Ballinahinch. It was entirely Catholic except for one protestant family, a couple and three children aged between ten and fourteen.

Now Drumaness is entirely Catholic. The protestant family decided it was safer to move after their home was stoned by a crowd of Catholics and an old disused Orange Hall in the village burned down.

The incidents of Catholic sectarianism were a direct response to the normal 12 July debauch of Orange Sectarian triumphalism and to Orange attacks in Ballinahinch and Donemana.

Martin McGinnis, Sinn Féin Assemblyman from Derry denounced a sectarian attack by Catholic youths in Derry as "stupid" and "anti-republican".

In fact though there is a strong thread of Catholic sectarianism, frequently visible.

A fortnight ago a Protestant was murdered in South Armagh, apparently for sectarian reasons.

The Protestants, of course, regard all attacks on the UDR — which the IRA, with some justice calls a sectarian army — as sectarian attacks, to which some of them feel entitled to respond in kind. Some of the killings of 'ex' or 'retired' UDR men are in truth hard to distinguish from sectarian killings.

What is notable about the recent incidents is the way the Protestant attack in Ballinahinch triggered the Catholic attack in Drumaness.

However it started, any large

scale sectarian conflict would go like that, a two-way conflict reverberating and interacting throughout the six counties with Catholic victims in some areas, Protestant in others. That's what communal conflict means on the ground — whether it be Cyprus, Lebanon or Northern Ireland.

One of Northern Ireland's three Euro MPs recently told the European Parliament that in Northern Ireland 11,000 families of those in employment needed supplementary benefit "to bring them up to the breadline" and that in a population of 1.5 million, 100,000 families were on supplementary benefit.

He said that the problem of the poor and the unemployed demanded to be given first priority everywhere.

What was the name of this concerned MP? Ian Kyle Paisley!

British readers of papers like Socialist Organiser think of Ian Paisley as an evil bigot, which of course he is. He is also a radical populist whose appeal to sections of Protestant workers gains from his seeming to champion their interests and because he expresses their resentments against the gentry of the old Orange establishment.

Paisley built his 'Free Presbyterian' church and what is now the Democratic Unionist Party not alone on anti-Catholic sectarianism but on sectarianism plus denunciations of the Unionist elite.

In turn they have sneered at him, mocking his pretensions, especially his Doctorate from the American Deep South hick fundamentalist 'Bob Jones University'. In the 1960s they put him in jail more than once.

In the early '70s a mass revolt of Protestant workers against the Orange establishment was part of the Protestant backlash against the Catholics. Confidence in the Gentry to defend their interests was shattered and organisations like the mass UDA of 1972 were born.

Given that this was a reaction against the Catholic upsurge it was inevitably sectarian.

It is nevertheless one of the great tragedies of Irish History that when the Orange masses lost confidence in the gentry and to an extent broke from them, they broke not to working class politics but to the reactionary populism of the sectarian bigot Paisley.

The National Front has repeatedly tried to gain a base in Northern Ireland, but has never managed to gain more than an insecure foothold.

They recently made another try and got an audience of 100 mainly shaven-headed youth to a meeting at the Diamond in Protestant Coleraine. Martin Webster spoke and so did Young National Front Feuhrer Joe Pearse, just out of a British jail for inciting racial hatred.

Pearse was in good form: he said the British army should be taken off the leash "to chase the IRA scum out of the ratholes where they live and shoot and hang them." Then he said he hoped his audience will "be ready to fight the black invasion of Ulster when it comes as well as the IRA!"

Get out of that armchair and into the country!

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

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



Capitalists' summer camp

GOVERNMENT over the poor, by the rich, for the rich: this is how it's managed.

This week, in Bohemian Grove, a camp site 65 miles north of San Francisco, the top few hundred of the US ruling class are gathering to discuss and lay plans.

Last year 15 out of the 25 biggest US manufacturing companies, 14 of the 25 top insurance companies, and 20 of 25 leading banks were represented there by at least one board member. This year as always, there will be a similar turnout from business, plus the President and leading figures of his

administration.

Apart from campfire caucuses, there will be formal talks from such people as World Bank chief Tom Clausen and Henry Kissinger.

Officially they are all on holiday. But Justin Dart, chairman of Dart-Kraft Inc., says: "How can you separate the man who is Defence Secretary from his job? He's there in a Defence Department capacity."

The camp is pricey — \$2,000 fee, \$2,000 yearly subscription to the club, plus \$500 for a weekend — but many of those attending will write it down to business expenses.

International news



Ever thought that official politics was more and more like show-biz? A recent scandal in the US has revealed that Reagan scored over Carter in TV debate before the presidential election — by access to a stolen copy of Carter's script

A squalid truce in Madrid

By Andrew Hornung

WHEN Yuri Andropov invited to the Soviet Union an 11 year-old American schoolgirl who had written to him pleading for peace, it was reportedly a publicity triumph for the USSR.

When a family of Siberian Pentacostalists was given permission by the Soviet authorities to travel to the US after being holed up in the American Embassy in Moscow for years, it was reportedly a publicity coup for the Reagan administration.

Rather less publicity surrounded the signing of the Madrid document earlier this month. There have been 8 years of negotiation: first at Helsinki, then Vienna and finally Madrid.

Now the two "human rights" tug-of-war teams, led by Secretary of State Schultz and Foreign Minister Gromyko, each claiming to represent the zenith of human civilisation against their barbarian rivals, have reached a point of diplomatic exhaustion.

This bust-a-gut tussle has been resolved by detaching the issue of "human rights" from the disarmament question and postponing any real decision on both. An agreement to be proud of!

The "Morning Star" hailed this conclusion as an "East-West compromise in human rights". Perhaps the headline writer learnt this kind of coy yet biting satire serving

as a secret saboteur of Soviet prestige in Moscow's State Publishing House.

Over 75 years ago a revolution genuinely proclaiming the beginning of the final act of human liberation took place in Russia.

Stark contrast today, the counter-revolutionary warder-bureaucrats who preside over the Soviet cell-block begrudgingly — under pressure from the world's mightiest imperialist power! — are forced to concede a further conference (in Berne in 1986) which "will seek a new charter for contacts between Socialist (!) and non-Socialist countries, like travel, mixed marriages and re-unification of separated families".

The Helsinki agreement had, on paper, committed the Stalinist bureaucracy to conceding certain limited "human rights".

The initiative groups and Charter groups set up in the Stalinist states to monitor the fulfilment of these commitments immediately became targets for state repression.

Activists were jailed, exiled or interned in psychiatric

units. This was the crowning triumph of Brezhnev-Carter detente.

Once again US imperialism swings away from a strategy of creating or accelerating rifts within the Soviet block towards a strategy of plain confrontation.

In the new phase the opposing champions of human liberation — the ones that are trying to crush freedom in Central America and the ones who are doing the same thing in Poland and Afghanistan — can drop the rope they have been tugging on for 8 years and shake hands on a compromise agreement: "human rights" will not even be on the agenda for a while.

A sigh of relief from the two teams after years of taking the strain...

PASOK backs down on bases

IN ONE of his books, Andreas Papandreu, now Prime Minister of Greece, tells how when he was a minister in his father's 1965-8 government he called the Head of the Greek Secret Service to his office to instruct him to stop bugging his office.

"You don't give the orders here", the head of the KYP told him bluntly, "the Americans do. I shall continue to bug your office."

When Andreas Papandreu campaigned as leader of the left-reformist PASOK party in 1981 he promised that if elected Prime Minister the US would be told to get out of Greece where they have military bases. Given his exposure of US influence he was widely believed.

Now Papandreu has re-negotiated US tenure of the bases until 1989. The new agreement would expire at the end of 1988 but the US would have another 17 months after that.

By lighting so long a fuse, Papandreu has seen to it that if PASOK doesn't win the next election a new incoming government can stamp out the spark and re-negotiate another long lease... which future reformist governments will, following Papandreu's example, no doubt honour to the letter.

By their friends shall ye know them



Jaruzelski

'WORSE than the Martial Law' was Lech Walesa's view of the new legislation being introduced by the Polish regime to replace the martial law regulations.

But the "relaxation" proposed by Jaruzelski is of course designed to appeal not to the ten million Polish workers who built Solidarnosc as the biggest and most democratic union in the world, but to the Western bankers and the Catholic Church hierarchy.

Reagan has already made clear that Jaruzelski's gestures towards "normality" in the freeing of many political prisoners are sufficient to procure a relaxation of trade sanctions and talks on rescheduling Poland's massive \$26 billion international debts.

For all their Cold War rhetoric the imperialists have no interest in procuring freedom of organisation for the Polish workers'

movement.

And the Pope will no doubt approve new legislation to give a guarantee to small farmers that private ownership of land has a permanent place in Polish society. This sop to the Catholic Church which demanded it is unique among Stalinist constitutions.

But it also indicates the direction in which the regime is looking in order to bolster its support. For the working class there is nothing but continuing repression — institutionalised in the revamped state "unions". For the conservative layers of the peasantry — the actual owners of private property in the "socialist" state — there are concessions.

So much for those apologists of the bureaucracy who attack Solidarnosc as "restorationist" and "counter-revolutionary"!

Turkish reign of terror

By Pat Lally
(Secretariat, Turkey Solidarity Campaign)

THATCHER's attempt to re-introduce hanging into Britain may have been thwarted, but she is no doubt consoled by the sentences of execution being handed down by her allies in Turkey's military junta.

With the military takeover in 1980 the Turkish state has been freed from Parliamentary niceties and has pursued a ruthless campaign of arrests, torture, mass imprisonment and trials against its opponents.

Execution is demanded as a matter of course. At the end of the recent trial in Diyarbakir of alleged members of the Kurdish Workers Party, 35 were sentenced to death and 340 others imprisoned for between five and 36 years.

Other grim statistics are the 30,054 convicted for 'political crimes' with sentences ranging from five years in jail to capital punishment, since the coup and 14,180 still on trial.

And these are only the numbers admitted to by the generals.

Most of these trials receive little or no publicity, especially those involving left-wing organisations such as Dev-Yol and Dev-Sol.

One exception to this is the show trial of 770 people in Amasya involving the former mayor and a large section of the population of the Black Sea town of Fatsa. They are accused of overthrowing the state and the death penalty is being demanded for 268.

A successful, international campaign has been developed around this trial led in Britain by the Turkey Solidarity Campaign.

The TSC is making plans now for a series of events around the third anniversary of the coup on September 12 and the fight for solidarity with Fatsa by the

labour movement.

A public meeting is being held in Hackney Town Hall on Saturday 10 September with speakers invited from Hackney and Islington councils, who have been in the forefront of support for the Fatsa campaign.

A feature of this event will be the British premiere of a video on the Fatsa trial and the launching of a pamphlet on the struggle of the Fatsa townspeople, which has been produced by the Islington and Hackney borough councils.

It is also hoped to have in attendance a representative from one of the delegations which have visited the trial this year.

Facts & Figures

SINCE 1974, 8177 people have been detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act — that's an average of almost three people every day.

Only 1506 of them were charged with any offences. In Britain, 4% of detainees were held for the maximum seven days; in Northern Ireland, 77%.

The Tories are now bringing in a new Bill to extend the law to all 'international terrorists'.

Strike figures remain low. 498 stoppages began in the first five months of 1983, and the total number of strike-days was 2,014,000. These figures are similar to those for low strike years like 1981 and 1976.

Up to and including 1978-9, 65% or more of non-oil direct investment in Britain was in manufacturing. In 1980-81, the proportion in manufacturing plummeted to 38%.

Overall, total fixed investment in manufacturing in Britain declined 31% between mid-1979 and early 1983.

Remember all the Tories' talk about control of the money supply being the be-all and end-all? Wonder why it's all gone quiet?

