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NOT OUR DREAM



By Reg Race

The election of Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley really means that a centre/right coalition now rules the Labour Party.

Their clear purpose, as revealed by events in the last few days, is to ditch the policies on which the Labour Party fought the last general election – particularly unilateralism and public ownership – and to obtain maximum freedom of manoeuvre for the leadership in the run-up to the next general election.

They also intend to protect this purpose from criticism at conference by using the big block votes of trade unions.

In other words, the 1950s praetorian guard of Deakin, Lawther, and Williamson, has been replaced by a 1980s praetorian guard of the TGWU, the AUEW, and the GMBATU.

These developments pose several clear problems for the Labour Party and particularly for the Left in the Party.

It is perfectly clear that we must defend the policies embodied in the 1982 Programme. We must stop censorship and expulsions.

And we must not be afraid of conflict – there is, in my view, no room for any kind of 'historical compromise' with Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley: their aim is to change the Labour Party, and we must so order our affairs on the Left that we construct united opposition to their attempt to roll back the reforms and radicalisation of the past five years.

INSIDE

Labour Party Conference

Four pages of reports on proceedings and views of the conference from Ken Livingstone, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Joan Maynard MP, Anne Pettifor, Helen John, Tony Banks, Ray Davies, Vidya Anand, Bob Cryer, Mandy Moore and others. See pages 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Free Gwiazda!

Jailed Solidarnosc leader Andrzej Gwiazda is now reported to be in very poor health. We print an appeal for his release, some of his correspondence from jail. See p.7.

Health pay swindle

During the next six months the Tories hope to set up their divide-and-rule Pay Review Body, and win a "no-strike" agreement from those involved – nurses, midwives and certain professional groups. Alison James examines this Tory con on page 14.

EDITORIAL

Unity- for what?

AFTER the Callaghan government was defeated four years ago the Labour Party set about sorting itself out.

Constituency activists were determined to ensure that 'never again would there be a Wilson/Callaghan type Labour government — the sort of Labour government which in office ignored the labour movement. What have we achieved? Have we ensured that the next Labour government won't be like the last one?

No, we have not! Despite the changes in the constitution to make re-selection of MPs mandatory and the electoral college for the leadership, in real terms we have achieved little.

Now Kinnock and his supporters say the renewal process in the Labour Party must end. 'Unity against the Tories' is their catchcry.

They want the Party activists to abandon the project of making the Labour Party fit and able to come to grips with capitalism.

The size of the Constituency Labour Party vote (91.5% for Kinnock — widely and deservedly loathed two years ago — and for Hattersley (51%) against Meacher is proof that a mood of fear and uncertainty exists at CLP level which creates a desperate willingness to settle for anything that promises to put up any show of opposition to the Tory juggernaut. This mood replaces the 1979 slogan 'Never again' with a new one, 'Back to the pre-1979 Labour Party'.

Kinnock said on Panorama last Monday, 3rd: "The prerequisite for restoring Britain is a strong and united Labour Party".

No, the prerequisite for restoring Britain and for looking after the interests of the working class is that the Labour Party is united around socialist policies — that it is a party under the control of the rank and file, out of government and in it.

That is not what we have now. We must fight until we get it. It will be disastrous if the serious Left loses its nerve now — as Ken Livingstone did, for example, in the Briefing meeting on Sunday, saying: "The Left could easily isolate itself... Neil Kinnock has both strengths and weaknesses... he is willing to learn..."

We need to keep the goal of the last few years in mind. A new Wilson/Callaghan style Labour government would not regenerate Britain.

Labour was in office for most of the last 20 years — from 1964 to 1970, and from 1974 to 1979. Britain continued to decline, and the decline even accelerated. Labour, the party of the health service and the welfare state, became, in office during the mid-'70s, a party of counter-reform, making cuts. It undermined its own credibility with the working class.

Reformism proved bankrupt — because the buoyant, expanding capitalism on which it rested is bankrupt. It will be as bankrupt under Kinnock as it was under Callaghan and Wilson.

Wilson, Callaghan, and monetarist Chancellor Healey paved the way for Thatcher. A Kinnockite Labour government would be another turn of the wheel on the same spindle. At best it would mark time.

We need to go forward. The prerequisite for this is not a united and strong Labour Party, but a socialist Labour Party determined to confront the ruling class, to mobilise the working class, and to fight for a democratic working-class socialism. We should not play 'ins' and 'outs' with the Tories in Parliament — we must go out to defeat the Tories and all they stand for.

Kinnock will try to shift the Party to the right. He will try to repair the ragged and dirtied fabric of the 'faking culture' in which the Labour Party wrapped itself for so long — Left talk to mollify the Party ranks, as a cover for pragmatic accommodation to the powers that be.

Kinnock is well-qualified to do this. But what we need is not left talk and hollow phrases, but the sort of seriousness in the working class interest that Thatcher and the Tory Party display in the ruling class interest.

Blather and blatherskates will get the labour movement nothing but more Wilsonism, more Toryism, and perhaps something worse than either. When Kinnock in his role of 'responsible' and 'realistic' parliamentarian says a new Labour government will not even restore the Tory cuts, then the Left should have no room for the delusion that the Kinnock/Hattersley leadership is an advance on Wilson or Callaghan. In the present conditions of British capitalism they might even prove worse.

Imagine this 'dream ticket' in government in late '80s Britain, and it will still seem a 'dream' only to those whose hopes for the future and for the labour movement have been brutally scaled down by the experience of Thatcherism.

In his final speech as Leader to conference delegates, Michael Foot urged delegates to keep in mind that Labour must offer the hope of socialism.

Those who merely hope for socialism do not deserve it. They will certainly play no part in winning it. We must fight for socialism. And to fight for socialism means also fighting against the enemies of socialism in the labour movement — against the soft Left as well as the Right. It means resisting the threat of an inner moral and political collapse of the Left following the setbacks and defeats.

After the collapse of the Italian factory occupations in 1920, the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci wrote some lines which serious leftists in the British labour movement should keep in mind now:

"The emancipation of the proletariat is not a labour of small account and little men; only he who can keep his heart strong and his will as sharp as a sword when the general disillusionment is at its worst can be regarded as a fighter for the working class or called a revolutionary."



A sneaky rehash

by Colin Foster

THE National Executive Committee's document on strategy after the general election, 'Campaigning for a Fairer Britain', was approved.

It was a pity that there were not more dissenting voices.

'Labour lost in the end because... we failed to convince people that we offered an attractive, credible and workable alternative', states the document. 'We must offer a vision of a better, socialist future'.

What did Labour offer in the general election campaign? To be truthful: a vision of a perhaps-not-so-bad Keynesian past, 'Tried and tested policies' was the refrain.

None of the radical elements of Labour's economic policy — nationalisation, control over investment, 35 hour week — were stressed. Instead the message was that Labour would solve the crisis... by borrowing from the banks.

But the 'jobs and industry' section of 'Campaigning for a Fairer Britain' gives no hint that this will change. Labour is supposed to 'convince people that there is a way out of the slump' by the example of France — where the Mitterrand government is in full retreat in face of the bosses and the bankers, and unemployment is as high as ever.

Some 'vision of a socialist future'!

But then 'Campaigning for a Fairer Britain' is written by those same people who were responsible for the disastrous election campaign — and contains not a word of self-criticism.

On nuclear weapons, 'Campaigning for a Fairer Britain' reasserts Labour's commitment to 'a non-nuclear defence strategy'. But the timescale previously mentioned — 'within the lifetime of a Parliament' — is omitted. And a number of 'first steps' towards nuclear disarmament are introduced:

- putting Polaris into the Geneva talks (rather than scrapping it);
- 'freezing' the arms race rather than getting rid of the nuclear arsenals);
- pressing for NATO to have a 'no first use of nuclear weapons' policy (rather than having no

but by promoting Europe-wide workers' unity.

Still, withdrawal was Conference policy. If the policy is to be changed, it should be changed by Conference. The National Executive Committee slipped in a change of policy on the sly, while at the same time pushing any open debate on the EEC off this Conference agenda.

Also, the new NEC policy is a far cry from Europe-wide workers' unity. 'Labour will fight to get the best deal for Britain...' it says.

And the French socialists should fight to get the best deal for France? German socialists should fight to get the best deal for Germany? The socialists of different countries all fight each other in the name of national interests, and the multinationals rejoice?

What about fighting to get the best deal for the workers of all the EEC countries?

The new NEC

THE National Executive Committee is as follows:

Leader (elected separately)

Neil Kinnock

Deputy leader (elected separately)

*Roy Hattersley

Treasurer (elected by whole conference)

Eric Varley 3,583,000 votes.
Runner-up: Albert Booth, 3,270,000.

Trade union section (elected by trade unions)

Alex Mitson 5,758,000 votes
Sam McCluskie 5,704,000 votes
Neville Hough 5,091,000 votes
Ken Cure 4,756,000 votes
*Tony Clarke 4,532,000 votes
Roy Evans, 4,471,000 votes
*Charlie Turnock 4,381,000 votes
Tom Sawyer 4,032,000 votes
Alan Hadden 3,823,000 votes
*Sid Ambler 3,483,000 votes
Sid Tierney 3,441,000 votes
*Doug Hoyle 3,351,000 votes.
Runner up: D. Howell, 3,325,000 votes.

Socialist societies (elected by Labour Clubs, socialist societies, etc.)

John Evans 37,000. Runner-up: Stan Newens 27,000.

Constituency Labour Parties (elected by CLP delegates)

Tony Benn 554,000
Eric Heffer 538,000
Dennis Skinner 534,000
*Michael Meacher 482,000
*David Blunkett 322,000
Jo Richardson 321,000
Audrey Wise 290,000.
Runner-up: J. Ashley 259,000.

Women's section (elected by whole conference)

Betty Boothroyd 4,834,000
*Ann Clwyd 4,740,000
Gwyneth Short 4,341,000
Gwyneth Shortwood 3,992,000
*Joan Maynard 3,793,000
Runner-up: Judith Hart, 3,664,000.

plus representative from the Labour Party Young Socialists, elected at the LPYS conference.

(* indicates a member not on the committee in 1982-3).

RAY DAVIES, activist in the steel union ISTC and former PPC for Cardiff North.

THE TASK before activists in the Labour and trade union movement is to go out and continue to fight to democratise the trade unions.

That's very relevant in terms of the block vote, which controls conference.

The last five years, coming to conference has been very exciting. We have seen all the activists campaigning for Labour Party democracy. The trade union leaders have been sitting on the side lines. But now the union leaders are organised against the democratic reforms and organised against the Left.

This is a watershed conference: what happened in conference yesterday [Monday 3rd] was that those same trade union leaders had got themselves together and were absolutely determined to kill off the Militant.

But we've got to throw away the desire to wallow in a sea of despondency and prepare for the fightback. It's not the Kinnocks of this world who are important, it's the rank and file. And if we want real accountability, it's into the trade unions we must go.

MANDY MOORE, CLPD Women's Action Committee and joint secretary of Socialists for a Labour Victory.

THIS IS perhaps the most down-hearted conference I've ever been to.

The CLP [Constituency Labour Party] delegates are lacking in fight, and allowing policies to be watered down in a way that a couple of years ago they would never have done.

It's because of the election result, and the result of the leadership elections.

Party members as a whole have felt frightened by the election defeat and the rather spurious calls for unity have overwhelmed them. There is a fear that fighting will damage our election chances — a fear soaked up from the media and the Right of the Party.

COLIN JOHNSTON, delegate from Wallasey Labour Party

OURS WAS a very weak composite — no more expulsions. Effectively it accepted the expulsion of the five [Militant editorial board members].

The witch-hunt debate was taken in three composites — one about paper sales, one about the five Militant editorial board members, and then ours about no more expulsions.

They all fell because of the block vote — end of story.

Every vote was a card vote. The CLPs were 80% solid against restrictions, and the chair was worried, so he called for a card vote.

The delegate from Liverpool Walton works in a graveyard. He made a good speech, saying that the type of unity on offer now is the unity of the graveyard — lying six feet under and all facing the same way.

VIDYA ANAND, member of London Labour Party regional executive.

I AM VERY encouraged by the results of the NEC elections.

But the Left has crumbled, especially in its support for Heffer. Even Meacher voted for Kinnock.

The trial of the Militant editorial board was a disgrace. Surely now we must get rid of the bans, proscriptions, and expulsions — we want unity, not expulsions.

The Party has to adopt a programme of positive discrimination for women and ethnic minorities. I was the first black member of the London Regional Executive. It really is important that we show the black population that we are prepared to fight with them.

EL SALVADOR

1983

El Salvador
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25 May
Park Street,
London N1.
(01-359 2270)

JEREMY CORBYN, MP for Islington North

THE LABOUR movement has got to face up to the fact that there are three million people out of work, there are school-leavers who have never had a job, there are fewer houses being built than ever before, and hospitals are being closed.

If Labour is to win power again, then we have to convince people that we can put forward and carry out policies that will actually bring full employment and the services that people need.

That cannot be done by a fudged reform programme. It has to be a fundamental restructuring of the economy, and a total commitment on transferring spending from defence to social objectives.

I'm concerned that there is a danger that the Party will try to fudge its way back into power, and therefore not be able to deliver on the programme we've been fighting on for the past five years.

The debate on the general election campaign was rather limited. It wasn't at all clear as to where the responsibility for defeat lay.

I believe it was a product of the failure of the Party leadership to campaign on the policies before — and indeed, in some cases, during — the election campaign, and the deliberate sabotage of that campaign by some people who tried to discredit the Party's policy on unilateral disarmament.

HELEN JOHN, Greenham Common Peace Camp

I FEAR that if Neil Kinnock isn't watched, if there isn't tremendous pressure put on him, he will actually sell out the people in this country and the Party activists over disarmament.

Neil Kinnock showed an overwhelming desire to have the motion on unilateralism reinitiated. That's not a hopeful sign. I'm not inspired by this leadership one little bit.

I think the most important thing this conference has shown is that CND still has a mass following inside the Labour and trade union movement. There are lots of leaflets being given out here for the demonstration on October 22. It's important that there is massive support from trade unions and Labour Parties to give a tremendous boost to all the CND activists.

We must keep the Labour Party pinned into its unilateralist policy. The Labour Party is the major political party opposed to the weapons, and the trade union movement has the power to stop anything that is unacceptable to the people.

It is a question of making the trade unions realise their responsibilities. Many of them have passed unilateralist resolutions, but are not doing anything with them. The trade unions should show they really mean what they say and start taking industrial action.

TONY BANKS, MP for Newham North West

I THINK there'll be an increasing demand for making the block vote more accountable.

At the moment, the vote isn't being exercised to represent the views of the rank and file of the particular unions.

The expulsion of the five members of the Militant editorial board is a total diversion from what the Party should be doing — fighting the Tories. The five have been used as the sacrifices thrown to the capitalist wolves.

The Left of the Party must resist the panic that has set in among the Right and some sections of the Left — the idea that all of our policies have to be changed because of what happened on June 9.

The role of the Labour Party is to set out a programme for socialist change and campaign around it — not to keep on adapting it to every movement of electoral opinion.



No compromise on the Bomb



PHOTOS: JOHN HARRIS

By Joy Hurcombe,
secretary, Labour CND

ABOUT 3000 people turned out onto the streets of Brighton just before the start of Labour Party conference, to demand that we stand firm on our policy to scrap all nuclear weapons.

No other issue of this Conference can raise that level of support.

The message of this rally and march was that we will tolerate no compromise on the full programme of unilateral nuclear disarmament, and that includes our commitment to get rid of Polaris.

All the speakers noted the contradictions and weaknesses of the leadership's presentation of Party policy on disarmament at the General Election. The contributions of Healey, Hattersley, and Callaghan, to rubbish Party policy, were attacked.

It was ironic that at the time of the rally the NEC was meeting to discuss their recommendations on the disarmament resolutions. The TGWU resolution which reaffirms Party policy on unilateral nuclear disarmament received only 14 votes to 11 for NEC support.

Kinnock wanted remission [i.e. the resolution not voted on, but sent to the new NEC for a report-back at next year's conference]. So the fight is still on.

We will go for the full programme, and when we get it again, will our new leaders support and campaign for it?

Not everyone is happy!

"I THINK everyone is happy", said right-wing MP Donald Dewar after the leadership election result.

We're not. And we suspect a few other people aren't either.

In 1981, 80-odd% of the Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) voted for Tony Benn as deputy leader against Dennis Healey. Neil Kinnock nearly got voted off the CLPs section of the NEC. Roy Hattersley was a no-hoper for the CLPs section.

In 1983, 91.5% of the CLPs have voted for Neil Kinnock and 51% for Roy Hattersley.

What's happened? Have the CLPs swung miles to the right? Most of the CLPs who voted for Kinnock would not support him as he did on the NEC or unilateralism. They would not support the witch-hunt as he does.

But in the leadership election they were swayed by the 'Thank God It's Not Healey' factor.

In the conference resolutions on policy, too, there was evidence of a defensive mood. The

right wing are now the ones who argue for radical shifts in policy.

Why? In 1979-81 the Labour Party began to transform itself — away from old practices of talking left and then doing just whatever seems realistic within capitalism, and towards accountability and clear commitment.

But the transformation stalled because the Left left key areas like economic policy almost untouched, and didn't spread the fight for democracy into the trade unions enough.

The half-way transformation meant Labour was not such a convincing alternative to the Tories — but just when determination was most needed, the Left started travelling.

Many became alarmed at the implications of what the Left had achieved, or the prospect of further clashes with the Right.

Compare Michael Meacher's deputy leadership campaign with Tony Benn's.

Meacher went out of his way

to endorse, and present himself as a suitable partner for, Neil Kinnock. The result may paradoxically have been to lose Meacher votes.

Activists convinced by Meacher's line that Kinnock was after all a good left-winger could then imagine they could get the best of all worlds by voting Hattersley for deputy. Kinnock as leader would safeguard left-wing policies; the combination with Hattersley as deputy would safeguard the unity of the Party.

If these same activists had been reminded firmly that Kinnock cannot be relied on to defend any left-wing policy, then they might have seen it as important to elect a left-wing deputy.

'Thank God It's Not Healey' is no basis to build a real socialist Labour Party.

Roy Hattersley has made it quite plain that he wants to shift Party policy in a direction which would make it an alternative to Thatcher only in a 'Thank God

it's not the Tories' sense, and hardly an alternative at all to the Alliance. Neil Kinnock won't be much of a brake on him.

That will bring the new leadership into the conflict with the rank and file — sooner or later.

Both Hattersley and Kinnock have said they will continue the witch-hunt against the left, and there is no reason to disbelieve them on this.

While Kinnock and Hattersley may be satisfied with Alliance-type policies, there is no way that the rank and file of the labour movement will carry on through years of slump and arms race on that basis.

Yes, the working class is groggy and downcast at the moment. But the downturn in industrial struggle won't last forever. And when industrial struggle rises again, and working class confidence with it, it will be radical socialist policies that workers look for.

Let's prepare for that future now.

DIANA MINNS, secretary of Hornsey Labour Party

THE conference is going as the NEC would wish — but a few of the CLPs are starting to fight back a little bit against the bureaucratic chairing of Sam McCluskie.

Motions are nodded through in a way which suggests that first-time delegates can't really know what's going on. There really needs to be a proper introduction to conference for delegates, so they understand exactly what they are doing and an agreed procedure whereby the CLPs are given equal speaking time with the unions and Parliamentary Labour Party.

The first session was a big disappointment to almost everyone in the CLPs, I think. And now it looks as though issues like the Manchester Wythenshawe won't get a full discussion. They'll just be nodded through on the final day.

KEN LIVINGSTONE, leader of the Greater London Council

YOU'VE got the danger of the party slipping into a repeat of 1963, where a charismatic leader is elected and the emphasis is on that particular individual.

The desire to win after a long period in opposition becomes so strong that the policy issues get fudged. Of course it might lead to winning an election, but then the problems start if the policies aren't straight.

That's why we have to battle very hard now for accountability of the Shadow Cabinet to the Parliamentary Labour Party. It's no good having MPs accountable to their constituency if there is no control of the Cabinet.

We've got to be absolutely clear about our economic policy too. Unless we can get straight the point about who is going to pay for Labour's programme, we open the way for our policies being ripped to shreds in the election campaign. If the Labour Party isn't prepared to tackle the question of control of capital and control of the banks and finance houses then it's quite likely that the skilled working class voters who voted for Thatcher will not come back.

They won't come back if they think Labour's programme is going to be paid for out of even more taxation.

We have to say that we will use the wealth of the City to rebuild the welfare state.

It's important to bear in mind that the CLP delegates here were overwhelmingly in favour of the Heffer-Meacher ticket, but half of them were mandated to vote for Hattersley and over 90% of them for Kinnock. We are now in the quite odd position where there was more support for the hard left from the MPs than the CLPs.

