

THE ENEMY IS AT HOME! RAIL

By Steve Good
Kings Cross
ASLEF

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

BOSSSES' WAR ON UNIONS

AS WE go to press British troops are surrounding Port Stanley, and the Tory government seems confident of victory against the Argentine forces.

But their victory - if, at the cost of killing and maiming hundreds, they achieve it - will not be ours. For our main enemy is at home.

It is the warmongering, profit-greedy British ruling class, and the Tory government that represents it. Our main fight is against their policies of attacking the working class in the 'national interest', shredding public services while boosting the arms drive, threatening lives across the world with their nuclear arsenal, exploiting millions in many countries through their international industrial and banking operations, and bolstering Reagan's efforts to keep the US grip on Central America.

Whatever the outcome of the war for the islanders - and they can scarcely rejoice at the prospect of henceforth being a small annex to a big military base, or being at the centre of a long-running war between British occupying forces and the Argentine air force and navy - the main effect of a victory for the British forces will be to strengthen this main enemy of ours, in all its most reactionary policies.

It was to boost her government's prestige and power, and not out of concern for the islanders' rights, that Thatcher went to war.

Against the wars of the ruling classes, we should be seeking solidarity with the workers of Argentina and Latin America.

'Lula' Inacio da Silva is a leader of the metal workers' union in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and of the Brazilian Workers' Party, one of the few non-Stalinist independent workers' parties in Latin America.

Last week (speaking to Socialist Worker) he made this appeal to the British working class.

"I don't believe in any war - least of all in a war about the Malvinas.

I don't think you English comrades - the English working class - have anything to gain from the war. The English government is in

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THEIR VICTORY IS NOT OURS

fact trying to cover up for the complete economic and political disaster it has created.

And the Argentinian government also has its own internal problems. The Malvinas war is a way of covering up what's happening there as well.

I don't think the English have any right to land in Latin America. Just as I don't think Argentina has any right to seize the islands and their inhabitants by force. No right at all.

English people must understand that we're no longer in the colonial era and that no country has the right to colonise another.

We see people in England forgetting about unemployment and economic collapse - and thinking about the war instead.

In Argentina people are forgetting about the 15,000 people that have disappeared, unemployment, political prisoners, inflation - and instead they are thinking about the war.

Both sets of people have become obsessed by the war and then they begin to support their own governments. Both governments are in the wrong and are dragging both peoples behind them.

And yet this war is in the interests of neither English nor Argentinian workers.

I think if it had been possible to ask the workers in both countries to decide what ought to be done, the result would have been different. There would not have been a war.

BRITISH Rail has declared war on the unions. After the Railway Staffs National Tribunal decision in their favour on flexible rostering, they stated that there would not even be any discussion on the 1982 wage claim of 15% until ASLEF abandoned the eight-hour day.

That position has now hardened further, with the British Rail Board offering a mere 5% - and that not until September, five months late. 5% over seven months is the equivalent of an annual pay rise of only 3%.

In addition, the rail bosses have given notice that they will send out new rosters and impose them whatever the union says.

The NUR has talked of industrial action from June 7 over pay and the rundown and closure of locomotive works - though the NUR executive has not yet decided on strike action from that day.

It is possible that BR will postpone the closures in order to avoid the NUR

action. But this will only be a manoeuvre. Clearly BR and the Tories are out for confrontation.

The unions must respond. Militants should demand that action goes ahead from June 7 - with the demand for an unconditional pay rise.

Whatever issue sparks the actual confrontation, the outcome will be decisive for all rail workers. Not only should ASLEF be supporting action called by NUR, but ASLEF members should be demanding that the date for strike action to defeat flexible rostering and enforce the joint union demand for 15%, be brought forward immediately to coincide with the NUR action.

It would be disastrous for ASLEF to stand aside from action called by the NUR.

If the NUR are defeated over the works closures, ASLEF will not be able to fight the BRB alone on its own sectional interests. If management suspend the guaranteed week for drivers and drivers assistants, then ASLEF members will be in no condition to face up to the BRB on flexi-rosters after weeks of dole money.

The hardening of BR's stance was clear from Railway Staffs National Tribunal decision number 77, which read more like a British Railways Board press release than a 'neutral' decision on flexible rostering.

It proved once again that trade unionists can have no faith in 'independent' arbitration. And it virtually dismissed ASLEF's case.

Even more significant was the way in which McCarthy went beyond the issue of flexible rostering to insist that new rostering arrangements can only be cost-effective if they are linked with more widespread single-manning.

The very length of time which it took to produce the decision indicates that McCarthy and the rest of the Railway Staffs National Tribunal were put under massive behind-the-scenes pressure to come up with a verdict favourable to management.

The official ASLEF response has, on the face of it, been quite strong. The Annual Conference, as expected, rejected the McCarthy award. However, there has been no official position put forward by the executive to deal with the probability that management will impose flexi-fosters. Indeed, recent statements by Don Pullen, ASLEF Assistant General Secretary, strongly suggest that it will be left up to the depots themselves.

But BR bosses are ready for a show down. So must we be.

Join the CND protest against Reagan on Sunday June 6 with placards and banners against Thatcher's war.

Assemble Hampstead Rd, Ladbroke Grove, or Belvedere Rd, 11am; rally in Hyde Park 3.30pm.

Other demonstrations against the warmongers: Monday June 7, 5.30, Grosvenor Square; Tuesday June 8, 1pm, lobby of Parliament.



The TUC's dribs and drabs

Friday June 4: one-day strike by health workers for their pay claim. **Monday June 7:** scheduled starting day for industrial action by the NUR on rail pay and closures.

Tuesday June 8: another one-day strike on NHS pay. The Yorkshire and Humberside TUC, and other trade union bodies, are calling for supporting strikes by other workers.

Thursday June 10: The TUC 'Union Day' against Tebbit's Bill. The TGWU national dockers' delegate meeting has called for strikes on this day, both against the Bill and for the dockers' own demands on jobs. Across the country Trades Councils and other labour movement organisations will be organising rallies and demonstrations.

In addition, the Fire Brigades Union and the NSMM conferences have called for TUC 24-hour strikes against Tebbit; National Union of Seamen general secretary Jim Slater has made the same call; and APEX has called for a day of action against the Tory Bill. (The TUC is very deliberately *not* calling June 10 a day of action). None of these unions have named a day, but militants should argue for action on the day of protest already planned — June 10.

On **Wednesday June 16** a one-day strike by the South Wales miners, in solidarity with the health workers, is due to follow.

That's the schedule for the next couple of weeks. It shows that will and confidence for a fightback is growing in the working class — and that our movement's leadership is doing nothing, absolutely nothing, to weld the fightback into a coordinated offensive.

The decisions which have scattered the action across so many separate days can only reflect a preference for action by demoralising dribs and drabs — less risky, more comfortable, than a concerted challenge to the government.

But where the official leadership ducks out, it is the job of socialists to fight for an alternative. We must be campaigning to pull together the action into a united fight, building links at local level, demanding that the union leaders seek maximum coordination.

At the same time we must argue against attempts to use 'unity' as a cop-out, like the NUPE Executive's refusal to implement its union conference's all-out strike call on the grounds that all the unions must act together.

The Tory government's policy of cuts, closures, and cash limits, designed to boost profits at the expense of services and public sector workers, is a common factor facing health workers, railworkers, and others.

The Tebbit Bill is a threat to all workers.

A working class response should demand:
*Wages to be protected against inflation by adequate pay rises and clauses guaranteeing cost-of-living rises each month in line with a working class price index.

*Reverse the cuts: automatic inflation-protection for the funds of the public services in line with a cost index controlled by the workers.

*Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'!

*Stop Tebbit's Bill. Defend the right to strike, to take solidarity action, and to picket.

The current union conferences show a militant feeling on a wide range of fronts. SOGAT and TASS have called for the TUC to break its links with the Tories in the NEDC and other tripartite committees. The UCATT conference rejected all varieties of incomes policy, overturning the executive on this issue. In the CPSA executive elections there was a dramatic shift to the left.

The gap between this militant feeling and the scattered action called by the leaderships underlines the centrality of the fight in the whole labour movement — unions and Labour Party — for democracy, for election of officials, and for new, accountable leaderships.

Tebbit Union leaders must **BREAK LINKS WITH TORIES NOW!**



CALL 1-DAY STRIKE!

The Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights is campaigning for action on June 10. Contact: 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

A chance missed

THE FINAL two days of last week's NUPE Conference were taken up with the Biennial Rules Revision Session.

Delegates had the opportunity to revise the rulebook and also to put amendments to an Executive Council statement on the organisation of the union.

The EC's attitude was basically to leave things as they are. They presented no more than half a dozen minor amendments to rule. The rest of the document was taken up with good advice to branches about getting the members involved.

The most heated debate occurred over full-time officers. The EC defended appointment of officers against a barrage of amendments calling for their election by the membership as a whole.

Delegates pointed out the hypocrisy of the situation where unelected full-timers were arguing for the mandatory reselection of MPs.

Delegates supporting the EC position failed to take

on the arguments about accountability and fell back on touching speeches about how we could trust our full-timers, after all, weren't they the best in the trade union movement?

Amendments

Unfortunately, the effects of a lack of debate throughout the union, and some hard lobbying by the full-timers, made themselves felt, and the amendments were heavily lost.

A number of minor amendments were carried which will affect the organisation of the union. One of them gave District Committees a larger number of delegates on Area Committees, thus increasing Branch representation. Another disallowed retired members from holding office in their Branches, something which should change the make-up of next year's conference.

Overall, an opportunity to bring greater democracy to the union and to turn it into a more effective, fighting organisation was lost.

SHEFFIELD'S OUT FROM JUNE 4!

Report from Ellen Taylor (NUPE), a member of joint union strike committee, Middlewood Hospital, Sheffield.

THERE HAS been a lot of energy put into this campaign by many people at Middlewood. After May 19 we carried on visiting workplaces, asking for moral, financial and active support in the form of strike action. This has resulted in the South Yorkshire miners agreeing to cooperate with us in our dispute.

It looks like they will be coming out on 24 hour strike with us on June 8 and joining the mass demonstration in Sheffield.

River Don steel workers will be out too, and other factories will be sending delegations. NUR and ASLEF have sent donations to our strike fund and they too will send delegations.

The dispute is not just about pay but about defending our health service. I think many workers are realising that this is their fight too.

The general mood in Sheffield was for united all-out indefinite strike which would get this dispute over and done with as quickly as possible. An emergency motion was taken to NUPE Conference, and after many problems with Standing Orders, accepted.

We were excited — and then deflated a little by the confusion created by the national leaders who pointed to the clause in the resolution calling for united action as an excuse to do nothing until every union was agreed.

Last Tuesday 25th, a 60-strong meeting of the



May 19: on strike and on the picket line

Link-up in London

SINCE May 19, when more than 150 hospitals in London took some form of strike action, momentum has been gathering for an even bigger response to the calls for strike action on the 4th and 8th.

Joint union strike committees and stewards committees have been set up in hospitals where there has not previously been this sort of cooperation.

Most hospitals are expected to come out on Friday and Tuesday and some of the teaching hospitals are only able to take emergency admissions.

NUPE London Divisional Council will be meeting during the week — as will the NUPE London strike committees.

The results of these two meetings will clearly be crucial for NUPE branches in London.

Also scheduled is a meet-

ing of the London health stewards combine, which is the only joint union initiative for London as a whole.

COHSE, which at the moment is waiting for its annual conference before deciding whether or not to

support NUPE will be holding a lobby, called by Region 5, at the DHSS offices at the Elephant and Castle on Friday 4th — when the ancillary Whitley Council will be meeting.

Jane Goss



Despite a tough debate, conference voted to retain the system under which officials like general secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe (above) are appointed, not elected

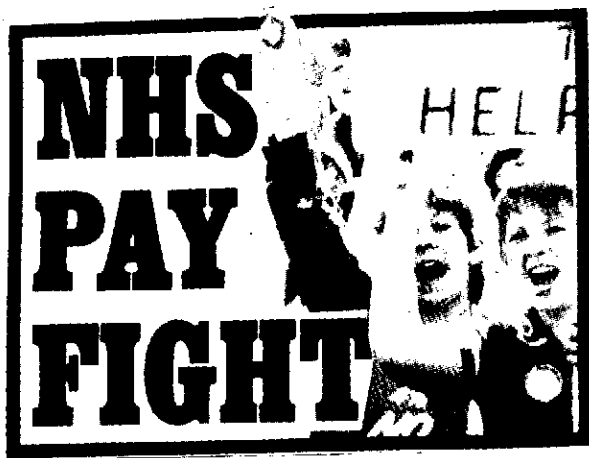
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NHS PAY FIGHT

STARVED OF UNION BACKING

by Tim
McRae

1. EDINBURGH

COHSE members at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital went back to work on 25 May after being out on strike for six days and having been refused official backing from the NEC.

NUPE members went back on the 26th. Although the Hospital is now back at work, people are still saying that all-out strike action with emergency cover is what is needed, and that they won't support one-day strikes.

However, NUPE workers are still on strike in the City and Royal Infirmary hospitals, although COHSE members there have gone back to work.

The Scottish miners have voted to give financial backing for NUPE industrial

action, so at the very least COHSE should do the same.

A local group of Health Workers for the Full Claim has been set up in Edinburgh, drawing in activists from all three hospitals to push for all-out strike as the only way to win.

We should be pushing for an emergency debate on the 1982 pay claim at COHSE conference and we should also be supporting the lobby of the TUC Health Services Committee meeting on Wednesday June 9.

An important initiative would be to demand a recall of the Lothian NHS Shop Stewards Conference to plan positive action in the light of the NUPE conference decision for all-out strike.

2. ROTHERHAM

LACK of official support has led to the collapse of strike action in Rotherham.

Badsey Moor Lane Hospital walked out on May 20, followed by NUPE members at the Rotherham District Hospital.

The following Wednesday a mass meeting of NUPE members voted overwhelmingly to stay out, and a mass picket followed at the Doncaster Central Hospital which was working.

Yet the next day the shop stewards were wavering. On Friday they had called the strike off.

A strike leader said: "We were told the TUC would back us and if we stayed out until June 8 we would each receive a paltry £12 in strike pay... Rotherham was flying the flag for NUPE, and the members and shop stewards felt we had been stabbed in the back."

DAVE AYRTON

JUNE 16 ACTION

Martin Barclay, branch secretary of NUPE Cardiff Royal Infirmary Branch, reports on the NHS pay campaign in Cardiff.

AT THE same time that the NUPE conference was debating the NHS pay dispute, St. David's Hospital, Cardiff was on 24-hour strike action. When they heard about the decision by conference to support the Middlewood emergency resolution calling for all-out strike action, NUPE, COHSE and the GMWU held a joint mass meeting on Thursday May 27, and voted to support that strike call.

After a lightning 24-hour strike on the eve of Conference, NUPE and COHSE members at Cardiff Royal Infirmary will be holding mass meetings to decide on future action.

The South Wales miners have voted to take strike action on 16 June, making this date an obvious focus for further action after the two days of national strike action called by the TUC.

The response to this has been tremendous and a massive turnout on the day is guaranteed.