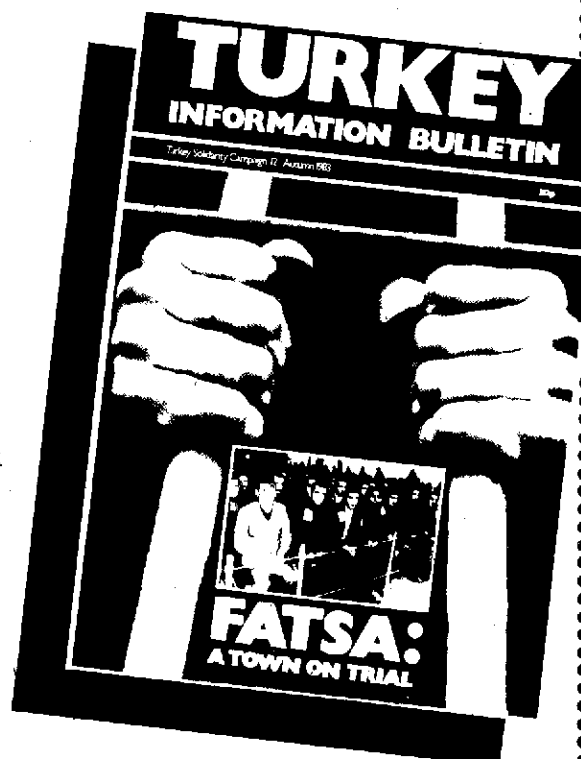
The rate of expansion of the stock of money is now well over the government's targets — whichever of the many possible ways you measure that stock. It has been over the targets for most of the time since 1979.

One of the corner-stones of monetarist theory is that the velocity of circulation of money is pretty stable. In fact this velocity has been falling, and at times falling sharply, since 1980. This has permitted rapid monetary expansion to go together with moderate inflation.



US hands off El Salvador!

El Salvador Solidarity Campaign: c/o 29 Islington Park Street, London N1.



BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX



Zapata (centre, with wide-brimmed hat) and Villa (right, wearing military uniform) ride into Mexico City



The revolutionary struggles

RECENT media attention has focussed on Mexico because of its immense foreign debt. Socialists should also be concerned to study the country's history for the relevance this has to present struggles in Central America. Adolfo Gilly's 'The Mexican Revolution', just published in English is a fascinating account of the revolutionary struggles which shaped modern Mexico.

The Mexican revolution of 1910 was the first great revolution of the 20th century.

Gilly's book first charts the capitalist development which occurred in Mexico under the 'Ancien Regime' of Porfirio Diaz. At the turn of the century countries as far apart as Mexico, Russia and India were undergoing considerable economic expansion because of the influx of foreign imperialist capital. Here the railways played a key role in developing internal markets and creating national economies.

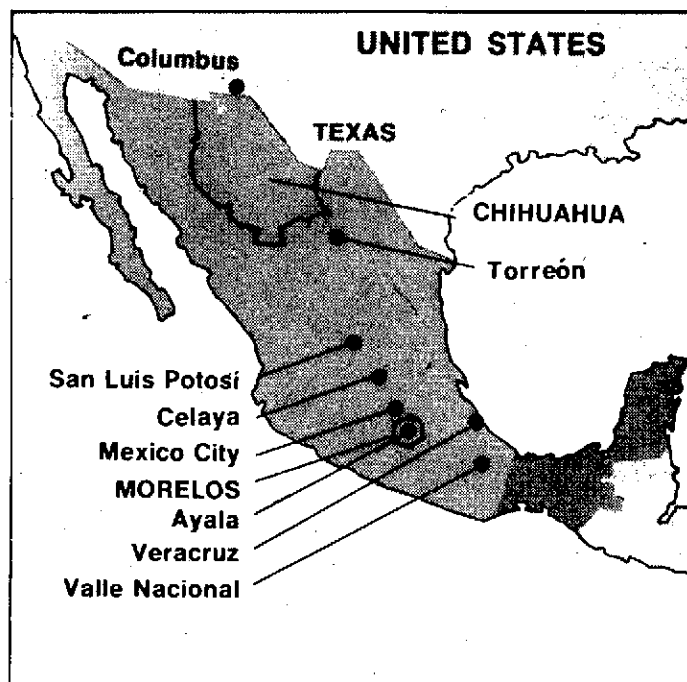
Peasantry

This economic expansion was of course achieved on the backs of the peasantry.

Social change inevitably brings in its wake the need for political change. Mexico had undergone a long period of political instability since independence in 1821, suffering republican, imperial (French, 1861-5) and military rule, and foreign, colonial intervention.

Then under the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz there had been political stability for three decades, but government exclu-

As mass strikes and demonstrations erupt anew in a Mexico that is deep in debt to the imperialist bankers, BAS HARDY reviews ADOLFO GILLY's book 'The Mexican Revolution'.



ded the growing, economically important sections of the nation — cattle ranchers and industrial bourgeoisie as well as the urban middle classes.

This section sought to establish a democratic system for themselves. They wanted a change in the political structure which would recognise the economic changes and open the door to their own participation in ruling the country.

The movement for democratic reform was led by Francisco Madero, a northern landowner. His attempts to achieve change loyally came to nothing because of Diaz's deftness at ballot rigging. Madero had to resort to arms, raising the banner of political liberalism against the old order.

For Madero's movement to be successful however, it had to rely on a wider social base than the modern bourgeois classes: on the peasantry of Mexico, the overwhelming mass of the population. For the peasants urban parliamentary democracy was a distant urban abstraction.

Their desire was for a return to village democracy and all the rights and property which had been taken from the peasant communities over the centuries.

The Mexican peasantry therefore transformed a political revo-

lution into a social one. It was the strength of the peasant masses which gave to the revolutionary period its length and depth and it was their social and political impotence which gave it its conclusion.

The key centre of the Mexican revolution was the state of Morelos. Here the peasantry under the leadership of Zapata turned the struggle against the Diaz regime into a movement of land occupation. Out of the struggle to regain their lost land the Morelos masses established an armed force — the Southern Liberation Army — to defend their social gains.

Roll back

Immediately Madero gained Presidential power he tried to roll back the social revolution in Morelos and its neighbouring states. Land redistribution could only be decided by the courts. Peasants had to prove their rights to the land before they could repossess it.

Here, indeed, was several years of lucrative work for the country's lawyers. The peasants would not have this. For them, it was the landowners who had to prove their rights. Zapata's peasant army refused to lay down their weapons.

At this point the old Mexican state army was more or less intact and falsely claimed to be loyal to the Madero government. Madero set this army against the peasant revolution but the action only served to create a much stronger peasant movement than hitherto.

The Mexican bourgeoisie wanted a continuity of political regime and a smooth transfer of governmental power. They did not want a massive social upheaval challenging property rights.

Coup

The most reactionary elements in the state, led by General Huerta launched a coup against Madero and murdered him.

The situation was now clear for a short all-out war between the army of the old state led by Huerta and supported by the church and landed oligarchy against the revolutionary opposition.

This struggle was to witness the final crushing of the old Mexican state.

Ranged against Huerta's troops were three distinct military/political forces.

First, as we have already mentioned, was Zapata's South-

ern Liberation Army, fighting to defend its local peasant revolution.

The second force, headed by the landowning politician Venustiano Carranza, a supporter of Madero who now assumed the leadership of the constitutionalist movement. Carranza held the North Western state of Sonora, a relatively rich region of Mexico which was not subject to mass popular upheaval. Carranza was cast in Madero's mould and wanted to keep the revolutionary change strictly within the confines of bourgeois legality.

The third and most decisive military grouping to fight Huerta was the Northern Division, a peasant army led by Francisco 'Pancho' Villa. Although this army did not develop a political programme, its military role was of crucial importance. The cattle-raising peasantry of Chihuahua provided Villa with a cavalry which cut ribbons through the Federalist troops in many engagements, especially the battle of Zacatecas in June 1914.

Not independent

The political circumstances surrounding this battle are quite instructive.

Unlike Zapata, Villa's forces were not politically independent of the Carranza leadership. Yet the bourgeois Carranzist leaders feared a junction between Villa and Zapata as the military campaign progressed. They were irked by the fact that Villa's peasant forces were winning substantial victories whilst the more 'regular' troops on the revolutionary side were making slow and unspectacular progress.

Between April and June 1914 Carranza did everything in his power to stop Villa capturing Zacatecas and advancing on Mexico City. The prospect of two peasant armies — Zapata's and Villa's — entering Mexico City filled the bourgeoisie with horror.

Villa eventually disobeyed Carranza and attacked the enemy, destroying a 12,000-strong force and breaking the back of the old state regime. From now on the two peasant armies were to develop in opposition to Carranza and the new bourgeoisie.

The Mexican revolution was, above all else, a peasant war.

The high point of this war was the entry of the Northern and Southern peasant armies into Mexico City in December 1914. From this historical

moment things began to fall apart from the point of view of the masses. Why the revolutionary peasantry were unable to establish a national state to safeguard their social and economic gains is a key question, especially in the light of the revived debate among the left about the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants.

Conversation

Adolfo Gilly sheds considerable light on the inability of the peasant forces on their own to achieve hegemony over Mexican society. This is best shown by the amazing conversation between Villa and Zapata as they wander through the vacant rooms of the Presidential Palace in Mexico City.

"Villa: I don't want public posts, because I don't know how to deal with them. We'll see what these people are doing. We'll just appoint the ones who aren't going to make trouble."

Zapata: I'll advise all our friends to be very careful — otherwise, they'll just get the chop... (laughter).

Villa: It's very clear to me that we ignorant men make the war and the cultured people have to make use of it. Just so long as they don't give us any trouble."

Zapata: The men who've worked the most have the least chance to enjoy those banquets. I tell you: when I go to a banquet I'm on the point of giving in."

Villa: This place is too big for us; it's better out there. As soon as this business is sorted out, I'll be off north to the country. I've got a lot to do up there. And the people will fight hard."

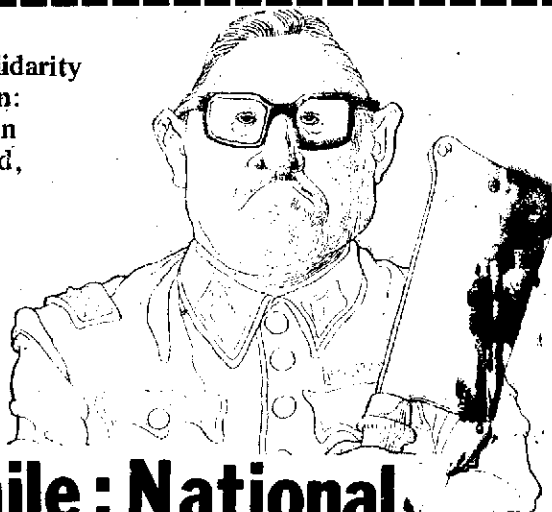
Seeds of defeat

Gilly aptly comments that this dialogue "contains the seeds of both political and military defeat."

"Unable to keep power in their hands, the two leaders are prepared to hand it over. They therefore give up the idea of a centralised army, which would require a centralised state power, and decide to forsake the centre which is already in their hands: each will return to fight in his own region, whose horizon they have not been able to transcend in a vision of the nation."

Militarily the forces of Villa and Zapata were in a position to finish off their erstwhile Carranzist allies in December 1914. Carranza was boxed in around the port of Veracruz and the rest of his supporters were isolated in peripheral areas of the

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**Chile: National
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Revolutionary fighters hitch a lift



How the painter Sequeiros looked back on the revolutionaries

that shaped modern Mexico



Anti-Zapata cartoon

country. The peasant armies controlled the centre and many important northern and southern states.

But, as we have seen, they lacked a strategy for centralising their forces and building a national state power. The Zapatista revolution was parochial, its state power did not transcend Morelos. Villa wished to base himself on his tried and trusted low peasants of Chihuahua state. The war they were now to pursue was defensive and haphazard. The entry into Mexico City was the military/political equivalent of some kind of national scout's day gala.

The 'cultured people' to whom the peasant leaders handed over government were representatives of the urban petty-bourgeoisie who similarly lacked a national perspective of their own. Caught between the peasant forces and the Carranza bourgeoisie, this 'shadow government' (reminiscent of the Spanish popular front government of 1936-39) eventually defected to Carranza and the side which had a national political perspective and a future.

Nevertheless, the bourgeois camp was undergoing changes under the pressure of the revolution. Carranza's old position as being challenged by the military wing of the bourgeoisie.

This group realised that they needed a wider social base and more radical policies to undermine the peasant forces. The

military faction, which was eventually to win over all the contesting groups, was headed by General Alvaro Obregón.