There are valuable lessons here; we have failed to carry the most advanced layer of union activists with us.

BRIAN WEST, Labour Campaign for Gay Rights

THE LABOUR Campaign for Gay Rights is here to make sure that the Labour Party doesn't backtrack on any of the policies it has managed to form of gay rights over the past few years.

It is also here to make sure that any new policies adopted are not discriminatory against gays and lesbians.

The CLPs have been giving us a good deal of support, especially from the left, where we already have something of a base. We have found that the trade unions are more reactionary, though.

The election of Kinnock is no step forward for gay rights in the Party. He says that the Party should be working to improve the lot of blacks and women, but at no point has he said that the Party should be helping lesbians and gay men.

He builds his whole image on Kinnock the family man — around the family unit. We've got to persuade him that he's ignorant about the policies the Labour Party stands for and about the oppression of lesbians and gay men.

JOAN MAYNARD, MP
for Sheffield Brightside

THE NEC [National Executive Committee] results are the best thing we've had so far, I think, but they're not as good as we could have had.

We've obviously got to fight very hard to retain the policies of unilateral nuclear disarmament and coming out of the Common Market, and to make the economic policy more socialist.

One thing I do agree with Kinnock about is that we've got to turn the Party into a campaigning party. But we can't separate campaigning from the policy. We've got to bring the two together.

And we can't go out and campaign successfully while expulsions are going on. There won't be unity in the Party while we keep expelling people.

FRAN FAULKNER,
Coventry South East
CLP delegate

THE VOTE against the only motion opposing the sale of council houses, and the vote to remit one in favour of sales, are part of the trend in the Labour Party to go for what seems to be popular.

The leadership don't seem to see council housing as part of the welfare state which is being privatised — though attacks on housing are even more drastic than the attacks on the NHS.

Selling council houses affects [council] Direct Labour Organisations [DLOs], who are now being forced to make profits. That profit is being used to hold down the rents.

In Coventry the council had decided to freeze the rents. But it's paid for by scraping back money from the accounts which should be used for housing repairs.

Council house sales aren't seen as privatisation until it is shoved under people's noses and DLOs are being priced out of a job.

Once you buy your council house, you rely on private builders, not the DLO. In Coventry, the DLO has taken a 16% cut in bonus to try to win a contract.

When people talk about the welfare state, housing is always last, or forgotten. But housing is the centre of virtually everything.

Take education. If you live on an estate and it's run down, what are the chances of your children, when they go to school and are given homework, being able to do it?

The NHS is overburdened with people who are suffering because of the conditions they work in. They go to doctors with bronchitis, eye infections, rheumatism — all the things that are aggravated or caused by bad housing conditions.

Look at the number of battered wives and children where the chief cause is bad living conditions, and the same for children being taken into care.

Bad housing causes misery and puts undue stress on the social services.

BOB CRYER, former MP
for Keighley

ON MONDAY the Labour Party conference was a sad spectacle — five Labour Party members being expelled following an unparalleled witch-hunt by the right wing, in tacit conspiracy with the gutter press whose pages they so often use.

It was treated by the press as a triumph for Kinnock. He had better not believe it. Expelling people is not the way to success.

Many of the Parliamentary Labour Party were baying in their usual reactionary fashion during the five speeches from the Editorial Board, especially Joe Ashton. Will the NEC allow the 'Daily Star' to be sold on Labour Party premises after such a display of support from one of its more prominent paid commentators?

Union block votes confirm witch hunt

IN a chilled atmosphere the NEC held their 'trial' of the Militant Editorial Board.

Mechanically the appeals were processed and then, despite a brave attempt from Alex Lyon to get a debate, chair Sam McCluskie rammed through a vote.

When the show of hands for the reinstatement of Peter Taaffe looked uncomfortably close, McCluskie shouted Card Vote, and then the big block votes of the unions moved to force through expulsions.

The atmosphere of resentment and suspicion of the union leaders using hundreds of thousands of block votes to decide on issues that the CLPs will have to pay the price for increased as the roll call of shame felled the hopes of the Militant 5 and the hopes of the left, and the hopes of turning outwards to fight the Tories free of witch-hunts disappeared.

Jim Mortimer's sophisticated defence of the five expulsions added nothing to the case. He relied heavily on emphasising the legality of the process, mixing this with pseudo-rationalisations of how Marxism is only now acceptable if it is

THE DEBATE on the witch-hunt was held in closed session on Monday afternoon.

A solid formation of almost all the major unions confirmed the witch-hunt on all fronts.

The expulsion of the Militant editorial board was confirmed. The ban on Militant paper sales was confirmed. A resolution calling for no more expulsions was voted down.

This is how two delegates saw the debate.

tame, ineffective and locked away in the pages of the Morning Star!

But Mortimer never once explained where the expulsions were going to take the Party. And everyone who is serious about Labour, and its chance of being the political voice of a working class fighting the Tories knew that he had not answered that question.

As Colin Johnston asked the conference, how did the Labour Party gain from expelling Nye Bevan? No answer came from those whose hands grip their block votes and little else; and despair from those in the CLPs who know they have to fight the Tories at the grassroots, and pay

the price for the action agreed at secret meetings of the St. Ermin's group.

Russell Tuck in a speech more designed to stir puddings than conferences struggled to convince the CLPs (the core of the opposition to this dirty manoeuvre) that there was no witch-hunt, because there were no witches involved and anyway Militant were not being expelled for their ideas.

The true Hyde of Mortimer's Dr. Jekyll was exposed by Jack

Straw. With his eye firmly on a future shadow cabinet seat, as one of Neil Kinnock's 'bright young men', he openly blurted out what all the right-wing in the Party want.

'Militant does not belong in the Labour Party' and 'they are not the only ones'.

A catchword at Conference this week has been 'unity', but the actions of the NEC and trade union magnates will only open up more divisions within the Party.

	Unions	CLPs	MPs	Total
Leader				
Neil Kinnock	72.6%	91.5%	49.3%	71.27%
Roy Hattersley	27.2%	1.9%	26.1%	19.29%
Eric Heffer	0.1%	6.6%	14.3%	6.30%
Peter Shore	0.1%	0%	10.3%	3.14%
Deputy leader				
Roy Hattersley	88.1%	51.0%	55.7%	67.27%
Michael Meacher	11.8%	47.8%	29.4%	27.89%
Denzil Davies	0%	0.8%	10.9%	3.53%
Gwyneth Dunwoody	0.1%	0.3%	4.0%	1.32%

The unions have 40% weight in the electoral colleges, the CLPs 30%, and MPs 30%.

Once again the Wilson show?

JOHN PALMER, a well-known Marxist writer,
spoke to John Bloxam

for that process.

I am thinking particularly of the currents around Marxism Today and the Labour Coordinating Committee.

I'm all for a revision of policy. Some of the policies are totally antiquated and out of date. They relate neither to an electoralist strategy nor, certainly, to a class struggle strategy.

But this is being used to carry the Labour Party into ground already occupied by the centre. From that point of view I think it is bound to fail. And Kinnock does not have this deus ex machina of the white heat of the technological revolution which looked like a solution to the problems of British capitalism in 1963.

I think what was most striking about the CLPs was the massive vote for Hattersley and Kinnock in the leadership election.

Of course one would expect the CLPs not to vote for the expulsion of Militant, which is such a specious operation that it would be difficult to see the average CLP swallowing it.

But I think the basic orientation of the CLPs is back towards the centre-right middle ground.

That is revealed by their willingness to vote for the centre-right dream ticket. It was another way of abandoning any serious struggle for socialist politics.

I think the reason for that is that there is in the short run a contradiction between electoralism, and electoral advantage, and what is actually required by the state of the struggle against Thatcherism. The kind of policies needed to mobilise the movement against Thatcher may in the short run be electorally difficult to sell.

But that is a contradiction which in a period of crisis cannot be escaped, and the real test of socialists in the Labour Party is which they put first — chasing the chimera of electoralism, or putting forward relevant class struggle politics.

They've opted for electoralism. And that conveyor belt will take them, whatever their subjective intentions, to the right.

I believe there needs to be a drastic look at the whole question of what a socialist economic strategy is. I'm particularly interested in initiatives from the bottom upwards in the construction of economic policy — workers' plans —

the whole area of prefigurative socialist politics, politicising trade union struggles, democratising campaigns around the health service and housing...

All of that revision of policy can be used as an excuse to dump principled commitments — or it can be used as a means to advance struggles and politicise them.

On the EEC, I don't regard withdrawal as a socialist policy, so it doesn't distress me that the NEC are abandoning it.

It's always struck me as bizarre that the Treaty of Rome is described, quite correctly, as quintessentially capitalist and reactionary, and the structures of the EEC as anti-socialist, in a way that implies that the monarchy and the British state and the House of Lords and so on are in some more progressive category.

We have to recognise the inevitable integration of capitalism on an international scale. There is the emerging material basis for a European working-class socialist strategy — a material basis created by the integration of capitalism.

The issue is not withdrawal or not-withdrawal. That is something for the future, depending on the balance of forces in an unpredictable situation where there could be workers' governments in one or other European country in isolation from the rest.

The issue now is the construction of a European socialist alternative strategy, based on the mobilisation around the peace movement, around the unemployment issue, the maximisation of benefits and social security payments at the highest level throughout the Community, women's rights, anti-racism, etc.

None of this means that we should not have policies for execution on a national basis too. But to counterpose the two is actually to end up in bed with the British state and the Union Jack.

I think the position that the Labour Party took on the Falklands was prepared for years by the capitulation to nationalism which we've seen in European matters.

Labour and the censors

Reg Race spoke at a fringe meeting with Ken Loach on 'Questions of Leadership'

KEN Loach's films, which were commissioned by Channel Four, have been prevented from being shown because of the activities of right-wing Labour Party supporters.

There are no legal problems about showing Ken Loach's films, it is simply that prominent right-wingers in the Labour Party — like Frank Chapple of the EETPU — believed that it would be disadvantageous for them to be shown walking out of interviews in these films.

Ken Loach's films discussed questions of leadership; and they identified problems which exist in the trade union movement.

It is perfectly plain to any reasonable socialist that sometimes trade union leaders and the TUC are willing to undermine industrial disputes.

This certainly happened during the ASLEF dispute in 1982, and, in a less extreme form, in the National Health Service workers' dispute in the same year.

These problems of the leadership being willing to opt for a quiet life certainly are more powerfully expressed when Labour is in government.

The Callaghan government, in 1978/9, ensured that the 5 per cent pay policy that had been voted down by the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party conference was implemented rigorously. It was none other than Mr Roy Hattersley, the new deputy leader of the Labour Party, who was the policeman in charge of vetting pay claims and pay offers during that period.

These problems in the labour movement exist simply because trade unions are being more and more incorporated into the state apparatus. It is in the interests of the Establishment that trade unions are docile, quiescent, and malleable, and very often they obtain these qualities from the trade union leadership.

It is of course true that in many unions democracy flourishes and the leadership takes real account of the rank and file. But in a wide range of unions there can be enormous leadership pressure exerted to cool off situations and prevent the members from obtaining what they desire.

This has reached an extreme form in the electricians' and plumbers' union, where branches are closed if they disagree with the leadership, where files are kept on Labour Party members, and where the general secretary of the union asked people to vote for an individual SDP candidate — who was of course being opposed by an official Labour candidate — at the general election.

These people are still allowed to be members of the Labour Party, whereas members of the Militant editorial board are not.

Building in the workplace

ONE OF the most important tasks before the labour movement is to develop workplace Labour Party branches. This was the theme of the Socialist Organiser meeting at this year's Labour Party conference.

Chair Ann Crowder stressed the importance of bringing politics into the work place and the need of a direct link between the Labour Party and the work place.

The residential workers' industrial action in which she is

involved could not be kept up, she said, without the support it is getting from local Labour Parties. She thought the possibilities of involving women would be greater in workplace branches, but at present Walworth Road has only 38 branches registered.

Victimised UCW militant Alan Fraser told how young people had been brought into his workplace branch who had no previous involvement in politics or even the union.

Bob Clay congratulated

Socialist Organiser for pushing workplace branches at Labour Party conference. He thought workplace branches had to be an integral part of the Labour Party and not just an afterthought with no real say in the Labour Party. They are important not just in protecting the Labour Party against Tebbit's attacks on funds but also for political development.

In the North East some shipyard union branches already sent delegates to GMCs.

Scrap the bosses!
Stop the Bomb!
A Class Fighter pamphlet
10p

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London N1 2SY.

Labour has failed blacks

By Monica Johnson, the only black woman delegate at the conference

I THINK I made a tactical error in not pinning down Jo Richardson and Ann Davis who were there, representing the women's section of the NEC and the women's rights study group, and I opened it to the floor for discussion.

Jo Richardson and Ann Davis chose not to make any response. In fact Ann Davis said, 'Let's have some more questions' after I'd finished speaking and a couple of other women there did allude to the fact that it was a serious issue. I made a point about the lack of black women delegates at this conference and the fact that as women in the party I saw us as the true progressives and what were we doing to encourage not only black people but black women to join the party and become active.

But there was just no response. And it wasn't even mentioned in your bulletin that this point was raised. I think this is really serious, especially if you bear in mind that the conference arrangements committee may not even include the resolutions on positive discrimination.

There was a delegation yesterday, and I believe also today, on that very issue — pushing for the resolutions on positive discrimination to be included on the agenda.

I think the Labour Party has failed black people and ethnic minorities and they continue to fail.

It's only at election time that there is a lot of activity amongst black constituents. People like me, the token blacks in the Labour Party, are called upon to be convenors of ethnic minority working groups, which I am in Dulwich, and the issue is shoved on to us, which I believe gives my comrades an excuse not to do very much about the issue. We've got our black brothers and sisters dealing with the situation and they're the best to do it.

This is one of the issues in the Labour Party that is constantly being fudged rather than being raised as a serious issue. I feel very strongly about the tokenism in the Labour Party. The issues I raise pertaining to the situation of black people are either ignored or people, because they've never really thought about it, just don't know what to say.

I've got a lot of respect for Jo Richardson, but I was really surprised that she had nothing to say on that issue.

I find it very hard to feel optimistic and I feel very confused about my position as a Labour Party activist. I feel very confused about my own situation in Southwark where there are a lot of black constituents.

On the doorstep during the last election black people were telling me that they were not going to vote. They had been Labour voters all the years they had been in this country. The Labour Party had failed them and continued to fail them. The only time they see the Labour Party is at election time so they were not going to vote.

The conference is a sham. Black issues are being ignored, CLPs denied a voice. Sam McCluskie (in the chair) is using his position to manipulate conference.

Everyone talks about democracy, but here where there is a forum for democratic debate it's not happening.

I'm tempted to go and sit on the beach for the rest of the week. Why am I wearing this delegate's card? It's meaningless.

DIANA MINNS, secretary Hornsey CLP

As far as women in the Party are concerned this conference shows no signs of being any better than last year's. Judith Hart at least knows that she shouldn't be patronising. Sam McCluskie isn't too aware of it. We are beginning to educate him a little but I do think that we've had a very raw deal so far.

It was right for the woman from Hackney to make a speech about the sexism of the trade union delegates. It didn't seem to have a lot of effect on the people it was aimed at but it did win a lot of sympathy from other women delegates from the CLPs. It's very upsetting and disappointing to come to a conference from a constituency where you think you might have got rid of a lot of the latent sexism, only to discover it is still there in the movement amongst those people who have a lot of influence.



Bureaucratic obstruction prevented many Constituency Labour Parties getting extra women delegates as provided for in the Labour Party Constitution. Women delegates staged a protest on the conference floor over this.

'The most macho Conference for years'

SEXISM is an explosive issue at this year's Labour Party.

As we go to press, the resolutions on women's rights — more numerous this year than ever before — have yet to come up for debate.

As in previous years, women will be demanding the right to elect the women's section of the NEC from their own Labour women's conference, to put five resolutions onto the Labour Party national conference agenda from the women's conference and to have positive discrimination on parliamentary shortlists.

Anger

But in the 'Labour Women's Briefing' fringe meeting organised by the NEC, and in the conference itself, women's anger has exploded against sexism and

bureaucratic obstruction.

NEC Women's Committee Chair, Ann Davis, blamed 'bad communication' for the lack of campaigning and organisation of women in the Party.

Women at the meeting called it bureaucratic blocking of women's issues.

The top 'representatives' of women in the Labour Party, like Ann Davis and Joyce Gould, don't represent the real women activists in the Party, who are to be found in the women's sections and women's conference.

The women's conferences are the fastest growing and most radical of all the Party conferences. That's the real reason why there hasn't been a women's conference this year and why the demands for greater women's representation

are fought off.

The right wing have no basic objection to sectoral conferences electing their own NEC members (the youth do it) but will block it because they know that the women elected would be left-wingers.

In the conference hall itself, the chair is deliberately patronising, women delegates have been ruled out of order, and women from the CLPs are suffering sexist abuse, especially from the male-dominated union delegates.

The right wing are sanctioning the sexism — it serves to keep the women, and therefore a large section of the left, intimidated, quiet and therefore in their seats.

Socialist Organiser talked to some of the delegates at conference.

ANN CROWDER, East Nottingham CLP delegate

THE CHAIR is abusing conference. He is using his position to divide the unions and the Constituency Labour Parties, talking about 'us' and 'them'.

He keeps calling speakers to speak by name, so it's obviously pre-arranged. CLP delegates are ignored when they want to speak.

MPs have had much more than their fair share of speaking time. The trade union leaders are moving their motions, not the ordinary members from the delegations.

It wasn't as bad as this last year, or the year before that. At least then you had a chance of being called, whoever you were.

Women were treated with much more respect last year. This year there is an incredible hostility to women, especially from the trade union delegations towards women from the CLPs.

There are nasty comments when you walk past them, or the minute you get up to make a point of order.

ANN PETTIFOR, CLPD Women's Action Committee

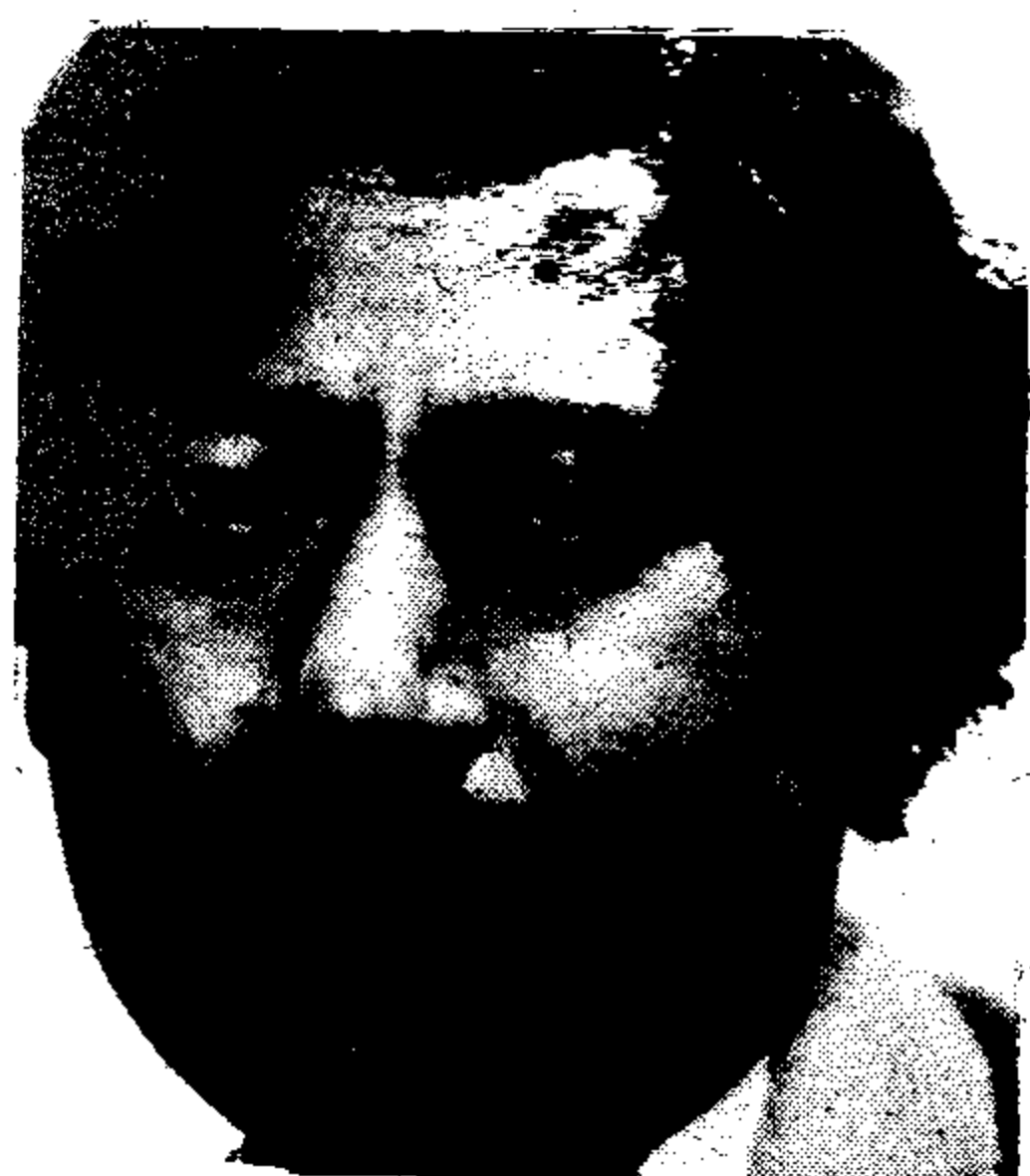
I HAVE been coming to conference since 1977, and this is one of the most macho conferences I've ever been to.