We will also be pulling out all the stops for the

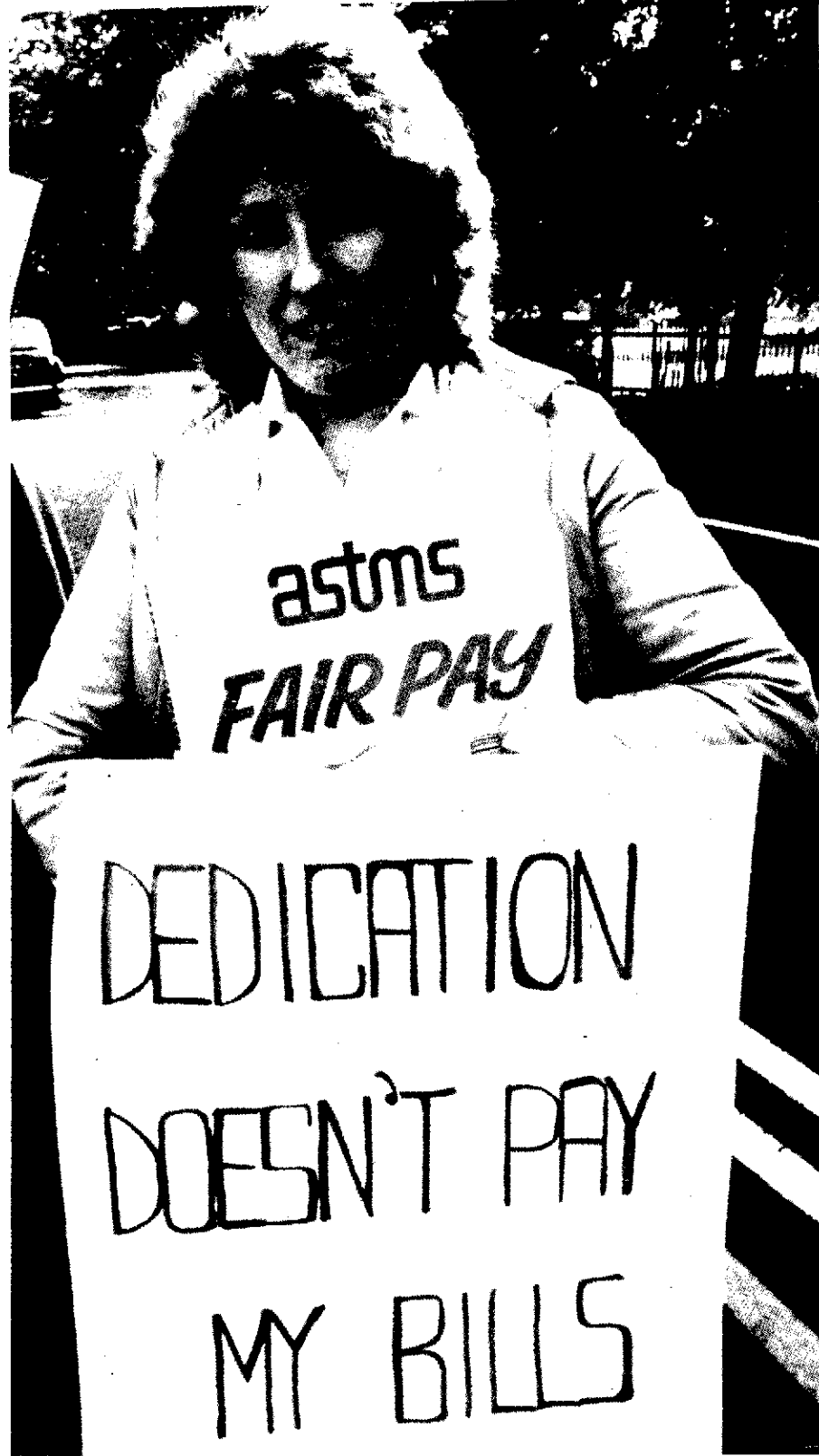
Miners' Gala in Cardiff on 12 June. Arthur Scargill will be speaking and we intend to hold him to his promise of support for NHS workers by calling for a national pits strike.

Steelworkers and workers in local industry are also being approached for support. Other NUPE branches in South Glamorgan have called for a march from Swansea to Cardiff to publicise the dispute and raise support.

Over the last few weeks it is the rank and file that have taken the initiative. Only now are the union officials making a move. Unfortunately it is in the wrong direction!

Joint committees of all NHS unions are being set up in each county, but the first meeting in South Glamorgan was held in works time and was dominated by full-timers.

We are demanding that the Committee should become a Joint Area Shop Stewards Committee so that it can represent the real feelings of the branches. Unless this is accepted the Committee will find itself being lobbied very hard by strikers from a number of different hospitals.



Lobby TUC June 9th!

LAST Sunday, Health Workers for the Full Claim held their second national meeting, where a number of important decisions were made.

It was agreed that we should call a lobby of the TUC Health Services Committee on 9 June after which there will be another national meeting of the campaign.

The meeting also agreed to produce a regular newsletter for all its contacts and to organise a fringe meeting at COHSE Conference which starts on 14 June.

Special leaflets will also be produced for the conference.

The next issue of the Health Workers for the Full Claim Bulletin will be out this week and orders should be phoned through to Anna Lunts, 0942 877296.

Militants in the health service who support the call for all-out strike action with emergency cover as the only way to win the pay claim are urged to join the Campaign by writing to Health Workers for the Full Claim, c/o Anna Lunts, 78 High Street, Atherton, Lancs.



Confidence grows

Frank Swift (NUPE) reports on the growth of confidence among health workers in Leicester.

IN Leicestershire, the Health Authority's attempts at a tough line against work-to-rules and one-day strikes are meeting strong resistance.

Basing itself on the DHSS circular 'If Industrial Relations Break Down', management have been threatening to suspend workers, stop

pay, or even sack workers.

When ambulance workers took action on May 19, they said they would provide emergency cover. Management replied that they would only pay half wages.

Letters

The ambulance workers responded by withdrawing all cover.

At the Leicester Royal Infirmary, several sections received letters saying they

would have pay stopped, or be suspended. Letters also said that the Authority would be within its rights to sack the workers.

Some sections backed down — but the cafeteria staff continued their work-to-rule. When their wages were stopped, a walk-out rapidly got them their pay packets (though with 10% docked).

A walkout by several sections of the hospital

Relaunch the left offensive!

by John
O'Mahony

THE LABOUR Left should be on the offensive. But, despite its opposition to the Foot/Healey leadership on the Falklands, it continues to retreat on the other fronts.

The Morning Star reported last Friday that Tony Benn has firmly decided not to challenge Foot for the leadership of the Labour Party this year.

The attempts to organise the broad Labour Left are so far unsuccessful. Labour Liaison 82 was started last January with the potential of uniting the Left and compressing the energy generated by Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign into a stable and organised force of the Left in the Party. Essentially it could have done on a permanent basis what the Rank and File Mobilising Committee had done for a while.

But Labour Liaison 82 is afflicted with indecision and plainly floundering.

Meetings

No representative meetings were called between January and May, and Labour Liaison 82 became a mere ad-hoc 'steering group' — as elitist as anything in the labour movement.

Now its attempt to get the Left together to put forward and organise in support of a left slate for the NEC is faltering.

At a representative meeting in May, a slate was agreed. Frank Allaun, Eric Heffer, Dennis Skinner, Tony Benn, Jo Richardson, and Audrey Wise were proposed, and, for the women's section, Joan Maynard, Margaret Jackson, Barbara Switzer, and Dame Judith Hart.

Joan Lester, whose hair is the only thing about her still red, and Neil Kinnock, Michael Foot's choirboy, were to be pointedly excluded.

Still, the presence on the slate of Judith Hart, a careerist (and a Stalinist too) was the measure of the state of the Left putting it forward.

Meacher

In the same vein, there was talk of putting Michael Meacher forward in the hope that though he would not get elected he might be a runner-up and thus inherit any unscheduled vacancy (and not do his career prospects any harm in the process).

Meacher is a far-sighted bourgeois 'statesman' figure on the Right of the broad Left, who works consciously — and openly — to prepare the way for incomes policy under a new Labour government.

This was bad enough. Then Frank Allaun and Heffer 'dissociated' themselves from the slate.

And then alleged minutes of the May meeting were released to the press — creating a scandal and big pressure on the Left leaders to climb down from even the rather feeble attempts they were making to organise the Left.

The Labour Left has

campaign to cramp and inhibit the Left.

Indications are that they might have succeeded. The danger is that the attempt to put forward a Left slate will be confined to vague and commonplace efforts to generate left-wing support, such as routinely happen.

The idea of a left slate implied an organised and serious Left. If it is abandoned in all but name, then the Right and soft Left can chalk up a major victory.

Mikardo

It even seems unlikely that there will be a serious left candidate for treasurer this year — Ian Mikardo having reportedly declined to stand.

Reports also suggest that the Foot leadership may attempt to rewrite the Labour manifesto, and not bring it before conference.

The inquiry into Militant is due to report to the June National Executive Committee. A sign of the times is that the NEC has just refused to allow the LPYS, led by Militant, to reprint their pamphlet on the Russian Revolution.

If the Left does not launch an offensive, then the Right will continue with its drive against the Left.

The state of the Left now, the lack of purposeful leadership and even minimal organisation willing to fight, is nothing short of a tragedy. Objective conditions again favour the Left.

The SDP

It was the split-off of the SDP that, paradoxically, took the wind out of the Left's sails. The SDP's showing in the polls and by-elections scared the labour movement, made the soft and flimsy Left look for compromises, and thereby inhibited the serious Left.

Having run away from the Labour Party and 'mobilised public opinion', the SDP was suddenly a power in the affairs of the Labour Party such as it had not been in seven or eight years before the Gang of Four and their PLP foot-soldiers broke with the Labour Party.

Now the SDP balloon has begun to deflate — very rapidly. The Alliance's resounding failure in the local government elections has shattered its image of invulnerability, and cut it down to size — as an enlarged version of the Liberal Party, looking set to play an enlarged version of the Liberal Party's role.

It may inflate a bit once more — but things can hardly be the same for ever again.

With this, pressure on the labour movement must ease off. The Left can and should renew the offensive.

If we don't, we are handing ourselves to blame. The Right continues to step up its offensive and the next Labour government will be a right-wing one.



A worker leadership against apartheid

FOSATU (the Federation of South African Trade Unions) is the largest and most powerful of the non-racial, independent trade union federations which have mushroomed in South Africa, especially since 1973. It organises a majority of the 160,000 non-racial trade unionists in the country.

They have developed an effective organisation in most of the industrial areas, based on shop floor strength and national, non-racial industrial unions, and have been involved in major struggles with firms like British Leyland, GEC, Smith and Nephew and so on.

As a result they have managed to win more than 70 recognition agreements with individual companies in South Africa.

In spite of their organisational strength, FOSATU unions have often been under attack both from within South Africa and from outside for being insufficiently political. There have been frequent allegations that FOSATU's decision to register under the state's Industrial Conciliation Act, their distance from the liberation movement of the African National Congress, their reluctance to take up broad popular demands in the community and their low-key rhetoric all pointed to an essentially reformist body.

We should be very wary of this label. Populist and nationalist movements have a long history of denouncing any kind of workers' organisation as

reformist and they have been particularly sceptical of trade unions. In South Africa there is a long tradition of such politics.

But the ANC's and the South African Communist Party's rhetoric of violent revolution does not necessarily mean that they are closer to working class politics than FOSATU.

FOSATU has — rightly — been stung by the criticisms into articulating and developing its political orientation. At the 2nd Congress of FOSATU in April 1982, FOSATU's General Secretary, Joe Foster outlined FOSATU's perspective on building an independent working class movement in South Africa.

The following are extracts from this important speech.

Bob Fine

In the three years that FOSATU has existed there is little doubt that we have achieved a lot in terms of growth and gains made for our members. However, we have no intention of becoming self-satisfied trade unionists incapable of giving political direction to the workers' struggle.

We would only be dreaming of change if we do not strengthen and build our unions into large and effective organisations.

As a trade union federation we are clearly concerned with workers and their aspirations. If we were to think in terms of our members only, we would have a very limited political role. If, however, we are thinking more widely of the working class then we have to examine very much more carefully what our political role is. In particular we need to look at this role in the South African context.

We can be clear that worker activities such as strikes and protests do not in themselves mean that a working class movement or working class politics exist.

In short it could be said that workers must build a powerful and effective movement if they are to succeed in advancing their interests against some very hostile forces, but they must also ensure that this movement is able to take a clear political direction.

In South Africa we cannot talk of a working

class movement as we have defined it above. Whilst there is undoubtedly a large and growing working class, its power is only a potential power since as yet it has no definite social identity of itself as working class.

The questions we should, therefore, address ourselves to, are:

*Why has no working class movement emerged?

*What are the prospects for such a movement emerging?

*What role can FOSATU play in such a process?

Repression

South Africa's history has been characterised by great repression and the major political and ideological instrument for this repression has been racism. Yet the major effect of this repression has been to very rapidly establish a large capitalist economy.

Racism and the violence and injustices associated with it is a very stark and clear form of repression. Alongside this only about 5-10% of the population has ever had the franchise. Clearly, therefore, there is a very identifiable oppressive force and the major political task of the oppressed peoples has always been to attack that oppressive and racist regime.

So what has developed in South Africa is a very powerful tradition of popular or populist politics.

Where virtually all the population is voteless and oppressed by a racial minority then a great alliance of all classes is both necessary and a clear political strategy. Furthermore, building such an alliance was a great task.

At all times there were occasions when workers resisted by strike action, protest and organisation. Yet this by itself cannot constitute a working class movement. Whilst the unions were often prominent they were always small and weakly organised both nationally and in the factories. They could not provide an organisational base for a working class movement as we have defined it above.

Progressive and militant unions were continually the subject of State harassment, but, never managed to seriously challenge capital nationally on a sustained basis. As a result the effective political role of progressive unions and of worker activity was to provide a crucial part of any popular struggle and that was to give it its "Worker Voice".

Representation

No mass popular movement can be effective or be seen to be effective if it does not have some worker involvement or representation. By the 1950s with the growth of South Africa's industry and the size of the working class, the need to include workers became essential and as a result the South African Congress of Trade Unions became an important element of the Congress Alliance.

In these circumstances the progressive trade unions became part of the popular struggle against oppression. They did not and probably could not have provided the base for working class organisation. There is of course no doubt that their activities have been very, very important in creating the conditions that led to the emergence in the last ten to fifteen years of the present progressive trade unions.

However, these unions are operating in a different environment.

Workers and their struggle became very much part of the wider popular struggle. An important effect of this development was that capital could hide behind the curtains of apartheid and racism.

The political energies of the oppressed masses and of international critics were focussed on the apartheid regime and its abhorrent racism. The government and Afrikanerdom became the focus of attack.

Capital did its very best to keep in the political background and as a result this helped prevent the creation of capital's logical political opposite which is a working class political movement. However, of crucial significance was that capital was growing rapidly and changing its very nature into a more monopolistic, technologically advanced and concentrated form. Its links internationally were also growing as was its importance for international capital.

We find, therefore, that behind the scenes of the great battle between the apartheid regime and its popular opponents that the capitalist economy has flourished and capital emerges now as a powerful and different force.

Growing gap

Yet as the upsurge of popular political activity emerged again in the 1970s some of its new forms such as Black Consciousness also place little emphasis on capital. So there is a growing gap between popular politics and the power of capital and as a result the potential power of workers. It is in this context we should look at the likelihood of a working class politics emerging.

The working class have experienced a birth of fire in South Africa and they constitute the major objective political force opposed to the State and capital. There is no significant petty bourgeoisie or landed class with an economic base in our society.

In the economy capital and labour are the major forces yet politically the struggle is being fought elsewhere.

The existence of this industrial proletariat and the rapid transformation of capital are very powerful reasons why a working class movement could rapidly develop in South Africa.

However, this does not mean that this will automatically happen. To understand this, we need to look at the present political environment more carefully to see both the present political tendencies and to establish why some active leadership role should be played by the unions and FOSATU in particular.

As a result of repression most worker leadership is relatively inexperienced and this is made worse by the

fact that their unions are weak and unstable organisationally. The union struggles fought against capital have mostly been against isolated companies so that the wider struggles against capital at an industry or national level have not been experienced. This also means that workers and their leadership have not experienced the strength of large scale worker organisation nor the amount of effort required to build and democratise such large scale organisation.

Unclear

Politically, therefore, most unions and their leadership lack confidence as a worker leadership, they see their role as part of a wider struggle but are unclear on what is required for the worker struggle.

Generally the question of building an effective worker organisation is not dealt with and political energy is spent in establishing unity across a wide front.

However, such a position is clearly a great strategic error that will weaken if not destroy worker organisation both now and in the future.

All the great and successful popular movements have had as their aim the overthrow of oppressive — most often colonial — regimes. But these movements cannot and have not in themselves been able to deal with the particular and fundamental problem of workers. Their task is to remove regimes that are regarded as illegitimate and unacceptable by the majority.

It is, therefore, essential that workers must strive to build their own powerful and effective organisation even whilst they are part of the wider popular struggle.

This organisation is necessary to protect and further worker interests and to ensure that the popular movement is not hijacked by elements who, in the end have no option but to turn against their worker supporters.

From what has been said we believe that FOSATU must set itself the task of giving leadership and direction to the building of a working class movement. Our efforts so far have equipped us to do this. Our organisation is nationally based, located in the major industries and the militancy of our members has generally developed a politically aware and self-critical leadership.