The radical military had two strings to their political bow. Firstly, they sought working class support by granting concessions to the trade union movement. The small Mexican industrial working class had, unlike its Russian counterpart, failed to establish an independent political existence. It was dominated by anarchist and reformist ideas and often the formal anarchist ideas of some labour leaders were a mask for their reformism.

Some anarchists had welcomed the peasant rebellion because it presented a violent and chaotic form. Railway workers were key elements in the movement of the Villist army — troop movements by rail being of key importance for the various military campaigns. However, the peasant leaders could not be expected to offer, by their very nature, a working class political programme. The nearest they came to this was the 'nationalisation' of the sugar mills in Morelos but this was very much an empirical and localised action, as distinct from expressing a general social programme.

Obregón for his part did offer an alternative. After re-occupying Mexico City he established a welfare network to assist urban workers and their families. At the same time he instituted price maximums on merchants

and taxes on businessmen and the church.

He even went as far as to conscript priests into the army. Many priests complained on the grounds of ill-health, but the military decided that 60 priests suffering from VD were fit enough to join the army!

The next step Obregón took was to intervene in a strike between Mexican Electricians and the Mexican Telephone and Telegraph Company over union recognition. The military saw to it that union recognition was won.

Now the stage was set for a 'social contract' between the military and the reformist workers' leaders. An agreement was signed whereby the state undertook to improve workers' conditions and recognise trade union organisation. In exchange the labour leaders pledged their support for the war effort of Obregón and Carranza against the peasantry.

The unions became recruiting agencies for the new bourgeoisie agreeing to form 'red battalions' for the army out of trade union based workers' contingents.

These forces would fight peasant 'reaction'.

The second political move of the new central government was the formation of the 1917 constitution.

Land

This contained two important provisions — Article 27 which recognised in a limited form the land redistribution which had already taken place and established provision for further land redistribution; and Article 123 which established a number of conditions of benefit to the labour movement (eight-hour day, ban on child employment, profit sharing, unfair dismissal procedures, freedom of association, and right to strike etc).

Article 130 secularised society by stipulating marriage as a 'civil contract' and taking over the Church's property.

Carranza himself opposed these reforms but accepted them as a necessary evil in 1917. They certainly were an effective political support for the military victories of Obregón against Villa.

In a series of battles in 1915 and 1916, Obregón had reduced Villa's forces to a guerrilla band which was more of a nuisance than a real threat to the new state.

The social commitment of the new regime to land conquests combined with war weariness

and lack of political perspective underlined the military defeats of the brave and honest peasant general.

Zapatism as a focus of opposition to the new bourgeois order was a tougher nut to crack. Here Obregón, whether by accident or design had retired from military activity and Carranza had given over the task of invading Morelos to a less able and popular general.

The attack on Morelos by the forces of Carranza took the form of simple genocidal war of extermination and population 'relocation' reminiscent of Vietnam and other colonial conflicts.

Teeth

The new bourgeoisie was showing its teeth and proving that it had the same attitude towards the independent insurgent masses as the old 'feudal' government.

In the years between 1917 and 1920 the Morelos resistance was destroyed.

Naturally the government then turned against the organised working class in an attempt to overturn the gains of the previous period.

Zapata was murdered in 1919 and Villa was pensioned off (later to be murdered in 1923). It seemed as though the clock had been turned back. With all his peasant foes vanquished Carranza was triumphant, but his moment of victory was his moment of downfall.

His threats to turn the military state into a civilian one, was too much for the new officer caste to bear. A military revolt led by Obregón quickly defeated Carranza who was murdered by his own troops.

It is at this point that we must consider the peculiar mutation that was and to some extent still is the Mexican regime.

Many bourgeois countries today eulogise the revolutionary past, the 'national struggle' and create a mythology about it. They seek to present history not as it truly was but as a storybook, telling tales best suited to their own class interest. The 26 county Irish state provides a very notable example. So too does India, where the bourgeoisie put up £1 million to finance a piece of hokum, the film 'Gandhi'.

In Mexico we have a state ruled for many decades by the Party of the Institutionalised Revolution. There is a Ciudad Madero and a Ciudad Obregón, but no major city or town named after Zapata or Villa. What kind

of state was it, that this ten year revolution created? How can Mexico be characterised today?

Gilly does provide some of the answers, but his book makes us want to go further in a study of Mexico before and after the Second World War.

Gilly, Michael Lowy and others have described the Mexican revolution as an interrupted or unfinished revolution. The 1920 regime, a bonapartist state which relied on popular support, continued to grant concessions to the masses. It was a kind of open ended situation with the regime still capable of further radicalisation under the Cardenas presidency (1934-40).

In actual fact considerable land reforms and labour rights were gained in this later period. The regime was of course anxious to keep the popular organisations under its control denying them political independence.

Obregón had trampled over Carranza precisely because he recognised the need for this popular base.

Similarities can be made with Peronism except of course that Argentina had not experienced a social revolution which destroyed the old reactionary forces — old army, church and landowners. In Mexico mass struggles had given the regime and the bourgeois class a continuity of rule which was not to be found in Brazil or Argentina.

But in what sense is the Mexican revolution interrupted or unfinished? Is there still a national struggle or a struggle against imperialism? Are the political questions being raised in El Salvador or Guatemala today of equal relevance to Mexico?

Working class

In the light of the simplified, outline history above we can see, I hope, that it is a simplification to talk of 'progressive' and 'reactionary' camps. Clearly Zapatism and Villalism represented the only truly revolutionary current. The 'revolutionary' bourgeoisie was and is thoroughly reactionary against Mexico's working masses. No trade union or land reform concessions are an adequate substitute for working class power which is on the agenda in all Latin American states.

The study of Latin America has been blighted by 'third worldism'. It assumes common conditions for all countries in the region and confuses anti-colonialism with anti-imperial-

ism. It fails to recognise the independent existence of nation states like Mexico and Argentina prior to the epoch of imperialism and talks as if all these states have a common identity in a struggle against US finance capital. It accepts the myth of their own origin promulgated by the ruling bourgeoisies of these states.

Reality is nevertheless more complicated. In the case of Mexico the decisive clash with imperialism took place four decades ago. The Mexican bourgeoisie won, the oil industry was nationalised and has been exploited by the Mexican ruling class in alliance with US big business.

The Mexican bourgeoisie exports capital. It invests in real estate in the USA!

We can also see in the foreign policy of Mexico (and Brazil) a quite independent stance vis-a-vis the US throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

But what about the foreign debts? Surely these indicate some kind of 'neo-colonial' subjugation? Foreign indebtedness is not confined to Latin America. (Poland).

To deny that a country occupies a neo-colonial status is not to say it is equal to the world's giants. The point is to recognise the relativity of that inequality and what it means for the internal politics of the country concerned.

No alliance

Mexico, Brazil and Argentina occupy a similar position in international economic relations as the peripheral capitalist states of Europe (Portugal, Greece maybe even Italy). These relations must be recognised and not be obscured by talk of 'national independence'.

If the Mexican revolution was interrupted or unfinished that can only mean that its conclusion can be brought about by a direct socialist change. This will mean giving up any talk of an alliance with the 'national' bourgeoisie which runs the state and may further repress the masses on instructions from the IMF.

It means a recognition on the part of the Mexican masses that they can only rely on their own strength. It means they should no longer continue to trust 'cultured people'.

The Mexican revolution was interrupted by the Mexican capitalist class. It can only be continued by an independent workers' movement which places socialism on the agenda.

SPOTLIGHT

Friends and husbands

by Andrew Hornung

"FRIENDS and Husbands" is Margarethe von Trotta's third feature film, being preceded by "The German Sisters" and "Sisters" (or "The Balance of Happiness").

The titles alone give a clue to von Trotta's central concern: the investigation of personal relationships — particularly those between women — from a feminist standpoint. But here feminism lies not only in the evident sympathy with which the women are treated and conversely the distance and lack of sympathy with which the men are treated, but in the reduction of the narrative elements to the advantage of psychological study.

In "Friends and Husbands" Olga (Hanna Schygulla) meets Ruth (Angela Winkler), a morbidly withdrawn woman teetering on the edge of suicide. Olga, apparently strongly independent, is estranged from her husband and, together with her son, lives with her lover.

As their friendship becomes stronger, Ruth's self-confidence re-establishes itself. But if the contract with a female friend gives her strength, the traditional sources of support — parental family (mother) and marriage partner (husband) — conspire to keep her dependent. They want to save her from suicide because, in any case, they couldn't bear the guilt. But they need her dependence too.

The three men of the film — Olga's lover, her ex-husband and Ruth's husband — are consumed by egotism. Every emotion seems to derive from or become a tributary to self-pity. Their egotism further expresses itself in claims on the time of "their" women and a jealous protection of their own time and space.

"Friends and Husbands" is one of the best films I have seen in ages. It is easily accessible in

a way that some German feminist films, like "The All-round reduced Personality" ("Redupers"), have not been because of its relatively conventional cinematic style.

German feminist cinema found its first organisational expression when, in November 1973, Helke Sander and Claudia Alemann organised the First International Women's Film Workshop in West Berlin. The following year saw the establishment of the journal "frau und film" (woman and film) and not long after West Berlin women involved in film began a series of monthly gatherings at the "Arsenal" theatre.

While these women were a part of the "new film" movement in Germany, they saw that movement as dominated by males, male themes and imagery. The self-proclaimed Marxist film-makers not only ignored the home-and-family situation, but even ignored women in the workplace. The women turned their attention to the everyday life of women and to the tensions of the family.

The films of Fassbinder, Herzog and Syberberg — lionised as the leading figures of an important German film — absorbed some of the political influences of the radical German student movement and the resurgence in Germany of Marxist theory, but they largely ignored women. Peter Handke's "A Left-handed Woman" and some films made by male-female teams, including "The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum" directed jointly by von Trotta and Volker Schlöndorff, provided some of the few exceptions.

Increasingly German feminist directors are being accepted as among the best film makers in Germany. While the work of some of the famous male directors, the late Fassbinder and Wenders for example, becomes more and more self-consciously formal, the work of directors like von Trotta is accessible and warmly direct.



Hanna Schygulla as Olga

"We have to put socialism back on the agenda"

MT: What's your view of the state of the Left in the Labour Party? At rank and file activist level, the Left seems to be as strong as ever, but in terms of organisation we're much weaker than we were at the time of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee.

TB: The campaigns that took place during the last Labour government, came to the surface and led to victory on policy and on the democratic changes after 1979. I don't believe they can be reversed.

So in that sense the argument was carried by what is loosely called the Left.

There was the deputy leadership election, and then there were various attempts to bring people together which weren't entirely successful for a variety of reasons.

And then, of course, there was the common feeling, which I certainly shared, that we should put the election victory very high. From Bishops Cleeve, 18 months ago, to the election, the Left — however you define it — threw itself very strongly into the campaign for victory.

We had the counter-attack on the Executive, over the expulsions and so on, but the Left did not allow itself to be diverted from campaigning.

The manifesto broadly reflected the policies that were in Labour's Programme, so from that point of view it was successful.

Now we come to a post-election period when people are reassessing where they stand.

What are the issues? First: to defend the basic items in the programme. On that score there's not likely to be much of a change.

Then, to consolidate the democratic changes. I think those cannot be reversed.

And then, having done that — and through the leadership election, of course, all these arguments come to the surface in some shape or form — to build for the future.

If you say, 'Are there little committees meeting that describe themselves as the Left?', I dare say the answer is no — not in the way the Rank and File Mobilising Committee met.

But if you say, 'Is there a shared commitment and a shared understanding, going over a very wide range of people on the Left?', the answer is yes.

So if you look at it from that point of view, I would have thought that the Left was in good shape.

MT: What about the implications in the election campaign itself? The manifesto contained most of the conference policies, but the leading spokespeople presented by the Labour Party were almost all from the centre or the Right of the Party, rather than from the wing that had been most associated with those policies.

TB: Yes, that's right. It reflects two things.

First of all, the extent to which the Right was able to organise last year to change the composition of the Executive. But even more, the fact that we have not resolved the relationship between the Parliamentary Labour Party and the rest of the Labour Party.

The composite coming back at this conference, which calls for the constitution of the Party to absorb and shape the standing orders of the PLP, is of critical importance. Until that question is resolved, we'll still be in the same

What are the main issues confronting the left in the labour movement in the aftermath of the Election? TONY BENN discusses his view of the situation with Martin Thomas and John Bloxam of Socialist Organiser in this extended interview. A further discussion — on the EEC — will appear in a later issue.

basic difficulty.