The chair is very authoritarian. His attitude is to try to discipline delegates, especially the women.

I think it is because Sam McCluskie is in the chair. The Party at large doesn't seem to have become suddenly more sexist. There are more women's resolutions than ever before.

His style is clearly that of a trade union leader used to dealing with tough situations, and not with comrades holding a debate.

Muhammad must stay!



NATIONAL MARCH OCTOBER 8

Muhammad must stay! National march and rally, Saturday October 8. Assemble 11am, Booth St Recreation Ground, off Soho Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, and march to city centre for rally. Officially supported by the local authority workers' union NALGO.

Stop the sexism!

THE REASON why I addressed the conference this morning [Tuesday] was the unacceptable behaviour of some male delegates who were sitting behind us.

Throughout yesterday's debate they subjected us to the most foul sexist rubbish whenever we tried to speak or were called to the platform.

The point I wanted to make was that women are here on the same basis as men, despite the disenfranchisement of many additional women delegates.

I am, in fact, the additional women's delegate from Hackney North CLP. I'm one of a very rare breed at this conference — there are even fewer women delegates here than last year.

LESLEY COURCOUF, women's delegate from Hackney North, explains why she spoke out on sexism at the conference

Basically, we should not have to listen to men shouting 'darling', and 'dear' at us and asking for our phone numbers while we are listening to the debate. I wanted to demand that they stopped.

I wanted Sam McCluskie [in the chair] to agree to take alternate male and female speakers from the floor. In fact, there have been more women speakers today, I think, so I think I've made a slight impact.

The reaction when I spoke was quite good, I thought. I started off by saying, 'Comrade Chairboy and boys', and that got a lot of applause.

But someone else told me that some male delegates were just poo-pooing it and laughing.

It appears that the Sun are using this story to witch-hunt Arthur Scargill and the NUM. We totally reject that, and dissociate ourselves from it. We have no evidence whatsoever that it was the NUM responsible for the harassment, and we are assured that it was not.

We welcome very much the support that the NUM are going to give to the women's composite resolution.

Results of the abortion referendum

Helping to keep Ireland divided

by Paddy Dollard

SOME READERS criticised my account three weeks ago of the 26 Counties referendum to make the present legal ban on abortion part of the constitution because I focused on the implications for Protestant/Catholic and North/South relations, and not on women's rights.

"It should be Paddy Dollard", said one critic. Perhaps. But not for the reason he was thinking of.

One of the most striking things about the referendum campaign which ended on September 7 with a two-to-one vote for the amendment was that almost everyone, on both sides, expressed general satisfaction with the present legal ban on abortion, under which Southern Ireland exports its abortions to Britain.

Mainstream opponents of the amendment argued that it would bring legalised abortion nearer, because it was so ambiguously worded, and that it should be rejected for that reason.

The small group of campaigners for legal abortion — a woman's right to choose — were completely overshadowed, and denounced and condemned, by most of those who campaigned for a 'no' vote.

Roughshod

The referendum was about abortion — but not about changing the position of women in 26 County society. Though it is possible that the courts may so interpret the amendment as to ban the contraceptive 'coil', for example, for now the referendum does not affect women as they vote.

The stark immediate issue posed by the referendum was whether or not the Catholic majority would use its voting power to vote against the amendment — a simple, in principle, Catholic dogma on all counts.

The referendum was one of the most important events in Irish politics in a very long time. It should be properly so.

"IF THE old Protestant Stormont Parliament, with the full backing of the Protestant Church, but against the united will of the Roman Catholic Church and people, had forced through Parliament a law dealing with some complex moral issue, do you not think that Stormont would have been accused of the vilest form of sectarianism by acting against the united wishes of the Roman Catholic community and by insensitivity to Roman Catholic opinion?"

Victor Griffin, Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin.

felt reverberating through Irish politics for many years to come and perhaps for as long as the 'Mother and Child' controversy of 1951.

It is, and will continue to be, cited in the North as evidence that Home Rule has meant Rome Rule in the South.

Listen to some of the comments from Protestants, Catholics, Unionists, Nationalists and socialists.

Sectarian

On August 26 the Unionist Belfast Newsletter commented editorially:

"Although there would be extensive and vociferous opposition in Northern Ireland to easier access to abortion, Unionists interpret the campaign in the South as an attempt to strengthen the theocratic nature of the state.

Victory for the amendment campaign will therefore serve to strengthen objections even amongst the most moderate Unionists to the South. Claims that the Republic is essentially a sectarian society will be strengthened. While both Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions recognise that human life is sacred, the amendment debate in the Republic is essentially about freedom of choice and the role of the State."

In its time the Belfast Newsletter has published a glowing editorial when Orange bombs went off in Dublin. Those constitutional Republicans in the South who let the Belfast Newsletter get in a position to write like this have a lot to answer for.

The same Orange rag could truthfully tell its already bigoted readers two days before the referendum:

"Roman Catholics attending Church services all over Eire yesterday were told by priests to vote for the amendment."

It presented the last minute TV broadcast by Taoiseach (prime minister) Garret Fitzgerald, calling for a 'no' vote, as a conflict between a good pol-

itician and 'the Roman Catholic hierarchy' — which in Orange demonology is the 'anti-Christ', the enemy.

On the day of the referendum the Belfast Newsletter pointed to the role being played by the 'Republican' Charles J. Haughey — a Catholic bigot and simultaneously the most vocal 'United Ireland' man and old-fashioned Green Nationalist among the party leaders in the South. It presents Haughey as the Catholic hierarchy's man, and says:

"Little thought seems to have been given to the effect the pro-life campaign has had and may continue to have on relations between the two countries north and south of the Border."

Of course, the Newsletter may be held to have little right to comment on such matters, being an advocate of (inevitably sectarian) Protestant majority rule in the Six Counties. It got all it could from the referendum in the way of anti-South, anti-Catholic propaganda.

Nevertheless, it expresses the attitude of one million or so Protestants, north and south of the Border. And what it says in this case is true.

Strangled

In the Belfast Newsletter a week after the referendum, Roy Bradford (former minister in the power-sharing executive of Faulkner and Fitt, brought down by the Orange general strike of May 1974), wrote under the headline, "An Eye-Opener for Irish Protestants":

"The deed is done. The bright idea that the constitution of the Republic might be liberalised [and] made more acceptable to Protestants has been lured up a dark entry and noisily strangled."

"The Protestant community in the South has spoken up and stood up for its civil rights in a way it has never done before. This augurs better for future relations between the two parts of the island."

"But the pattern which emerges from the referendum is plain, with its implications for any hope of agreement between the two traditions."

"In the urban areas, where the more thinking, educated citizens are concentrated and exposed to the climate of today, the attitude is open-minded. But for the rest the old adage holds: Roma locuta, causa finita est — Rome has spoken, the matter is finished."

"Starry-eyed Republicans have seen their future and it doesn't work. Protestant citizens in the South are no longer starry-eyed..."

In the speech quoted at the head of this column, Victor Griffin, Dean of St Patrick's Dublin, speaking on a 'no' platform which he shared with Michael D. Higgins, chair of the Labour Party, spelled out the



issues as those of his general persuasion saw them:

"In truth the proposed amendment has little to do with the question of abortion, which is already prohibited by law."

"It has everything to do with the question of whether we are to enshrine in the constitution a particular ethical view on certain moral issues. This, I maintain, is not properly a matter for the constitution. It is a matter for the churches."

"A pluralist and truly Republican society will be sceptical of authorities or pressure groups, whether ecclesiastical, political, or racial, and will keep its constitutional decrees and parliamentary legislation on moral matters to a minimum."

The Irish Times put the issues pointedly in an editorial (August 30) entitled, "The Second Partition of Ireland". It insisted that the whole nation would not be voting.

"What we are working for now is freedom FROM the Six Counties, freedom from the promises down the generations."

"It is not just the Unionists we are abandoning. We are cutting off the one-third of our people in the North who represent nationalism..."

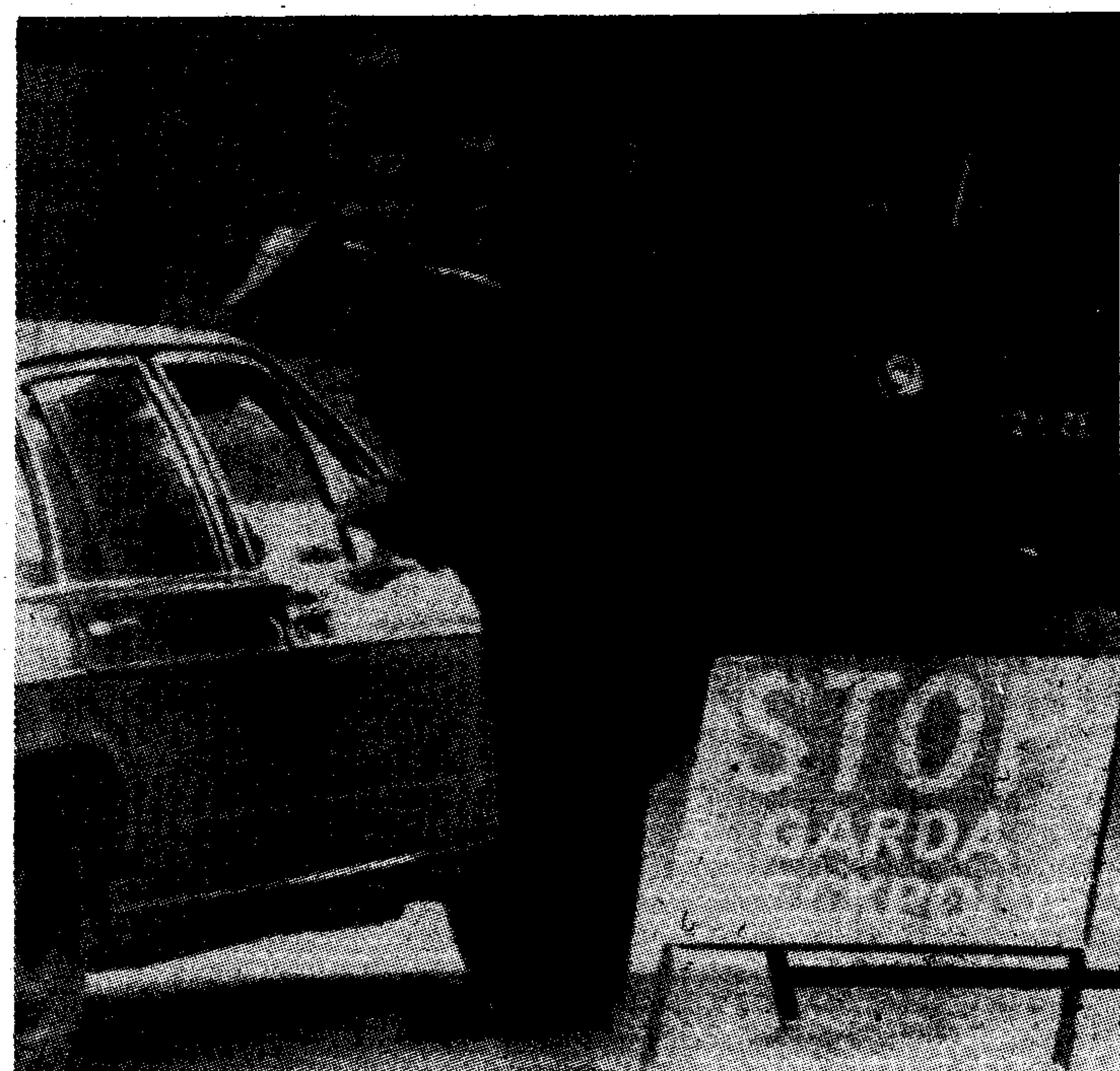
And the Irish Times editorial on August 31 finished: "Forget the North."

Michael D. Higgins, a serious left-winger and opponent of the coalition between Labour and Fine Gael, spoke the truth and summed up the bitter experience of the referendum when (at the meeting with Dean Griffin mentioned above) he said that the choice posed by the referendum was one between:

"triumphalist assertion of the views of the intolerant on present and future generations, and a commitment to a pluralist, caring, compassionate society."

The fact that two-thirds of the electorate either didn't vote, or voted no, gives some hope for the future. But the intolerant Catholic triumphalists hold the stage at the moment.

CORRECTION: The account of the referendum in SO 146 contained an error: the 'no' vote in Dublin City was about 50%, not two-thirds of the poll.



26 County police man a checkpoint

Dublin moves against H-block break-out

A recent article in the Provisional Sinn Fein weekly An Phoblacht reports on the mobilisation of police and troops in Southern Ireland against the Republican prisoners escaped from Long Kesh.

MASSIVE collaboration by Free State gardai and army personnel was put into operation on the border on Sunday on the direct instructions of Coalition premier Garret FitzGerald and Minister for Justice Michael Noonan, in an effort to recapture any of the H-Block escapees moving south.

All available members of the Garda Special Task Force, backed up by uniformed gardai and Free State soldiers from the 27th, 28th and 29th Battalions at Dundalk, Finner and Monaghan were deployed along the border from Sunday evening. Traffic moving southwards was stopped and searched and a number of houses near the border were searched. The operation has been continuing into the week.

Hunted down

Northern direct-ruler James Prior told a press conference on Monday:

"These men will be on the run, they will be hunted down whether they are in the north of the island or the south of the island, and we shall be doing all we can, in cooperation with the Republic of Ireland, to see that they are captured."

In Dublin, two out of the three establishment newspapers were quick to back up the official collaboration, which ran totally counter to the popular admiration around the twenty-six counties for the IRA's latest spectacular exploit.

On Monday, the Irish Times editorialised 'sadly' over the break-out:

"Are some of them foolish enough to think that they will be more welcome on this side of the border than on the northern side? If so, they will discover their mistake the hard way."

"The escapees are not heroes or myth-makers: they put at risk peace in the community — and destroy peace within themselves."

The Irish Independent's editorial on Tuesday proclaimed:

"There is no haven for them here."

If any of the escapees are recaptured in the South, they face the prospect of either imprisonment in the Free State or even extradition.

In August this year, the Dublin High Court — ignoring established precedent — ordered the extradition of Philip McMahon, who was one of the 12 republican prisoners who escaped from Newry Courthouse in 1975.

This case is awaiting appeal to the Free State Supreme Court, which has already signalled its wish to re-interpret IRA activity

as 'non-political' and therefore outside the restrictions of the 1965 Extradition Act and Free State Constitution.

Six of the eight IRA prisoners who broke out of Crumlin Road Jail in June 1981 are currently serving ten year sentences in Portlaoise Jail. They were recaptured in the South and charged with the escape under the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act.

The first successful use of that Act was also against an IRA escaped prisoner, Gerry Tuite, who made a dramatic escape from Brixton Prison in London in December 1981. He was arrested in the Free State in the following year and is also serving ten years in Portlaoise.

In a statement congratulating the prisoners on their escape, Dublin Sinn Fein commented:

"Despite media attempts to put this escape in the context of causing more violence in our society, it should be seen for what it is — another blow against Britain's continued armed presence in our country — in fact a blow against violence."

Extraditing

We condemn the twenty-six county government for their unashamed collaboration in sealing the border and their certain intention of extraditing any of the escapees who might cross to the South.

We view this collaboration as merely doing Britain's dirty work and feel that the Dublin government would reflect public opinion better by using its influence to secure a British withdrawal rather than maintaining their presence in Ireland."



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Sri Lanka

ACCORDING to a recent statement from the leader of the now-banned Tamil parliamentary party, Tamil United Liberation Front, the time for a political solution in Sri Lanka is running short.

The Sinhala-communist government has rushed through legislation specifically outlawing parties which advocate a separate Tamil state. Thus the TULF MPs expect their seats to be declared vacant, and by-elections to be called on November 21.

During the recent anti-Tamil pogroms, the worst in Sri Lanka's history, the government provoked the situation by official broadcasts, speeches, and newspaper articles, and the army and police joined in the slaughter.

The banned opposition party fears fresh violence. The TULF, pledged to a non-violent campaign on Gandhian principles, is likely now to be overtaken by more militant groups [such as the Tamil Tigers] prepared to use guerilla warfare to defend their community, and in the process to split the country.

According to the TULF, the Sinhalese government has consistently understated the latest outbreak of communal violence.

Official figures say between 360 and 390 Tamils died, but in reality it was more than 2000. More than 10,000 Tamil homes were burned and destroyed, and 155,000 Tamils rendered homeless.

The government has also outlawed the parties of the left, smearing them with alleged association with alleged gun-smuggling by foreign powers, namely the Soviet Union and East Germany.

Its repression is directed not only against the Tamils but also against the organised labour movement.

In brief

THE LEFT has lost further electoral ground in France. Sarcelles, near Paris, a town which has had a Communist Party mayor for 18 years, went over to the Right at a by-election on October 2.

SEVERAL hundred people, it is estimated, have been executed, and tens of thousands arrested or deported, in an 'anti-crime' drive in China. Even official figures cite 31,000 arrested.

According to the Paris daily Le Monde, the drive "seems linked to political repression".

THE SHIPYARD occupations in West Germany are over. But the workers' resistance is not finished. 130,000 shipyard and metal workers demonstrated in Bonn on September 29 against cutbacks in their industries.

THE GENERALS' so-called 'return to democracy' in Turkey received another adornment on September 29, when the National Assembly adopted a new press law. Local magistrates can close newspapers or ban texts. The national government can proscribe any publication which is "a threat to the unity of the country, national security, and public morals".

STILL deadlock in Chad, where France has sent its biggest military force to Africa since the Algerian war of independence. France and Hissene Habre still control most of the south, Libya and Goukouni Oueddei the north.

The French government will be hoping to promote a settlement at a Franco-African conference of governments starting on October 3.

A teraz uznajemy
twoja niezależność
i samorządność



'Now we acknowledge your independence and self-management' (Print from Poland)

Gwiazda's letters to his family

January. I have developed a healthy habit of refusing to be in the least bit perturbed by things over which I have no control. I've managed to cut my smoking down to 8-10 a day, so that what I'm allowed to buy in the prison canteen lasts out. Nothing new here. They took away my coupons, so you won't have any trouble in sending me parcels.

The snails come out in the walking places when it warms up — they have brown shells. In one yard there are four of them.

To try and keep fit somehow, I've been doing exercises in the mornings and evenings: 100 knee-bends, 20-30 press-ups, 30 lifts of a bucket of water in each hand.

Both my mates are asleep; they've received permission from the doctor to remain in bed during the day. I'm lucky myself, in being healthy and not needing to lie down, so I'm not allowed to!

We had a "kipisz" — something like a search. When we returned from a walk, we found all our stuff turned over. The confiscation of my tobacco was a great loss. It had been made up from carefully collected dog-ends and was just half-way through the process of refinement with the help of syrup from strawberry jam and apple rinds. They said it had been thrown away because it had been 'mixed with tea'. Don't try and understand it — even I, after 14 months of imprisonment, was struck dumb.

Send me some Pyralgin (pain-killer), they've only got anti-neuralgin here, which doesn't help me at all and further strongly aggravates my stomach.

They X-rayed my gall stone; it's still there, nothing has happened to it. I won't be able to see the photograph, of course, because it's a secret. The same as not knowing what medicines will be given.

March. On the subject of prison — when I was in the army, the battery commander was constantly threatening me with arrest. When he was away, the non-commissioned officers took advantage of it and clapped me inside. The commander gave them a terrible telling off when he returned: "Until now,

Gwiazda was only afraid of being arrested, and now what have you done? Shown him that it's not so terrible, after all. Now he will be afraid of nothing." A similar situation must exist in Poland now. All at once, for no reason whatever, some few thousand people passed through the mythical prison and stopped being afraid.