FOSATU as a trade union federation will clearly not constitute the working class movement nor would this place FOSATU in opposition to the wider political struggle or its major liberation movement.

FOSATU's task will be to build the effective organisational base for workers to play a major political role as workers. Our task will be to create an identity, confidence and political presence for worker organisation. The conditions are favourable for this task and its necessity is absolute.

We are interested in how the leadership is elected or appointed; who it is answerable to and how this accountability is achieved; how experienced leadership is and how it gains this experience and how they develop means of training and educating leadership so that it remains self-critical and politically active.

The challenges facing worker leadership are

undoubtedly different to other leadership groups. For worker leadership in a capitalist society one's everyday struggle is related to your job and therefore your wage and therefore your very ability to survive.

The most appropriate comparison is with that of the guerrilla fighter who has to develop the strength to resist daily, the knowledge of his terrain that will give him every tactical advantage, and the support of those for whom he is struggling.

Probably most important because both the worker leader and the guerrilla are fighting a powerful enemy, is the development of a sense of when to advance and when to retreat.

These skills are not easily learnt and not easily replaced. So worker leadership cannot be wasted by opportunistic and overly adventurous actions.

We are also concerned with worker leadership in a wider arena than only that of the union struggle. Giving leadership to the working class requires an organisational base. Without this base then the poverty and the lack of education, information and time that workers are struggling against will be the very factors which will force workers to surrender leadership of the community to other strata in society.

Communities

One answer that is often proposed is to be more involved in community activities. That FOSATU should be involved in community activities is correct since our members form the major part of those communities. However, as we have argued above we must do so from an organisational base if we are truly to be an effective worker presence.

Without this base it is more likely that we will destroy a clear worker identity since workers will be entirely swamped by the powerful tradition of popular politics that we examined earlier.

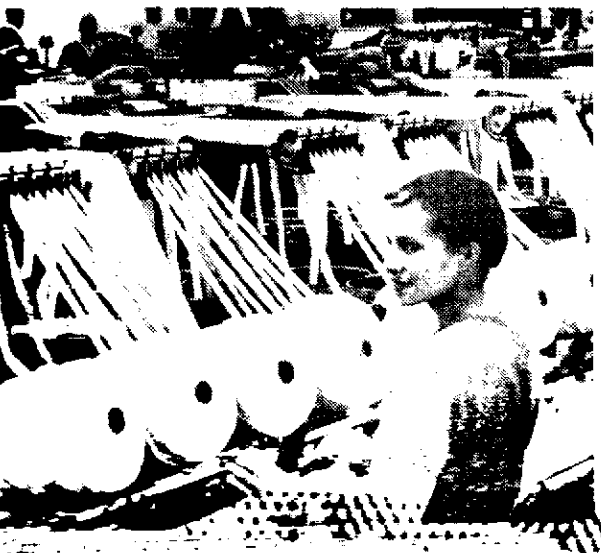
It is also the case that there has emerged into our political debate an empty and misleading political category called the community. All communities are composed of different interest groups and for a worker organisation to ally itself with every community group or action would be suicide for worker organisation.

Under the surface of unity community politics is partisan and divided. FOSATU cannot possibly ally itself to all the political groups that are contesting this arena. Neither can it ally itself with particular groups. Both paths will destroy the unity of its own worker organisation.

Our whole existence is political and we welcome that. Our concern is with the very essence of politics and that is the relation between the major classes in South Africa being capital and labour.



'The working class... is the major force opposed to the State and capital'



World News

Shock waves from Iran's victory

By Jim Benson

RECENT developments in the Middle East are perceived by US strategists as a major test for their policy for maintaining domination in the area.

Their policy has been:

1) Trying to destabilise regimes hostile to US imperialism, whether the theocracy in Iran or the state-capitalist nationalist regimes in South Yemen or Libya.

2) Giving military and economic support to pro-imperialist regimes like Egypt and Israel, and endeavouring to implement the Camp David accords, cornerstone of Pax Americana in the area.

3) Ensuring the ability to intervene directly or through client states in the Middle Eastern war theatre at times and places where their interests are directly threatened.

4) Eroding the revolutionary potential of the Palestinian resistance, one of the most powerful unifying factors of the Arab masses against their rulers, by dissolving the Palestinian problem in an "autonomy formula".

The military victory of Iran over Iraq (and its implications for the Gulf states) and the possible disintegration of Lebanon (and its implications for the state of Israel) challenge the stability of the equilibrium established by US imperialism.

On May 25, the Gulf Cooperation Council was established by Saudi Arabia as a first step towards a security pact. The council comprises Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, and Bahrain.

However, this move fell short of ensuring the Saudis' aspirations for a united strategy on military and security issues. This was proved shortly afterwards at the Fez summit where the Gulf Cooperation Council states failed to agree on Fahd's peace plan.

This setback seriously threw into question the role of Saudi Arabia as a powerful mediator for imperialism and propelled them to find urgent means to reassert their regional control.

The first opportunity arose when shortly after the Fez summit, Bahrain announced that "60 persons, 12 of them foreigners, were arrested by the security forces, in possession of heavy armaments."



Saddam Hussein

They confessed their intent to overthrow the Bahraini government and that they also had targets in other states in the area.

Needless to say, all official statements pointed directly at the "Iranian enemy" accusing Iran of training "Shi'a rebels".

Such a case of "subversion" was quickly exploited by Saudi Arabia and pro-

vided an impetus for this country to find a bilateral security pact.

This was followed by Qatar who felt "that the external threat made security coordination among Gulf states a necessity".

This incident was also followed by a revival of Gulf security discussions between Saudi Arabia and Iraq sealed by a treaty stabilising their borders for the first time since 1922.

During the past two years, the Saudis have acquired from the US highly sophisticated equipment to link by computer 20 border checkpoints, collating police and intelligence information.

Other Gulf countries have subsequently been connected to this network.

And - after two years of negotiations - Saudi Arabia has also acquired the AWACs air reconnaissance system from the US.

Hardware

According to 'Middle East' magazine: "Between them, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar have bought some \$47 billion worth of military equipment and hardware, primarily from the US. They are now shopping for air defence and electronic warfare equipment designed to link with the Saudi system when it is complete."

The defeat of Iraq, and the unpredictability of Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution", has alarmed the Arab states - especially those with Shi'a Muslim communities potentially sympathetic to Khomeini's demagoguery.

Over the weekend Tehran newspapers stated emphatically that "Iran's prime aim in the war is the overthrow of Saddam and his ruling Ba'athists."

Some even proposed that Iranian troops move into Baghdad to unseat the government.

Demonstrations

For the past few weeks the imminent defeat has stirred the masses inside Iraq. According to Kurdish sources "the past month has witnessed riots and demonstrations in at least half a dozen northern towns, including the old city of Kirkuk, in which some 70 people are said to have been shot. More recently there have been outbreaks of violence in Baghdad, and in the southern town of Hillah, Nassiriyah, Kerbala and Basrah."

Political horstrading is under way in the Arab capitals. Egypt, which supported Iraq to the point of sending troops and military equipment, has acknowledged the incalculable consequences of a military confrontation with Iran and announced that it will be sending no more help.

Wavering

The Steadfastness Front - the PLO and Arab states opposed to the Camp David accords - originally backed Iran. But they are now wavering.

The Palestinians can only be disturbed by the news that Israel appears to have sold 127 million worth of military equipment to Iran, mainly spare parts for US-made F-4 Phantom jets.



Will 'Islamic Revolution' destabilise the Middle East?

Secondly, Saudi Foreign Minister Faud Al Faifal visited Damascus and Algiers, two key capitals of the Steadfastness Front, to reaffirm his country's position on the Camp David agreements, namely its renewed opposition to Egypt's return to the Arab fold until "the reasons for its expulsion, the Camp David agreements, are removed".

One can only speculate that in exchange for Saudi's assurances the Steadfastness Front states are prepared not to exacerbate the conflict in the Gulf.

President Assad of Syria who has backed Iran because of his conflicts with Iraq - has started talking

about appeasement, fully aware that any break in the equilibrium which triggered a mass upheaval in Iraq or the Gulf states could threaten his own regime.

It is quite possible that the upheaval taking place now in the Middle East will leave US imperialism no path open but to intervene directly. There is clear evidence that contingency plans have long been drawn up.

The plan for the US rapid deployment force to be given landing rights and other facilities was successfully negotiated with Turkey and Morocco.

On his last visit to Washington, King Hassan of Morocco offered the US the

use of alternative sites in return for some \$150 million in foreign military sales credits.

But the warfare in the Lebanon also has implications for US strategy.

Lebanon is the crucial arena of struggle for the Palestinian resistance. The latest political manoeuvre of the Lebanese fascists having failed, they have ignited a mass wave of violence: car bombs, assassinations, etc.

The fascists aim to impose their authority throughout Lebanon, and defeat the joint forces of the Palestinians and the Lebanese Muslim Left in the south.

Repeated raids

At the same time Israel launches repeated raids into Lebanon. The ultimate aim must be to liquidate the Palestinian resistance once and for all, and permit the implementation of the Camp David agreements.

The battle taking place in Lebanon is not just a tactical struggle, but could determine the very survival of the Palestinian resistance.



Police state for Australian blacks

By Jo Thwaites

THE Commonwealth Games take place this autumn in Brisbane, Queensland, the state in Australia run by racist John Bjelke-Petersen and his Country Party.

In mid-January this year the Black Protest Committee was formed. A meeting of the Black Community of South-East Queensland elected 12 Aboriginal and Islander people to coordinate peaceful protest at these Games on the issue of Land Rights for the Aboriginal people - a protest that would be particularly effective with the presence of the world's press at the Games.

They have also called for a boycott of the Games in solidarity with Aborigine Land Rights.

But Bjelke-Petersen and his henchman, Police minister Hinze lost no time in pushing a Commonwealth Games Act through the State Parliament on March 9. This is supposed to ensure the 'security' of the Games.

It gives sweeping powers to the police and 'authorised

persons' to maintain law and order and suppress the publication of material likely to undermine it.

Police and 'authorised persons' can search and arrest or remove people from or near the Games using 'such force as is necessary'.

They can also declare 'notified areas' - black leaders suspect that these will include all the main roads into Brisbane.

In a 'notified area' the police can declare a state of emergency and order anyone in the area to help the police in arresting or dispersing people. If you refuse you could get a fine of 3,000 dollars or two years in jail or both.

It is clear that Petersen's intention is to make sure no criticism of Queensland's treatment of the Aboriginal peoples reaches the rest of the world.

Queensland State government policy on Aboriginal affairs is based on the premise that Aboriginal people are inferior and can be 'improved' through assimilation with whites. So claims to ancestral lands, the



right to live in their traditional manner and compensation for destruction of their lands by mining companies are all shrugged off as not being in the long-term interests of the Aboriginal people. Instead, they need to be 'civilised'!

This attitude has prevailed, particularly in Queensland, since Captain Cook first raised the British

flag in what is now Sydney and 'took possession of the whole Eastern Coast.' Like South Africa, Australia was part of the British Empire, and both were built by ignoring the rights of the existing inhabitants.

Resources

Both still have close ties with Britain. British inves-

tors still control vast Australian resources. The biggest company involved in seizing Aboriginal land for mining is British - Rio Tinto Zinc.

Shorty O'Neill, representing the National Federation of Aboriginal Land Councils (the largest Aboriginal organisation), is touring Britain and Europe, seeking support for a boycott of the Games.

Polish miner tours Britain

A leader of the militant mineworkers from Silesia, chair of one of Solidarity's regional councils, is visiting Britain next week to talk to miners about Solidarnosc's struggle for survival.

Stanislaw Palka, now in exile, was one of the signatories of the historic Kastrzebic agreement in Silesia in 1980, which marked, together with the Gdansk agreement in the Lenin Shipyards, Solidarity's strength as the real voice of Polish

workers.

He will be starting his visit in the Barnsley area on June 9, visiting the Nottingham Miners' Gala on June 12 and visiting other mining areas till the end of the month.

Miners who would like to help organise meetings at NUM branches, or more informally with groups of miners, should contact the Solidarity Trade Union Working Group on 01-373 3492.

Solidarnosc

**Socialist
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REVIEW**

The Rime of the Ancient Feminist

John Macdonald reviews 'The Rime of the Ancient Feminist' by Stephanie Markman, with illustrations by Laura May, published by Stramullion - a Scottish-based feminist collective - price £1.25.

THE Rime of the Ancient Feminist' is a parody of Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner', and a satire on women's role in society, of marriage... and on the Marxist Left.

The verses mirror very closely the original poem. The theme also. The heroine is herself a romantic. Seeking to escape from terrifying panic and inner chaos, she naively sees apparent security with a man as her solution.

If I was so encompassed by his circle of protection, what need had I to mourn if I had lost my own direction?

His loving lips to fasten mine, his arms to hold me tight; what matter how I spent my day, if he'd be there at night?

Day after day, day after day, the pale face at the curtain. What need to move, to stir at all, when love was still so certain?

Her situation as a married woman, confined and isolated in the home by circumstances, inner and outer, is opposite to that of the Mariner whose isolation takes place on the turbulent open seas. The images are reversed.

Her rage and inner turmoil is suppressed in favour of the apparent security of 'walls and ceilings everywhere'. She does not know that she shares it in common with anyone else. This is her isolation.

In rows of houses, rows of women, silent and alone; I only knew my own constraint, I only knew my own.

The heroine finds in the Left an alternative to this

state of affairs. All her suppressed rage and passion wells up and becomes redirected 'against the ruling class'.

But her involvement in political activity never relates to her own situation and experience. She discovers the left as an exclusively male affair.

When evening came, they'd drop their work and hurry to the meeting. The chairman gave a nod to each, a most fraternal greeting.

I'd sometimes listen silently, I'd sometimes try to speak. The comrades looked so tired and bored, I'd get confused and overawed, my voice would break and squeak.

I'd stammer out my phrases and look red-faced at the floor; the comrades waited till I'd done, then went on as before.

She finds that socialist theory and practice do not take account of individuals, particularly of women, that socialists relate to each other in a way that is at odds with their socialist aims.

The Left becomes for her another form of confinement which she has already experienced in her marriage.

But then people from the women's movement rescue her from a bar where she is feeling violently sick after another alienating discussion with her male comrades.

And now I stood beside the sea, the salt tears on my cheek. The women came and called my name, as if to bid me speak.

The sea was washing, washing in; beneath the moon it stirred. I turned to share my life with them; they took it in, they heard.

I poured it out, the pain, the doubt; I ripped away the shell. When I was bare before their stare, they spoke of theirs as well.

The 'Rime' portrays through humour the way men put women down. The writer also conveys from the inside what it means for a woman to be used up by a man.

And how many women have lost their integrity and identity as individuals as a result of oppressive relationships? How many men fail to realise that it is they who have made her like this - an emotionally dependent dead-weight of a woman, who feels she has no existence outside of the relationship?

But the Ancient Feminist implies that changes in society can only come from individual development. Part of her rejection of the Left is our claim to have an objective analysis of political developments. Her doubts about the women's movement are based solely on the effects of its conflicts on individuals, not on whether its existing politics are able to achieve women's liberation.

She champions the understanding of human emotion and relationships as against the analysis of wider political processes. She denies the effects of general political change on individuals and the ability of Marxists to relate to general experiences with

proposals that answer the general needs of the working class.

Oh sister, I have lived too long in barren, arid lands; a dismal place, without embrace, without the touch of hands.

I've seen too much dissension, too much strife, too much despair; and still I wait to celebrate the sisterhood we share.



The story also implies that the different qualities of men and women in capitalist and pre-capitalist societies are immutable - that women understand emotion, while men attempt to be rational. This is exactly why socialists do have to hear what she is saying. It is only by changing in ourselves the division of qualities ascribed to us as men and women in this society that we can actually rise above the criticisms implied by this work.

Unless we combine our will to understand the world and act on it with a will to understand ourselves, we will cause the need for numerous ancient feminists, ancient gays, ancient blacks and ancient workers who rejected the idea that the class struggle was relevant because the socialists didn't understand how their oppression had affected them as individuals.