But I think there is a much stronger foundation to build on than anyone would have dreamed possible four years ago, or maybe even two years ago.

MT: As regards your own role in the election — of course you had to focus your efforts on Bristol. But I think a lot of activists were disappointed that, for example, on unilateralism, everyone could hear what Jim Callaghan was saying, or Dennis Healey, or Michael Foot, or Neil Kinnock — but not what Tony Benn was saying...

TB: Oh yes they could. I was on Question Time the following night, and heard by six million people.

I said however important Mr Callaghan may be, the Labour policy is crystal clear — that we will have no Trident, no Polaris, and we will close American nuclear bases.

If you ask, was I used by the Party machine, the answer is that I wasn't. But in terms of clarity of exposition of the policy — I could not have been clearer, and it was said to the largest possible audience at very great length.

I think what you're maybe scratching at is the idea that I should have attacked Jim Callaghan during the election. But I don't believe in that. The situation would not have been assisted by diverting ourselves from the main question, which was to get across the policy and reveal what the government was doing.

'I don't believe I should have attacked Callaghan'

You have to be clear that on eve of poll, everybody is together, because you have a common interest in an agreed programme and in the replacement of the government.

JB: Do you think it would be unfair to say that the Left kept its head down during the election? So that the argument was almost going by default?

TB: I think what you're saying is that the right wing of the Party dominated the Shadow Cabinet and the National Executive — which was a product both of the nature of the old Parliamentary Party and of the conference last year, when Sid Weighell and others secured the Executive that they wanted.

In the circumstances of an election campaign, the official leadership, both Executive and Shadow Cabinet, does decide who plays the prime role.

But I don't think it would have been right to have attacked colleagues during the election. I think all you could do is put



Callaghan

across with such clarity as you could what we were saying — and that it was a minimum programme, which is what I put in my election address.

Of course, the media do determine, in a sense, who plays a prominent part. If they don't report what someone says, then that person is alleged not to have played a prominent part.

MT: On one aspect of policy — on economic policy, the policy for jobs — a very wide range of opinion, from Roy Hattersley, through Neil Kinnock, to Ken Livingstone and to ourselves, has said that the policy did not convince voters.

So some people have been arguing that the policy needs to be changed — in different ways — some, that the same policy needs to be argued differently. What's your view?

TB: There were a lot of problems. One is that it was not thought that our leadership supported the policy.

And indeed the Alternative Economic Strategy boiled down in the end to a presentation of 'borrow, reflate, and the system will spring back to life' — which was not credible.

The fuller Alternative Economic Strategy — which did not include wage restraint — had been explicitly rejected when it was put to the Cabinet in 1976.

A lot of people said: when you were in power, you had a chance to do it. You didn't — on the grounds that it would undermine the fight against inflation and lead to a siege economy. That's just what Mrs Thatcher says would happen if you did it now. Therefore, not only do we doubt that you are able to do it,

we're not even sure that you want to do it.

There was a huge credibility problem.

Looking at it more broadly, from 1959, when the last Tory landslide occurred, right up to 1979 — and maybe you could argue, in terms of the Parliamentary leadership, right up to the election in June — there had been major economic concessions to monetarism, political concessions in terms of revisionism generally and putting the blame on the trade unions, defence and foreign policy concessions including the fact that we supported the Government during the Falklands War, and a total failure to resolve the relationship between the PLP and the Party.

These four weaknesses exposed us during the election.

I think the support for the Falklands War in 1982 by the Opposition and the majority of the National Executive Committee struck a fatal blow at our credibility as peacemakers and people who didn't believe in using force to settle international disputes.

But I'm not anxious to find individual scapegoats, because my opinion is that we have got to build on the policy, and develop it, not run away from it. If you run away from it, no-one will ever believe you in a future election.

MT: How, then, do you think the economic policy should be developed?

TB: We've got to look forward and see what is going to happen over the next four years.

If we leave aside the overhanging world banking crisis, and look simply at the rise of unemployment, the sense of hopelessness, the reduction of the dole, the cuts in public services, and privatisation, we can see what the battles are going to be. And I think the first task of the Labour Party and the labour movement is to protect our own people as best they can — extra-parliamentary activity, raising it in the House, trade union activity, political education, campaigning, and so on.

If we look ahead at the next possible moment when a Labour government might be formed, we have to assess what sort of policies we might need to deal with a much worse situation than we had in June 1983. That suggests that we shall have to be much more radical than last time.

We've also got to present the European argument in an international socialist context, and not get tangled up with the Enoch Powell view that it's all a matter of Britain's national interest vis-a-vis the Common Market.

The idea that because we were beaten on June 9 the British people will always want the arms race, always want unemployment, always want us to be tied into the Treaty of Rome, always want to let market forces wreak their wrath upon us, is totally unrealistic.

I think one of the things we may have won is the credit for having stuck to a position which had a certain socialist critique and logic and courage about it, even though it was not accepted at the time.

JB: You said that the first task of the labour movement now is to protect its own people. What policies do you think need to be developed to enable that to be done?

TB: It has to be done in the first instance by the people who are under attack. You can't have the Labour Party National Executive

"There is much too cosy a relationship between TUC and Tories"

calling a national strike of mine-workers. It's got to go through the NUM: if they do decide to take strong measures, we've got to support them.

I think there is a slightly dangerous idea that if only there was what is called a bold socialist leadership, and there was a call given from Walworth Road on the fourth Wednesday of every month, then the streets would be full of people demonstrating.

It's got to come from underneath, and then you've got to defend it. The ASLEF drivers last year were brutally betrayed. The health workers had real difficulties in the end.

MT: What about the idea of the labour movement 'disengaging' from collaboration with the Tories?

TB: If anything it is more urgent than it was.

There is something rather pathetic about a trade union movement that is now under absolute direct attack pleading to be allowed to put its case. That's a sign of weakness.

A lot of trade union leaders used to be actually part of the mechanism of imposing Government policy. I know many of them have been dismissed from the boards of nationalised industries, and some have resigned, but there was a time when some trade union leaders were still on the boards of companies that were about to privatise.

There is much too cosy a relationship between the TUC and the Treasury, and the TUC and the Foreign Office. If the effort that goes in to trying to influence Government policy in a marginal way through the NEDC or in other ways were re-deployed to plan a strategy for Labour, it would be much better.

And nothing would frighten the Government more than disengagement. Just as with the House of Lords, every Labour peer that is appointed strengthens the House of Lords and gives it legitimacy, so every trade union representative tied up in Government business in any way gives legitimacy to Government policy.

JB: On another policy issue, Ireland, you had an article in the Guardian yesterday proposing withdrawal of troops. How do you see the relation between that — which I think you're absolutely right on — and a united Ireland?

You seemed to be arguing that at least for the foreseeable future Ireland would remain divided, and while British troops might come out, United Nations forces going in would maintain the existing relationships in the North.

TB: I don't think you could bring about reunification by force, let alone by British force.

I argued that withdrawal is necessary; I tried to show how it could be done, because a lot of people think it couldn't be done; I cited the 1948 Palestine Act, which was a simple Act declaring that His Majesty's jurisdiction in Palestine would end from a certain date; I then linked that with talks between the Irish government and the British gov-

ernment and the authorities there about human rights, financial aid, an amnesty for people involved in offences connected with the emergency.

You would have a UN force in to maintain order during the transitional period. I think one of the most powerful reasons why people in Britain have been reluctant to favour the Troops Out idea is that they fear there would be bloodshed on a huge scale.

Going back to August 1969, when we sent the troops in because the B-Specials were running amok and doing great damage to the Catholic community, there was discussion at that time by the Irish Government in support of some United Nations initiative. It was not very welcome to the British government for a variety of reasons.

But I think that the measures I have proposed would open up a completely new era both in the North and in the relations between the North and the South. When the Northern Loyalist leaders realise that they cannot use British troops to enforce their will on their own minority, they are going to have to come to terms with them.

I think that the nationalists in the North, having achieved the objective at least of withdrawal by Britain, would be less inclined to engage in conflict which might lead to a counter-blast. I think also that the labour movement in the North, which is the key to the whole thing, realising that British troops were not a permanent part of the scenario there, would have to get together to prevent things going wrong. And then the obstacles to some form of association between North and South would begin to melt away.

But the one thing I'm absolutely clear about is that there is no future at all for present policy. The idea that if only we thought about it more carefully and were a bit wiser we could find a formula that would ease the tensions, is a complete illusion. And I think most people in Britain see that.

Of course there are interests — the defence interest and others — which have found it quite convenient to leave the situation as it is. Maybe they don't want to release a strong labour movement with socialist ideas, which I think would inevitably emerge into that situation, because then it would threaten their own source of economic power. After all, it is not a sectarian or a religious argument

at all, it's about very much more fundamental things.

MT: I want to track back to the beginning, when you mentioned the leadership election. Who will you be voting for as leader of the Labour Party?

TB: I haven't got a vote, that's the short answer. I'm not a Member of Parliament, the Transport and General Workers Union of which I am a member decided at its conference, and the local Labour Party of which I am a member has, I think, already nominated.

There will obviously be an opportunity to express a view. But my interest in it is as it was in 1981, not to see it in terms of who is the best person, but to relate it to the policies, and above all to the nature of the leadership. We put our confidence far too often in individuals — Ramsey MacDonald, George Brown, Roy Jenkins, Ray Gunter... — and the idea that this is somehow a central and supreme question, as distinct from the nature of the leadership, and above all the relationship between the Parliamentary Party and the Party in the country, is a mistake.

I'm hoping that some of the issues will emerge, and I think to some extent they are beginning to emerge.

But I've always believed that elections are very healing exercises. They clarify; people make a choice and create a structure of consent. Whoever the Party chooses as leader, we should rally round in the way that we should have rallied round Peter Tatchell when he was first nominated for Bermondsey.

The discussion about policy must be free to go on, whoever is the leader of the Labour Party at any particular moment.

JB: But you've said that one of the major arguments in 1981 was that we needed a leadership prepared to fight for the conference policies.

You've talked elsewhere about the need for a collective leadership, and used the analogy of a wheel with different spokes. That seems to accept that you would have very diverse political views in the leadership — that you could have a leadership that didn't agree with the policies, but because it was coming from a different direction it would be strengthening the Party.

TB: I didn't mean that. When I said collective leadership, I meant a leadership along lines decided by conference.

But I'll tell you one reason why I'm reluctant to get drawn in the way you would like me to be. Suppose Mr X, or Mr Y — or Ms X, or Ms Y — is elected having issued a manifesto contrary to Labour Party policy. Are we then to be told that because they were elected, the Party has decided that it want to follow that contrary policy?

That's not acceptable. We've got to get the Parliamentary Party and the leadership generally to begin to define their role in quite a different way.

As a Labour MP I was a full-time official of the labour movement. I had my right, and claimed my right, to speak my own mind, but the decision-making body of the Labour Party is the Labour conference. If you lose at conference, you can go on saying, 'I think the policy should be different', but you can't, as leader or as MP, campaign for something else as if it were the policy of the Party.

It's important that whoever wins is committed to that. I don't think enough statements have been made for us to be sure on that count.