I am having trouble with the remaining teeth which are left to me after a year of prison dental care. I'm unable to eat food quickly enough in order to finish it before it goes completely cold.

Your letter of March 8 found its way into the indictment. You wrote something too harsh about the prison service. (...)

April. I'm sitting in the "kabryna" (special punishment cell) and finishing off the last of my stock of food from the January parcel.

There are snails in only one of the walking places — there were four, but now I've seen only two, one of which didn't look too good.

In January I pushed a semi-rotten apple core towards them. They seemed to move in its direction, but you can't really tell much about a snail's intentions — especially if it's freezing cold — in only half-an-hour.

I had intended to start writing in the morning, but could not tear myself away from Easter breakfast. Apart from what you sent, there was: a frankfurter saved from Thursday, and beef from Saturday. I had also saved an egg, it must have been from Friday, since they didn't give us any today. It's odd — on Christmas Eve, we got carp, but at Easter, they couldn't even give us a boiled egg.

Whilst writing this description of my feast-day, I quite forgot that I was in the "kabryna". This is a real prison, not just a "hotel". Most important of all, there is a real bucket, and no WC of any kind. Inside the cell, there is a barred cage with another lock. I feel as though I'm on an outing — fresh air, cold, few people, sleeping on a hard bed under a blanket with no sheets. The only thing missing is the beautiful scenery and, of course, the possibility of going on long walks. (From Voice of Solidarnosc, no 70-71).

Andrzej Gwiazda

Save this Polish union leader!

ANDRZEJ Gwiazda, vice-chairman of NSZZ Solidarnosc, has been imprisoned since the imposition of martial law in Poland on 13 December 1981 — 'awaiting trial'.

Andrzej Gwiazda is chronically ill. He has suffered from stomach ulcers for 12 years; these can revive as often as several times a year [as bleeding ulcers], depending on conditions and treatment. He also suffers from gall stones [currently a large stone], and parodontosis; in Bialoleka Internment Camp and in Rakowiecka Street Prison, he lost all his front teeth. Chronic inflammation of the sinuses brings on continuous headaches during cold periods. These illnesses are mutually compounded, and exclude the use of some medicines. His stay under investigative arrest is leading to a rapid intensification of his illnesses and to the emaciation of his system.

DURING discussion with his friends, he sometimes mentioned his childhood, which he had spent in Kazakhstan (USSR), to which he, his mother and grandmother were deported when the Red Army entered Pinsk (in 1939), where they had been staying at the time. His father survived the war in an officers' PoW camp.

Andrzej told of the hunger he had experienced in the Kazakhstani village of Immantau, and about his resourcefulness in finding food on the steppes and taiga. Once, after eating some grains which he had chipped out of frozen heaps spilled out near some railway lines, he fell ill with an ulcerating inflammation of the alimentary canal. He was close to death, and still experiences the effects of the illness to this day.

The Gwiazdas returned to Poland in 1946, and lived first in Chorzow, and then in Gdansk.

In December 1970*, Gwiazda was present at the Gdansk Voivodship Committee during the most heated moments. He caused armoured transport vehicles to stop by inserting metal rods in their caterpillars.

In 1973, he was thrown out of the Polytechnic (he had been employed there), and was unable to obtain any other work for half a year. Finally, he was taken on at the Elmor factory. In 1970, the workforce at Elmor had been frightened, and had behaved passively. Slowly, the atmosphere changed. Andrzej spent a lot of time in discussions with workers. They liked his directness and warm-heartedness, and respected his professional knowledge. In November 1976, Andrzej and his wife, Joanna, wrote a letter to the Sejm (Polish Parliament) in defence of the workers of Radom and Ursus**. Surveillances and persecutions followed. The Gwiazdas established contact with Bogdan Borusewicz*** and other activists of the democratic opposition, and on 30 April 1978 Andrzej signed the founding declaration of Free Trade Unions.

The Security Service harassed him constantly, and he was detained many times. But they stopped taking him from his place of work from the time when the workers attempted to remove the wheels of the Wolga, hiding Gwiazda in the shop, which they roped off, adding a notice stating 'work under high tension'. In March 1980, the director approached him with an offer of a profitable contract trip to Algeria. Joanna was out of work at the time, Andrzej was ill, and both were very tired. They hesitated. (...) Andrzej decided to stay. Everyone knows what happened next: during the August 1980 strike, he was a Praesidium member of the Inter-factory Strike Committee, later he was Vice-Chairman of NSZZ Solidarnosc. Andrzej is honest, courageous, noble and above all, very warm and kind.

Notes

*In December 1970, scores of workers demonstrating against huge price increases were killed on the Baltic Coast by the militia and army.

**In June 1976 strikes broke out all over Poland in protest against massive price increases. In Radom and Ursus, during demonstrations, hundreds of workers were heavily beaten and many received long prison sentences.

***Bogdan Borusewicz was a member of KOR (former Workers Defence Committee), and one of the leaders of the August 1980 strike in the Gdansk shipyard. Although shot at in December 1981, he managed to evade arrest. Still underground at the present time, he is one of the three members of the underground Regional Coordinating Commission for the Gdansk Region.

† Between one and 1½ million Poles were deported to the USSR in 1939 from the area occupied by Stalin's army by agreement with Hitler, who invaded Poland from the west. 13 million people lived in Stalin's area, 8 million Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians and 5 million Poles. A quarter or a third of all the Poles were deported. (Our note, SO).

From 'Voice of Solidarnosc'



Iran: the toll rises

THE Iran/Iraq war has just completed its third year — with 300,000 dead so far. Meanwhile, a new report has appeared on repression in Iran.

FRESH evidence of widespread torture and secret executions of political prisoners in Iran came to light recently in a report by Amnesty International. The evidence, corroborated in extensive interviews with former prisoners, show that nightly executions were commonplace in Tehran's Evin gaol, many not being publicly reported.

One former prisoner told Amnesty International that 497 political prisoners were killed at Evin prison in a single night in July 1981, with only 33 executions being subsequently announced.

Another, held for six months at the Revolutionary Guard headquarters in Rasht in Northern Iran near the Caspian Sea said that approximately 100 executions had taken place during that time of which only three had been reported.

Victims have included teenagers and pregnant women, two groups of people whose execution is specifically prohibited in international law, Amnesty International said.

Most of those executed, like almost all political prisoners in Iran, are believed to have been tortured, most frequently by whipping, with such devices as leather whips, electric cables, hosepipes and flexible wooden strips bound with wire.

Women prisoners also find themselves under the constant threat of sexual abuse and rape by warders and Revolutionary Guards.

Former inmates from Cell Block 4 in Evin prison have reported that men who refuse to cooperate under interrogation are tied down and repeatedly thrashed across their testicles, leaving them unable to urinate for days.

In a letter to the Iranian leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, sent in August and made public this week, Amnesty International said it was prepared to send a delegation to Iran to present its evidence showing clearly that the total number of executions in Iran since the 1979 revolution must be considerably higher than the officially announced figure of 5,000 so far.

Adopt a prisoner

I/we (Name)

(Organisation)

Address

Phone

would like to obtain further details about adopting a Polish trade unionist victimised for his/her membership of Solidarnosc. Military and civilian courts have already sentenced over 5000 Solidarnosc prisoners to jail terms of up to ten years.

Send to: NSZZ Solidarnosc Information Office, 314-320 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP (01-837 9464)



Halsbury: one of the anti-union judges of the early 1900s



From January to December 1930 unemployment nearly doubled, and then it stayed high for years

The first No

LABOUR's new leader, Neil Kinnock, is in many ways a carbon copy of the past.

His crucial advantage is the ability to win the assent of left-wing activists while also appearing acceptable to the most conservative sections of the labour movement — a talent which in the past, too, has been the prime qualification for becoming Labour leader.

With such an ability, however, go certain drawbacks. Nothing illustrates this better than the career of Labour's first leader, Ramsay MacDonald.

In 1900 a conference of delegates from the trade unions, the Independent Labour Party, and socialist societies decided to set up the Labour Representation Committee to be a voice for the trade unions in Parliament. It was a defensive reaction to the anti-union measures of the employers and the then Tory government, rather than a conscious movement for socialism.

The delegates chose Ramsay MacDonald as secretary. As Beatrice Webb said at the time, "Jamie's mellifluous Celtic persona gives him a cosmopolitan air that makes him acceptable to all factions in the movement. Henderson isn't intelligent enough for the job, Keir Hardie smells, and the others are far too uncouth".

While acceptable to the middle class Fabians like Webb, and to conservative trade union leaders, MacDonald also had a left-wing base in the Independ-

ent Labour Party, which had been formed in 1893 and now became a component part in the federal structure of the new Labour Party.

The ILP had many left-wing activists, but mostly it remained at the level of a vague, moralistic, often religious, socialism.

MacDonald, ironically, summed it up in 1904:

"Every time I go abroad and see on the bookstalls evidence of intellectual and imaginative activity amongst foreign socialists I am ashamed of our English movement".

MacDonald himself, however, was much more fascinated by the goings-on in radical Establishment circles than in developing a socialist philosophy for the working class. From 1900 to 1914 he hoped that the way forward for Labour would be through a great split between the Asquith and Lloyd George wings of the Liberal Party, after which Labour would fuse with the latter to create a new 'Radical Party', carrying on the reforming work of Gladstone and the 1906 Liberal Government.

Desertion

For MacDonald, the working class was not quite good enough to deserve its own independent political party. His desertion in 1931 was intellectually prepared for long in advance.

Indeed, if the years 1889-95, 1910-14, and 1916-22 had not been characterised as they were by the enormous growth of the trade unions, MacDonald would not have been a Labour leader, but a semi-orthodox Liberal MP, sitting alongside John Burns and Lloyd George.

In 1911 MacDonald forced his MPs to vote for the clause in

the National Insurance Act that forced employees to pay one third of the contribution to the scheme. This was against the Labour Party's Annual Conference decision that the whole contribution must be paid by the employer and the Government. But MacDonald was contemptuous: "What would Lloyd George say if we were seen to be pettifogging over details?"

The cornerstone of MacDonald's tactics was the MacDonald/Gladstone pact of 1903, agreed with the 'old stager', son Herbert. The Labour Representation Committee and the Liberals agreed on a division of seats so that in a few constituencies Labour could stand against the Tories without Liberal competition.

29 Labour MPs were returned in the 1906 General Election. The price of the electoral success, however, was capitulation to Liberal policies. Anyone who opposed this orientation was, in MacDonald's eyes, 'a wrecker'.

In 1918, for example, when a by-election occurred in Fife-shire, it was the Fife-shire Miners' Federation who were the 'wreckers'. They nominated a local miner, Raymond McAttwell, as the Labour candidate, in preference to an ex-Liberal worthy.

MacDonald was furious. "Do not those dim-witted miners realise that the former Liberal MP, Sir Arthur Ponsonby, is willing to stand (for Labour)? I must go to Fife-shire to put some sense in their heads". Sir Arthur became the candidate.

Here as always, MacDonald's guideline was the Fabian idea that social reform would come through the enlightened sections of the bourgeoisie, not through the crude, uncouth efforts of the working class itself. The same outlook determined his attitude to the industrial struggle.

During the national rail strikes of 1907 and 1911, in which the union was fighting for the right to negotiate, MacDonald spent his time talking to the company and the government side in an attempt to 'bring harmony to our nation by finding a solution'.

It was the same later, during the General Strike. MacDonald had always opposed all "that syndicalism stuff", and used all

The career of Ra

Barry Haslam (secretary of Rochdale Constituency Labour Party) reviews David Mar

his energies to try to call off the "calamity of the General Strike".

On May 5, the second day of the strike, he journeyed to the country house of Winston Churchill, who was editor of the government's 'British Gazette' and master-mind of government strike-breaking policy, for dinner and a chat.

For MacDonald there was nothing out of order in the Labour leader, quite arbitrarily and off his own bat, dining with the leader of the class enemy in such circumstances. He noted: "Besides the miners' issues, we had a pleasant ghost talk on superstition and dinner topics".

"The notion that socialism has anything to do with the mad scramble for the extra penny a week is nothing but an illusion", MacDonald warned Party members in 1913.

"It is the job of the trade unions to negotiate for better conditions for the workers, not the Labour Party. Our goal is to unite the country and take it towards progress".

Trespass

And in MacDonald's view, the other main component of the Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party (whose place in the Party corresponded roughly to that of the constituency activists today), had the job of painting a moral vision of socialism.

It should not trespass on the territory of the trade unions, or get its hands dirty by leading struggles against capitalism, but "follow the teachings of Jesus and point the way to the Promised Land" by general moral enlightenment.

In 1931 he was to say: "I am the representative of the whole nation and not just one region or class. The King expects me to do my duty by himself and the country. Not to form a National Government would be the highest treachery to them both".

This desertion of the labour movement in the name of loyalty

to 'the nation' was only the logical conclusion of long-held views. In 1910 he had argued for distancing Labour from the unions.

"Labour needs to be an independent party — not just a caucus for implementing TUC decisions".

Class war

In MacDonald's view, "the Labour Party should have no class consciousness. Our opponents, they are the people with a class consciousness. Instead of this we wish to advance the consciousness of social solidarity. The class war is not the work of our hands. It was created by capitalism".

And when young militants fought for a genuine socialist programme for the Party, he told them: "You speak of revolution — but look at nature. How wise is the worthy tortoise, and you will find in its movement the natural rhythm for the transformation of society. Learn from nature".

Trotsky was to comment: "English pigeon-fanc — by a method of artificial selection, have succeeded in producing a variety by the progressive shortening of the beak. The beak of the new stock is so short that it is incapable of breaking through the shell."

The English bourgeoisie's political skill lies in shortening the revolutionary beak of the proletariat and thus preventing it from breaking through the shell of the capitalist state. This beak is the Labour Party.

A single glance at MacDonald, Thomas, and Mr and Mrs Snowden, is sufficient to convince us that the work of the bourgeoisie in the selection of short-billed and soft-billed specimens has been crowned with immense success, for these ladies and gentlemen are not only not fit for breaking through the shell of the capitalist system, but are good for nothing whatever".

In 1915, however, MacDonald was forced to resign the leadership of the Labour Party. The Labour Party had supported World War 1. Arthur Henderson, with majority TUC and Labour backing, joined the Liberal Government as Minister of Education.

It was a small minority of Labour leaders, including MacDonald and Clynes, who remained opposed to the War.

No doubt MacDonald recalled the career of Lloyd George. In 1900 the Liberal MP had vocally opposed the Boer War. It did his career no harm at all. Lloyd George rocketed from anonymity to the centre-stage of British politics.

Why could Ramsay MacDonald not do the same?

Pacifism

Lenin called MacDonald's position 'social pacifism'. MacDonald deplored war and slaughter — "violence in any form is unthinkable and unacceptable" — but confined himself to appealing to the capitalist governments to stop it. He made no effort to mobilise the working class to take power from the hands of the warmongers.

He stumped the country calling for peace initiatives with Germany and an immediate ceasefire, and also chastising the Coalition Government for its military incompetence.

As the war ended, the Clyde, Sheffield, Manchester and elsewhere became smouldering cauldrons of industrial militancy. The centre of gravity

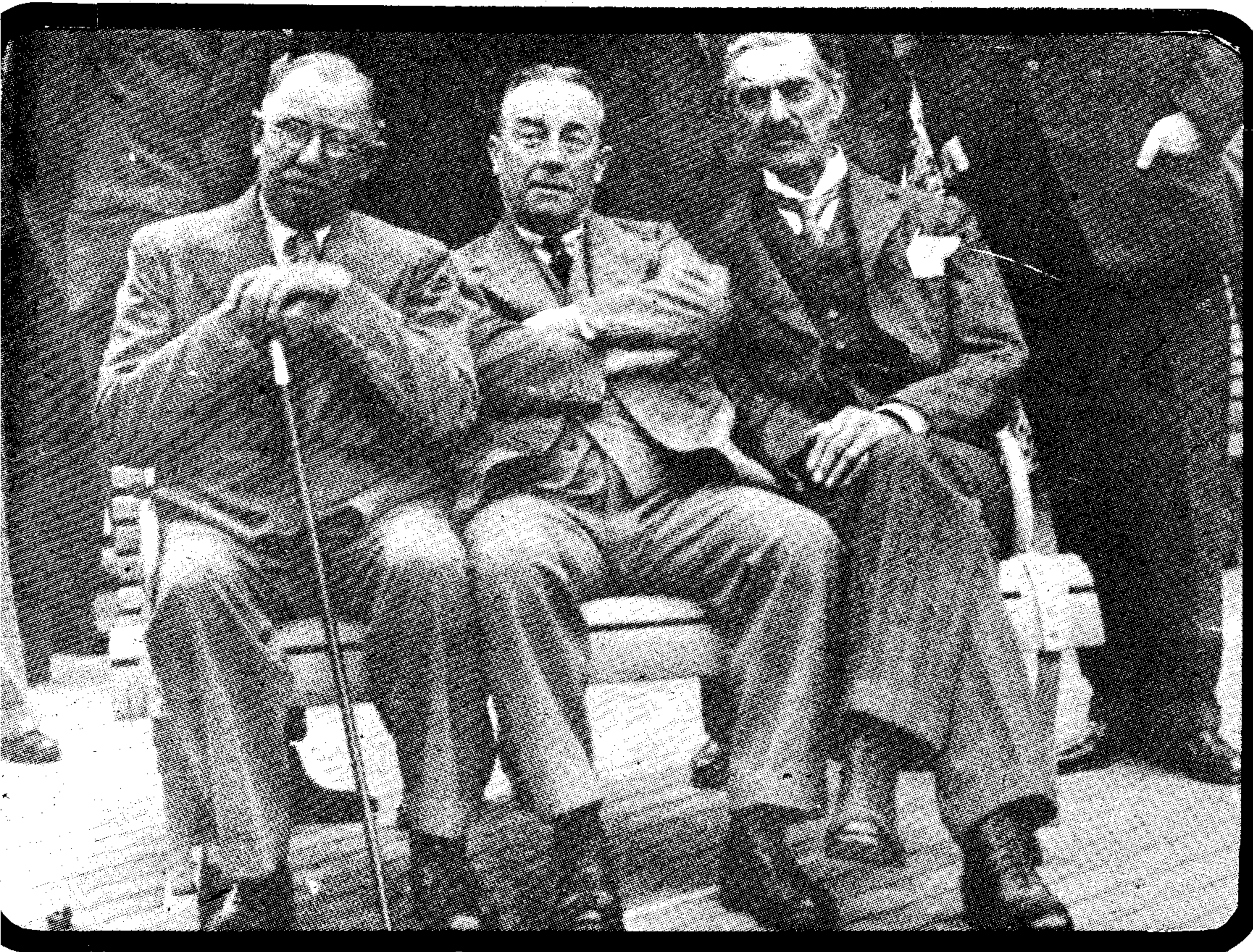
King George V: "Mr MacDonald indeed about the singing of the Commons and elsewhere".

Ramsay MacDonald: "Do but a small group of ruffians well in hand".

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MacDonald (right) with Tory coalition partner Baldwin (centre): 'a pariah figure'



The 1935 general election. Labour's Shinwell ousts the renegade MacDonald

eil Kinnock

msay MacDonald

and's book, 'Ramsay MacDonald' (Jonathan Cape, £15)

shifted to the left in the TUC and the Labour Party.

In this period MacDonald produced all manner of left talk. No doubt he found it morally uplifting. Besides, it could help his career.

Workers' councils

At the famous Workers', Soldiers' and Sailors' Convention in Leeds in July 1917 he hailed "the great achievements of our comrades in Russia" — and called for soviets (workers' councils) in Britain! In 1920, he loudly backed the action of London dockers who refused to load munitions for use against Soviet Russia onto the ship 'Jolly George'.

But revolutionary rhetoric was one thing, revolutionary conclusions were another. MacDonald denounced the Third International and the new (then revolutionary) Communist Party, at the same time as he tried to ingratiate himself with the Clyde Shop Stewards' movement. He defended the doctrine of Parliamentary democracy as the central motor of change, while also calling for social revolution.

The General Election of 1922 produced a radical break with the past. The Liberal Party was eclipsed, taking third place. Labour became a major force, with 142 seats. (The Conservatives had 347 seats and formed the government).

MacDonald was re-elected leader of the Party, beating Clynes by a whisker — 61 to 56 — in a Parliamentary Labour Party vote.

Id, I am very worried
at Red Flag song in the

at worry, Your Majesty, it is
and miners. We have them

That the mass of ordinary workers had illusions in MacDonald and his crew cannot be doubted. The 'New Leader' wrote at the time:

"He is the focus for the mute hopes of a whole class. When he entered his constituency of Aberavon, it took his car one hour to move two miles. It is enough for us to know that rarely, if ever, in English political history has such a scene been witnessed — who could be a pessimist after this!"