Still solid after nine weeks

KIGASS: JOIN THE PICKETS

by Judith Bonner

WOULD you work a 40 hour week for a maximum of £42.50, less if you are a school leaver, in a factory with no regard for health and safety, no protective clothing even if you use acid, no canteen and in general, appalling conditions and facilities?

Well, women workers at the Leamington Spa factory of Kigass Engineering who do work in such conditions decided enough was enough and went on unofficial strike.

But finding the situation impossible with no proper union, and with promises of better working conditions the workers went back.

Nothing got better so the women decided to put up a fight for an AUEW branch.

The boss, Arthur Wardman, not acquainted with 20th century working conditions, and not seeing the need for a union, refused to recognise the AUEW.

That was nine weeks ago and last Friday, workers decided to continue striking for better pay and conditions and AUEW recognition.

They unanimously voted down Wardman's proposals which were AUEW recognition on the basis of a 50-point rules and regulations agreement, the main clause of which is to split the most militant of the strikers up by sending them to Abex (a sister firm whose workers are also in dispute) ten miles away and giving them different jobs in the same factory, not wanting, as he put it, "to upset his loyal workforce".

The alternative proposal, which did not receive much welcome either was an £8 pay rise without union recognition.

If the Kigass women are to win then a veto of all goods going to and from Kigass is essential. Kigass is a supplier to most major engineering firms, including Rolls Royce, whose workers in Coventry have already blacked parts.

This is a double blow since apparently the parts being blacked are essential components for the Harrier jump jets at present in action in the South Atlantic.

Despite a bad press from the local media, which has been falsely stating that the women have returned to work, the workers continue their fight undaunted.

At the moment, the workforce that is still in, is just ending a week's holiday and so is the boss but rumour has it that a couple of his henchmen are still around, hence the presence this week of only a skeleton picket.

But from Monday 7 June there will be stronger pickets and supporters of the strikers are welcome to come along and join the picket.

If you cannot do so, make sure you have done the following:

*Send a letter of support to the women workers on strike.

*Send a donation.

*Ask for a speaker at your local Labour Party or trade union branch.

The address is: c/o J. Patson, 13 South Terrace, Witnash, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

Rulecan still need money

THE women strikers at Rulecan, Runcorn, have now got a signed agreement that they will be re-employed from June 14, with trade union recognition.

The employer has undertaken to re-employ them in new premises. If acceptable premises have not been found by the 14th, he is bound to pay them anyway at a fallback rate of £55 a week.

The women are leaving nothing to faith. They are continuing their picket line until they are back at work.

They still need money. Send to NUTGW, Room 46, 62 Dale Street, Liverpool 2.

ISLINGTON
Sunday June 13, Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Caledonian Rd., 3.00pm. Tea/coffee and sandwiches. For babysitting ring 607-5268.

POLAND
Contact: Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, 64 Philbeach Gardens, London SW5. 01-373 3492. Glasgow Polish Solidarity Campaign, Ian McCalman, 18 Mossiel Rd., Glasgow G43. 041-632 1839. Edinburgh PSC, C/o Edinburgh Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place. Oxford Labour Committee on Pland, 468 Banbury Rd., Oxford, 0865 58238. Coventry PSC, John Fisher, c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Rd., Coventry. Labour Poland Solidarity Fund, c/o Cooperative Bank, 110 Leman St., London E1.

WOMEN. Politics and Trade Unions beyond June Dayschool for women organised by Manchester branch of WEA. Sunday June 13, 9.30-11.30am, Manchester Central Library, 1st Floor, 100 Market Street, Manchester. Tickets £1.50.

WORKERS' March against Racism: FROM Brick Lane through Brixton to TUC conference in Brighton. September 4 to 8. Sponsors include: Jayaben Desai, Anwar Ditta, Nasira Begum, Tony Benn, Ted Knight, Ken Livingstone, Paul Boateng. Details 01-274 3951.

SOUTH AFRICAN SOLIDARITY
Public meeting: Sanctions - a strategy for the Anti-Apartheid Movement? A critical approach by Neil Faulkner, SWP Southern Africa Group. Saturday 5 June, 2.30-5.00, at Caxton House, 129 St. John's Way, London N19.

CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR PARTY & TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY
'A Question of Leadership'. The film HTV refused to screen. Discussion after showing of the film led by Ken Loach, the film's producer, Alan Thornett, film participant and British Leyland shop steward, Ray Davies, ISTC and film participant. Wednesday June 23, 7.30pm, Kigass Engineering, 13 South Terrace, Witnash, Leamington Spa. Tickets £2.00; unwaged £1.

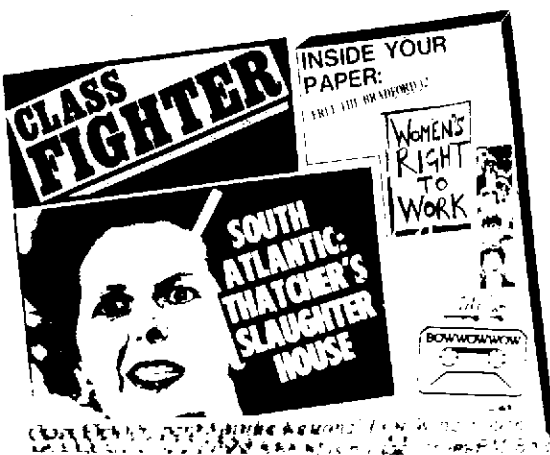
London Workers Socialist League classes on basic Marxism. Next class: The Transitional Programme. Friday June 11, 7.30pm. For venue write to PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

FESTIVAL OF PEACE & FREEDOM
Tuesday June 8, 11am-10pm, Central Hall, Westminster. Evening Concert at 7pm. Tickets available from Chile Solidarity Campaign, 129 Seven Sisters Road, N1. Tickets £2.00; unwaged £1.

POLISH SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN bulletin: new issue out now.

Individual copies, or sale-or-return bundles, can be obtained from Marion Pitman, 29 Hampton Road, Twickenham, Middlesex. (01-898 7165), at 30p per copy.

Subscription (six issues) £2.50.



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THE OTHER AMERICA



Ronald Reagan represents one America — the America of the military advisors in El Salvador, the multinational corporations exploiting the world, the massed nuclear weapons threatening our lives, and the alliances with right-wing dictatorships in many continents.

There is another America — the America of the working class, of organised labour, of a powerful women's movement, of black militants who see their fight as linked to that of the liberation movements of the Third World.

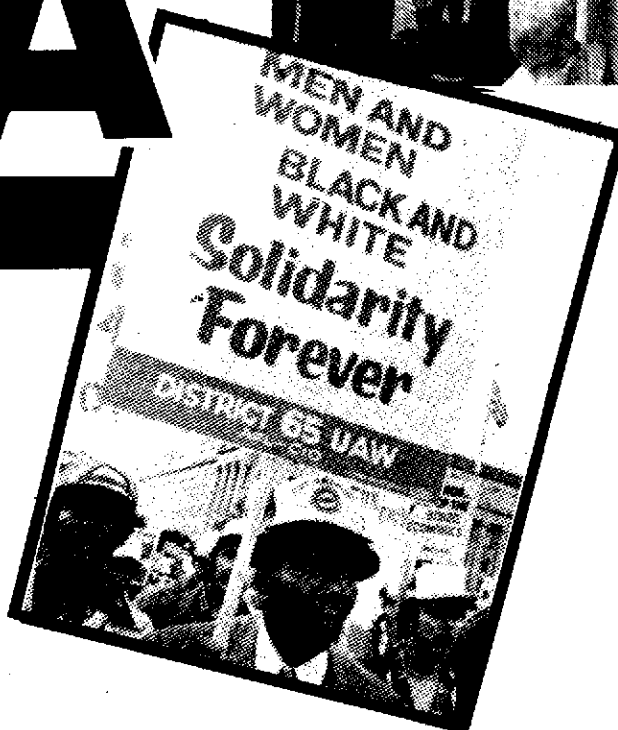
Last September 19 there were 250,000 of them on the streets against Reagan — the biggest demonstration ever seen in Washington. Among the speakers was a member of the air controllers' union PATCO. His speech conveyed their spirit of defiance — despite all being sacked, down to the last member, by Reagan's decree, they fought to the end.

A similar spirit had been shown by the US miners in their 105-day strike in 1978. They faced an order to return to work under the Taft-Hartley Act, condemned it as "this rich man's law", defied it, and went on to win a good part of their demands.

For a long-time, rising living standards and prosperity, based on the US's world domination, made it possible for this fighting spirit of the US working class to stop short of generalising politically, and to coexist with ideological acceptance of capitalism.

That heritage is still a long way from being discarded. But the prosperity has faded — US real wages have been stagnant for a decade.

Our demonstrations against Reagan should also be demonstrations of solidarity with the other America. For when they move — and move they will — the US working class will be a greater force for progress than Reagan can ever be for reaction.



policy, instead of enriching America and giving some crumbs to the workers, will have to turn back against the workers, to squeeze them to the bone to get the money to pay for America's barren and hopeless adventures on foreign fields.

"And that will signify the complete and utter bankruptcy of the labour bureaucracy in the matter of foreign policy."

"The workers, under such conditions, must and will turn to militancy and throw up leaders of a new mould, just as the workers in the thirties threw up new trade-union leaders out of the ranks."

"By far the most probable line of development is the final break-up of the Democratic-labour coalition, and the launching of an independent labour party by the workers."

"In my view, a labour party will be formed under conditions similar to those under which the CIO [the industrial union movement of the 1930s] was organised. And the party formed under such conditions and by such means cannot be a conservative party any more than the CIO could be a conservative union of the old type."

"Such a party will be necessary, from the very first start, a radical, revolutionary party, with the most militant workers and the conscious revolutionists pushing it to the left."

"And in this situation of political awakening of the workers, when for the first time the American workers as a class begin to turn to politics on their own account — then the revolutionary Marxist party which has forseen the whole development, which has theorised it long before it began, will find its own native environment, its natural field of work."

"It will become, in the great expanding situation what is said in the scriptures, the leaven that leaveneth the whole lump."

and its future

FOR decades the US has seemed to be the world's strongest and most secure bastion of capitalism.

Yet that strength can quickly be reversed. US capitalism has two great enemies — potentially mortal enemies — its own strong and often militant working class, and the workers and oppressed peoples exploited by it all across the world.

In 1953 the US socialist leader James P. Cannon outlined "America's Road to Socialism".

By 1914, "It was becoming clear that America's rise to the position of first power in the world, involved it in all the affairs of the world. The United States was no longer isolated and alone, secure on an island protected by two oceans. Its investments and its inter-

ests extended all over the capitalist world, and all the crises and revolutionary disturbances in any part of the world became lodged in America's own foundations."

And by 1953 it was clear that "There are not going to be any victories. There are not going to be any conquered peoples to sweat and slave to make America rich enough to maintain a high standard of living for the workers and fatten up the labour fakers."

"On the contrary, American imperialism will encounter opposition everywhere; it will fight losing battles against revolutionary peoples, as already shown in Korea."

"There will be terrible casualties and incalculable expenditures, and the whole damned foreign



**Socialist
Organiser**



Reagan's other red carpet

El Salvador the US sets up a regime in which the leading role is played by a man described by a former US ambassador there as a 'psychopathic killer'. In Guatemala it has given the US a muted support to a regime reckoned to have killed thousands in systematic murder.

Honduras the US is giving \$10,650,000 of aid this year, and maintaining 'advisors' to build up an army which is closely linked with El Salvador's armed forces. Honduras also serves as a base for former members of the National Guard in El Salvador, who carry out constant harassing actions across the border into El Salvador.

The US blocks and campaigns against economic aid to Nicaragua and Cuba, and tries to keep up the pressure of constant threats and displays of military might in the Caribbean. Since the Nicaraguan Revolution in July 1979, Central America has been the sharp end of the continuing struggle against US domination by oppressed peoples across the world.

As Jenny Pearce points out: "Strategically the region's proximity to the United States gives it a unique position in America's national security considerations. US bases in Guantanamo Bay on Cuba, San Juan and Roosevelt Roads in Puerto Rico, and in the Panama Canal Zone, as well as dozens of smaller air and naval bases in the region are considered vital to American defence."

"(And) ultimately, if the United States cannot maintain its supremacy in its own backyard, its ability to do so elsewhere in the world is open to serious doubt."

Investments

"Commercially, the Caribbean basin is an important trade route..."

"The economic importance of the basin is considerably less than its geopolitical significance... But there are sizeable investments; the Caribbean is the US's source for important minerals like bauxite; it is a major area for oil refining; and it probably has considerable unexplored oil and gas reserves."

US domination in the

former Spanish and French colonies of Central America and the Caribbean began in the 19th century. It was around the same time as the big capitalist powers of Europe completed their colonial seizure of most of Africa and Asia, and the motives and (despite formalities) the content were much the same.

US imperialism latched onto the social structure it found in these countries — small landowning oligarchies ruling over an impoverished peasantry. (Costa Rica's structure did not fit this pattern, and its development has been somewhat different). It turned the countries into plantations for the US corporations, producing bananas, coffee, or sugar.

The Dominican Republic is an example. To this day the US corporation Gulf and Western owns over one-seventh of the cultivable land, using it for sugar, for other export crops, and for ranching. Another 50% plus of the land is owned by a small oligarchy.

75% of the peasantry is landless or lives on tiny subsistence plots. A survey in 1970 found that the average protein intake was 62% of the recommended minimum for health, and in some of the poorest communities as low as 34%.

On El Salvador, Jenny Pearce quotes Marcel Niedergang, writing in 1971:

"There are fourteen of them (the oligarchic families). Their names are emblazoned outside the air-conditioned office blocks, the banks, the trading firms and the insurance companies of San Salvador. They play golf. They give parties by their swimming pools. They join exclusive clubs."

Coffee industry

"You find them, their sons-in-law, their nephews or their cousins, running every business, and most of all the coffee industry, which is Salvador's greatest wealth..."

"The Duenas, the Regalados, the Sol Milletes, the Guirolas, the Alvarez, the Melendez, the Menendez Castros, the Deiningers, the Quinonez, the Garcia Prietos, and Vilanovas: this oligarchy runs the lives of three million mestizos."

Meanwhile 60% of rural families earn less than the minimum required to buy sufficient food for a healthy diet.

All this century, US capital has poured in to profit from cheap labour. After World War 2 it became totally dominant in the area. Just as it had established its domination by force (see inset), it used force to maintain it.

In 1954 the CIA backed a coup to overthrow the Arbenz government in Guatemala when its land reform threatened (unused) United Fruit Company land. In 1965 20,000 US marines were sent into the Dominican Republic to overthrow the nationalist reforming government of Juan Bosch.

But in the 1960s the pillars of US domination were beginning to crumble. It was not only the impact of the Cuban revolution.

There was a limited but real industrialisation in Central America. Industry's share of output rose from 13% in 1960 to 18% in 1970. New middle classes and working classes, each from their own angle, began to challenge the entrenched oligarchies.

Its losing battle in Vietnam underlined for the US ruling class the need for it to find other options than fighting to the end in defence of discredited and corrupt dictators.

Alternatives

Jimmy Carter's "human rights" policy was an expression of this search for alternatives. So was the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977.

Since 1903 the US had run the Canal Zone as a state within a state. Panamanian nationalist feeling

against this became more vocal after Omar Torrijos took power in 1968.

So Carter decided to make concessions. The US came out of it well.

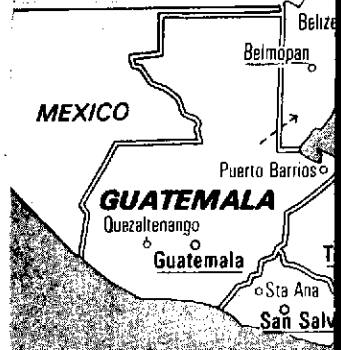
Panama regained sovereignty over its entire national territory. But it would not get full control of the canal until the year 2000.

The US retained the right to keep military bases in the country — only having to reduce them from 14 to 3 by the year 2000. And the treaty gives the US the right to intervene militarily at any time 'if the neutrality of the Canal is threatened'.

Best option

Many strategists for imperialism still believe that this sort of accommodation with nationalist regimes is the best option. Governments like the French and West German have maintained relations with Sandinista Nicaragua and pushed for a negotiated settlement with the FDR-FMLN in El Salvador. The Socialist International, working closely with states like Venezuela and Mexico, has been a major agency for this policy.