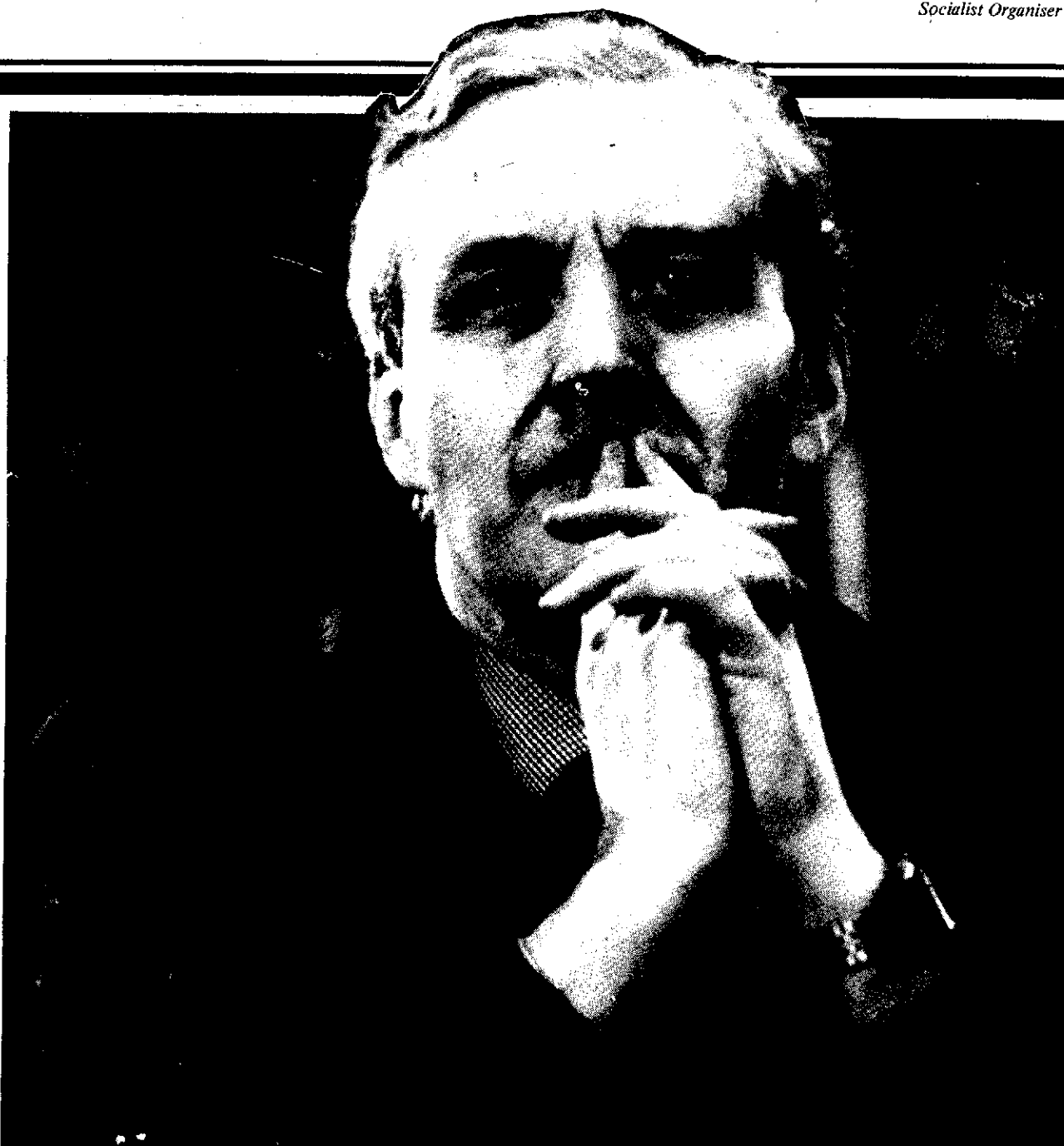
JB: I think you're right about the importance of conference sovereignty, but that didn't stop comrades in 1981 arguing for the candidate that best represented conference policies.

TB: When you come to it you have to make a decision. As in many cases you may choose the person closest to yourself, even though there is not a total identity of view.

MT: Would you like to sum up what you see as the tasks now for Labour Party activists?

TB: To analyse why we lost, and to see that the defeat was a product of a series of major concessions over a generation.

To protect people; to build a mass party; to establish the workplace branches; to build an alliance — because the Labour Party is an alliance, not one settled in a smoke-filled room with David Steel, but with a whole range of groups, women's movement, peace movement, ethnic communities, ecology movement, local community groups...



And, finally, you have to give people hope. While people are so frightened of the Right, landing tomorrow if it wasn't Mr Heseltine and the Tories, frightened that unemployment will make it impossible for them to campaign for decent wages and conditions — while fear dominates — people will not have the courage to look ahead.

Our job is to rebuild. And although it is a frightening time for lots of people, it is also a period that could be the most creative and constructive in the history of the labour movement.

JB: You were saying that if the Left organises it will marginalise itself...

TB: It's got to be careful it doesn't marginalise itself.

JB: But one of the lessons of recent years is that when the Left doesn't organise, it gives the Right the chance to counter-attack.

TB: In 1981 there was an ad hoc operation for the deputy leadership campaign. When that ended the ad hoc alliance began to break down into its component parts. We've always got to look for unity on an ad hoc basis.

But we've got to be careful at a time when left policies are in the ascendant in the TUC and in the Labour Party, that the Left doesn't marginalise itself.

And one of the problems that the Labour Party faces at the moment is that it has devoted a lot of time — and I think it was inevitable — to its internal affairs. There is now a foundation of committed activists. It is the task of the activists to permeate upwards and downwards.

JB: You seem to have a very optimistic view of developments in the Labour Party. Don't you think there's a danger of complacency? A section of the Party wants to re-establish it on the old basis.

TB: Yes, they'd like to. But I don't see any prospect for doing that, in the CLPs or in the trade unions.

And the way you deal with this is to break out ahead. It's by the development of new policy that you break out ahead — not just by standing by old policy.

If we concentrate on that, we're more likely to make progress than if we're all armed to fend off the dangers of the past.

Next issue

A response to Tony Benn's recent article on Ireland, published in The Guardian.



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.

Socialist ORGANISER

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

PECKHAM Labour Party public meeting on Ireland. Friday 22 July at 7.30pm. St. Albans Hall, Manor Place, off Walworth Road. Speakers: Steve Bundred, GLC Councillor, and Richard Balfe, Euro MP.

HALT repression in Sri Lanka! Tamil workers can be the link to revolution in all South Asia. 7.30, 29 July, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Public meeting called by Spartacist League. 01-278 2232.

National Abortion Campaign conference, October 1-2. For details contact NAC, 374, Grays Inn Rd., London WC1. 01-278 0153.

Release Nelson Mandela! Victory to the ANC! Weekly picket of South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, 5.30-7.30 Fridays. Called by City Anti-Apartheid Group.

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].

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

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

CONFERENCE

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September 17

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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).

Next meeting: Thursday July 28 at 7.30 p.m. in the Club Room, bottom of Block 45, Stirlingfauld Place, Gorbals (opposite Citizens Theatre). "Defending a woman's right to choose". Glasgow NAC speaker.

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 Lol Duffy, 3 St. James Court, Victoria Road, Wallasey. Next meeting: Thursday 11 August on 'Nuclear Disarmament and Socialism'. 8.00 p.m. in the Labour Club, Church Road, Seacombe.

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.

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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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

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, 623322. SO is sold at Books and Corner Books, Woodhouse Lane.

Sheffield. Meetings fortnightly on Mondays at the Bull and Oak, The Wicker. Next meeting July 25: "The British Left and the Soviet Union".

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.

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

WALES

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Meets alternate Fridays, 7.30pm, the Hen and Chickens, Constitution Hill. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop, Digbeth High Street.

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

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

Northampton. Contact 713606.

Nottingham. Meetings Thursday evenings, 7.30 at the International Community Centre. SO is sold outside the Victoria Centre (Saturday 11-1) and at the Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote St. Contact: Pete Radcliff, 585640.

SOUTH

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

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

LONDON

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

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

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

Hounslow. SO is sold outside All Saints Church, Hounslow High St, Saturday 10.30-12.

Islington. Contact Nik, 278 1341.

Southwark/Lambeth. Off to YS summer camp, no meeting in first week of August. Next educational, July 24 at 7.30 pm on 'Reformism'; August 14 at 7.30pm on 'Stalinism'. Phone Ian, 670-3279 for details.

S.E. London. Phone 691-1141 for details.

Putney. Tuesday 9 August, 8pm. 'Organising the Left'. 22 August, debate with Militant. 8.00 pm. For venues of both meetings phone Gerry, 789 7587.

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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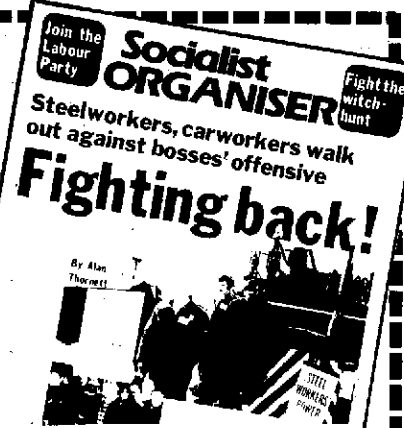
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Left Press

by Stan Crooke

Stalinist view of Khomeini

EVEN by the standards of the Communist Party's Morning Star itself, its recent article on the banning of the Tudeh Party in Iran plumbed the depths.

The author, Chris Myant, attempts to justify the Tudeh Party's policy of support for the Khomeini regime, the same regime now oppressing the Tudeh Party (TP). His "justification" is a concoction of distortion, duplicity and dishonesty.

Myant begins with a ritualistic condemnation of those, like the radical Islamic Mojahedin, who fought back against the regime's attacks. They chose the "road of confrontation" which resulted in "terrorist violence and counter-terrorist massacre and repression."

Myant thinks that the real terrorists in Iran are not the regime's thugs but the Mojahedin and the leftist opposition. Any repression in Iran is a response to their "terrorism". It was their own fault they got massacred.

The opposition is condemned, whilst the regime is white-washed.

Myant does the same trick with the Iran-Iraq war, which was "imposed on Iran by the Ba'ath regime in Iraq." The latter certainly sparked off the war by its invasion. But the sole reason for the war's continuation is the Iranian government's refusal to respond to Iraqi calls for a ceasefire, and its decision to carry the war into Iraqi territory.

The Iranian government continues the war as a useful diversion from internal problems. Myant pretends the problem is that Moslem forces "in Iran and in the Iranian government are victims of manipulation by 'the right wing' of Iranian politics."

This right wing "exploited the inability of many radical Moslems to counter reactionary use of seemingly Islamic ideas and precepts."

Islamic ideas are never reactionary? This argument itself proves the degree of CP acceptance of the lying presentation by the Khomeinists of their reactionary Islamic ideas as 'progressive' and 'anti-imperialist'.

The TP says it clearly: Religion is not in itself reactionary. On the contrary, it can be a progressive phenomenon: "From its inception, Islam has reflected the voice of the oppressed and the poor and declared war against the exploiters, the usurers and the oppressors... such doctrines reveal the democratic and anti-aristocratic nature of Islam." (Quoted in MERIP, no. 75).

Such a novel insight was, of course, extremely useful to a party trying to curry favour with an Islamic regime. Thus, because the TP presents Islam as a progressive force, Myant talks of "the reactionary use of seemingly Islamic ideas and precepts."

But, once again, the result of Myant's analysis is to white-wash the regime: at heart they are all progressive chaps, even if they savagely repress all the women of Iran, even if they do stone to death the odd gay or torture to death the occasional socialist, but they've just been led astray by the right wing.

Thus, whilst itself facing attacks from the reactionary Islamic regime, the TP continues to regard that regime as potentially progressive and concentrates its fire on the Mojahedin "terrorists" and the leftist opposition.

A breakthrough in cancer research?

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

RECENTLY a large step forward in understanding the basis of cancer has been made, through the study of a peculiar class of viruses — the retroviruses.

They are peculiar because, as well as causing ordinary virus diseases in animals, they can also lie dormant inside the cells of an animal. In this state, they are undetectable because their genetic material is integrated or absorbed into the genetic material (DNA) of their host's cells.

Some retroviruses, the RNA tumour viruses (RTV) are known to cause cancer in animals and it was found that they actually carried in their genetic material a gene for cancer (an oncogene). When this gene was integrated into the host's DNA, the host

cell was transformed into a cancer cell.

When researchers investigating viral oncogenes compared them to genes in the DNA of various animals (including humans), they found that each of the dozen or so oncogenes had a counterpart in the DNA of the animals examined. In other words, the viral cancer genes are similar or identical to genes naturally occurring in many animals. So we already possess genes capable of causing cancer. The RTVs probably got their oncogenes by picking them up by accident from animal DNA while lying dormant.

Now, if we all carry "oncogenes" in our DNA, why don't we all get cancer?

Every cell in our bodies

carries the same amount of DNA, an enormous encyclopedia of information, but only a tiny fraction of that information is used by any one cell. Each type of cell needs to make a different set of proteins, and the genes for these have to be turned on by a chemical switch — a special bit of DNA. The rest of the genes are inactive, including the oncogenes. Now, suppose an RTV infects the cell. If it carries an oncogene with its "On" switch, then when this is integrated into the cell's DNA, the gene will start making its protein and the cell is transformed into a cancer cell. These RTVs, the Acute Transforming Viruses, induce cancer quickly in animals.