The 1924 election tilted the balance even more. The Conservatives had 259 seats, Labour 191, and the Liberals 159. No overall majority for anyone. The King sent for MacDonald and the first Labour Government in history was formed.

Trotsky wrote: "If MacDonald walked into Parliament, laid his programme on the table, rapped lightly with his knuckles, and said, 'Accept it or I'll drive you all out', if he did this, Britain would be unrecognisable in two weeks."

Reverence

MacDonald would receive an overwhelming majority in any election. The British working class would break out of its shell of conservatism with which it has been so cleverly surrounded; it would discard that slavish reverence for the law of the bourgeoisie, the propertied classes, the church and the monarchy."

But MacDonald had different ideas.

"Socialist measures are not on the agenda. We have to prove that we can govern as competently as Baldwin. We must not alienate the middle classes."

No measures were taken against Capital. No welfare or social policies were introduced. This government did not even deserve the name 'reformist'.

For MacDonald that was unfortunate, but secondary. What mainly impressed him was this:

"Who would ever have thought that MacDonald the starveling clerk, Thomas the engine driver, Henderson the foundry labourer, and Clynes the mill-hand would one day form the King's Cabinet!"

MacDonald enjoyed himself: "The left wing people have been criticising me again for wearing Court Dress. They are a dull-witted lot. In their view, if I was to give sixpence a day from public funds to the poor, then I would be a socialist. What rot! I do not care a fig for the argument that Court Dress is part of royal flunkeyism. The King has been cordial and friendly, and that is important to me."

Nine months later the Labour Government was bundled out of office, with the help of the forged 'Zinoviev letter' scandal.

But by the late '20s, with unemployment climbing steadily, Baldwin's Tory government lost popularity. In 1929 Labour won 287 seats in the General Election, with the Conservatives taking 261 and the Liberals 59.

John Maynard Keynes had begun to put forward his theory that the government could use budget deficits to reflate the capitalist economy by launching public works programmes. The Liberal Party entered the 1929 General Election with a Keynesian platform, 'How to Conquer Unemployment'.

But the Labour Party manifesto, 'Labour and the Nation', was cautious, conservative, and monetarist. It made only vague hints about expansion, and repudiated the 'wild adventurism' of Lloyd George's claim that unemployment could be brought down to 500,000 within a year.

While Keynes and the Liberals had the confidence to challenge the shibboleths of orthodox economics and to propose radical changes within capitalism, MacDonald, Snowden, and Henderson were concerned to make themselves respectable in the eyes of the conservative bourgeoisie.

The first act of the new Labour government was to preside over the sentencing of Wal Hannington, organiser of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, to 12 months for sedition. Its second act was to reduce the pay of civil service clerks, dockers and railworkers by 5%.

Then the Wall Street finance empire blew up.

In January 1930 unemployment was 1,533,000; by March 1,731,000; by June 1,946,000. By December 1930 it was 2,735,000.

The crisis split the government down the middle. Philip Snowden, the Chancellor, demanded strict adherence to monetarist orthodoxy. There would have to be cuts all round in order to keep sterling on the Gold Standard, he said.

Oswald Mosley (later to go over to fascism, but then still Labour) proposed a Keynesian alternative. MacDonald was unmoved: "There is no more socialism in that than there was in the cup of tea I had for breakfast this morning."

Snowden placed a statement before the Cabinet calling for a cut of £67 million in unemployment benefit.

For three weeks the government prevaricated. Henderson, who had the closest links to the trade unions, led the opposition to MacDonald and his Chancellor. Finally, the vote was 11 to 9 in favour of cuts. Immediately the nine resigned.

Expelled

MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas formed a National Government with the Tories, and were promptly expelled from the Labour Party. Henderson became Labour Party leader, and was backed by the TUC.

MacDonald's daughter, Sheila, noted in her diary:

"Daddy spoke to Mr Thomas, 'We cannot shirk our responsibilities', he said. 'All this sentimentality about the workers is trash. The unemployed must make sacrifices too'."

"But what about Henderson", Mr Thomas said.

"Bugger him! We've got a National Government to form", said Daddy."

Ramsay 'MacShackles' remained prime minister, but was a mere prisoner of the Tory Baldwin and became a pariah

figure for the rest of his days. In the 1935 election, when the National Government was re-elected with a 247 seat majority and Labour was reduced to 46 seats. MacDonald nonetheless lost his own Parliamentary seat to Labour's Emmanuel Shinwell.

MacDonald became an increasingly pathetic figure, and died in 1937, aged 71.

Reflex response

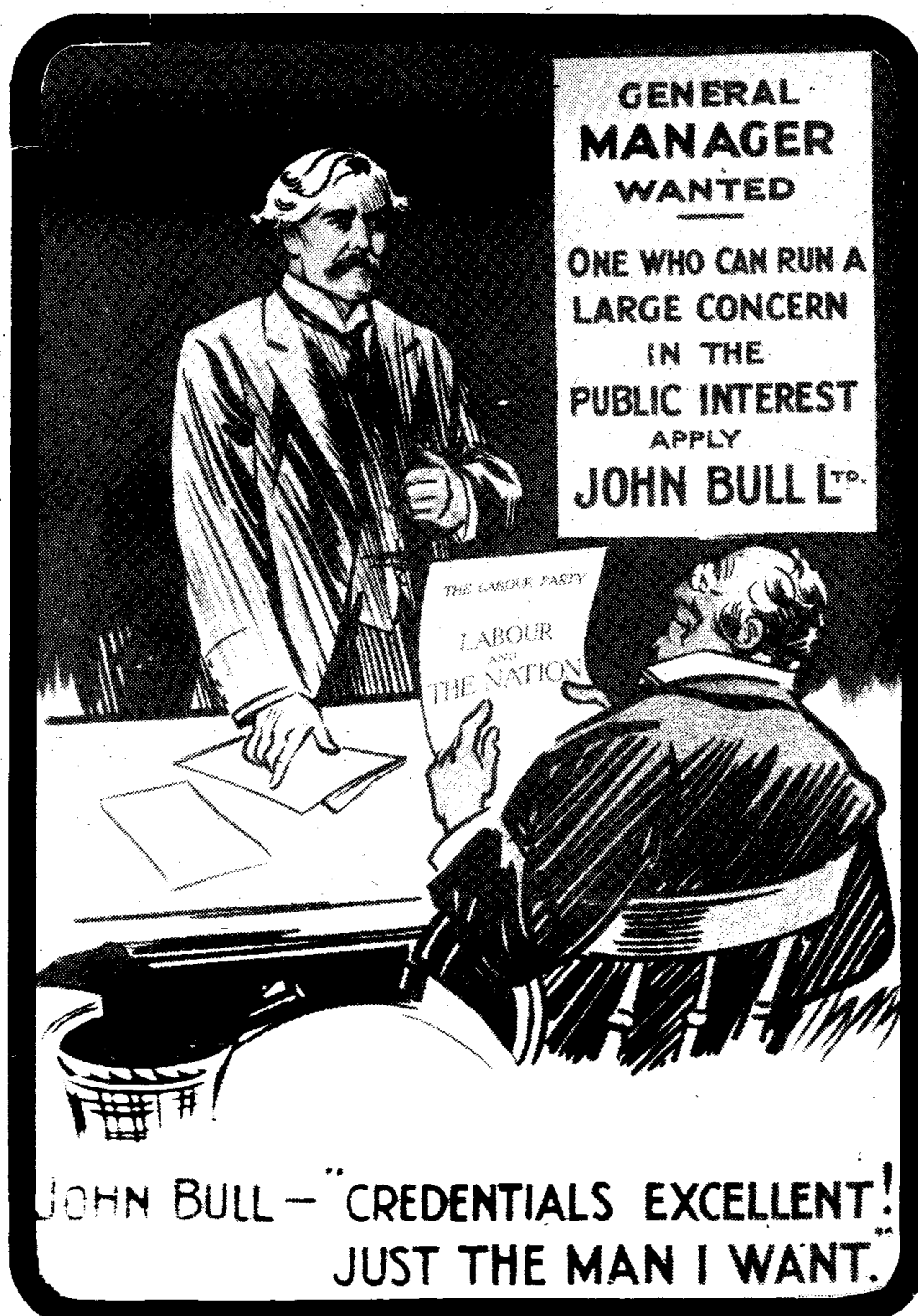
Why did it all happen? The working class movement in Britain was formed organisationally and ideologically long before Marxism became accessible. The trade unions, the bedrock upon which the Labour Party came into being, had grown through piecemeal

spasmodic lurches forward, as a reflex response to Capital's attempts to increase the exploitation of labour.

The labour movement's leading cadres were often imports from the reforming wing of the Victorian middle class. Trotsky put it well:

"At bottom the English Labour Party has thus far been living without a head on its shoulders, while the party of the English bourgeoisie has a head — a head with a high and mighty brow, supported by a robust and powerful neck."

It is only by understanding this history that we will be able to fight for a socialist leadership of the labour movement today.



Labour's 1929 election poster

International news

Bureaucrats or dissidents: who fights for peace?

Many socialists and unilateralists in Britain see the official peace movements in Eastern Europe as their allies. Yet these 'movements' are tightly controlled by the bureaucratic states — which ruthlessly suppress the unofficial, independent peace movements which have developed recently.

Whatever differences we may have with their policies, shouldn't socialists support the democratic rights of these dissident peace movements against the repressive Stalinist bureaucracies?

Stan Crooke reports on one example — East Germany.

'Straight Left', whose editorial advisory panel includes four members of the TUC General Council and three Labour MPs, whilst praising the official 'peace movements' has described the independent ones as 'groups of dissidents with a logistics base in the West', 'criminals who want to avoid punishment and so declare themselves victimised' and 'not peace organisations in any recognisable sense.'

European Nuclear Disarmament is accused of 'blind anti-Sovietism', and its support for the independent peace movements in East Germany is equated with 'campaigning for the right of people in the German Democratic Republic to refuse to defend socialism'.

Straight Left is part of the new Stalinist network which has developed in the Labour Party, and a representative journal of this current.

Clear-cut

Others are less outspoken and clear-cut in their politics. But Stalinism in the form of attitudes, prejudices, double standards, and a basic commitment to solidarity with the rulers in the Stalinist states, not with those they oppress, is a growing force on the Labour Left, and even the Labour centre.

Its influence extends from Clause 4 to the new secretary of the Labour Party, Jim Mortimer.

But what do the official and unofficial peace movements actually consist of in reality? The question can best be answered by taking a specific example: that of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

As in other Eastern European countries, the state itself in the

GDR is officially regarded as a force for peace: 'The Republic as a whole is service in the cause of peace' runs one of the slogans of the ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SUPG), whilst another of its slogans claims 'Military service and service in the cause of peace are identical.'

All activities carried out within the boundaries set by what is in fact an extremely repressive state apparatus are therefore construed as activities in furtherance of the cause of peace: 'Our whole Republic, its citizens, our economy, science and culture, the workers and farmers are one great peace demonstration', claimed one East German writer recently.

Taken to its logical conclusion, this argument means that the stronger the repressive state apparatus is in the GDR, the stronger is the cause of peace. And the GDR ideologues do not shrink back from this logic.

'The stronger socialism is, the more secure is peace' runs one of the main official slogans of the GDR (in which 'socialism' actually means 'Stalinism'), whilst more recently the state apparatus has revived the slogan first raised when military service was introduced in 1962. 'Peace must be defended — peace must be armed.'

The result of all this is to enable the bureaucracy to define as a 'legitimate' peace movement only that which conforms to the norms which it itself lays down: 'the peaceful policies of the state and the people's desire for peace are two sides of the same coin... the policies of the state are identical with the objectives of the peace movement.'

That the policies of the state



Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: Is state diplomacy the way to peace?

and the objectives of the peace movement should be 'identical' is hardly surprising — both are, after all, run by the same people.

Official 'peace' demonstrations and other initiatives for 'peace' in the GDR are called by the Peace Council of the GDR. This Council consists of representatives of the official 'trade unions', the official 'youth movement', the official 'women's movement' and so on.

But the point here is that such movements are not genuine ones, independent of the state bureaucracy. In fact, they are merely extensions of the latter and transmission belts for its policies. The Peace Council does not therefore consist of democratically elected representatives of a mass movement. It consists of a collection of Stalinist bureaucrats who run a variety of anti-working class state organisations.

(And since 'peace must be armed', one of the bodies with a key role in the official 'peace movement' is the NVA — the National People's Army. Thus, at the present time, the NVA, in conjunction with the official 'youth movement', is running a series of rallies under this slogan. One of the main purposes of these 'peace rallies' is to win 'volunteers' to undergo training to be an officer in the NVA).

The nature of the Peace Council also explains the size of the official 'peace demonstrations' in the GDR. The bureaucracies of the different Stalinist mass organisations represented on the Council take responsibility for ensuring a full mobilisation of the membership of the organisations they run.

Thus, for example, the leadership of the official 'trade unions' or the official 'youth movement' will order a turnout by their members. But, given the direct links between such organisations and the STASI (State security police), trade unionists or youth who fail to respond to the call to demonstrate know that this can lead to harassment both at work and at home. There is thus nothing

voluntary about the mass turn-outs for the official 'peace demonstrations' in the GDR.

The official 'peace movement', therefore, is not a voluntary organisation of mass individual membership. In fact, it has no individual membership at all. It is merely a committee of Stalinist bureaucrats taking decisions without being accountable to anyone for taking them, and using the various Stalinist transmission belt mass organisations to ensure the implementation of these decisions.

And it goes without saying, the 'peace initiatives' of the Peace Council are directed solely at Western imperialism. Imperialism's nuclear arsenal and its acts of aggression towards the Third World are condemned. The Kremlin bureaucracy's possession of nuclear weapons and its acts of aggression — e.g. Afghanistan, the threat to invade Poland — are, at best, passed over in silence.

(At worst, they are supported: 'A major bulwark of peace has been developed in the shape of the Soviet Union... the further strengthening of the socialist world system (i.e. Stalinism) provides the real possibility... of banishing world war from the life of society,' explains the Stalinist manual, 'A Pocket Political Dictionary').

The unofficial, autonomous peace movement, on the other hand, stands in a very different relation to the state and its policies. By definition, it comes into conflict with both.

Outside

The GDR's constitution permits the formation of organisations only if they are 'in accordance with the principles and aims of the Constitution'. Since the 'autonomous peace movement' rejects the notion that 'peace' can be equated with the policies of the GDR's state apparatus, it automatically falls outside of what is permitted by the GDR's constitution.

But to talk about a peace 'movement' as such in the

GDR is inaccurate. Given the level of repression, it has hitherto proved impossible to draw together the local groups and initiatives into a national campaign. The unofficial peace movement in the GDR, therefore, is not a single, unified organisation, but an umbrella term used to cover various local groups and activities, which often have no contact with each other.

And the GDR's unofficial peace movement is also different from West European peace movements. Unlike the latter the former does not concentrate on unilateral nuclear disarmament as a major issue, for two main reasons.

Firstly, it is unclear whether or not nuclear missiles are stationed in the GDR anyway. Officially — though this is not necessarily true — the USSR claims that 'only' nuclear delivery systems are stationed in the GDR, not the nuclear warheads themselves.

Secondly, campaigning for unilateralism, even in relation to the delivery systems, immediately poses the issue of self-determination. Constitutionally, the GDR is 'allied for all time and irrevocably with the USSR', a polite way of saying that the GDR's policies are subordinate to those of the Kremlin bureaucracy. To call for withdrawal of the delivery systems would be a direct challenge to the touchstone of the GDR's entire sub-existence as a satellite state.

Even so, nuclear disarmament has begun to gain an increasing prominence within the campaigning of the genuine peace movement. The 'Berlin Appeal' of January 1982, for example, called for: '... first of all — away with nuclear weapons. The whole of Europe must become a nuclear-weapons free zone...'

(The author of the document was immediately arrested and the 73 initial signatories to the Appeal were also taken in for interviewing by the security police. All were, however, later released).

To be concluded next week

Belgium: a glimpse of class power

THE MASS strike movement of 800,000 public sector workers in Belgium ended on Friday September 23. The right wing coalition government had made some concessions on its projected cuts, but managed to force through most of its plans.

This means the strike movement achieved much less than its potential. Responsibility for that lies with the leaders of the two trade union federations involved, Christian and Socialist.

The concessions were offered the weekend before the return to work. The strikers contemptuously rejected them, and the movement grew.

But the union leaders proceeded by basing themselves on the weakest sections of workers.

The union leaders convened each group of workers separately to discuss a return to work, and pushed the strongest groups back to work by telling them they were isolated.

Yet this is how the Financial Times (September 23) described the development of the strike movement.

'Early [in September] there were consultations in the Walloon industrial town of Charleroi about the special problems of the railwaymen who looked as if they would be particularly affected by the public sector cuts... The local union leaders said they would think about a strike in October.'

But when the railwaymen themselves heard about how they might be affected by the cuts, they took the matter into their own hands. That was September 9.

The strike spread throughout the rail network and out into the civil service and the state agencies... Within a week the state machinery was seizing up...

[Previously] the Government [had] remained secure against the unions because the Socialist and Christian Democrat groupings could not agree on a combined approach.

The public sector strike changed that, at least for a time. It was not that the union chiefs were in special alliance.

Rather, pressure from the strike came up from underneath. To regain control of the strike union leaders were forced to cooperate more closely than they have done in the past...

The initial spark for the strike was concern mostly about the details of bonuses and rises [etc]... By this week [the second week of the movement] though the Christian Democrat and Socialist unions were listing much broader demands.

Generalised, these demands embodied the theme that... the public sector and the workers have made sufficient sacrifices, the wealthier should pay more in taxes and there should be more action to reduce unemployment...

The British working class has that power, too. It could beat the Tories.

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.



THE CAUSE OF IRELAND

Frank Higgins reviews 'The Cause of Ireland' (shown on Channel Four TV, Monday October 3)

IS THERE any other failure in the recent history of the British Left so gross and so complete, or so scandalous, as our failure to mobilise the labour movement in support of a just settlement with Ireland?

The question is rhetorical because the answer is indisputable.

One important aspect of the Left's ineptness on Ireland is the very low quality of our educational and propaganda material — in writing and on film — over the last dozen years.

There are basic political reasons for our failure. Ireland is in fact a very complex question. And the way it appears to people who have not probed behind the surface seems to justify the British government.

The Six Counties is as old as such European states as Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia, and much older than most of the states of the Third World. It has the support of a two-to-one majority of its population, and so does the British connection.

It looks as if Britain is upholding the rights of the majority, and in doing so playing the irreplaceable role of a peace-maker.

To see it differently you have to roll back the film of history for decades to see how the present situation emerged, and how the present conflict is inescapably a part of the original injustice.

The second reason for our failure is the state of the far left itself. Instead of proceeding like Marxists from an analysis of the concrete complexities of the problem — that is, from the real situation, with all its unique

features, and from the real problems to be faced — the Left has avoided them and pretended that Ireland is just Britain's last colony.

The Left has pretended that the issue is a straight, uncomplicated imperialism vs. anti-imperialism conflict. Following the Irish Republican 'left', it talks as if the one million Protestants don't exist.

It tries to use a simplified model of a Third World country fighting garrison colonialism — for one of the advanced countries of Europe, in which a comparatively small minority of the Irish people, the Northern Catholics, are fighting to undo the 'settlement' reached between Britain and the Irish bourgeoisie 60 years ago, and now effectively accepted by most of the Irish people.

Thus, to the British labour movement, the Left talks in riddles and enigmas. Issues are dissolved into a historical jargon about imperialism, which is difficult to follow for the uninitiated — and even more difficult to follow for anyone who tries to fit together what is going on in Ireland with the theories referred to in the jargon, for example Lenin's theory of imperialism.

Specialised 'Irish activists' have been selected and educated. They are sincerely committed to the struggle of the oppressed Catholics, but intellectually and emotionally they live in a world of their own. The oppression of the Northern Ireland Catholics gives some resonance to what they say, but there is no coherence to it, except what they take from the petty bourgeois Irish nationalists.

The 'Marxist' talk — of permanent revolution, for example

— is for the consumption and consolation of devotees who in practical politics are in tow to the Republicans.

Thus much that the Left tries to say to the British labour movement is impenetrable to most people. It is Irish nationalist emotion wrapped in portable 'Marxist' jargon.

It is the complexities of the Irish situation, and the difficulty of seeing a way out of the impasse, that has defeated the Left.

All this leads to pretty dire propaganda. The numerous pro-Republican amateur and semi-professional documentaries and videos made over the last dozen years are mostly useless. 'The Cause of Ireland' is an exception.