But Ronald Reagan bitterly opposed the Panama Canal Treaty. His team came to power vowing there would be "no more Iranians". The counterparts



of the Shah in other countries would be defended to the hilt.

Already Nicaragua had been 'lost'. After over a year of civil war against the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza, whose family had not only ruled politically but also dominated Nicaragua's economy since 1933, the Sandinista Liberation Front triumphed in July 1979.

US policy had wavered ineffectually between backing Somoza; trying to construct a new regime that would include Somozists (but not Somoza) alongside some of the Sandinistas' bourgeois allies (but not the Sandinistas); and finally dumping Somoza.

In March 1979 the New Jewel Movement had already overthrown the Gairy dictatorship in the

CRISIS ON HIS DOORSTEP

by Paul Street
NOW, America's federal budget deficit was supposed to be safely sliding down towards zero. Instead it seems intent on soaring out of control into the economic stratosphere.

By now, the famous tax-cut was supposed to have had an adrenalin coursing through the veins of America's somnolent capitalist class. Instead, more and more firms are collapsing in economic anaemia.

By now a new model of American capitalism was supposed to be raising the world's largest economy to the heights of production and consumption. Instead it continues to languish in what is becoming the deepest — and could be the most intractable — slump since the 1930s.

By now, as a result of all this, Reagan's reputation as the saviour of enterprise and the American spirit was supposed to have been rising like a beacon in the recession of the 1984 Presidential elections.

Instead, the President is on the verge of coming to a disgrace at the very end of the economic

As the start of a new financial year approaches the US Federal government still has no budget. If present policies continue unchanged then its deficit next year is presently predicted to be the almost unbelievable sum of \$180 billion — i.e. a Federal government deficit of nearly \$1,000 for each person in the population, nearly 10% of America's total national income.

Deficit

The furious budget debate which has raged in Washington over the last few months is basically about how much this vast potential deficit — which everyone claims to find unacceptable — is to be reduced, and how.

The size of the problem is clear from the fact that to eliminate the deficit altogether the Federal government would have to cut spending and/or increase taxes to an extent which would reduce the real take-home pay of the average American family by \$4,000!

So, not surprisingly, not even the most conservative politicians want to cut it

now to less than \$100 billion.

Even though there is now a broad political consensus around that figure (which a year ago would have been universally declared "unthinkable"), American politicians seem to have reached a complete impasse about how to achieve it.

Reagan and right-wing Republicans insist on maintaining the rapid increase in military spending. This (by far the largest single item of Federal expenditure) is to them inviolate, though liberal Democrats would like to reduce it.

Many Republicans and even Democrats want to fill the gap by raising taxes. Some of them (not Reagan himself) want to go so far as to postpone or even revoke altogether the 10% annual tax cuts which did so much to get Reagan elected in the first place.

The third possible way to bridge the gap is by cutting non-military spending on education, health, social welfare and social security (pensions).

Liberal Democrats resist

this and Republicans go for it only very reluctantly since they feel the electorate breathing down their neck. In November the whole of the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate will have to be re-elected.

Reagan himself has now come down for a plan which would raise some taxes and mount a massive attack on Federal medical expenditure for the elderly.

It is one of seven different budgets which were presented to the House of Representatives last week. Because no politician so near to an election wants to sanction anything which would obviously harm many of his or her constituents, every one of the seven was voted down.

The American budget is out of control, and this situation may well last until after November's elections.

Meanwhile, the potential size of the uncontrolled deficit is one of the main factors which is keeping interest rates high, because lenders expect the Federal government to be an extremely heavy borrower.

But while fiscal anarchy keeps interest rates up, the

Federal Reserve's tight monetary corset has, along with a fall in overall demand, helped to bring inflation down.

Hence the gap between the interest rate and the rate of inflation (the real cost of borrowing money) has been raised to its highest level in history exactly when a sharp squeeze on profits makes borrowing essential for the survival of many companies. So the result is a vicious circle as some companies plunge into a quicksand of indebtedness from which there is no escape.

The level of business failures is rising fast and is now virtually at its highest post-war level. More important it is big and once

successful companies like Braniff Airways which are going bankrupt or tottering.

And if that were not enough the money markets periodically freeze in their tracks when faced with threats of default by Poland, Argentina or others and events like the collapse last month of a financial speculative company called Drysdale Government Securities.

The shock waves from that explosion wiped out over a quarter of the annual profits of the immense Chase Manhattan Bank (America's third largest) and a rather larger proportion of its credibility.

Of course, some areas of America still boom. And

American capitalism is hardly on the verge of collapse.

But the present recession is deep, much deeper than was foreseen. In the last year industrial production has fallen by more than 7% and unemployment has gone above 10 million, its highest since the Great Depression.

Inanities

And what is perhaps more significant, the inanities which emerge from time to time from the White House are almost the only optimistic words to be heard at present on the immediate future of the US economy.

The unremitting pessimism of the American financial press today approaches a catastrophism more expected from the far left.

And early expectations of President Reagan from the capitalist class have collapsed even more than the economy.

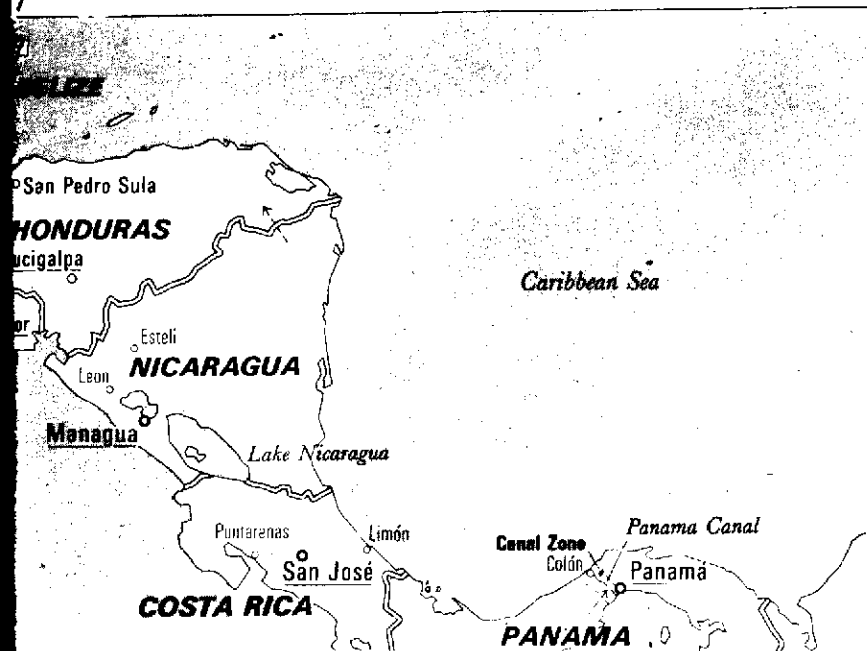
If, two years from now, Reagan is preparing to fight for a second term he will certainly not be basing his campaign on the success of Reaganomics.



HERS!

REAGAN'S

Jenny Pearce's book "Under the Eagle" (new edition just out - Latin American Bureau, £3.50) chronicles how the once-derided "banana republics" are challenging US imperialism. Colin Foster summarises the story.



island of Grenada (population 100,000). They had amassed a fortune while most of the population lived in poverty as bad as anywhere in the region except Cuba. The new government scrapped out a vigorous foreign policy and allied Nicaragua and Cuba. Reagan's philosophy was voiced by Fred Wood, a former President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Guatemala, a country Carter had cut off aid because of the human rights record of the regime. Why should we be worried about the death squads? They're bump-off the commies, our friends. I'd give them more power... But there's no ques-

tion, we can't wait 'til Reagan gets in. We hope Carter falls in the ocean real quick... We all feel that he (Reagan) is our saviour". El Salvador has been the front line since 1979. In 1972 a coalition led by Christian Democrats won the elections, but were deprived of victory by fraud. Some officers tried to stage a "constitutionalist" coup against the oligarchy. The oligarchy defeated them, with US aid. Gradually El Salvador's politics polarised into civil war. Guerrilla groups were formed and gained support during the '70s. In 1977 the die-hard oligarchs forced the abandonment of a very limited land reform and hard-liner General Carlos Humberto Romero took

power. State terror and assassination squads stepped up their activity. In October 1979, as the US was trying to reassess its policy on El Salvador in the wake of the Nicaraguan revolution, some younger officers seized power. They promised reforms. But they continued repression, and were unable to push through the reforms against the opposition of the oligarchy. In January 1980 most of the members of the new government resigned, and another junta was formed. The US pressed for reforms. In spring 1980 the junta announced a major land reform, the nationalisation of the banks and foreign trade - and a state of siege. Some of the land reform - affecting the biggest estates - was implemented. The rest was soon postponed indefinitely. But the state of siege was implemented through massive repression. At least 13,000 people were killed in 1980, mostly by the armed forces. The opposition consolidated. In April the FDR political alliance was formed and in October the FMLN military alliance. From a socialist point of view, the FDR alliance threatened to limit the revolution. Instead of making agreements for common action with the

middle-class opposition while maintaining their own independent politics, the revolutionary socialist left had merged themselves into a political bloc on a programme restricted to radical bourgeois reform. But the US was not reassured. On January 10, 1981, the guerrillas launched a major offensive. On January 14 the Carter administration resumed military aid (cut off in March 1977). The US has also built up the armed forces of Honduras for joint actions with the El Salvador forces, and secured military supplies and (reportedly) advisors from Argentina to El Salvador. The elections this March were meant by the US to be a showpiece - to prove it was defending democracy. But only Britain among European governments endorsed these elections where left-wing candidates could not stand for fear of death. And the victory for the die-hard right has increased the US's problems. More than ever it is clear that Reagan's defence of US imperialism power means an alliance with the death squads. In Guatemala, too, state death squads terrorise the country. Amnesty International, a body that weighs its words carefully, titled its pamphlet on Guatemala, "A government programme of political murder". "Nearly 5,000 Guatemalans have been seized without warrant and killed since General Lucas Garcia became President of Guatemala in 1978", Amnesty International reported in 1981. "The bodies of the victims had been found piled up in ravines, dumped at roadsides, or buried in mass graves. "Thousands bore the scars of torture, and death had come to most by strangling with a garrote, by being suffocated in rubber hoods or by being shot in the head... "The evidence compiled and published by Amnesty International in recent years indicates that routine assassinations, secret detentions, and summary executions are part of a



HOW THE USA CONQUERED CENTRAL AMERICA

1898-1902: US troops occupy Cuba - supposedly in support of its fight for independence from Spain. The 'Platt amendment' to independent Cuba's constitution [1901] gave the US powers to intervene whenever it saw fit. It sent troops again in 1906-9, in 1912, and in 1917-23. 1901: US takes Puerto Rico from Spain as a colony. 1903: Panama [previously part of Colombia] becomes

independent under US sponsorship - and gives the US an indefinite lease on land to build a canal. US troops intervene in 1908, 1912, and 1918, and are permanently stationed in the Canal Zone. 1904: After the government of the Dominican Republic defaults on payments to a US finance company, the US takes over collection of customs duties there. 1905: US marines land in

Honduras. 1909: US backs an uprising to overthrow the government in Nicaragua and takes control of customs revenue. 1910: US troops land in Honduras. 1912-25 and 1926-33: US marines occupy Nicaragua, and train, equip and advise the National Guard. 1914-34: US marines occupy Haiti. 1916-24: US forces occupy the Dominican Republic.

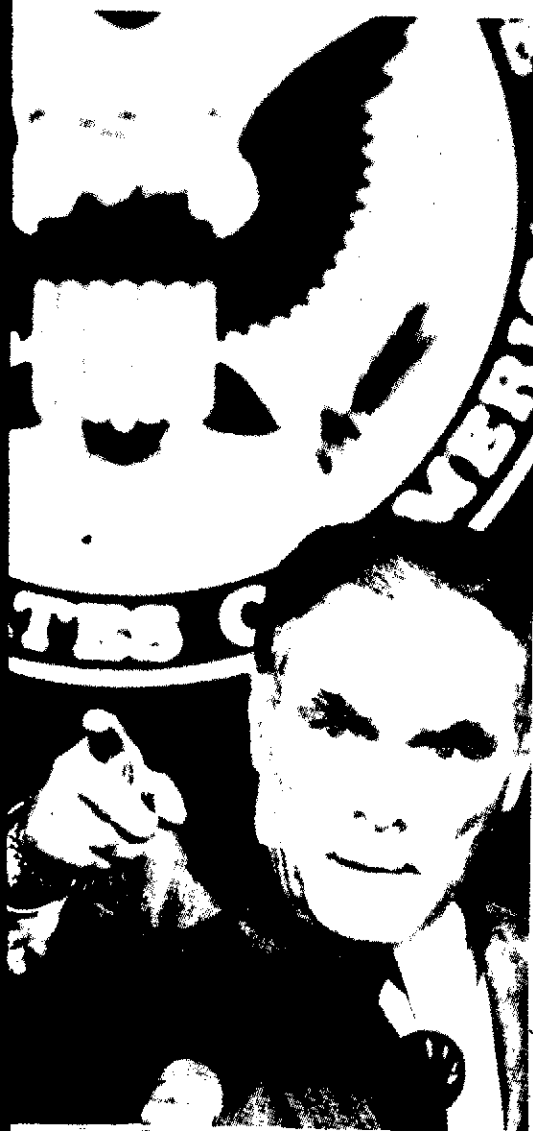
clearly defined programme of government in Guatemala... Such was the record of the Lucas Garcia regime that Reagan was unable to reverse the block on military aid imposed under the Carter administration. The new regime of General Rios Montt, who took power in a coup this March, continues the military dictatorship, but may provide the pretext for the US to resume aid. (Up to now Guatemala has had to rely on Argentina, Chile

and Israel). Guerrilla operations are increasing, and the US is worried. Guatemala is a bigger country than El Salvador, and much more important economically. Secretary of State Alexander Haig told the press this March: "It's a matter of weeks or months before you see - perhaps even more consequential in terms of potential damage to US interests - a similar situation (to El Salvador) developing in Guatemala. It is a clear,

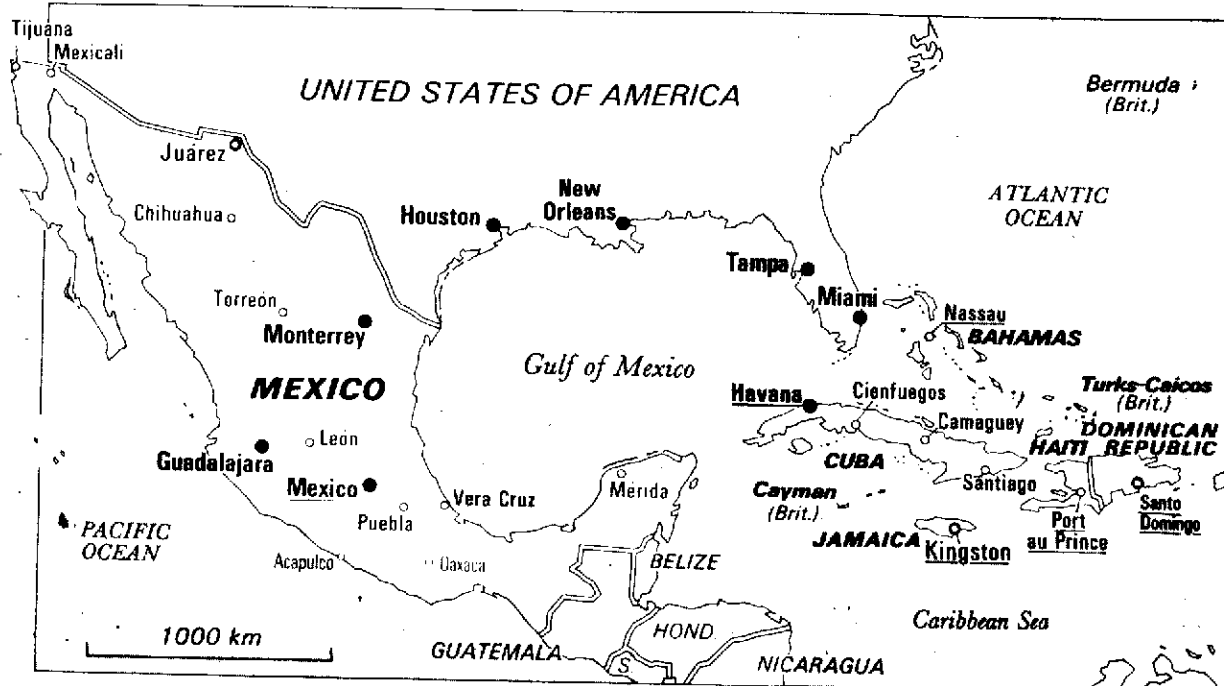
self-influencing sequence of events which could sweep all of Central America into a Cuba-dominated region... Direct intervention by the US military in Central America still faces big difficulties. A huge majority of the US people, vividly remembering Vietnam, is opposed. Official propaganda efforts to convince them about the "communist menace" have flopped disastrously. But as other options narrow, direct intervention cannot be ruled out. Every world event, from Jaruzelski's coup in Poland to the Falklands war, will be used by the Reagan team to keep up relentless pressure for an arms build-up and reassertion of the US's power in the world.