Others, the Chronic Transforming Viruses, probably carry only an "On" switch or an oncogene with no switch. These will cause cancer slowly because the chance is small that a switch is inserted next to a natural oncogene (or vice-versa) in the animal's DNA.

But there is something still to be explained. Why do we have oncogenes in our DNA if they are so dangerous? Why don't they die out?

The answer is that oncogenes are ordinary genes with useful functions in certain cells. A very recent discovery in this field illustrates this point.

There is a protein called "Platelet-Derived Growth Factor" (PDGF), produced by tiny blood cells called platelets. PDGF stimulates certain cells to grow and multiply, to repair damage caused by cuts and bruises. Researchers looking at the function of PDGF compared its structure to lots of other proteins, using a computer, and found it was almost identical to a protein called "p28sis" which is coded for by a monkey tumour virus called Simian Sarcoma Virus (SSV).

Now suppose SSV inserts its oncogene into the sort of cell stimulated by PDGF. The cell will start making p28sis which is similar to PDGF. It will stimu-

late its own growth and multiplication independently of the platelets. We will get more cells making p28sis... and so on. We have a tumour.

Several important questions for future research now arise:

1. Do other oncogenes code for growth-stimulating proteins? If so, we have a general explanation for cancer. Already there is evidence accumulating.

2. Are some human cancers caused by RTVs? So far only the Hepatitis B virus is known to cause liver cancer. It may be a chronic transforming virus.

3. Can we fight such cancers by making anti-bodies to destroy the growth factors so they cannot stimulate the tumours?

4. Why are some cancers quite harmless, while others spread over the body causing rapid death? Something other than growth factors seems to be involved.

In any case, we are nearer than ever to understanding cancer and producing effective cures.

Moralism no answer on Tudeh Party

"IN NO WAY do the Tudeh Party deserve to be defended by socialists", says Stan Crooke (SO July 7). The choice of words is revealing: it discloses a profoundly moralistic approach to the problem of how socialists should

respond to the Khomeini regime's attacks on the Tudeh (Iranian pro-Moscow Communist) Party.

Stan is quite right to point out that the Tudeh Party played a part "actively aiding the regime in the physical liquidation of left

wing opponents". In so doing, the Tudeh Party followed the logic of being an agency of the Soviet bureaucracy within the ranks of the Iranian masses.

What the Tudeh Party did in Iran is no different from what the Iraqi CP did in Iraq before it was ousted from the government. And in substance it is little different from the anti-working class activities of such parties throughout the world.

For all that, the Tudeh Party — despite its smaller weight compared, for instance with the Iraqi CP — was a section of the Iranian working class movement.

It was a section of an ideologically disorientated movement, and led by people guided by a purpose other than and counterposed to the interests of that movement. Nevertheless, it was a section of that movement.

Logically, Stan Crooke is arguing that the CPs in general have ceased to be an element in the working class movement and that they represent nothing more than agencies of reaction.

Bani Sadr

And more than that. The National Council of Resistance of Bani Sadr and the Mujahedeen is not part of the workers' movement.

But wouldn't we defend its democratic rights against the Islamic despots? Stan's argument makes sense only if the Tudeh is not only not a workers' party, but not a party at all — just a clique of KGB agents.

Whatever the Tudeh's despicable record, objectively the attack on it marked the latest step in the Khomeini regime's bid to secure an unconditional monopoly not only of power but of organisation and expression. It is not in the interests of the working class to permit this.

Civil rights

As socialists we condemn injustice and abuse of civil rights wherever they occur. We defend the victims of such injustice in that we demand an end to such abuses. What we may think of the victims of these injustices, how we evaluate their politics and their record — that is not the issue here.

It is in the interests of the working class to end tyranny. Such opposition to tyranny doesn't imply any general support for its victims or for their policies.

A. HORNUNG,
Hackney



Don't vote for Kinnock!

SOCIALIST Organiser's coverage of the Labour Party leadership "contest" has correctly called for a vote for Heffer and Meacher on the first ballot. It is inconceivable to me that we should lower ourselves to support Kinnock on the second (presumably, as the lesser of two evils), teeth gritted or not.

It is I think obvious to the whole country (with the exception of the editorial boards of a few socialist journals) that the Kinnock/Hattersley match is a friendly and that the vanquished will get a runners-up medal (hereinafter referred to as the Deputy Leadership).

Indeed Richard Gott in the Guardian last Saturday week described the contest as a Welsh windbag versus a Yorkshire gas-bag and pointed out that either (or in tandem?) were poison to real socialist advance.

The decision to support a 'left' is not automatic but is a tactical decision. We support 'lefts' in order to break them from their passivity, put power in their hands and demand they break from the bourgeoisie.

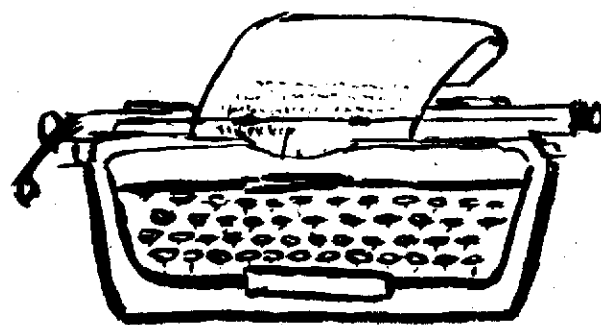
Since the only followers Kinnock and Hattersley seem to have are in the media and the bureaucracy we seem to be addressing only ourselves... I mean can you see the slogan "Kinnock! Break with the bourgeoisie!"?

To balance up the attractions of the candidates, Kinnock seems to support a bloodless version of party policy on unilateralism while Hattersley has the advantage of being older and therefore has less opportunity to wreck the movement. Neither asset is decisive enough to justify a vote.

We should support Heffer "with gritted teeth" and abstain thereafter. Despite a generally good record of voting on the NEC, Heffer was chair of the inquiry which was instrumental in denying Brent East CLP the right to reselect and has failed to this day to so much as supply the CLP with a copy of the report. I can vote for him, just. But Kinnock... perhaps my stomach isn't strong enough for politics.

Comradely,
MICK WOODS
Kilburn.

Writeback



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



Khomeini

Keep it up!

I AM very impressed with Socialist Organiser. The paper clearly follows Marx's viewpoint of organising around democratic struggles and fighting for socialist ideals at the same time.

In the United States, the left tends to be very sectarian; Maoist, Marxist-Leninist; all sorts of rhetoric with no understanding in relating to a united front.

I would be most interested in subscribing here in America as I could learn what a socialist paper should be like.

Keep up the great work.

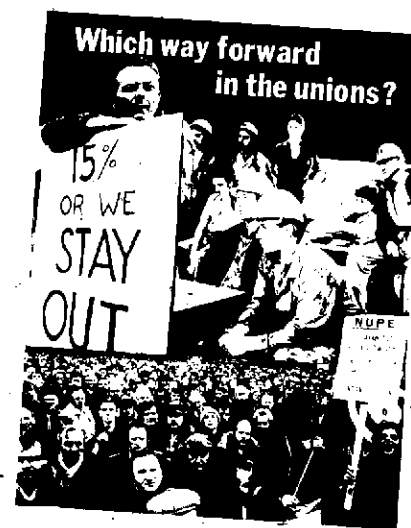
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JOHN HARRIS

Angry epilogue to the March

Jim Denham writes:

MORE AND more labour movement bodies are registering their concern — and in some cases outrage — at the way the 1983 People's March for Jobs was run.

Regular readers of Socialist Organiser will know that the whole affair was run like a Stalinist state on the move. The organisers outlawed "political" slogans, denied the rank and file marchers any say in the day-to-day running of the march, and physically intimidated anyone — marchers or local supporters — who did not comply with their every whim or dictat.

The TUC leadership initially tried to prevent the march from ever taking place. Eventually they were persuaded to change their minds — but only on condition that the event was kept strictly "non-political".

The march organisers, largely Communist Party members and Labour Party free-lance Stalinists, then took it upon themselves to enforce the TUC's wishes, utilising all the time-honoured methods of the Stalinist apparatus: intimidation, thuggery, slander and deals with the police.

On the Western leg, four marchers were expelled for chanting "Maggie Out". They included North West TUC executive member and TGWU full-time organiser Paul Davis, and Pete Cashman, a Socialist Organiser supporter and TGWU branch secretary.

In Birmingham and Oxford the organisers cooperated with the police in obstructing local labour movement activists who wanted to support the march. On both occasions, medical vans were driven into the support marches to separate them off from the main march — presumably because the supporters were chanting dangerously infectious anti-Tory slogans.

In Towcester this resulted in the arrest of two members of the Oxford Trades Council People's March Support Committee, Ted Heslin and Steve Akers. Chief marshal Danny Collins was clearly happy to see the arrests and appeared to be working hand in glove with the police throughout the incident.

Sexism was also rife, encouraged by the "macho" posturing of the Stalinists. A woman marcher, sponsored by Leicester Trade Council, was expelled

from the Eastern leg when it was discovered that she was two months pregnant.

Another woman marcher, SO supporter Helen Johnson, was attacked by "chief security steward" John Ellis, pinned against a wall and suffered a broken toe. Needless to say, a "minor incident" like this did not warrant the kind of punishment meted out to those marchers who had chanted anti-Tory slogans: Ellis stayed on the march.

But now the truth about the march is beginning to come out. Union branches and trades councils who sponsored marchers have been horrified by the reports they have received.

The TGWU Region 6 Committee, Wirral Trades Council, Liverpool Trades Council and Vauxhall Ellesmere Port Joint Shop Stewards Committee have all condemned the expulsions of marchers for chanting anti-Tory slogans. The Merseyside County Association of Trades Councils has called for a full inquiry into the running of the march.

Leicester and Hull Trades Councils have passed resolutions protesting at the expulsion of the pregnant marcher. Halifax Trades Council, who sponsored Helen Johnson, are expected to register their protest over the attack on her.

Birmingham, Oxford and Northampton Trades Councils have all received resolutions critical of the way the march was run. Birmingham decided to invite all local marchers to attend its next meeting, in order to hear their first-hand accounts.

Even bodies normally dominated by Communist Party politics have been critical. The TGWU 5/908 branch, whose chairperson is Longbridge convenor and leading Communist Party member Jack Adams, has passed a resolution expressing concern at the suppression of anti-Tory slogans and at intimidation and violence from the marshals.

The thugs and finger-men who controlled the march must be brought to book. Such people are not fit to run a wheel stall, let alone a major labour movement activity.

Fight for your branch and trades council to support the Merseyside call for an inquiry. Contact Merseyside CATC, c/o Paul Davis, 56, The Cliff, New Brighton, Wirral, Merseyside.

Helen Johnston adds:

HALIFAX Trades Council has begun an inquiry into the incident on the People's March for Jobs when the marcher they had sponsored (me) received a broken toe.

They had asked me to bring a written statement to the Executive meeting last Wednesday about the incident and also about the march.

Oddly enough the meeting wasn't quorate so they could not make a decision to have or call for an inquiry into the march as a whole. The Vice-President a Communist Party member was hostile to the march.

The Trades Council is sending me a copy of the report and I am sure it will be of use to other branches.



St Mary's: workers occupied against the closure

As Tory axe bites deeper into NHS How to save your hospital

THE Tory attacks on the NHS need an organised and militant fightback. There is no sign or likelihood that the trade union leadership will fight — it is up to the rank and file to build action against the cuts and closures.

This action will be linked with opposing privatisation and the contracting out of services. It is much easier to close a hospital which employs domestics on contract and a lot of agency nurses.

Once management decide to recommend the closure of either wards or an entire hospital the rundown begins. The rundown has not been authorised by the District Health Authority (DHA) at this point — it is being done by an entirely unaccountable group of bureaucrats.

Over the last five years there has been an almost identical scenario for closures:

- *ancillary and nursing staff who leave are not replaced;
- *conditions for both patients and workers deteriorate;
- *it becomes almost impossible to get routine health and safety work done, old obsolete equipment is not replaced;

- *then, suddenly the administrators announce that the hospital is becoming unsafe.
- They create the conditions which make the hospital unsafe and then use the conditions to justify closing the hospital.