In two hours it presents a coherent account of the way the Catholic revolt moved between 1968 and 1971 from a civil rights movement, modelled on Martin Luther King's black movement in the USA, to the armed IRA offensive which is now in its 13th year.

It is plainly on the side of the Catholics, whose leaders, like Gerry Adams MP and Danny Morrison, eloquently explain their politics in the film.

What is unusual about 'The Cause of Ireland' — written by Geoff Bell, author of 'The Protestants of Ulster' — is that it does not, like most pro-Republican 'left' propaganda, ignore the Protestants (and thus largely ignore the working class).

Not without sympathy, it explores the attitudes of Protestant workers and lets many of them talk for themselves — shop stewards, a Protestant socialist, UDA activists, a Protestant who married a Catholic.

It is possible to understand



Loyalist paramilitaries: this film explains rather than ignores

their viewpoint. One of them explains: 'The Provos say "Brits Out" — but we are part of the British family...'. It comes across as 'Protestants out'.

Many of the Protestants call themselves 'British'. One man talks of his shock, him 'a wee British man', on being classed as Irish in Britain.

We see shipyard workers marching in early 1971 to demand internment without trial. Unemployed Protestant workers, whose privileged economic position — i.e., they had a job amidst permanent mass unemployment — is being eroded by the collapse of industry in Northern Ireland, speculate in a rather dazed way that the economic collapse reflects a British decision to withdraw by the back door.

A former UDA activist seems conscience-stricken about the sectarian assassinations that the UDA carried out against Catholics, because they were Catholics, in the early '70s.

Catholic Republican women critically discuss the South, which, they say, should be secular. Gerry Adams criticises the South because it is not secular and because it does not serve the cause of Gaelic Irish culture to which it pays lip-service.

Adams explains that all sorts of contradictions in society are being exposed by the Catholic struggle, and thinks this is clear-



is the historically distinct character of the Protestant community — its religion, culture, and sense of its own identity, all of which pre-date by centuries the marginal privileges within partitioned Ireland, or even within industrial Belfast.

The film presents sectarianism as if it is a one-sided, exclusively Protestant, affair. It is not. The oppression of the Catholics in the north does not make it so, nor does it change the basic all-Ireland Protestant/Catholic sectarian framework to the conflict which is now murderously intensified within the artificial Six County state.

Adams should not have been allowed to get away with vague talk about socialism and vaguer talk about secularism: a harder edge would have made the film's commitment to the oppressed Catholics, despite all the difficulties and problems, more convincing.

One result of the film's politically 'soft' approach to the Provisionals is that it ends on a note of optimism on the basis of what seemed to me to be vague and incoherent assertions that the present struggle is going to lead in a socialist direction.

The previous two hours of the film give little reason for such bland confidence. Rather, it suggests the question whether the Provisionals are not — despite their goal of a United Ireland, and despite the sincerity of those who talk about socialism — unintentionally preparing the way for a bloody repartition of Ireland.

But, all in all, 'The Cause of Ireland' — the title is derived from James Connolly's saying, 'The cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour; the cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland' — is a fine and valuable contribution to building an understanding of what the war in Ireland is about.

It is a shame that it went out between 11pm and 1am on a Monday night. Showings of it should be organised throughout the country.

WHY DO we and the other 'higher' animals suffer from various cancers, while our simpler relatives, the sponges and jelly-fish don't?

The answer, according to James Graham, writing in the Journal of Theoretical Biology, is simply that we have genes for cancer (oncogenes) while they don't!

But why do we have genes for cancer?

Graham observes that jelly-fish have not evolved any of the complex organs found in the Bilateria*. They are very simple organisms with only a few types of cell. They are extremely plastic in form and function. Turn a jellyfish inside out and the gut cells become skin cells and vice versa. Chop it up and the bits become new jellyfish. The cells are constantly growing and dividing.

Compared with Bilateria, they have a relatively small amount of genetic material (DNA), and there is little to go wrong with it.

The complex animals may

Why we get cancer

SCIENCE
By Les Hearn

have hundreds of types of cell, but each must carry the DNA that codes for all the proteins the body needs to produce, though 99% of it may be unused by a particular cell.

This vast amount of DNA is the source of the diversity and success of the Bilateria in adapting to their environment, but it also presents a threat to individual Bilaterians. Mutations caused by chemicals or radiation can cause some of the 99% of inactive DNA in a cell to become active, disrupting the order of the body. And the large total amount of DNA makes it certain that mutations are a common occurrence.

Mutations occur in the simple animals, but are far less serious. Since a typical jellyfish cell does the same things as any other, a mutation would probably harm only the cell involved, rather than the whole animal.

As Bilaterians evolved in complexity, it was there-

fore essential that they evolved defences against mutations and cancers and defences to ensure precise copying of the DNA when cells divided.

These defences include:

1. Strict controls over production of body cells. Bilaterians are less able to regenerate; renewal of aged cells slows down after sexual maturity; many cells have stopped dividing and so cannot have cancerous offspring.

2. Avoiding mutagens (things that cause mutations) like sunlight. Early Bilaterians lived on the sea-bottom for 100 million years. Their descendants had opaque coverings of non-living material with pigmented skin that filtered out ultra-violet light. They were small, presenting less target for radiation, or lived in sheltered habitats.

3. Repairing damaged DNA. Special enzymes (proteins that make or break chemical

molecules) are constantly cruising along DNA molecules, repairing breaks and replacing damaged sections.

4. Destroying cancerous cells. Many Bilaterians can identify and destroy 'transformed' cells. This ability is the basis of the development of the immune system.

Some 350 million years ago, Bilaterians overcame the threat of naked sunlight and colonised the land. Now we have two main groups of Bilaterians — the Arthropods (jointed-legged animals) and the vertebrates (backboned animals). The two groups could hardly be more unlike and James Graham explains this in terms of defences against cancer each possesses.

The arthropods lacked an immune system and had to remain small with thicker, opaque, pigmented coverings. Many are restricted to sheltered places. They have shorter lives which lessens the time for cancers to appear.

The vertebrates developed a better and better immune system and could relax some other defences. Body coverings could be reduced in thickness, the body could grow larger and more complex. The ageing process could slow down, the age of sexual maturity and the

life span increase. This may have granted an opportunity for the development of an ability to learn, unnecessary to the short-lived insects.

There is a trade-off, though. No system of defence is perfect, and as we, the most successful Bilaterians, extend our

life-spans by conquering external enemies, we increase the chance of internal sabotage by cancer.

To meet this we must either reinforce our immune defences medically or reduce the risk of mutagen slipping through our defences by altering our diets and habits, or by avoiding radiation, natural or artificial (another excuse for not getting out of bed!).

*Bilateria are animals with distinct left and right sides, unlike jellyfish which have no particular sides.

Labour Campaign for Gay Rights

To join or affiliate, write to Chris Richardson, 21 Devonshire Promenade, Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2DS. £5 for individuals, or for affiliated organisations, per 1000 members; £2 low-waged individuals, £1 unwaged

Get ORGANISED!

Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns. We ask £1.50 a month minimum (20p unwaged) contribution from supporters.

I want to become a Socialist Organiser supporter/ I want more information.

Name

Address

Send to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

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, M15, etc), public accountability, etc.

*Free abortion on demand. Women's equal right to work and full equality for women. Defend and extend free state nursery and childcare provision.

*Against attacks on gays by the state: abolish all laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men; for the right of the gay community to organise and affirm their stand publicly.

*The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish Republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.

*The black working people of South Africa should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles and armed combat against the white supremacist regime. South African goods and services should be blacked.

*It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic reselection of MPs during each Parliament and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.

*The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control. The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist alternative in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for crumbs from the tables of the bankers and bosses.

UNITY?

AMONG the piles of leaflets and hand-outs at Labour Party conference this year, there is a new daily bulletin in the name of 'Labour Briefing'. Thereby hangs a sad but instructive tale.

Socialist Organiser has produced daily bulletins at Labour Party conference every year since 1978. The 'Original Briefing' has been going since 1961. Usually some right wing group or other also produces a bulletin — this year it is the 'Fabians'.

This year as previously, the preparations for producing these bulletins started well in advance. It's a lot of work: supplies, equipment, personnel, accommodation, finance.

Then, the weekend before the conference started, a national 'Labour Briefing' meeting was held.

London Labour Briefing is a well-established monthly, reflecting the broad left wing in the London Labour Party which also finds expression in left-wing councils like the GLC and Islington.

A number of different political currents, including Socialist Action and Socialist Organiser, contribute articles to it and help to sell it.

Following the success of the London Briefing, other Briefings have been started round the country (though invariably they have a narrower base). They recently set up a national network and decided to produce a regular national Briefing supplement.

At this particular national Briefing meeting, Socialist

Action turned up in force — and proposed that Briefing produce a daily bulletin at Labour Party conference. Socialist Action had all the technical requirements in hand, they assured the meeting. They would even have a word-processor and an electrostencil machine in Brighton.

In short, Socialist Action had made the preparations to produce a bulletin, and now wanted the Briefing imprint for it.

The meeting was favourable to a Briefing bulletin. But several comrades — including the people who do most of the work producing London Briefing — were worried at the idea of Briefing thus being 'co-opted' by Socialist Action and appearing in opposition to the established Socialist Organiser bulletin.

So it was decided that Briefing would seek to produce a bulletin in association with Socialist Organiser. A proposal that the Briefing bulletin should not go ahead if terms could not be agreed with SO was lost by one vote. Two editors were elected for the Briefing bulletin — Sarah Roelofs, an invariable supporter of Socialist Action, and Jane Stockton, a central person in London Briefing.

The next week was a vivid illustration of what Socialist Action mean when they talk about unity. SO proposed a bulletin carrying both Briefing and SO imprints. The central London Briefing people wanted more prominence for the Briefing

masthead than for the SO imprint — which we conceded — but agreed. Socialist Action refused.

It was deadlock. And, of course, deadlock was just fine for Socialist Action. All they had to do now was to stall to prevent a joint bulletin, and — if the Briefing team would go along with them — they would get what they wanted.

Thus the extra bulletin.

In a sense, we've got the least to complain about in this affair. We've lost nothing but the time and nervous energy consumed in the fruitless negotiations.

Comrades around the various Briefings who have given credit to Socialist Action's talk of unity have, however, reason to be bitter. They ended up being hijacked. And worse: in the first two days of conference, despite the much-vaunted Socialist Action technology, the 'Briefing' bulletin was late appearing and illegible or barely legible.

The serious supporters of Socialist Action should also have reason to be bitter. SA sacrificed the opportunity to put across its own politics clearly to the conference in favour of an attempt to pretend to be the great unity-organisers of the Left... and, behind that hypocritical facade, to pursue narrow factional self-interest with the blinkered, holier-than-thou single-mindedness of inveterate sectarians.

The pretence seems to have backfired in its purpose of insinuating Socialist Action into a central position within the Labour Left: many people are now aware that the whole exercise had little to do with honest unity, much more to do with factional manoeuvre.

Socialist Organiser in Brighton

MANY OF the delegates applauding Neil Kinnock as he made his victory speech must have been clapping extra loud to drown their doubts and their memories of Kinnock's record.

But from all the crowds of leafletters outside the conference centre next day, there was only one voice to remind them of those doubts.

"Is everyone happy?", asked the Socialist Organiser bulletin. "We're not".

Some half-a-dozen Socialist Organiser supporters are delegates, and one of them, Colin Johnston from Wallasey, moved the important composite opposing further expulsions.

But the main activity of Socialist Organiser — like much of what's most interesting at the conference altogether — is on the fringes. Each day we produce a bulletin reviewing the day's agenda, reporting on the previous day, and commenting.

We sell the paper, try to introduce Socialist Organiser

to delegates and visitors who won't have come across us before, and organise meetings. This year Socialist Organiser had a fringe meeting on Labour Party workplace branches, as well as helping to organise a Socialist for a Labour Victory meeting with Ken Loach on 'Questions of Leadership', and others.



SO badges 25p each, or £2 for ten.

From: N. Barstow, 165 Liverpool Road, London N1. Cheques payable to N. Barstow.

Two pamphlets summing up the ideas of Socialist Organiser.

'Where We Stand' — 20p plus 15p postage. 'How to fight the Tories' — 10p plus 15p postage. Or the two together, 45p including postage. From Socialist Organiser, 28, Middle Lane, London N8.



Agenda

SOCIALIST ORGANISER AGM and day school: Saturday October 29/Sunday October 30, in London. Day school Saturday at Crouch Hill Recreation Centre, Hillrise Rd, off Hornsey Rise, London N19. AGM Sunday at County Hall, London SE1.

LONDON Campaign for Gay Rights now meets regularly every four weeks at Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont St, WC1, at 6pm. Next meeting October 9. Gay Young Socialists meet at Gay's The Word at 6pm. Next meeting Sunday October 16. Contact: London LCGR, Mike Haran 659 2938 or Chris Beer 785 9515; GYS, Martin Goodsell 263 9484.

LABOUR movement conference on Ireland: Peace through Democracy. Saturday November 26: speakers include Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Clive Soley.

LONDON Cuts conference organised by the Southwark Campaign Working Party: Sunday November 6, at County Hall, London SE1. Contact: Southwark Campaign Working Party, Town Hall, London SE5.

TOWER Hamlets Association for Racial Justice: meeting on Racial Violence. Sunday October 9, 3pm, St Hilda's in the East, Club Row, London E2. Contact THARJ: 729 1946.

WOMEN in trade unions: a TUC exhibition with photographs, documents, banners and badges. From October 4 to 29, 10am to 6pm weekdays, at Congress House, Gt Russell St, London WC1.

YCND Truth Kit now out. Available from 126B St Paul's Road, London N1.

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

Where to find Socialist Organiser

SCOTLAND

Glasgow. Contact: Stan Crooke, 34 Garturk St, Glasgow G42. SO is sold at West End bookshop, Rutherglen shopping arcade (Friday lunchtime), Coatbridge shopping arcade (Saturday lunchtime), and Maryhill dole (Tuesday morning).

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

NORTH-WEST

Rochdale. Next meeting Monday October 11, 8pm at the Castle Inn, Manchester Rd.

Manchester. Contact Tony, 273 5691. SO is sold at Grass Roots, Books, Newton St, Piccadilly.

Stockport. Meetings every Sunday, 7.30pm: contact 40 Fox St, Edgley, Stockport. SO is sold at Stockport market, every Saturday, 11 to 12.30.

Wirral. Contact Lol Duffy, 3 St James Court, Victoria Rd, New Brighton, Merseyside.

Liverpool. Contact 733 6663. SO is sold at Progressive Books, Berry St, and at News from Nowhere, Whitechapel.

Hyndburn. Contact Acerring, 395753.

Stoke. Contact Paul Barnett 151 Broadway, Meir, Stoke, on Trent (328198).

YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

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

Harrogate. Meets every other Sunday evening. Contact Mark Osborn, 522542. SO is sold outside the market, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday lunchtime.

York. Contact 414118 (98 Hull St). SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday morning, at the Community Bookshop, outside the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings.

Sheffield. SO is sold outside Boots in Fargate (Saturday 12 to 1) and at the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Rd, Contact Rob, 589307.

Durham. SO is sold at the Community Co-op, New Elvet. Contact Andy, 64088.

Sunderland. Contact c/o Durham.

Halifax. Contact 52156. SO is sold at Hebden Bridge Books.

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

Hull. Meets every Wednesday, 8pm. Details from SO sellers. Childcare available.

WALES AND WEST

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

Bristol. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane.

MIDLANDS

Birmingham. New series of discussion meetings starting on 'Imperialism'. Alternate Wednesdays, 7.30 at 169 Barclay Rd, Bearswood, Smethwick. Next meeting Wednesday October 19: 'Decolonisation and the economics and politics of "development"'. SO is sold at the Other Bookshop.

Northampton. Contact Ross, 713606.

Coventry. Day school on the Politics of Socialist Organiser — Sunday October 16, 10.30 to 4.30. For venue phone Keith, 75623. Creche, tea and coffee provided. Agenda includes report-backs from Labour Party and TUC conferences.

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

Nottingham. Meets every Thursday evening, 7.30 at the International Community Centre. SO is sold outside the Victoria Centre (Saturday 11 to 1) and at the Mushroom Bookshop, Heathcote St. Contact Pete Radcliff, 585640.

SOUTH

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

Basingstoke. Business meeting Friday October 7, 7.30 at Chute House.

LONDON

North-West London. Contact Mick, 624 1931.

Haringey. Contact 348 5941 or 802 0771.

Islington. Next meeting Sunday October 9, 7pm at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19.

Labour Party conference: report from a conference delegate, plus discussion. Also business — campaigning on YTS, etc. Contact Linda, 278 1341.

South-East London. Contact Siu Ming, 691 1141.

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

Richmond. SO is sold at Richmond Quadrant every Saturday, 11.30-1.30. Further details, contact Nick De Marco, 876 6715.

Southwark/Lambeth. Meets every other Wednesday at Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. Business 7.30, discussion 8.30. Next meeting Oct. 12.

Orpington. Contact c/o South East London.

Tower Hamlets. Next meeting Monday October 19, 7.30, on the Labour Party conference. For details, phone Susan, 377 1328.

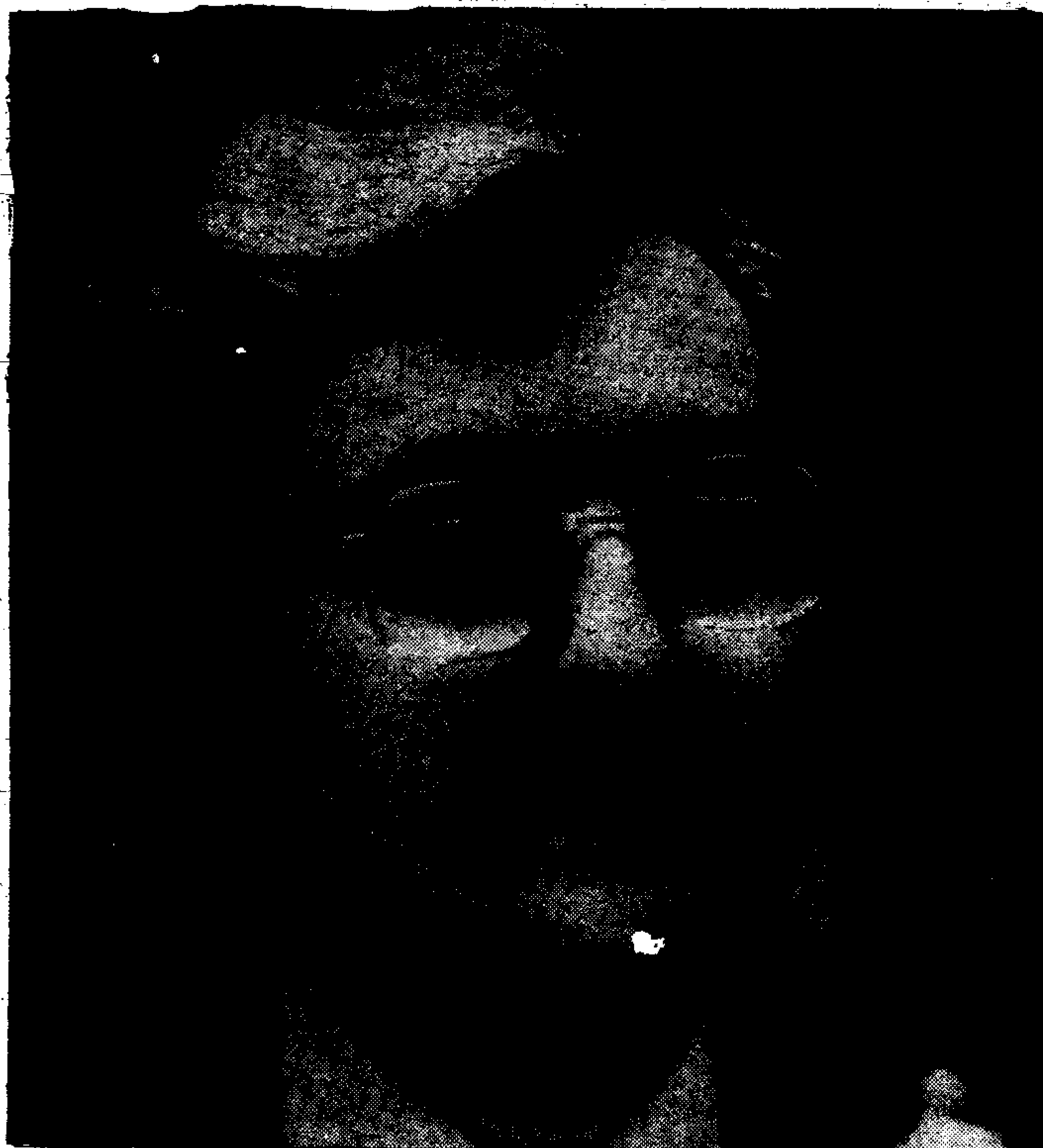
Hounslow. SO is sold outside All Saints Church, Hounslow High St, Saturdays 10.30 to 12. Contact Chris, 898 6961.