Delaying

Reagan can hardly succeed in turning the clock back to the days when the oligarchies and the US corporations were absolute rulers in Central America. But he can succeed in delaying and restricting the victories of the current liberation struggle, and in making the working people of Central America pay a higher price in blood. Whether he does or not depends on the success of the US working class in challenging the warmongers and capitalists who rule them, and on our efforts in fighting Reagan's main ally - the Tory government

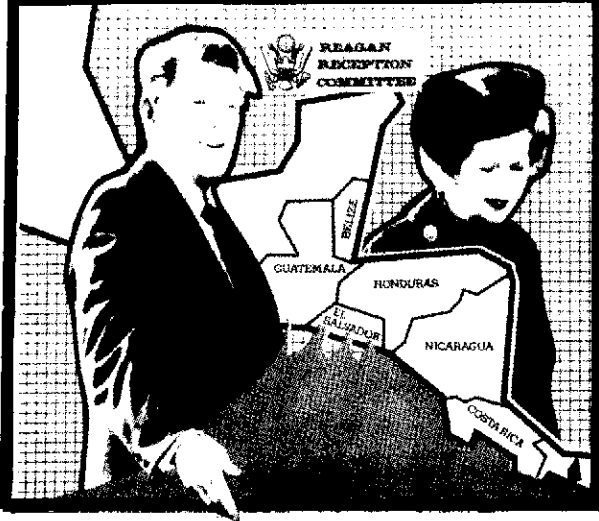


Guatemala could follow El Salvador



**Socialist
Organiser**

**DUMP THE
WARMONGERS!**



Thatcher's War "The real casualties are the working class"

Now that the fighting is well underway in the South Atlantic, what chance do you think we have of building a movement for the withdrawal of the Fleet?

Well, obviously it's very difficult at the present time. There is a shooting war. The situation has gone from bad to worse. Indeed it really exposes the official leadership in the PLP and indeed in the TUC.

In no way do I suggest that we should support the junta, although on balance the Falkland Islands must really belong to Argentina, because of the historical aspect.

Our position as socialists must be to develop our movement so that we can link up, despite the odds, with the Argentinian

workers, so that the Argentinian workers can be encouraged to fight back against Galtieri and so that we can develop the political understanding of British workers.

The Tory government is using the war in the South Atlantic as a handy diversion. They can tell workers 'forget about mass unemployment, forget about falling living standards, the real issue is elsewhere'.

There is a whole lot of work to be done by the left and apart from a few groups like your own, very little is being done.

But I and several other left wing Labour MPs felt that the TUC General Council should invite the CGT (Argentinian TUC) to send a delegation to this

**Labour movement
opposition to the war in
the South Atlantic is still
very inadequate, with no
lead being given by the
official leadership.
Socialist Organiser spoke
to Ron Brown MP, an
opponent of Thatcher's
war.**

country to discuss and to build up solidarity between British and Argentinian workers.

That is particularly important, because I believe that if we are to develop a fight against the junta in this country and the junta in

Argentina it is going to come through an understanding between the two sections of the working class.

Unfortunately the TUC General Council or at least the TUC General Council Secretary has not even indicated that he received a letter.

So I'm disappointed but perhaps not surprised.

I think the activists have been confused too. Some normally sound left-wingers feel that calling for the fleet to return to port, simply means supporting the Galtieri regime.

Only a few people have come out onto the streets and at the last minute tried to get things moving.

Do you think that those who call for an end to the fighting but support

economic sanctions against Argentina are part of the confusion?

Some of them believe that some action has got to be taken against the junta. But to argue that the capitalist system takes action against the junta is laughable.

The bankers certainly do not accept it. At a recent meeting in Vancouver they made it quite clear that it was business as usual. So the international capitalist system supports the junta in Argentina and they support the junta in Britain.

What impact do you think the position that Foot has taken on the Falklands crisis will have on his future as leader of the Labour Party?

Foot claimed to be a peacemaker, and he has compromised himself as very much a warmonger, like it or not, and I suppose it is easy to argue for party unity but it often means that principles get thrown out of the window.

Foot clearly does not command respect in this situation, from left or right. A leader has to take the movement forward, but to do that he has to adhere to principle.

Are there any other comments you would like to make on the war in the South Atlantic?

British capitalism is on the offensive, apparently winning a mini-war. But the real casualties are the working class, both in and out of uniform.

When we go out and argue we may meet a hostile response simply because of the hysteria built up in the press.

But we should bring our forces together and try to develop a unity of the left so that we can take the working class forward in a real fight against the Tories.

Warmongers' assistant?

IN PEACETIME, Michael Foot is an inveterate peacemaker. In wartime, it seems, he becomes a warmonger. And the more bloody the fighting, the more craven his support for Thatcher's war in the South Atlantic.

It cannot be said that we had no warning. Foot was a fighter for nuclear disarmament — until he was in a position to take decisions on nuclear weapons.

Then, in a secret inner cabinet of the last Labour government, he took part in a decision to update Polaris.

He has never opposed Britain's war in Northern Ireland.

But Foot's record on the South Atlantic war — and the way he has drawn closer and closer to the Right wing across the board — is now making many Labour activists ask whether the time has come to replace him as Labour Party leader.



Foot

Last Friday's Morning Star said Tony Benn had decided not to run against Foot. But there is still time for a campaign to 'draft Benn' — as a candidate representing Labour Party rank and file policies.

The last Socialist Organiser delegate meeting considered whether to campaign for a challenge to Foot, and decided to discuss the issue further in local groups. The discussion comes back to the next delegate meeting this Saturday, 6th — in the light of Foot's record on Thatcher's war.

Martin Thomas



Demonstration against the war in the South Atlantic

The show goes on

by Patrick Spilling

IF H is for hero, then P is quite definitely for Pope. Quite how the Pope came into it is not quite clear. One minute it was all our lads, the next, the screens and papers were filled by a white haired con-man smiling from the back of a converted Range Rover.

For so long the Pope's visit had been off that it came as a shock to realise that the Gatwick tarmac was actually being scrubbed down so that he could abase himself on British soil without catching any of those British diseases.

Television stations locked themselves in a time warp of golden banners and chanting clergy. It was a Royal Wedding repeat without the token woman and lasting almost a week longer.

The radio was worse still. The Pope's stage mafia voice rolled its way through platitudes scattering the programme schedules like confetti in his wake.

"My greatest fear" said one professional Pope-watcher, "was he would drop a bombshell by mentioning the word ceasefire, but all he spoke of was an honourable peace."

For two days there might well have been a ceasefire. For all the peace-loving talk, the Pope was a warmonger.

because the Ministry of Defence cut off all but the barest news from the successful attacks on Goose Green and Darwin.

Whether this brief blackout was for military operational reasons or not it proved very convenient for the media who were permitted to switch their attention to the Pope without interference from the other side of the world.

The Mail on Sunday, for example, one of nature's hawks over the Falklands war, turned its front page over to a picture of the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury kneeling side by side presumably praying. (The Archbishop of Canterbury always looks as if his conver-

sation with the almighty are more in the nature of a briefing session from the Tory Party rather than anything so humiliating as prayer).

The headline was simply 'Our Father...' and the text described it as, 'A moment when more than four centuries of bitter division began to yield to the forces of reconciliation.'

Other papers "discovered" that there was anti-Catholic prejudice in Britain. The Observer called it "the one great prejudice in British society which even the most tolerant still regard as respectable", a statement which would astound politically conscious women, blacks, gays, just for starters.



PRESS GANG

This Pope-wooing was in part an attempt to keep His Holiness the Cope (as one BBC reporter called him) as near to neutral as possible over the South Atlantic war.

But that was only part of it. It was a way of paying homage to his sphere of influence in Britain. If the Pope can meet the Queen without an understanding of who should curtsy to whom that was proof of British tolerance and of Papal deference.

But the break from war, towards the rhetoric of peace was brief. Within days we were back to the Falklands, the Kawasaki scramble bikes, and Colonel H — the latest hero to find his fame posthumously.

We all know of course that all this is a farce. We are told that every day. It is one of the things that distinguishes British people from Argentinian people.

But even in heroism and even in death, some are more equal than others.

Captain Birdseye who went down with his ship, the Atlantic Conveyor, was a case in point. Nobody knows what happened to him, or even whether he survived the first blast against his ship. But we were assured that he almost certainly died while saving unnamed sailors from death.

Colonel H occupied a still higher circle — a grand imperial hero.

The interviews with his wife, surely some of the sickest reporting of this war, proved that he was a man destined to die in battle. The Daily Express under the headline 'My Hero' reported her as saying that as a man Colonel H had "very black and white views" — he always knew the difference between right and wrong

and did what was right."

It wasn't even as if Colonel H confined his military rectitude to wartime. The paper reported that he was on a skiing holiday when he heard on the radio about the task force being sent. "He drove like mad to the ferry and we arrived five hours early for the boat. As soon as we got home he began making calls and sending signals, saying that the Second Battalion were really the only ones that could do the job."

And he kept in practice between battles as well. "He read books about battles and played lots of war games at home." But his wife added, "Unfortunately he seems this time to have picked the wrong counter."

Nothing could make more of a contrast than Colonel H with his black and white certainties on the one

side and militants in the trade unions on the other.

As the Daily Mail so eloquently put it,

"We have had our fill of the Britain of wrecking strikers; of anarchic shop stewards and selfish speculators."

"But there is another Britain. A Britain of service and sacrifice; of duty and gallantry. It is the Britain of H Jones and of his men."

As the Pope finishes his British tour and heads back for the Holy City that is something he will have to bear in mind. He might be feted by the media; he might be praised and he might be tolerated. But Popes like everyone else had better remember that when the lip service has been paid to peace, there is nothing the British press likes better than a Colonel H or two to lead his men into battle, preferably getting them all killed at the eleventh hour.



THE CRISIS BEHIND GALTIERI

Martin Thomas surveys the history of Argentina — and the crisis behind the junta's invasion of the Falklands.

ARGENTINA, like Britain though at a different level, is a capitalist economy in decay. The economic crisis facing the Galtieri regime is the culmination of 50 years of relative decline.

The Spanish Empire which dominated Latin America from the 16th century was centred in Mexico and Peru/Bolivia — where relatively dense, highly developed native (Indian) populations were conquered and used as forced labour to produce silver and gold. Buenos Aires was peripheral.

At the time of Latin America's struggle for independence (starting in 1809) it had only begun to develop as a merchant city. The wild hinterland was for the most part sparsely peopled by nomadic Indians, though cattle-raising had started.

Some of the leaders of the independence struggle had dreamed of uniting the continent. But the old empire broke up into many separate states.

Boom 1870-1930.

In Argentina, after many civil wars and feuds, a stable state structure was consolidated by the 1860s. Capitalism established itself in the countryside. In the 1870s the remaining Indian population of the hinterland was driven out, and vast new areas of fertile land were seized.

British merchants had already established themselves in Buenos Aires soon after independence in 1810.

Ruled by the big ranchers, and basing itself on free trade, Argentina boomed. It became a massively prosperous supplier of wheat and beef, mainly to the British market. Immigrants poured in from Europe — mainly from Italy and Spain. The population increased from 1,750,000 in 1869 to 11,600,000 in 1929. (Today it is about 27 million).

Foreign capital also rushed in. Between 1870 and 1910 27,000 miles of railways were built. British capital dominated. In 1909 41% of the fixed capital in Argentina was foreign-owned, and two-thirds of that 41% was British.

In the early years of this century Argentina looked very different from the other countries of Latin America. Alone with Uruguay it was (and is) almost entirely a white-settler state.

It had no impoverished peasantry living in semi-feudal conditions. Wages were high — higher than in Western Europe — to attract the immigrant labour. It had the infrastructure and living standards of an advanced capitalist state. The ranchers made huge profits.

But the prosperity was narrowly based. In a world economy dominated by the big imperialist powers of Western Europe and the US, the countries of Latin America had been integrated as provinces, relying on one or two major exports, linked more closely to countries like Britain

than to each other. (Even in 1970, only 11% of Latin America's international trade was within the region).

Argentina was one of those provinces, even if a rich one. When the world trade patterns under which it had flourished collapsed, after the 1929 crash, it plunged into economic and political crisis.

1930: Free trade prosperity collapses, and the army steps in

The dominant political force in Argentina up to

export of capital from the advanced countries dried up. As Argentina fell into financial crisis, the military seized power in December 1930.

The new regime was no more able to resolve the crisis than the Radicals. In June 1943 it was overthrown by a group of junior officers.

Dominance

The manifesto of this group called for an 'inflexible dictatorship' so that Argentina could gain the same dominance in South America as Germany in Europe. 'Only in this way will we be able to carry out the armament programme that is indispensable to

capitalism.

Welfare spending was increased. Trade unionism was spread (but under state control), and the share of wages in national income pushed up from 29% in 1946 to 46% in 1950.

On the basis of Argentina's big internal market and substantial infrastructure, industry had begun to develop even before World War 1 — accounting for some 18% of output in 1900-5.

Industry

It became more important after 1930, especially during World War 2 when imports were scarce. By 1937 industry was 26% of output, by 1947, 31%

with the Radicals and the conservatives in a 'Democratic Union'. They were marginalised, and to this day the unions are dominated by Peronist nationalism and 'business unionism'.

Between 1955 and 1966 factions of the Radical Party ruled. A coup in 1966 brought to power a military regime determined to break the power of the unions and encourage foreign investment. But it was beaten back by tremendous workers' struggles in 1969 — almost an Argentine parallel to France's May 1968.

In 1973 the army conceded elections. A Peronist candidate, standing on the



A working class with a long tradition of struggle — but side-tracked by nationalism

World War 1 was the oligarchy of big capitalist landowners. Opposition developed from the 1890s.

The Socialist Party, founded in 1894, was based almost exclusively on immigrant workers in the cities. Trade unions — often very militant — were built among craft workers, in textiles, and on the railways.

But many workers were drawn in behind middle-class politics. The middle class of professionals, small businessmen, and officials was (and still is) large in Argentina. It was this class — or more especially the Argentine-born section of this class — that was represented by the Radical Party.

The Radicals' main platform was electoral reform. Having eventually gained this they won the presidency in 1916 and governed until 1930. They continued the free trade policy favoured by the ranchers and British capital. But they also used the armed forces to bolster themselves against the conservatives. In 1922 army generals were put in charge of the nationalised oil firm.

And it was the army that stepped in when, in 1929-33 the money value of world exports fell 50% and the

our conquest of the continent'.

In September 1945 Colonel Juan Domingo Peron seized the leadership of the new regime, to become the major figure of Argentine politics for the next 30 years.

Peron's regime 1943-55: a corporatist class alliance

Despite many parallels, Peron's regime was not fascist. Instead of directly smashing down the trade unions (though he broke many strikes and jailed many trade unionists), Peron built up a corporatist alliance of workers and industrialists.

State control of trade, initiated since 1930, was increased. The state took a big chunk of export revenue. The British-owned railways, the US-owned telephones, and other sectors were nationalised (with generous compensation).

By 1955 only 5% of Argentina's fixed capital was foreign-owned, as against 20% in 1940 and 48% in 1913. Ever since then the national state has dominated Argentine

The failure of nationalism — and of working class opposition

Peron loudly proclaimed himself a nationalist and 'anti-imperialist'. But national industrial development under his regime was thin. After a spurt based on 'import substitution' in 1945-8, it stagnated.