These "creeping cuts", nearly always preliminary steps in the closure process need to be resisted.

COHSE, NUPE and NALGO all have policies of no cover for unfilled vacancies.

Shop stewards should ensure that that policy is implemented. At St. Mary's, Harrow Road, the domestics were told to clean floors when they had never done it before. Management were preparing the rundown and did not want to hire new people. The domestics refused this additional job and provided a focus for other workers in the hospital who wanted to oppose the closure.

The trade union bureaucrats will constantly try to sell out and sabotage this sort of action. It rocks their pleasant relationship with managers.

This kind of obstruction from the full-time officials to determined action by the workers will continue right through the fight to save beds and jobs.

The battle for hospitals is not just about fighting the Tories — it is just as much about fighting the trade union leadership.

The most effective way of opposing the NHS is through the workers themselves. They must organise and fight back against the cuts and closures. It is vital that workers fight the Tories and the axemen who close hospitals as a united force.

Other left wing papers may urge you to fight the cuts. But only Socialist Organiser follows up last week's survey of NHS closures with a detailed guide on how to build a campaign that can fight back. JANE GOSS draws on years of experience in the key NHS battles. Next issue: on occupations and workers' control.

But, if we are to fight and win they must be built again.

Opposing the coming onslaught, particularly in London, will need just as much coordination and support as we saw in the fight for wages in 1982.

Health and safety committees are particularly important — at the South London Hospital the Health and Safety Committee has forced management to make major repairs that they were hoping to leave to use as fuel for their arguments about the hospital being "run down".

As soon as word leaks out that a hospital is threatened (we know of 53 in London alone) the workers and community must organise. It takes time for the implications of closure to sink in. Most workers, although they are aware that other hospitals have been closed think it can never happen to their hospital.

All health service facilities are threatened by the Tories; thinking that if another hospital in your district closes yours will be okay is disastrous.

Closed

In Wandsworth five hospitals have closed since 1978 and now the South London is earmarked for closure. Management use the fear of closure and the false hope of saving one place at the expense of another to try to pit worker against worker.

In Wandsworth they have said publicly that if the South London Campaign succeeds then something else will close. This tactic is one of the most vicious and has to be squashed immediately.

It is vital that workers fight the Tories and the axemen who close hospitals as a united force.

All workers should be alerted. Workers should oppose three and six month contracts which

make it easier to assimilate people from the hospital about to be closed.

Usually a district will only issue "temporary" contracts for a whole year's run-up to a closure. So, new staff are effectively sacked in order that workers from the closing hospital can be "slotted in".

The whole process undermines trade union activity and militancy and makes some workers wary of even joining a union in case they jeopardise the renewal of their contract.

Workers in the threatened hospital must refuse even to discuss alternative employment with management. They should ignore any letters or demands that they get from supervisors telling them to attend meetings (usually on their own) to have preliminary discussions.

Health service managers are now experienced in the techniques of closing hospitals. They try to do it quickly and quietly through administrative measures and intimidation. They do not like well organised campaigns with experienced people who know their tactics.

It is sometimes hard to convince workers just what rotten and unprincipled tactics managers will use. Yet, in every fight against closure there are intimidation, victimisations, dirty tricks. Only a strong and coordinated campaign can effectively oppose this kind of operation.

The most successful fightbacks — EGA, St. Benedicts, Longworth, St Mary's — have involved workers and supporters meeting together either weekly or fortnightly.

Meeting in the hospital is best because the workers will see people coming in every week to support them and the supporters

will feel part of the hospital (and know its layout).

It may seem too frequent at first — but managers work very quickly and things can change on a daily basis. There is no need to ask permission for these meetings — management will almost certainly refuse.

Just pick a room and have the meetings. It is unlikely that administrators will make an issue of it as they do not want to provoke action early on!

A public profile is essential. Everyone in the community should know that their hospital is threatened. Leaflets, posters, petitions, pickets and demonstrations are all good for attracting interest.

Workers who are a bit frightened about fighting management and are not sure about the levels of support they will get can be bolstered by seeing a large demonstration or a lot of people turning up to picket outside the hospital.

It is important to challenge management at every step in the campaign. The administrators and consultants will constantly be putting out statements about the terrible financial conditions, weeping crocodile tears that they have to close the hospital, and saying that they really have no choice and that there is no money available.

Workers should be reminded of last year when we were given the same arguments about why we could only have a 4% increase. There was no money then, but suddenly billions were found for the Malvinas war, extra money was found for the judges and the police.

The fact is that there is money available for the NHS — but the Tories do not want to spend it on health. Workers should challenge the District's financial figures and demand to open the books and see just how the districts spend their allocations. We should use figures showing the huge profits made by the drug industry and by other suppliers.

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Mick McGahey: a leading Communist Party member, but by no means the worst of the NUM leaders on the issue of workers' rights in the Stalinist states

NUM Stalinism

ONE OF the less pleasant aspects of the NUM conference was the undercurrent of Stalinism, which repeatedly broke through into the open. It manifested itself in a number of ways.

Fraternal delegates invited to the conference included members of the Soviet miners' 'union'. But the latter, like the rest of the 'trade union movement' in the Soviet Union, is merely an auxiliary weapon of the ruling bureaucracy to control the working class, and has nothing at all in common with genuine trade unionism.

And the NEC's annual report presented to conference, whilst rightly condemning attacks on union rights in countries such as Turkey and Chile, was silent upon the repression of Soviet miners such as Klebanov and Nikitin, currently being held in a psychiatric hospital for fighting for union rights. The NUM of course has 'accepted' the Soviet government's account of Klebanov's imprisonment; he is not a jailed trade unionist but a lunatic.

On the question of the repression of free trade unionism in Poland, the Executive's annual report merely states that, 'the union has continued to watch closely the developments in Poland.'

And, talking of the Tories' hypocrisy in attacking trade union rights in Britain whilst claiming to support them in Poland, Scargill referred to, 'Solidarity in Poland who, so they say, are fighting for independence,' the insinuation being that Solidarity was fighting for something different. Capitalist restoration and a Catholic theocracy perhaps?

Almost farcical were the references to the peace-loving Soviet Union during the debate on nuclear disarmament. 'Since 1927 Russia has been calling for peace,' one delegate told conference. What was so special about 1927 was never explained,

not that workers throughout Eastern Europe would agree anyway.

And the entire conference was taking place in the shadow of Scargill's shameful support for the creation of a new 'Miners' International' involving the fake East European unions. The NEC annual report proudly announced that the first congress of this sham International 'should be hosted in the spring of 1984 in Great Britain', and would prove to be 'an historic conference for the International Trade Union Movement.'

If it is it will be because it splits the NUM off from other miners' unions and tie it to the anti-trade union labour fronts of the Stalinist states.

That Stalinism was so in vogue at this conference does much to explain the roaring business done by the sellers of the Communist Party's Morning Star outside of it.

Teachers clash with ILEA

Interview with Richard Rieser, Secretary of the Inner London Teachers' Association, on its dispute with the ILEA.

What has the dispute been about?

About the ILEA's insistence on compulsorily transferring teachers to alternative positions who they maintain are above the staffing ratios of the school.

What was your objection?

Several. Just because the rolls fall, doesn't mean you have to have fewer teachers at school. You've got to maintain the curriculum of the school. It's mainly hitting the secondary schools this year - 250 secondary and 150 primary teachers are designated to be moved this year.

We have amply demonstrated

YOP's deadly record

SWEAT shops, not registered with the factory inspectorate where the workers are not insured kill YOPsters.

In an open verdict recorded by the Sheffield Coroner on the death of Derek Cain the MSC was criticised for not having checked out the factory where Derek was 'placed'.

It seems that even a quick 'phone call to the Factory Inspectorate would have told the MSC officer that C. Plumb

(Hatfield) Ltd was a cow-boy outfit. A visit would have shown that operating a foot pedal on a four foot high, 3 by 5 foot platform, with no handrail and open shreading blades was not a job for anyone let alone a supposedly supervised YOPster.

But the MSC didn't ring or take a look and Derek died - along with 16 others. 700 young workers have been seriously injured on a YOP

placement.

The MSC staff have complained they do not have the resources to visit and approve every prospective workplace before a trainee is assigned. And in the rush to find placements for the September intake of YTS 'trainees' many more young people are going to find themselves in non-unionised and deadly factories.

'No' to Michelin

WORKERS at the Michelin factory in Stoke have now been locked out for ten days. Their opposition to the management's attempt at speed-up through four-shift working in the Light-weight Production Department remains strong.

Last week, a mass meeting of 1,000 workers from the LPD voted unanimously to continue

to reject management's proposals.

Last week the bosses sent a letter to every worker in the LPD calling on them to return to work on their terms. A small picket was put on the gate but not one persons from the LPD turned up for work.

Pressure is being applied through the press. The local

paper, 'The Evening Sentinel' is printing letters calling for a return to work signed 'Michelin worker' or 'Michelin worker's wife'.

The strike has been made official by the union.

That opens the way for the blacking of all Michelin products throughout industry.

The next ploy by the bosses may well be to threaten workers with the sack. Workers in Michelin must be prepared for it.

They will best be able to resist if the rest of the movement shows its support now.

The sluggishness of the official union's response must be countered by militants in the motor industry acting now to black Michelin.

Greenings picket

GREENING's bosses are re-thinking their strategy after the hard slap but he face they got from last week's mass meeting. Only 7 out of 300 voted to go back - more voted to stay on strike after 17 weeks than had originally voted to come out. They have stopped sending letters to the strikers. The threats and cajolery have all stopped. This may indicate that there is still a spark of intelligent life in there somewhere.

But the strikers aren't taking any bets on it. The bosses could decide to dig themselves deeper into the hole; they may decide they've had enough. They have made no attempt to contact the union.

The spirit of the strikers showed itself last week when 75 turned out to mass picket on a quiet morning.

Delegations from the strikers are going to speak to works committees, trade union branches, etc. Donations of money are coming in. But not nearly enough. After 18 weeks out families with small children and heavy financial commitments are facing a degree of hardship.

Invite Greenings to send a speaker to your Branch, shop stewards' committee, trades council, etc.

Send donations to Len Blood, 26 St. John's St., Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside.

POEU fight on

THE POEU's fight against the privately owned Project Mercury is continuing.

The situation changes very quickly and further developments will probably have taken place since the time of writing.

The latest edition of 'Campaign News', the newsletter of the LNCI branch, explains the calling out on strike of all members on a Crossbar unit at Covent Garden telephone exchange.

The members were called out on strike from Monday 11 July in response to BT management's (this time successful) attempt at connecting up some Mercury lines to the BT network.

This is the second attempt by BT management to connect up Mercury circuits through the BT network, and was carried out, over the weekend, in a building not used solely by BT.

No details of planned further connections are known at the moment, but the connection which was made was only phase one of a two phase operation which is necessary before the lines will actually work. Phase two will not be carried out at the same building as phase one.

These difficulties, together with fears that Tebbit's secondary picketing law may be invoked, might be the main reason why there have been no pickets.

But if BT management continue to connect up Mercury circuits, this will seriously undermine the national levy collection which is being conducted to fund selective industrial action and also to campaign amongst the membership.

It would seriously damage the fight for the blacking of Mercury as well as the union's opposition to the Privatisation Bill which has now had its second reading.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the industrial action will have to spread outside of London in response to management's actions, and that picketing will need to be introduced despite Tebbit's laws.

TGWU green light

from page 1

great leverage to get the other unilateralist trade unions to endorse the TGWU decision and themselves make a commitment to blacking work on the nuclear death industry.

The TGWU decision follows the recent action by the NUS - backed by the Executive of the TGWU - which stopped the movement of nuclear waste for dumping at sea.

The NUR is unilateralist. The next step is to get it to endorse - or organise - blacking.

Thus the labour movement is beginning to answer the to-be-or-not-to-be question which lies at the heart of every call for disarmament - who will do the disarming?

The ruling class will never be persuaded to disarm peacefully.

There is no force in Britain other than the working class which could disarm the ruling class against its will.

If the labour movement can be won to concerted action in refusing to work on construction and transport or any of the other activities on which the lethal fraud of nuclear 'defence' depends then the warmongers can be paralysed.