Harlow. Contact c/o 28 Middle Lane.



Official badge of the State
in the name of the people
of the State

JONATHAN HAMMOND



ANDREW WARD, REPORT

JONATHAN Hammond, last year's president of the National Union of Journalists, and chair of the Socialist Organiser Alliance, was commemorated at a crowded meeting in London last Wednesday, 28th.

Jonathan died on August 17, aged 41, from a heart attack brought on by asthmatic trouble.

The meeting was chaired by Annie Pike, a colleague, friend and comrade of Jonathan's at work, in the union, and in Socialist Organiser. "Don't mourn, organise", was how she summed it up, and that was indeed the spirit of the meeting.

Marek Garztecki spoke from the Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, who were given office space in the NUJ headquarters on Jonathan's initiative. Marek told the meeting how for over a year Jonathan shared with them the room he occupied as union president. "Of all the people I have met in the British labour movement", said Marek,

Martin Thomas reports on the commemoration meeting held on September 28.

"Jonathan was the most truly an internationalist".

Marek also paid tribute to Jonathan's qualities of generosity and kindness. Jonathan never complained about the inconveniences of sharing his office: he did not make elaborate speeches about the strength of his commitment to Solidarnosc, he simply did what he could to help.

These same qualities were mentioned by many other speakers. Two other qualities would have been evident from the number and variety of speakers even if no-one had spelled them out: Jonathan's immense energy and dedication, and his ability to argue his views politically without ever personalising issues.

Many branches and committees of the NUJ, Fulham Labour Party; CND, Amnesty Interna-

tional, Information on Ireland, Turkey Solidarity Campaign, and others, were represented. And many speakers were astonished to find that what they knew of Jonathan's political activity — which was hectic enough — was only one aspect among many.

Speaking from Socialist Organiser, I emphasised Jonathan's honesty and straightforwardness. In a fragmented labour movement, lacking coherent unifying strategy and infested by bureaucracy, there is a pressure on all of us to develop tunnel vision, confined by our own little line of activity.

Jonathan had no such tunnel vision. That's why he could be president of his union and yet never be 'too busy' to help, never 'above' the most humdrum acti-

vity in his Labour Party, never 'too important' to join the everyday work of an ideologically defined tendency like Socialist Organiser.

Jonathan always cherished the non-sectarian nature of Socialist Organiser — but this was not ideological indifference. He was also prepared to argue our corner, even when it was difficult.

Eddie Barrett, current president of the NUJ, made an appropriate final speech, pointing to the NUJ banner at the front of the meeting and saying: "Jonathan carried that banner more often than anyone else. The best way we can pay tribute is by making sure that there are more of us behind that banner in future".

The meeting then closed in a way that Jonathan would have appreciated: with a brief report from Rod Prince of the NUJ/NGA chapel locked out at Latin American Newsletters, and a collection for their strike fund.

Left Press

Purge in the US

ONE OF the strangest, saddest and most bizarre events among organisations calling themselves Trotskyist in recent years has been the transformation of a large section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) into more or less uncritical supporters of Castroism.

Whatever it was in the past, Castroism is today a variant of Stalinism, from any point of view you choose to look at it.

Cuba is ruled by a bureaucracy modelled on that of the Stalinist states. Freedom of the press and speech, to dissent and to organise a political opposition, the right to form independent (i.e. real) trade unions and anti-Castroite, anti-Stalinist workers' parties — these rights do not exist.

It seems that Castro still has great popular support, but nevertheless the Castro group have created a totalitarian state in Cuba, completely dependent, because of US hostility, on subsidies from the Soviet Union.

It is this Stalinist Cuba the new Mecca of the American SWP and those who follow its lead in the other sections of the USFI.

In the British Socialist League (formerly the IMG), something more than one-third of the organisation has gone over to



Castro with a Sandinista leader

Castro-Stalinism — including people who have been in the organisation's central leadership for more than a decade.

When you meet such people, who are outwardly rational, they tell you with shining eyes about Cuban democracy, where no labour movement independent of the state is allowed, and about 'free' elections in which there are no opposition candidates.

The SWP is no insignificant organisation. Founded in 1928 by James P. Cannon (who died in 1974) it was for long a leading force for unfalsified international Marxism. For decades its press educated generations of Marxists throughout the world.

Workers Review is published by a group of US Marxists, the

Proletarian Tasks Tendency. Its September 1983 issue comments on the present state of the SWP.

THE leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, under Jack Barnes, is actively engaged in the expulsion and suspension of all oppositionists within the SWP, and any members who have doubts as to whether members of the opposition should be expelled.

From an early position of critical support of the Castro leadership, including attacking the suppression of gays in Cuba, the SWP has moved to a position of unmitigated, and uncritical support of the present Cuban leadership.

Why do we call the SWP Stalinist? Let's take a look at what Stalinism is. Stalinist parties deal with opposition with organisational measures, rather than political debate. So does the SWP. Stalinists who have lost any hope of revolution in their own country become uncritical "cheerleaders" of revolutions in other countries, the Soviet Union, Albania, etc., to the point of losing any perspective of mobilising their own working class for a revolutionary upsurge. So does the SWP.

Stalinists tailoring the union bureaucracy, oppose the efforts of rank and file union militants to struggle for better contracts and union democracy. So does the SWP. Stalinist parties do not allow for factions and tendencies. In effect, neither does the SWP.

The liquidation and break-up of the SWP offers a new opportunity to reconstruct the Trotskyist movement in the United States. While Trotskyism is not a large force in the United States, it is the only path the working class has between Stalinism and the pro-capitalist trade union leadership. Every effort to reconstruct and reunite the Trotskyist movement should be worked towards.

Link up towards soviets

REGARDING Martin Thomas's criticism of me in Socialist Organiser no.137: it certainly would be a mistake to advocate the immediate setting-up of fully-fledged soviets throughout the Netherlands.

However, that was not what I was advocating. The point I was making was that in the present situation it is necessary to advocate linking up the local representatives who have been leading the various actions.

This is in fact building towards soviets. I used the word towards in my original article. Whether fully-fledged soviets develop will obviously depend on the way the whole situation

Writeback

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

develops. But we should not be caught out. In my view the emphasis SO is placing on the building of Lab-

our Party workplace branches is absolutely right. DAVID HARRIS, West Sussex.

Analysing the witch hunts

TWO POINTS about Alan Thornett's article (SO 144).

The BL witch-hunt was vicious. The popular press is, indeed, vile and repressive and hysterically anti-socialist. Attempts — though pretty feeble ones — were made by the press to spread the Cowley witch-hunt across industry, and to claw into it the Labour Party, CND, etc.

Precisely for that reason it is important to make a cool assessment of where we are at and of what happened.

I think it is wrong to see the BL witch-hunting as part of a concerted and integrated campaign to smash the labour movement. The evidence suggests it was far more haphazard.

The Cowley management is not the whole capitalist class, and it had its specific motives for dealing with the 13 as it did. The press seized its opportunities, but it is not all-powerful.

The conditions existed in Cowley for the management to sweep out the 13 with relatively little trouble. It takes more than a few horror stories in the press to create the conditions for purges in every industry and every area of society.

And if the Cowley witch-hunt were part of a concerted effort to smash up the labour movement, then that fact would invalidate Alan Thornett's criticism of the Socialist League.

He says that they merely fed the witch-hunters' fires by holding a press conference, and that it would have been better to keep their heads down. That makes sense if the witch-hunt was basically a localised, limited affair, so caution and tactical sense could hope to prevent any serious extension of it.

But if there were a concerted drive against trade union militants with the Cowley witch-hunt as its cutting edge, then lying low would not help and might hinder.

It's like the well-worn argument against any militant self-assertion: that it 'provokes' the reactionaries, 'gives them an ex-

cuse' to strike at you. And the answer is the same: if it's in their interests, they'll manufacture an excuse or a provocation.

Strategy and tactics cannot be shaped by fear of provoking our opponents. Whether the SL should have kept its head down is a matter of judgment of the immediate circumstances.

A far more weighty criticism of the SL is what they did and didn't do in their press conference.

After they had been thrown out of their jobs for being revolutionary socialists, it served no purpose to continue to deny their political identity. Who believed their denials?

The denials must have discredited them, and not only them, politically. They missed the

chance to make a bold and principled Marxist statement.

To choose to try to integrate themselves into the BL workforce rather than make socialist propaganda would have been perfectly proper — if it were an option.

But by the time they held the press conference, it wasn't.

Yet they had... a press conference to deny any connection with the SL, chaired by one of the better known SL full-timers!

They fed the press witch-hunt at that point mainly by seeming to fit exactly the media image of lying, twisting reeds.

From whichever angle you look at it, it was a lamentably incompetent and disorientated performance.

JACK CLEARY, London.

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Tories swindle health workers

BY April Fool's Day 1984 the Thatcher Government hopes to have set up a Pay Review Body (PRB) for selected groups of NHS workers. These are nurses, midwives and health visitors, plus a group which Health Secretary Fowler labels 'Professions Allied to Medicine', and which includes physiotherapists, chiropodists, radiographers, dieticians and one or two other paramedical groups.

Many other groups are excluded, most notably the ancillaries, administrative and clerical staff, and the technical grades. This last group, mainly laboratory workers, are subjected for the second time to Fowler's Law of Divide and rule. During the NHS pay dispute of 1982 their offer was the same as the ancillaries', and not the higher offer given to the nurses and other 'professions'.

To the elitist technical grades this linkage with blue-collar workers was even more insulting than the pay offer itself. The same fears arise now.

But how wise are those workers in excluded grades who want to be covered by the PRB? First, we must be clear that the PRB has no real power to impose its recommendations on any Government. In Fowler's consultation document of February 22 this year there is the biggest loophole I've ever seen: "The Government has given an assurance that its recommendations will be accepted unless there are clear and compelling reasons for not doing so."

You've only got to remember Thatcher's refusal to meet the Doctors and Dentists' Review Body recommendations to realise the ineffectiveness of such a machinery. Similar cases

can be cited from the experiences of teachers and civil servants.

Second, the consultation gives the lie to any "independence" claimed for the members of a PRB. They are appointed by the Prime Minister — and they are sacked by the Prime Minister. In 1982 the Chair of the North-Western Regional Health Authority was asked to resign (or fired) because of his public support for the health workers. Half-a-dozen other Regional Chairs were sacked, too. Every one was replaced by a figure more pleasing to the Prime Minister's sensibilities.

Third is the call on staff to accept a 'no-strike clause' as the price of entry to the PRB club.

Let's squash a few myths. Nobody in the NHS dispute stopped work to cause distress to patients or relatives. Indeed, the emergency cover organised by Joint Shop Stewards' Committees was often better than that organised regularly by management. The TUC's dispute guidelines were so tightly-drawn as to cause as little disruption as possible.

If Norman Fowler cared as much about the direction and accountability of the NHS as every hospital worker cares about her or his responsibilities we'd be well on the way to providing a full and comprehensive service.

The NHS strike tactic is used sparingly and with precision. But the right to withdraw one's labour is a right which must never be thrown away on the terms presented to us in the

PRB proposals. To do so would be like a football team having its bootlaces all tied together by a biased referee before the match.

I think we should understand that the very reason the Tories are creating a PRB is because they know it is one more way of imposing their vision of the future of the NHS on staff and patients alike. It is naive to imagine that a PRB structured and sculpted by the DHSS would be even independent and objective. There is no way it would be favourable towards a staff side opposed to this government's obsession with cash limits and privatisation.

One argument for accepting the PRB proposal is that it will help NUPE recruit nurses.

If, the argument goes, NUPE refused to recognise or submit evidence to a PRB, while COHSE and the RCN did so, nurses would join a union which at least had a say in the pay review process. Thus, all



"In the end, the only pay review that counts is the trade union"

unions are obliged to operate through the PRB simply to keep up membership.

But this is a foolishly short-term view. The PRB means what the Tories want it to mean, a weakening of union bargaining power and solidarity.

Members and potential recruits will rightly ask 'Why pay subs to a union that can't even negotiate our wages?' — and unions will lose members. If NUPE and COHSE (and all the other NHS unions which fear the effects of non-recognition of a PRB) made a united, well-argued, and widely-publicised stand against the proposals, those proposals would be unworkable.

The union negotiators at

And the NHS unions affiliated to the TUC — despite last year's sell-out at national level — have the potential for enough workplace-based activity (especially through Joint Shop Stewards' Committees) to keep up membership at a local level. There is, therefore, no reason why we should be blackmailed into accepting a PRB.

In the end, the only pay review that counts is each member's own trade union. It is through their relatively democratic channels that members can press for improvements in wages and conditions. We decide what we want and what we are prepared to do to get it.

The union negotiators at

national level must be able to rely on the collective strength of the rank and file, and equally the members must struggle hard for an accountable leadership which has a socialist vision of a health service adequate to our needs and under the control of the working class.

Announcing the PRB Fowler said 'I am sure that the staff will welcome this new system and cooperate fully with it.' I hope that activists will urge no co-operation of their union in such a dangerously divisive and diversionary body. The reality of this government's strategic attack on the health workers and the service we provide must be exposed.

How the left can make headway in the colleges

IN THE sixties the Left made more headway than anywhere else in the Labour youth movement and the Labour student organisation. Today the YS looks a very big nut to crack. Could NOLS be easier? Could it be a lever to change the YS?

Jane: Well, NOLS is about the same size as the YS. Militant is the biggest group in NOLS, but they can really only organise themselves. They don't have the same sort of periphery that Socialist Students in NOLS has.

Everything depends, really, on what we can do in the Further Education (FE) sector.

Students in FEs still live at home, they're still part of the local community, and their interests aren't as narrowly focused on the college.

Karen: You can start building in the FEs with the peace campaign, for example. You can activate a lot of people and get them involved in Youth CND.

Last week we carried an interview with Karen Talbot, a member of the National Union of Students executive, and Jane Ashworth, on the perspectives of the new paper 'Socialist Student'. This week we have the continuation of the interview, covering issues in NUS and in NOLS (the National Organisation of Labour Students).

more towards trying to influence the government — which is a totally futile exercise. It's a major priority for them to produce briefing documents to argue with MPs and local authorities.

But there has to be action, if necessary without the backing of the national union executive.

What scope do you see for linking up with campus unions on issues like cuts and privatisation?

Karen: It's really important. It happens in a lot of colleges already, but it needs to be developed more. Labour Clubs should get involved with their Trades Councils.

Jane: NUS will send out circulars saying, 'Make links with your local trade unions'. But it doesn't mean much.

What NUS leadership mean by it is things like the Education Alliance, which is very, very top-heavy — basically half a dozen people from NUS Executive going along and talking to half a dozen people from various education unions.

But I think cuts and privatisation can forge some real unity at campus level. The government clearly intends to get as much ancillary work as possible out to private contract. There'll be job cuts and reduced services, no doubt about that.

It's not just something for campus unions. Whereas in the past it's been a campus focus, now much more we're talking about issues affecting the whole of the working class.

together Labour students and Labour Party members among the ancillary workers and teaching staff?

Jane: Yes. I think you'd have to make sure the workplace branch was dominated by the ancillary staff — because teachers could well be a dead hand on it, especially in universities — and it would work together closely with the Labour Club.

You haven't said much about grants, even though the real value of grants has gone down a lot in recent years.

Karen: Grants are still an

issue, and we are still pushing the £30 a week claim for FE students.

But we won't be having a big national mobilisation on grants in the first term of this academic year — which perhaps means it'll be seen as less of a focus.

Jane: That's true, but it's wrong. I don't see why a student union should be considered as any different from a trade union on this. A trade union that doesn't deal with its members' wages isn't going to be a credible trade union. The same applies to NUS and grants.

We need to push for a fighting orientation all round. At grass roots I think there'll be the response — especially in FEs. There's a gap to be filled by a strong left organisation among students, and if we do our work properly we can fill it.

LAST WEEK we cited a Department of Employment study which indicated that — on average — white-collar workers strike about ten times less than manual workers.

The figures are from 1966-73.

The period studied was one of a general rise in strikes [except for the year 1973]. However, the figures do show non-manual strikes increasing faster than manual strikes. It is dangerous to draw any sweeping conclusions from this because the period studied is so short.

Facts & Figures

'Transport' includes warehouse workers, storekeepers, etc. 'Metal/electrical' includes all workers involved in 'processing, making, and repairing' metal or electrical goods. ['Processing, making and repairing' workers in other industries are among the middling groups for strikes].

'Science' means 'professional — science, engineering and technology'. 'Assembling etc' includes painting, packaging and inspection. 'Literary etc', as regards strike activity, means mostly journalists. 'Professional' means professional — education, welfare, health.

All the figures relate only to strikes involving a single occupation.

Remember: of these figures, and many other information, see page 14.

Analysis

A further analysis of the data was published by the Department of Employment in 1980, subdividing 'white-collar' workers and 'manual' workers into smaller groups.

Annual averages	Strikes per 100,000 workers	Strike-days per 100,000 workers
High-strike groups		
Transport	19.0	369.6
Construction and mining	17.1	1424.2
Metal/electrical	9.3	183.3
Science	5.3	116.9
Middling groups		
Assembling etc	4.8	64.4
Literary etc	3.1	26.1
Low-strike groups		
Food, drink	1.4	2.3
Other	1.4	2.3
Other	1.4	2.3
Other	1.4	2.3
Other	1.4	2.3

How many Labour Clubs are there in FE at the moment?

Karen: Very few. A lot less than there are in the universities and the polys.

Jane: But there are some developing.

What are the big issues in NUS [the National Union of Students] which Socialist Student will be taking up?

Karen: Peace, obviously. And the usual priorities of cuts and grants.

The NUS is veering to the right again now, moving away from demonstrations, away from pickets and direct action. Socialist Student should be pushing for action in place of the tokenistic and ineffectual gestures that come down from national level.

Why is the NUS moving off the streets just when the cuts are becoming most severe?

Karen: They're moving

SOCIALIST STUDENT

Students, workers: Together we can win!

Articles by Tony Benn; Karen Talbot, NUS Executive on 'The year ahead'; Tony Dale, NOLS NC and lots more.

New paper of Socialist Students in NOLS. Available from Andy Bennet, DSU, Dunelm House, New Elvet, Durham. Copies 10p each. Take a bulk order to sell!

SSIN Day school

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Haringey: after victory, organise!

THE week-long strike of over 2,000 NALGO members in Haringey, North London, reached a victorious conclusion last week when the sacked worker, Les Butler, was reinstated and management agreed to an independent inquiry into its handling of his dismissal.

The Labour controlled council, who backed the management of the PELAW, Public Works section, were forced to climb down completely. Only two councillors had taken the union's side.

As important as the victory was the effect of the strike on

the NALGO branch.

The majority of members have never taken industrial action in their life, and undoubtedly the strength, organisation and solidarity of the members in the strike could not have existed without the newly formed shop stewards system.

Many stewards commented that under the old Departmental Representative system they probably would not even have heard of the strike until it was over. Now they are determined to strengthen the stewards system.

A decision by NUT members

by Mary Corbishley (Haringey NALGO)

not to cross picket lines was possibly what brought the councillors to their knees when they were faced with schools being shut.

For a number of years relations between NALGO and other council employee unions has been very poor. The joint union committee has not met for two years.

Initially the Council drew much of their confidence from the fact that the manual workers unions were unsupportive and, in

the case of the TGWU, openly hostile to the strike.

But the inter-union hostility is at the level of local leaderships.

The strike began to heal some of the rifts, as NALGO members (many of whom in the past had flouted other unions' picket lines) recognised the importance of the picket and for the first time talked to rank and file members of other unions and heard about their working conditions and disputes.

It is vital that the inter-union rift is bridged and a new joint shop stewards committee is built. Without such unity even despite the new found confidence of the NALGO branch when the fight over cuts and jobs comes the unions will be too busy attacking each other to win.

An important part of this process will be the role of Labour Party workplace branches involving council workers across the unions.

For NALGO Labour Party members the lack of links between the union and the Labour Party became glaring.

We had little possibility of either bringing to account councillors for their anti-union stance or pointing out to Labour Party members the necessity of a united political approach between the unions and the Labour Party to the Tories' attack on local authorities.

The Labour Party workplace branch based on Hornsey Town Hall sent an open letter to all Labour Councillors but to no avail.

One way to reverse this situation is to build more workplace branches across the council which cannot be ignored.