Before he was overthrown by a military coup in 1955, Peron had turned back to foreign capital, in an effort to boost industry.

In 1934 Leon Trotsky had proposed the slogan of the 'Soviet United States of South and Central America' as the only road to a socialist reconstruction of the continent's lopsided economies.

Peron's economic nationalism was the diametric opposite, an attempt to restore Argentina to its former prosperity by turning in on itself. It produced a chronic fiscal crisis of the state, which has dominated subsequent development.

The Socialist Party and the Communist Party opposed Peron. But they offered no socialist alternative. Instead, joining

basis of a 'social pact' signed by the unions and employers won the presidency — and then handed over to Peron himself, who at the age of 78 had returned from his exile in Madrid.

Peron died in July 1974 and his widow Isabel took over as President. There was no repetition even of the shallow boom of 1945-49. Real wages slumped, inflation rose to 500%, and fascist gangs sponsored by Isabel Peron's ministers slaughtered working class militants. It was only a matter of time before the military returned, in March 1976, with an even more ferocious onslaught against the trade unions.

Real wages are reckoned to have been halved since 1976.

Since the 1976 coup — a turn to foreign capital, and a deepening crisis

Slowly, Argentina has become an industrialised country. Industry now accounts for about 45% of national output (1977: agriculture 13%, services 42%) and by 1973 23% of exports were manufactures.



Peron dominated Argentine politics for 30 years

become a bigger proportion of the total, enabling Argentina by 1963-4 to produce 63% of its new industrial equipment and machinery.

The US has been the dominant foreign investor, accounting for 58% of foreign capital in Argentina in 1975. Substantial US capital did enter in the 1960s — 64% of it (by 1968) was in manufacturing. In 1969, it was estimated, foreign capital (about half of it US) owned 60% of the 150 biggest industrial companies, which controlled 32% of industrial production.

But in 1968-75 the growth of US/West European capital in Argentina was very slow — only 1.2% per year, as against 12% in Brazil for example. By 1976 foreign investment had practically dried up.

Investment by Argentine capitalists has also been slow, with a lot of their money going abroad.

The relative decline of Argentina can be gauged by comparison with Australia. In the early years of this century, the two countries were on a level. In 1928-9 Argentina's output per head was about 70% of Australia's. In 1959-60 it was about half.

By the late '70s it was about 25 or 30%.

Argentina is now on a level with countries like Portugal, Greece or Turkey — and not very far ahead of Brazil or Mexico, though it suffers less than those countries from uneven development between booming cities and backward hinterland.

The decline has lurched into disaster with the economic policies of the military regime since 1976. Designed to dismantle statist, protectionist policies and encourage foreign investment, they have led only to an industrial slump and an enormous foreign debt (worse than Poland's). The army-controlled state sector has actually increased, swallowing up bankrupt firms.

Against this background, the invasion of the Falklands was a desperate gambit by the military, to play the nationalist card. Behind them stand the Peronists, newly revived from their disarray in 1976, and vowing vengeance on Galtieri if he fails to fight to the last drop of blood for the islands.

Will the nationalist blind alley cripple the Argentine working class again?

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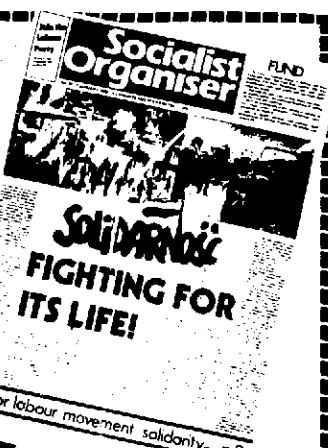
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Appalling! Writeback

ARGENTINA- OPPRESSED NATION?

I WAS appalled at the graphic, cartoon or whatever you want to call it on the front page last week (May 28th). Presumably the female figure was supposed to be Margaret Thatcher, and presumably this is supposed to justify a depiction full of loathing for the female body.

The cartoon was the visual equivalent of the slogan 'Ditch the Bitch' (or worse) which thanks to a campaign by Women's Fightback has more or less disappeared from left demonstrations.

If your skin is too thick to

recognise what's wrong with publishing a witch-like object of sexual disgust on the front page, why not type out and pin up on your wall the simple guidelines that Michelle Stanworth suggests in the May issue of Women's Fightback: 'The struggle against Thatcherism must focus on her policies and her power, not her femaleness'.

RACHEL LEVER



We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words. Send to 'Writeback', Socialist Organiser, c/o 28, Middle Lane, London N8.

Not work, but liberation

I HAVE become increasingly disturbed at the way many people who call themselves socialists continue to use pro-capitalist slogans such as 'Jobs not Bombs' and 'Fight for the right to work'.

the 'right to work' and 'what we need is jobs'. I know that unemployment is a bad thing, but I'd rather be unemployed than working at the local armaments depot or building tanks or dying from asbestos poisoning as some people in my town are.

What we need is not jobs but, as Martin Thomas wrote, '... to abolish the system of wage-labour and domestic-labour, replacing it with a new division of labour, a new control by women and men over their work and its products, and a new relation between work and life.'

Women already have the right to work; what we need now is the right to liberation.

D.P. SMITH
Wrekin CLP



The junta's land-grab

THROUGHOUT the Falklands crisis Socialist Challenge has sided with the Argentine claim to the islands. They have, in one way or another, given support to the Junta's methods for repossessing these territories by stating that the islands were taken by force from Argentina by the UK.

ces for reunification with the Fatherland. Genetically historically and culturally these people are from the same stock as ourselves.

'Before 1919 they were part of the Wilhelmine Empire, before that the First German Reich, before that the Confederation of German Provinces. The same goes for the city of Danzig, for centuries the major port of Prussia.'

'These territories were taken from us not through the exercise of the principle of national self-determination by the indigenous populations, but by military force. It is only with great reluctance, and after intensive deliberation that the order has been given to repossess these territories to their rightful owners.'

Is this Galtieri speaking? Well, no, it's Adolf Hitler.

Interestingly a strict examination of both individuals' claim to these different territories actually shows Hitler has a much

stronger case. After all, Argentinians have never populated the Falklands on a settled basis, while Germans did inhabit Danzig and the Sudetenland.

And significantly, Argentina has a similar level of industrialisation today as Czechoslovakia had in the 1930s. One cannot twist either of the two cases into the simple imperialist/colony mould.

Pickles

So would Brian Grogan (SC 20 May) brush aside 'the political coloration of the regime' (after all, Hitler was elected, unlike Galtieri) and supported the German claim?

Trotsky, of course, would have turned over in his grave to have thought that his followers would end up giving support to the type of regime he brilliantly analysed in 'The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany'.

But why have our com-

Thatcher's War



... and Galtieri's

CARLOS Garcia (SO 86) and many other comrades argue for supporting Argentina in its war with Britain — rather than denouncing both sides as reactionary — on the grounds that Britain is imperialist and Argentina is not.

Less reactionary

But surely socialists do not believe that weaker capitalist classes are any less reactionary than the big world-dominating capitalist classes? To believe that they are — that we must automatically consider the smaller and weaker capitalist classes (not so small and weak, either, in the case of Argentina) as progressive when they come into conflict with bigger and strong-

er ones — would be to commit ourselves to an international version of the Communist Party's 'anti-monopoly alliance'.

Socialists should side with bourgeois forces against imperialism when they fight for national liberation. We side with them because of what they are fighting for, despite what they are — and we point out that because of what they are, they will not fight consistently, and the working class should organise independently to take the lead.

The current arguments over Argentina turn this reasoning on its head. They hold that we should side with Galtieri because of what he is (representative of a non-imperialist capitalist class) despite or regardless of what he is fighting for.

Or worse — they hold that because of what Galtieri is, his war against Britain must be progressive, therefore, since he is fighting Thatcher for control over the Falklands, Argentine seizure of the Falklands is in some way progressive.

Not progressive

But Galtieri has no more to do with national liberation than Pinochet. Annexation of a small distinct neighbouring community by the predatory and militaristic regime in its relatively big and powerful neighbour is not progressive even if Britain opposes it.

Certainly socialists in Britain must put our main stress on fighting Thatcher's reactionary war. But Galtieri's war is reactionary too.

ALAN GILBERT
London

YOUR REPLY to the excellent page written by the PST/International Workers League (SO 83) should concern any Marxist. Beyond saying 'Down with Thatcher's warmongering — Withdraw the Fleet' you appear to have lost sight of any Leninist position.

Britain has dragged its feet over giving up the Falklands because although the islands may not be of great importance to Britain, maintaining them helps preserve the ideology of imperialism.

The Falklands were taken by force from Argentina by British imperialism. As the Falklands is not a nation, and the people living there are settlers who have been planted there courtesy of British gunboats, they have no case for self-determination.

Just claim

The islands belong to the Argentine nation. It is the Argentine nation not the present junta which has a just claim over the islands.

In this conflict one side is an imperialist wishing to maintain its influence. The other side is a victim of imperialism. It is an oppressed nation whose whole economy is dominated by the multi-nationals.

Galtieri's motives for taking back what belongs to the Argentine could be impatience over 20 years of British stalling or it could be an attempt to divert attention away from his economic problems. Whatever the reason it is irrelevant. The issue in this war is not the motives of the junta but imperialism. This was graphically illustrated by the quote from Trotsky that the IWL reproduced where Trotsky says he would support a fascist regime in conflict with imperialism. To condemn the re-taking of the Falklands is to detract from the fact that the main enemy is here at home.

Marxists support all those fighting to free their nation of foreign domination.

We give such support regardless of whether those fighting against imperialism are socialists or not,

e.g. support for Irish republicans. Leninism recognises that any blow against imperialism is to be welcomed.

You state that in the present war the junta is 'pro-imperialist'. But which imperialism is it supporting? Certainly not American. As for the retaking of the islands you say this 'was not an issue of Argentine national unity'. Clearly in the eyes of the Argentine working class it is! You couldn't put a piece of paper between them and the regime on this issue. This makes your statement that you stand not in the camp of the regime, but that of the workers, meaningless.

Contrary to what you say the war does not strengthen the standing of the junta. It puts it under a considerable strain. A rising tide of anti-imperialist sentiment in Argentina threatens to go beyond the limits which Galtieri wishes to confine it. Already banned workers' parties are openly holding meetings on the war, which whilst condemning Britain also criticise the junta. Such is the mood of the nation that the police dare not move against such meetings.

Socialists in the Argentine are now in a favourable position to call for the confiscation of British owned factories.

Problems

Galtieri has bitten off more than he can chew. Soon the working class in the Argentine will be presented with the bill for the war, they will see that the problems of the economy remain once the nationalist fervour dies down. When this situation arises the forces of the left will be in a stronger position to meet it.

Socialist Organiser should be supporting the oppressed nation against the oppressor and therefore calling for an Argentinian victory against British imperialism. Your failure to do this so far has got you into the present mess you find yourselves in.

Yours fraternally,
DEREK CATTELL
Liverpool

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The comrades of Socialist Challenge have failed to move on from the 1930s in their analysis of Latin America's relationship to Western capitalism.

JACK CONNELL
Bury



With the masses in the war

I REFER to Donnie Brooks' letter in last week's Socialist Organiser entitled "Wrenching quotes from Trotsky". The purpose of the letter was to discredit the quotes from Trotsky used by the vast majority of the Trotskyist movement to illustrate Trotsky's view that it is sometimes necessary to support reactionary third world regimes when they are attacked by imperialism.

Comrade Brooks uses the usual method of discrediting historical quotes by asserting that they are "out of date", "torn out of context" or whatever.

Naturally all historical quotes have the weakness caused by the passage of time. Certainly there can be no perfect parallels. The point however is whether they hold true or not and in this case they undoubtedly do.

Repeatedly, on numerous conflicts and projections — China, Brazil and Mexico — Trotsky argues that it is perfectly possible to stand on the side of a reactionary regime which is thrown into conflict with imperialism.

The similarities or otherwise between the Falkland war and the Japanese invasion of China can be debated. What cannot be debated is that Trotsky stood on the side of the Chiang Kai Shek regime. He did not start with the nature of China's regime, but its relationship to imperialism.

Leadership

Starting from that position, Trotsky concluded that in such a war revolutionaries must work and organise within the anti-imperialist masses in order to fight to re-establish themselves in the leadership of the masses.

This is where Socialist Organiser's position of defeatism on both sides, which comrade Brooks implicitly defends, is so dangerous. In Argentina, SO calls for the working class to fight against the war, in other words against the aspirations of the anti-imperialist masses.

It would call for the blacking of supplies to the war effort and for the withdrawal of the Argentine troops from the Falklands in the face of the British offensive — which would hand victory on a plate to Thatcher.

Such a position is alright if like SO you are neutral on the war. But in Argentina and in Latin America as a whole, it would isolate revolutionaries for many years to come.

Revolutionaries in Argentina should follow Trotsky's advice (even if it was written as long ago as the Transitional Programme) and fight for leadership inside the anti-imperialist masses. Only in that way can they turn it into a real struggle not only against imperialism but against Galtieri and Argentine capitalism.

RICHARD DEAN
Oxford



Unions back CLPD ideas

THE last week in May was a good one for Party democracy. Nearly a million Party conference votes were committed (at the GMWU, UCATT, AUEW/TASS etc) to the struggle against witch-hunts.

Barring dirty work, some kind of unity should therefore be achieved in Blackpool.

This year's ASTMS agenda was stuffed full of Party democracy issues, but the effort was spread too widely so none were prioritised for debate. However, an excellent fringe meeting with Joan Maynard led to practical discussion of future tactics as well as welcome new members and money for CLPD.

The NUPE Conference also failed to reach the Labour Party composite but here again a constructive fringe discussion was held with Deputy General Secretary Tom Sawyer in the chair.

A feature of both these conferences was the increased impact of women, though the position of women within the union is in both cases still regarded as a higher campaigning priority than the position of women within the Party as a whole.

Strong determination to defend the democratic reforms was exhibited by the conferences of TASS, and outstandingly, UCATT. The latter joined the NUPE EC in opposing the divisive shortlist of one manoeuvre and in

Campaign for



Democracy

By Francis
Prideaux

supporting the right of CLPs to select Parliamentary candidates without political interference.

The builders also called for Labour democracy in local government, a properly democratised PLP with recorded voting on all major issues, and a Manifesto commitment to take into public ownership at least 25 of the hundred largest privately owned manufacturing companies.

On the Bermondsey issue, Bill O'Shaughnessy stressed that what was at stake was not the personal merits of Peter Tatchell but the fundamental right of the CLP.

The union did not fight for mandatory reselection to have it overturned at the whim of a few individuals.

The NEC must endorse Bermondsey's choice without further delay.

"They will not find a scab to replace him no matter how hard they rake through the gutter."

For the union executive, Charlie Kelly warmly endorsed all the democratic proposals and particularly stressed the need for the Party NEC to press for the abolition of the shortlist of one manoeuvre by the 1982 Party conference.

Supporting resolutions to this effect must therefore be a top priority.

It was also successfully moved by Jim Franklin that only comrades holding views in line with UCATT policy should receive the union's support in Labour Party elections.

The logic of this principle is bound to interest comrades elsewhere.

Rank and file activists in a whole number of unions are increasingly determined to make their presence felt in Labour Party affairs. Things are on the move. Draft resolutions for Labour Party conference can be obtained from CLPD, 10, Park Drive, London NW11 7SH, Tel: 01-458 1501.

Socialist Bookshelf

Books and pamphlets that you should read

Ian Swindale re-reads the classic account of the Russian Revolution, "Ten Days That Shook the World" by John Reed, published in paperback by Penguin at £1.95.

The first time I read this "slice of intensified history" was in the early '60s when, as a school student eager to find out what the Russian Revolution had really been about, I picked up a copy in my local library.

At first baffled by the large array of political parties and popular organisations with strange names — Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Cadets, Soviets, Dumas — I quickly became absorbed by the vivid account of the first days of the Revolution put together by Reed.

As an American journalist, but also a supporter of the Bolsheviks, Reed was able to pass more or less with immunity from one side to the other to interview the leaders of the main parties, and talk to leading capitalists on the one hand and ordinary workers and soldiers on the other.

Although at one point he was put against a wall and nearly shot by Red Guards who took him to be a spy, he was able to come and go, witnessing many of the key events of the Revolution.