For 20 years the once-massive movement for nuclear disarmament was dormant. In Britain from 1958 to 1963 CND could mount demonstrations of up to 150,000. But that movement wasted its strength and declined for a number of reasons.

Only a minority turned to the labour movement. A brief victory for unilateralism at the 1960 Labour Party conference was overturned by the still very strong right wing in 1961.

The militant wing turned to brave but impotent direct action - to mass sit-downs, led by one of the great figures of British radicalism and reformist socialism, the octogenarian Bertrand Russell. Then in 1963 the US-USSR Test Ban Treaty induced a false sense of security that lasted two decades.

That feeling of security is gone and replaced by alarm. But the new mass movement for nuclear disarmament has yet to learn the central lesson of the old CND's experience of growth and decline - the campaign against nuclear weapons and nuclear bases must turn to the labour movement.

The great message of the TGWU conference is that it is possible to win the labour movement to the irreplaceable action that will stop nuclear weapons. The central truth that the anti-war movement needs to learn, and to organise itself around, is that working class action is the only thing that will stop them.

Still out

THE workers at Industrial Pyrameters, Birmingham, are still solid after a month on strike. This is despite being offered reinstatement - they were sacked on July 4 - and a very small increase in their 3% wage offer from Pyrometers boss Harold Smith. As one of them told us, 'to go back now would be to waste all the sacrifice and effort of the last month.'

They regard Smith's latest offer as a sign that he is on the run and his vindictive decision to withhold holiday pay he owed the strikers as a sign of desperation.

The strikers now have a list of Pyrometers major customers (including Lucas, Vauxhall, the NCB and Perkins Diesel) and are contacting the unions at them to arrange for blacking.

Donations, messages of support, etc., to D.P. Hyde, 19 Philip Sydney Road, Spark Hill, Birmingham.

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.



How much support have you got from Constituency Labour Parties?

So far, Hackney North and Greenwich have supported our stand, and a number of members of the Executive Committee of the Greater London Labour Party have spoken on our behalf including: Mildred Gordon, Angela Brittain, Vidya Anand, Bob Labi, Eddie McParland and other comrades mostly from the Militant tendency.

A vote taken supporting our stand was defeated, with two abstentions - Jeremy Corbyn and Tony Banks. The position put forward by Frances Morrell was carried with the support of all but one of the women's caucus (Angela Brittain) - and Ken Livingstone - who spoke out surprisingly against the teachers' demands.

On 13 June we addressed the whole Labour Group calling on them to consider a moratorium on compulsory transfers. We were asked to withdraw after presenting our case - only one member, we are led to believe, Paul Moore, supported us.

We don't believe we are being divisive in the face of govern-

ment threats to break up the ILEA; we are expressing the democratic views of our members.

We have called on the ILEA Labour Group to think again before it is too late and work for a voluntary agreement for the movement of teachers which would defuse the situation.

Despite the strongly held position of ILEA that they would not 'negotiate under pressure' they have agreed to negotiate with the teachers' side and have agreed to give back a number of jobs they had previously refused.

LRD

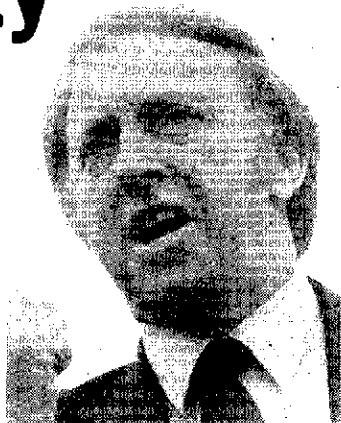
IT has been pointed out to us that an unsigned article in the issue of Socialist Organiser dated 2 June 1983 on the business backgrounds of Tory MPs failed to acknowledge the obvious source of the facts and figures it used. This was the Labour Research Department.

Usually writers in Socialist Organiser give credit for work drawn upon. Of course this has frequently meant making acknowledgement to the Labour Research Department, which services labour movement bodies with facts, figures and analyses. Our failure to credit LRD this time was an oversight for which we apologise to them.

Readers can subscribe to 'Labour Research' monthly for £11 (to LRD, 78 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 8HF, 01-928 3649). Details of other LRD services from the same address.

Open Letter to Arthur Scargill

Solidarity with E. Europe workers



Arthur Scargill,

When you were elected President of the NUM socialists welcomed it as a victory for militancy and working class independence against the yellow-hearted collaborationists that generally run our unions. Many of your actions since have shown that judgement was not entirely misplaced.

You have taken a clear stand on pulling out of talks with the Tories and the bosses. Quite right. They aim to bind and gag us with laws and prohibition. Why should we come licking at the boots which aim to crush us? You have proclaimed, extravagantly, that you are prepared to go to gaol rather than kow-tow to the bosses' law.

And yet... Thousands of trade unionists are imprisoned, beaten, shot in the streets in Poland and you propose? Not just talks with the gaolers, but to glorify the persecutors as the representatives of the workers.

You condemn Solidarnosc, the chosen representative of millions of Polish workers, for demanding what we, even under a Tory government, can take for granted as a basic right — the right to join a union, to organise to fight for more control by working people over their lives.

You recognise the Tories' anti-union laws for what they are — manacles for the working class, yet you are blind to the transparent oppression of the Polish regime, visibly backed by naked force, by tanks and guns and stormtroopers.

For defending your members' interests, their jobs, you have been vilified by the press, labelled "lunatic", "extremist".

Anyone would have thought this would have given you an insight into the workings of propaganda and character assassination.

Yet when the poison comes from the Stalinist state-controlled media, you are prepared to spread it. You swallow some of their most transparent lies and peddle them to the British labour movement.

Elementary class sympathy should suggest to you that Polish miners did not sit-in

by John Cunningham
(Dinnington NUM, in
personal capacity)

underground, hunger-strike and face bullets and batons in order to restore capitalism.

Workers the world over aren't that different. Miners in South Africa, America, Bolivia and Britain have used the same militant class tactics.

Are Polish miners a different animal? Or Russian miners like Klebanov and Nikitin, who fought for the safety of their fellow workers and against official corruption?

You may have been called mad by the gutter press, you haven't yet been incarcerated in a psychiatric prison, fed mind-changing drugs or locked in solitary confinement for daring to question the ruling order.

Klebanov and Nikitin have. And how do you solidarise with these workers? By repeating the vile slanders of the Kremlin bureaucrats — they are "mad" — for representing fellow workers, for fighting life-threatening speed-ups, for criticising low safety standards!

Your project for a world mine-workers' federation, uniting East and West would be fine — international solidarity can only strengthen the workers' common interest. It would be fine, if it were a workers' international. But you've failed on the most basic principle. "Know your own class". The "unions" of Russia and Eastern Europe are not workers' organisations, they are tools of the state, opposed and thrown aside by the workers whenever they've had the most minimal chance to express themselves democratically.

Every upsurge in class consciousness, in militancy has seen these "unions" line up behind the gun-barrels of the military and the "invited" invading armies of the Russian bureaucracy.

We know where our class allegiance lies — with the workers who fought to hold the mines and shipyards against the tanks and troops in Gdansk and Katowice, who occupied factories in Prague and Budapest against Russian troops, who will rise yet in the very heart of "Soviet" tyranny, the USSR itself.

Socialists will identify with these — the real working class in the Stalinist states who are oppressed, leached upon by the bureaucracy and denied rights the British labour movement won a century and a half ago.

But you, Arthur Scargill, identify with the parasitic bureaucrats in the Stalinist states. You align yourself with those who have erected their power on the ruins of free trade unions and independent labour movements and on the bones of many thousands of workers, who hold on to that power at a tremendous cost in working class blood and degradation.

Socialist ORGANISER

As Hattersley, Kinnock step up the pace

Eric Heffer's 'manifesto'

By John
O'Mahony

ERIC Heffer, the serious left's candidate for the Labour Party leadership, has published his 'manifesto'.

At its heart is a strong reaffirmation of socialism and a presentation of Heffer's understanding of what socialism is.

"The Labour Party is a socialist party or it is nothing... the question that has to be asked is: what do we mean by a democratic socialist society? Democratic socialists believe it is essential to end class society. Socialism cannot be achieved unless that happens and genuine equality of opportunity cannot be created while class divisions exist.

"Class society arises because the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange is in the hands of a relatively small group...

"It is impossible to create a classless society while private ownership of the major industries exists. That is basically the case for public ownership."

Necessarily

But public ownership does not necessarily mean nationalisation, he says.

"Nationalisation has too often been equated with socialism. That is not so, it can be state capitalism, as are our nationalised industries in Britain...

"Democratic socialism does not envisage a society where everything is state-owned and state-run. A democratic socialist society means that personal initiative will not be destroyed but encouraged."

But more than public ownership is needed:

"... to avoid the creation of a new class and to ensure that society does not become bureaucratic, it is necessary to create forms of democratic management."

One might discuss whether or not the parasitic ruling Stalinist bureaucracies are a fully formed

class. But in substance, Heffer is right. He goes on:

"The third vital ingredient of democratic socialism is democracy itself. There cannot be socialism without democracy... it is perfectly understandable for working people who rightly cherish their freedom, for which they, and especially their forefathers fought, to say that if what exists in Soviet Russia is socialism, then they want no part of it."

He says we must maintain and develop freedom of thought, publication and worship.

"Democracy must be extended to every sphere of public life. There should be a free and open society, with the ending of the Official Secrets Act, and the introduction of a Freedom of Information Act."

The House of Lords should be abolished.

It is a comprehensive statement, yet it does not mention that the capitalist class have a monopoly of violence or potential violence, the state, whose dismantling and destruction is a central precondition for any advance to a socialist democracy.

The manifesto is disappointing in its ultra-cautious proposals for what the left should do now. He says the clock can't be turned back in the Labour Party.

"... as time goes by some further constitutional changes, leading to a wider involvement of the membership in decision-



Heffer: candidate of the Left

making at all levels, will be desirable, but certainly not at this moment. So, for the time being we should leave the constitutional position as it is..."

This is the approach of those like Vladimir Derer who say the left now needs to consolidate, not go on a new offensive.

The short answer is that we have little to consolidate. All the gains on democracy — reselection, electoral college — can be domesticated and neutered by the Labour Establishment. Such rules and regulations are common to many right wing Labour Parties

in Europe. Reselection has not yet been used to bring the PLP into line with the Party.

If the left does not resume the offensive we may well see our formal gains rendered irrelevant to the basic task of changing and fundamentally renewing the Party. This will be a danger especially when the Establishment is led by the soft left.

Despite the weaknesses of his manifesto, Heffer's candidacy is itself, of course, a powerful counterblow against the attempt of the Kinnock left to filch the gains of the last period from us.

FUND

Still a long way to go!

£88.50 this week brings our July total to £237.15. That's less than a quarter of our £1,000 target — with three-quarters of July behind us.

This week we thank two Oxford supporters for donations of £20 and £10; Rob Strinati, £20; Glasgow SO supporters, £15; Jeff Snee, £1.50; and Sheffield supporters for £22 they assure us is in the post.

Eleven groups have sent in money towards their targets, and here are the percentages they have so far achieved: Islington leads with 123% (the only group to exceed their target), then come: Southwark/Lambeth, 92%; Glasgow, 55%; Sheffield, 55%; York, 50%; Liverpool 28%; Oxford 27%; Hounslow, 25%; North-West London, 19%; Coventry 14%; Hackney 4%.

We're still waiting for donations from the other groups. They are: Edinburgh, Rochdale, Manchester, Stockport, Wirral, Stoke, Huddersfield, Durham, Leeds, Hull, Halifax, Harrogate, Birmingham, Leicester, Northampton, Nottingham, Basingstoke, Cardiff, Haringey, South East London and East London.

All money which arrives in the office by July 31 will be recorded in the July Fund. That's ten days to go — and £762.85 to raise!

There'll be a full list of targets reached — or otherwise — after the break on August 4. In the meantime send your donations to: The Treasurer, 214 Sickert-Court, Essex Rd., London N1.



Kinnock: candidate of the left talking

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NEXT ISSUE: out

Thursday August 4, with more on the fight to save the Health Service, interview with Tony Benn on the Common Market, and full coverage of the struggles in the unions and the Labour Party.