ON Monday of this week about 400 health workers and supporters turned up to attend a public meeting of Sheffield Health Authority, at which cuts and privatisation were to be discussed.

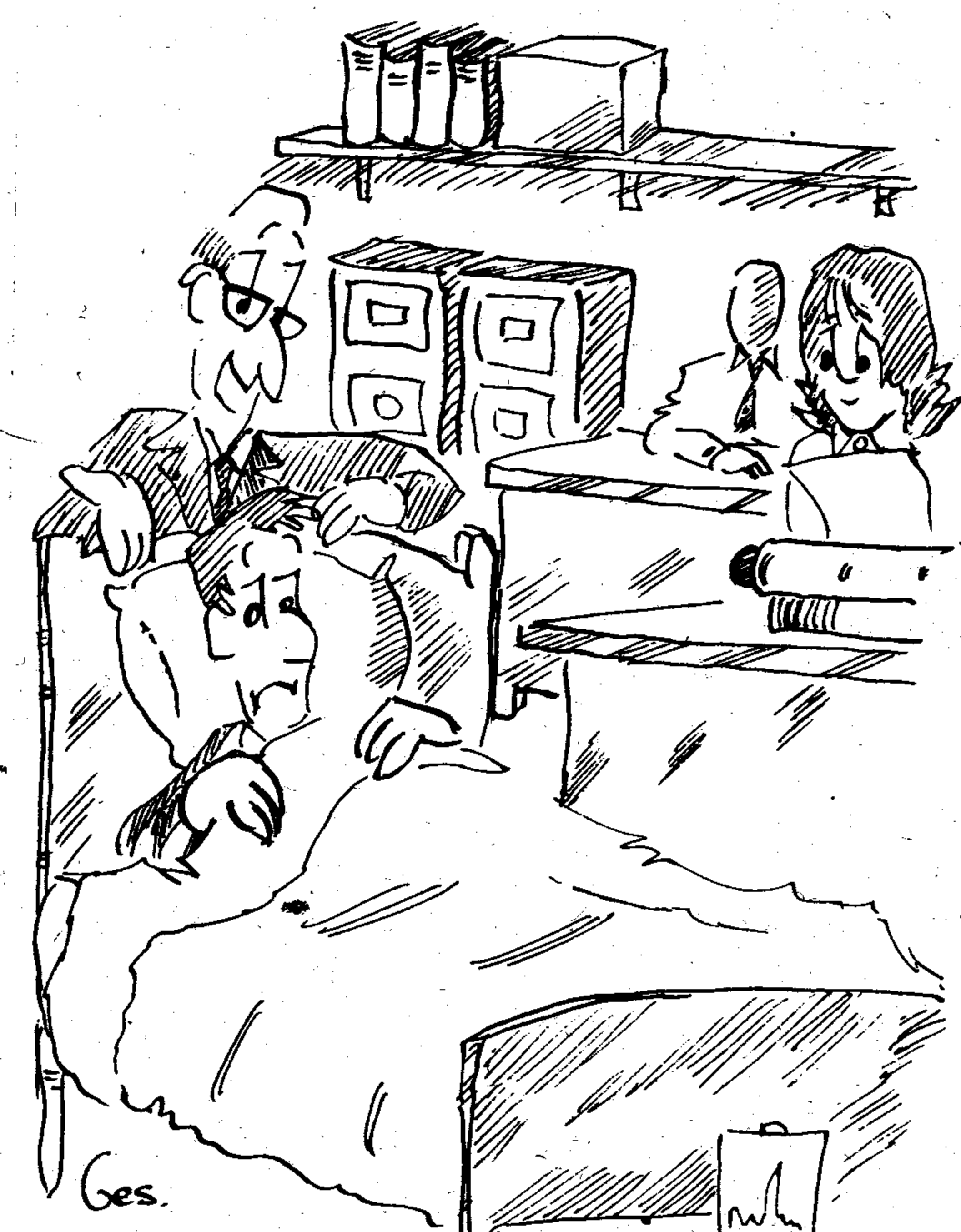
The police were also invited to the meeting. They were of course "only doing our job, love" but they seem to have exceeded their brief a little when they started protecting the public meeting from the public. Force of habit?

Of the 400 health workers clamouring to know how the District Health Authority were to dispose of their jobs, only 28 were designated as members of the public and allowed into the meeting.

Our hope was that Sheffield Health Authority would be pressurised into taking the same line as Brent - no cuts and no privatisation. The line emerging from the meeting, however, was 'no cuts, no privatisation (until the government forces us to)'.

Reality, according to one of the lucky 28, was a policy of avoiding the cuts but keeping in the black - i.e. making cuts, employing slave labour in the form of YTS and/or private contractors and selling off NHS property to developers of private hospitals.

Their version of opposing privatisation appears to mean maintaining the fair wages condition in all contracts and little else.



"The hospital was demolished whilst you were asleep and this office block was built".

How we organised to black Trident

DAVIE GRAHAM is a founder member of the workplace Labour Party branch at Rolls Royce, Hillington, near Glasgow. Socialist Organiser interviewed Davie on the role of the workplace branch in the factory.

Could you tell us how you and others went about building the branch and what problems and successes you encountered?

Six Labour Party activists called a meeting of all Party members in the factory. Along with Jimmy Allison, Scottish Organiser, our branch was then constituted. We have been very successful in gaining new members over the last six months.

We are selling 50 copies of Labour Weekly to branch members every week. Within the branch we have three Strathclyde Regional Councillors, three Glasgow District Councillors, one East Kilbride District Councillor and one Renfrew District Councillor. This has all helped in building our branch.

Rolls Royce management were very enquiring as to our activities at first.

After I and branch officials met with management on three occasions their objections have ceased.

Could you say something about the relationship between the branch and the shop stewards committee in the factory?

In a word, excellent. Members of our branch are shop stewards for the AUEW, GMBATU, TGWU and ACTSS. Within our membership we have comrades who are also on the factory joint trades committee and members who are convenors of respective unions. Progressives who are not Labour Party members but are shop stewards have been very helpful and supportive.

What kind of activities does the branch intend to carry out in the period ahead?

We have started monthly factory gate drops of our branch newsletter. We put out 2,000 free of charge to the workforce. Working with the factory committee during the general election we had factory gate meetings at lunchtime addressed by Labour MPs and others.

Do you see the branch playing a role in helping combat the continued rundown of the plant?

I don't see any confrontation taking place over voluntary



Continuing a discussion from our Sept. 17 'How to Fight the Tories' conference.

Hostel strike wins at last

redundancies. Having said that, the recent 2-1 vote against working on Trident by the workforce, which was worked for by the Labour Party members and the shop stewards, was a very significant victory considering that morale is not all that high in certain areas of the workforce due to the decline in the Aerospace industry.

How do you see workplace branches participating in the reconstruction of the labour movement?

If we are serious in building a mass campaigning party I believe it is essential that we expand and build up workplace branches in factories, offices, schools, and a most important area - within the local authorities, e.g. NALGO members.

IT TOOK a long and bitter strike for the 26 workers at Arlington House hostel in Camden to win. But they stuck it out for 13 months and won they did.

The scope of their victory is measured by the great differences between the wages and conditions they walked out against and those they return to.

They used to get free lodgings - a 7ftx5ft room and a bed - and £26 basic a week. Now the lowest paid will get £102 a week and live out.

The hostel has been taken out of the hands of Rowton Hotels and will be run for Camden Council by the UK Housing Trust.

Carousel calls in cop

WITH THE strike for union recognition and reinstatement at the Carousel wafer factory in the east end of Glasgow now into its third month, both sides are dug in for a lengthy struggle.

In the last fortnight, the scabs have become much more aggressive towards the pickets, threatening them and punching them, on and off the picket line.

Saccomando, the factory's owner, has now enlisted the help of a former policeman to help him to ferry in scabs and to try to intimidate the pickets.

Many of the firms taking supplies from Carousel are still doing so. Embarrassment was recently caused by the discovery that Glasgow Co-operative stores are continuing to stock Carousel wafers.

The groceries department at the Co-op's head office in Glasgow pleaded ignorance of the dispute, but promised a sympathetic response, once officially contacted about it.

No major deliveries have been made to the firm since the flour delivery over a fortnight ago, and shop stewards at the firm which supplied the flour (Carr's) have since written to the strikers saying that no more will be permitted.

Other minor setbacks suffered by Saccomando include the refusals to cross the picket line of POEU engineers (to fix two of his three phones which are now out of order), and of the mechanics brought in to fix Saccomando's wage-slip machine.

The weekly mass pickets are continuing. Though they have not increased in size - about 60 or 70 turn out - they have become much more pickets of rank and file trade unionists and Labour Party members rather than just the far Left.

The attitude of the police to the mass pickets has also noticeably hardened.

As winter sets in Saccomando's vulnerability to picketing and blacking is rapidly decreasing. He has already lost the Saudi Arabian order which used to be his main one during the winter months.

This makes it all the more vital to step up support.

Donations/messages to: TGWU office, 216 West Regent St, Glasgow.



SOLIDARNOŚĆ

WITH EDMUND BALUKA

LET'S GET HIM OUT OF GAOL

Edmund Baluka was recently jailed for five years by the Polish Stalinist regime. They have offered to release him if he is prepared to leave the country, which he will not do. Get your union to send a protest to the Polish Embassy in London, demanding his release.

Dayschool and AGM

Annual General Meeting, Sunday October 30 at County Hall, London SE1. Day school on organising for the politics of Socialist Organiser, Saturday October 29, Crouch Hill Recreation Centre, Hillrise Road, London N19. Details from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8



TUC meets Tebbit

THE TUC got no joy when they met Tebbit last Thursday, 29th. Their offer to discuss 'voluntary' trade union reform was turned down by Tebbit, whose new Bill is already drafted. They told him of their fear of a tight legal straitjacket on the unions. He told them he wanted a loose rather than a tight straitjacket — but it couldn't be too loose. Afterwards, Len Murray got up off his knees, dusted himself down, wiped Tebbit's spittle off his face, and told the press that the trade unions' offer to Tebbit had been "honourable and honest".

Socialist ORGANISER

Gays tell Labour: Don't say we lost votes

by Stephen Spurdon

ONE Sunday afternoon, just after the general election, I watched an edition of the Channel 4 programme "Union World" in which reasons for the Labour Party's defeat were being discussed. Sitting with the presenter were union stalwarts and champions of the masses, David Basnett and Gavin Laird.

"Do you think," said the presenter, "that the Labour Party's advocacy of such middle class concerns as animal rights and gay rights caused disaffection amongst the mass of traditional Labour voters?"

Basnett pulled one of those merry little grimaces like a grave opening and mumbled on about "getting back to priorities". But there it was — the assumption in the question had been accepted. Gay rights was a vote loser.

That assumption is hidden in the weakness of the manifesto commitment to gay rights:

"We are concerned that homosexuals are unfairly treated. We will take steps to ensure that they are not unfairly discriminated against — especially in employment and in the definition of privacy contained in the 1967 Act — along the lines set out in Labour's Programme, 1982."

Liberal sentiments — weakly expressed — give the lie to the Party hierarchy's views on gay rights more than if nothing had been said at all. We are an embarrassment, we are divisive and we are, in the final analysis, expendable.

We are not even to be heard — if the annual conferences of the Labour Party are anything to go by. And this year's conference will be no exception, with not even a mention for gay rights. Yet again, we are relegated to a fringe meeting — symbolic of our position in Party consciousness.

But this will not always be the case. Mainly through the work of such organisations as Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, many people in the Party are beginning to realise that the fight for gay rights is as much a part of the socialist struggle as are the issues of class, race and sex.

Indeed, it is our threat to the very basis of capitalism — literally how it reproduces itself — that has set off a nervous reac-

tion in the press. Only recently we have had an attack on gay rights of almost unprecedented proportions, provoked by the rape of a six year old boy in Brighton by three men. It was interesting to note the subtle propaganda at work as many of the reports linked homosexuality with paedophilia with child molestation, as if homosexuality was the start of a slippery slope.

If the capitalist establishment can see what a danger gay liberation is to its being, why can't the Labour Party see it in that way and support us for precisely the same reason? And why is it that the "left" persists in perceiving gay rights as marginal to its demands?

For instance, many gay socialists, like myself, consider the left's advocacy of Eric Heffer for the leadership to be an obscenity when considering his dubious record on sexual politics.

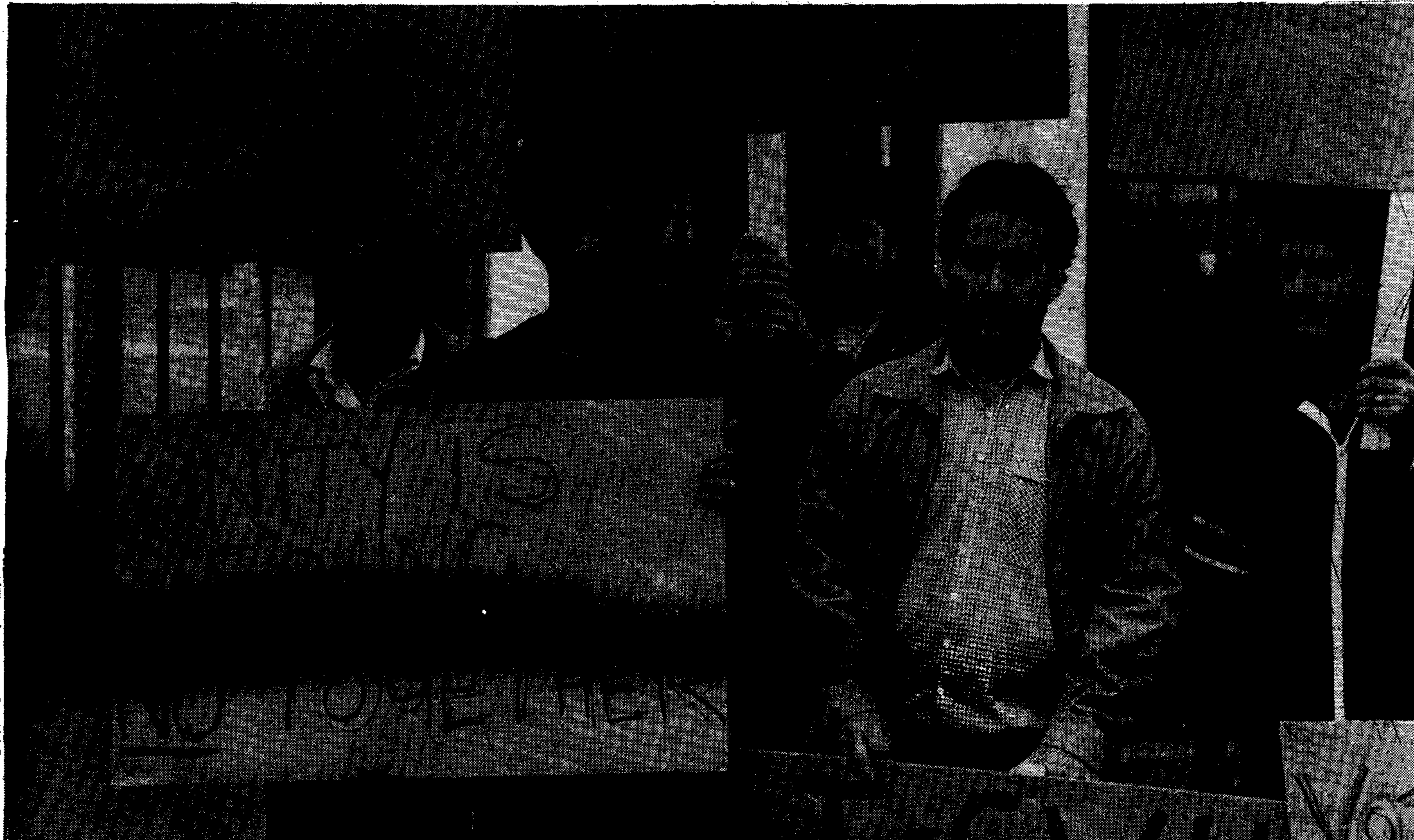
Until recently, it was difficult to argue with gay people that they should align themselves with the socialist cause in general and the Labour Party's in particular. The Liberal Party seemed the logical choice for gays because of its consistent (if liberal) advocacy of gay rights.

Until, that is, the last election where it was clear to see the poisoning influence of the SDP on the "radical" Liberal tradition — now withering at its very roots (sic).

Many Liberals were appalled that any mention of gay rights had been expunged from the Alliance manifesto. And their worst fears were realised at the recent Liberal Assembly where Alex Carlile, home affairs spokesperson, told the Assembly that, as far as he was concerned, the Party had no policy on gay rights.

This was good only in that it may serve to show gay Liberals the worthlessness of tokenism: the Liberal Party's support for gay rights has been dropped as quickly as it was adopted, there being no ideological backing within the Party for anything other than a reformist approach to the oppression of gays.

For those of us in LCGR, tokenism or tolerance is unacceptable. What we demand is a recognition of the revolutionary potential of sexual politics and a socialist perspective of it within the labour movement. We are convinced that nothing less than that will lead to true freedom.



TGWU pickets at Ellesmere Port

VAUXHALL TORPEDOED

THE collapse of the two-day old strike at Vauxhall is painfully reminiscent of the BL strike in 1979 which was also killed by the leadership after two days.

Although Vauxhall management was clearly shaken and forced to come off the 14 month deal, an important wave of militancy in the Vauxhall plants has been stabbed in the back.

Terry Duffy was in the van-

by Alan Thornett

guard of the sell-out. It was his public hostility to the strike as soon as it became a reality which created the situation at Dunstable. Not that the TGWU leaders are any better in reality.

Not a single public statement has been made by TGWU officials supporting the strike, yet such a statement by Moss Evans or Grenville Hawley would have

strengthened it considerably.

Members of the AUEW were balloted separately at Dunstable and voted to scab on the strike. That became the vulnerable point. On Tuesday the Dunstable TGWU members met and voted to accept the company's offer under the pressure of AUEW scabbing.

Luton met a few hours later and voted by a 2-1 majority to follow Dunstable and go back to work.

But there was no lead whatsoever from the platform. No recommendation was made to the meeting. The mass meetings were called after only two days of the strike to vote again on a company offer which came nowhere near meeting the claim. It is the same old story. When the leadership is opposed to a strike, call mass meetings at every pretext and the crack is bound to emerge. The workers have to win the vote every time, the management only have to win it once and it's all over.

It is little wonder that hundreds of militant workers were angry and bitter after the Luton meeting. They were obviously able to see the whole manoeuvre and how it was carried out.

Like Cowley in 1981, Ellesmere Port was left high and dry, having voted overwhelmingly to continue the strike and having proceeded to seek the support of the dockers. Understandably, they decided not to go it alone and voted on Wednesday morning to return to work.

The strike, however, and the limited gains of stopping the 14 month deal shows once again that the working class is prepared to fight when the issues come up, even given the collapse of the TUC and trade union leaders in the post-election period.

Mail smears Labour

TUESDAY'S Daily Mail (October 4) carried one of the most vicious press attacks yet on the Labour council in Islington, North London.

A journalist, Gloria Stewart, faked up leaflets for a fictional women's collective offering aid to prisoners and ex-prisoners from Holloway Prison. Using information she had gathered on the prison while doing a series on it recently as a freelance, she approached the council for money and premises.

The council, well aware of the treatment faced by prisoners in jail, and the difficulties they often have on release, made a favourable initial response.

A council statement points out:

"No money and no accommodation were ever given to this group. Council leader Margaret Hodge hit out at the Mail's irresponsible smear and stressed that the reporter had used a false name, Gloria Murray, when she approached the council, a fact not mentioned by the Mail."

"When Gloria Murray first spoke to deputy council leader Valerie Veness she did not mention accommodation but merely asked for a grant for a newsletter. Margaret Hodge added: 'The council is always extremely careful about investigating fully any request before money or resources are handed out.'"

But the Mail journalist did not stick around for the investigation. She pulled out and wrote her two-page article "exposing" the council's willingness to consider helping prisoners and ex-prisoners — what she brazenly asserts to be "a clearly crazy cause."

Margaret Hodge commented: 'Islington will get on with the task of providing homes and jobs for the people of Islington and will not be deflected by this kind of dishonest, disreputable, muck-raking journalism.'

March with CND

October 22

11am Embankment London

FUND

OUR bulletins, paper sales, and meetings at Labour Party conference are important. But they also cost money. Some of it we'll make good by collections at the conference. But there will be about £150 to cover from general funds.

The work at Labour Party conference also takes a lot of time and energy — so we've not got full fund figures this week.

There's £20 from Ian Nichol, £6 from Steve Hall, and £2 from Barnsley. We haven't got details of the rest, but it's certain we need a lot more money!

Send to: The Treasurer, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.