It is hardly surprising then that the revolution should come alive in the pages of his book. Here we can read the proclamations of the Military Revolutionary Committee, led by Trotsky, which organised the insurrection, and the Decrees on Peace and Land passed by the Congress of Soviets on the first day of the Revolution.

We can hear the bourgeoisie who had condemned Russian soldiers for failing to fight hard enough against Germany, praying now that the Kaiser's armies would come soon and smash the Bolsheviks.

We can smile in amusement at the leaders of the other socialist parties as they walk out of the Congress of Soviets in order to "go and die" at the Winter Palace in the company of counter-revolutionaries "in defence of the (bourgeois) revolution". (Needless to say, none of them actually died there. The Red Guards wouldn't let them in, so they went home!)

And through all the confusion, the mistakes and chaos of the revolution we can sense the huge awakening of the ordinary peasants, workers and soldiers — many of the illiterate — as they grapple with the politics of the various revolutionary organisations; as they try in the midst of rumours and proclamations from all sides to work out who is fighting on their behalf and who has crossed over to the class enemy.

Endless political debate, the eager reading of newspapers, pamphlets and leaflets, a minimum of sleep and meals hurriedly eaten between rushing from one flashpoint to another — this was the life led by the Red Guards the factory workers and army battalions in revolutionary Petrograd and elsewhere in those days.

The Bolsheviks seemed to be completely isolated, having seized power. Against them stood the bourgeoisie, the yunkers, the Cossacks, teachers, students, clerical workers, even some sections of the working class, like the railway workers union, and of course all the other socialist parties.

But in reality they were far from being isolated

because behind them stood the mass of workers and soldiers.

As news of the revolution in Petrograd spread to the front and throughout Russia, local Soviets fought to establish their own power.

But in the first few days, covered by Reed's book, the crucial question was securing the revolution in Petrograd against counter-attack by the forces still loyal to Kerensky.

Here, chaos seemed to rule supreme. Nobody seemed to know where Kerensky was or how near to Petrograd his troops had advanced. Rumours spread like wildfire, while those who were eager to defend the revolution were unorganised and no overall strategy existed to defend the city.

But the tireless work of the Military Revolutionary Committee, the determination of the workers and soldiers to defend their revolution and the appointment of sympathetic officers to lead the revolutionary troops resulted in Kerensky's forces being thrown back.

Petrograd was saved and the revolution erupted again throughout Russia.

By the time I had finished reading the book on that first occasion, I was completely convinced that the Russian Revolution had been both the most important event of the 20th century and the most democratic expression of the will of the masses ever to have taken place.

Even in a country where the working masses had been kept in deliberate ignorance by their ruling class it had been possible for the ordinary people to grasp where their interests lay and to make whatever sacrifices were necessary to win the struggle for power.

The rich and the educated scoffed at them, dirty, badly clothed, poorly educated and inarticulate — the 'Dark People'.

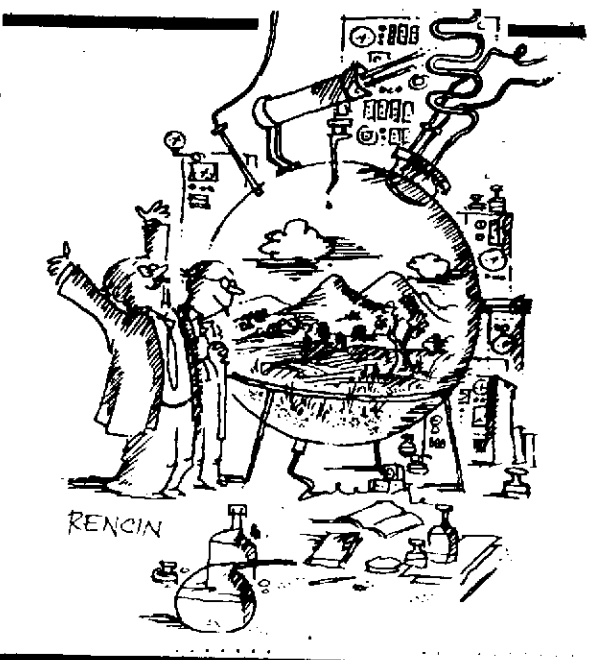
But they fought with tenacity against all the odds to establish the world's first workers' state.

I have re-read the book several times in the last 15 years and on each occasion I have felt inspired by Reed's account of the unfolding Revolution. And with an introduction by Lenin, recommending the book to the workers of the world, what more needs to be said? Read it!

SCIENCE

Japan leads on IQ

By Davy Jones



THOSE who use IQ data to demonstrate the innate superiority of the white race must have received a jolt last week with the publication in the science magazine 'Nature' of an article showing that the average IQ of young Japanese is, at 111, some 9 points higher than the average American or Western European IQ.

According to Richard Lunn, Japanese IQ has risen dramatically this century, and by some 7 points in the course of one generation. Since even 6-year olds show the increase, it cannot, Lunn claims, be due to education.

But, as an accompanying commentary by Nature staff writer Alun Anderson points out, Japanese society has been turned upside down in the last 50 years; in the period between 1930 and 1960, 40% of the population moved from the country to the cities.

The accompanying proletarianisation of isolated

peasant communities, rapid economic growth, and consequent improvements in nutrition, health, welfare and education, and growing influence of a Western culture, have all probably contributed to the improvement in IQ score (on American-designed tests), in growth and life expectancy.

Dangers of drugs

By Les Hearn

SOME readers questioned my statement that "heroin, taken hygienically and in moderation has few if any long-term effects".

My source for this information was a lecture, by the head of drugs research for Reckitt and Colman's Pharmaceutical Division, on the properties of the various opiate drugs. This does not mean that heroin is a safe drug under all circumstances.

For one thing, the lethal dose is fairly close to the effective dose (the amount that is needed to make you feel good) and accidental over-dose is a frequent cause

of death. So, no surprises really, except for those who consider that IQ is mostly determined by genetic factors.

Why Japanese IQ should be higher than American or European IQ remains a mystery, and whether it means that Japanese are more intelligent (whatever that means) or simply

better at IQ tests is highly questionable. What this data does not support is the author's contention that the Japanese IQ advantage has been a significant factor in Japan's post-war economic growth. That really is putting the cart before the horse.

In contrast, use of alcohol and nicotine carry with them a bewildering number of damaging side-effects and long-term effects (some of these were outlined for alcohol by Davy Jones in SO 82).

In this sense therefore it is possible to say that heroin is a safer drug than alcohol or nicotine.

However, over-use of any drug is a bad thing and as socialists we should be particularly worried that both alcoholism and heroin addiction are increasing among young unemployed

ruption of supply (these can be fatal).

Now while we may not think addiction is a good thing, its most serious side-effect, is the withdrawal symptom, caused by inter-

THE LABOUR PARTY

BUILD ON THE TRUE LEFT!

Vidya Anand is the representative from the London Labour Party Executive to the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) Labour Group. He has been closely involved with ILEA since 1974. Last week he spoke to Socialist Organiser.

AT THE last Executive Committee meeting of the Greater London Regional Council on May 17, an emergency resolution was moved by Jeremy Corbyn and seconded by myself which sought to "order the ILEA Labour Group to present all cuts and savings to the Regional Executive before any cuts are implemented even though they may have already received sub-committee approval. A special meeting of the Executive Committee to be called for this purpose." But the resolution was defeated. Ken Livingstone voting with the right-wing did not help our cause.

And what has happened since?

The ILEA Labour Group has been systematically voting through a whole range of cuts without consulting the EC or the Party. Can you detail some of these proposed cuts?

Yes — the closure of Priest Hill Sports Centre — cuts in the number of nursery assistants at the Infants Schools, scaling down of in-service training, reducing the number of advisory and unattached teachers — the list is endless.

How has the Labour Group reacted to these cuts?

Nervously. A few stout and true comrades such as Keith Veness, Charlie Rossi, Dave Wetzell, Lesley

Hammond (the new Chief Whip), Gerry Ross, Andy Harris and Valerie Wise voted consistently against the cuts.

All the way through while a few Grasshopper-Lefts seemed to disappear through the doors every time the voting took place, other Absent-Lefts seemed to have convenient engagements, and regrettably on some of the cuts the Left lost by only one or two votes.

Some of the Left comrades I am given to understand, were actually in the building — at County Hall — while cuts after cuts were being voted.

Perhaps some of these comrades think that their convenient absences will protect them from the wrath of their GMCs, when they are asked "Where were you when the cuts were being voted through the ILEA Labour Group?" What is your general feeling about the Group itself?

I was greatly surprised at the poor attendance at these critical meetings when the fate of so many schools, colleges and education services was hanging in the balance. But this is all very negative.

No, not at all — I found a number of positive and courageous comrades who chose to stick to their guns in spite of the general atmosphere of compromise, of finding ways and means of accommodating with the Right — who are nearly half the group.

I was surprised too to see how tough the Right wing remains, while the soggy-Centre and grasshopper-Left just couldn't keep up with the pace.

I was very pleased indeed to hear Lesley Hammond, the new Chief



Ken Livingstone

Whip, inform us that she intends to open the ILEA Group meetings to observers from the constituency parties, as does the GLC. This is a positive step forward.

And what do you think of the leadership?

Somewhat on the weak side. The Officers seem to be more in control of what's going on than the leadership.

But on the positive side it has to be stated that both the Leader and Deputy Leader of the ILEA have shown and do show some respect for the London Labour Party's views, even where they disagree with them and they have responded positively to

a number of issues I have personally raised with them.

And what of the future?

Build on the true comrades who are sticking to the Manifesto! I have no doubt that the Labour Party did not send the comrades to County Hall to trail a pink flag but rather to haul up the Red Flag of socialism!

Bridgehead

I firmly believe that the Left now has a bridgehead at County Hall. Our job is to widen it and keep up the pressures. There is no room for compromise when it comes to principles — that's my view, anyway.

Kicked out for fighting cuts

By Stan Crooke

IN A Glasgow District Council by-election on May 18, in the Fairfield ward in Govan, Pat Keegan, standing as "Labour against the Cuts" won an overwhelming victory against the "official" Labour candidate (by 819 votes to 299).

Pat Keegan was Labour District Councillor for the area until he resigned in protest at the council's decision to close Govan baths.

Although both the Fairfield Labour Party branch and the CLP backed Pat as Labour candidate, the Glasgow District Labour Party narrowly vetoed his readmission to the panel and parachuted in an ageing union bureaucrat as the official candidate.

All the members of the Fairfield Labour Party branch now face expulsion for backing Pat Keegan in the by-election. At least ten Labour District Councillors have already said they will resign if Pat's request to be re-admitted to the group is accepted.

And Militant supporters have argued that Pat "must

be expelled from the Labour Party, if he hasn't been expelled already" on the grounds that he is a "maverick".

The fight against the baths' closure is being continued and stepped up. Maria Fyfe, a leading member of the District Labour Group has publicly stated that if Keegan had lost then the Council would have re-opened the baths, but since he won they will not even consider the idea.

Pat Keegan told Socialist Organiser:

"When I was re-elected the Labour District Councillor in 1980 I wrote in the personal message on my election address that I was prepared to fight the cuts along with all other organisations of the working class.

"We set up a Govan Cuts Campaign and had a campaign against the 31% rent increases which the council was demanding. We organised a rent strike which I joined as well, so that I would face the same attacks as everyone else in the rent strike.

"Although the strike is now being phased out, I think the fact that this

year's increase is only 8% shows that we achieved a small measure of success. I believe that the Labour Group listened to what we had to say because they were getting the backlash.

"In opposing the closure of the baths, too, I believe that I was faithful to my manifesto of 1980 in which I promised to protect services.

"I believe that the Labour Group should have shown greater leadership to other local authorities in Scotland. Then it wouldn't have been possible to pick them off. It could have led a campaign which could have been successful and united other councils by putting itself in the front line.

"The branch and the constituency agreed with what I'd done (although they disagreed with my resignation) because I'd been acting in line with the political stance of the CLP on cuts and rents.

"If the District Labour Group had the same climate as the CLP then it would be a happier situation for Labour supporters in Glasgow and Scotland in general."

Stick to Manifesto

by Jo Thwaites

MANY Labour Party members are looking to Islington Council as the next Labour Council to take on the Tories. It has the solid backing of the people of Islington as 51 out of the 52 councillors are Labour (and the 52nd (SDP) councillor only won by one vote!).

Pat Longman, one of the Socialist Organiser supporters on the Council, opened a discussion at the Islington Socialist Organiser group last Sunday, 30th, on how to keep the Council to its Manifesto commitments.

Pat pointed out that already, only weeks into the four year life of the council, there are signs that Labour councillors aren't as keen on reversing the SDP and previous Labour cuts as they should be.

The conflict arises between those who are willing to operate within the current SDP-fixed budget and see their role as fitting in as much of the Manifesto as they can into that tight framework, and those on the Left who see their first commitment as carrying out the promises they were elected on.

First test

The first test of the Council was over the cuts made by the SDP. Labour candidates had promised throughout the election campaign that they would reverse these cuts.

At the first Policy Meeting, Socialist Organiser supporter Alan Clinton proposed that all the cuts should be reversed. This was carried — by one vote, and at the price of a great outcry afterwards about the committee's "irresponsibility".

It then went to the Labour Group, where the package was voted on item by item and the vast bulk of it got through. But the problem of making sure that the Council sticks to its Manifesto remains.



Pat Longman

In the three Islington constituency parties there is a fairly thorough system of accountability. Their joint Local Government Committee has a system of quarterly meetings with the Labour Group to elect Group officers and decide what stance the Group should take on the major issues coming up.

This is not strictly constitutional within the Labour Party, but is the only way of making sure that the Group represents the policies of the Islington Parties.

The next of these meetings is due at the end of July. At the Socialist Organiser meeting we decided to produce a discussion document for GMCs and Wards, arguing that we should not see ourselves on the Council as being administrators bound by the restrictions imposed through the SDP budget.

The Socialist Organiser councillors are keen to make sure that all the Council documents are available to the local Party.

and that the rank and file members are absolutely clear about what's happening on the council.

As Pat pointed out: "All too often, it's the Council officials and the people in the know, the ex-councillors, who can put pressure on the Labour Group. We want to see the pressure coming from the rank and file of the Party".

Accountability

It is through rank and file control and accountability, through campaigning, public meetings and a clear view of what the Council is doing that the Labour Party will recruit and provide a basis for a determined fight against the Tories.

That's also the only way that the Islington Council can counter the attacks from the press that have already started — not through lying low and playing it cool till times become more opportune for the implementation of the Manifesto.

RUNNING LONDON — OUR WAY

Credentials from: Jim Ring, 55 Stonard Rd, London N13. Price £1. Creche available.

Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn, Valerie Wise, Sue Davies, Valerie Veness

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING is organising a working conference of Labour councillors and Labour supporting activists. Councillors need to break out of Council Chamber politics and link up with "extra-parliamentary forces" — the trade unions, the women's movement, tenants and ethnic minority groups, etc. The aim is to set up an "Association of Socialist Councillors in London".

June 19 County Hall

UCW censures leaders

THIS year's UCW conference in the last week of May, was the first held since the separation of the Post Office and British Telecom.

For most of the week conference met as two separate sections, but they both faced the same threats from the government, privatisation, Tebbit's law and new technology.

In the Post Office conference proposals on new technology had been submitted by the union to the Post Office.

1990?

In exchange for co-operation on new technology, the UCW had asked for increased annual leave, a shorter working week (going down by stages to 30 hours by 1990) and a lowering of the retirement age from 60 to 55 (again by 1990).

Many delegates doubted the Post Office's willingness to deliver the goods by 1990... if ever.

There was a highly charged debate on management's unilateral attempt to



Jackson retires. Will the new UCW leaders fight the Tories?

exist between ordinary postal workers and all grades of management. A composite amendment on the issue, moved by the Derry branch, called for the eradication of the division. It was carried overwhelmingly despite opposition from the platform.

Productivity

But it was the issue of productivity deals that produced the sharpest debates. In the Postal Officers' conference a national productivity deal was debated and was carried by only two votes (1189 to 1187). Many delegates argued how immoral such dealings were when there are 3 million out of work.

The same issue was the highlight of the Telecoms conference. A motion of no confidence in the Telecoms Group Management Committee (TGMC), the Telecoms section's executive, for agreeing a productivity deal in November 1981, was overwhelmingly carried.

The entire TGMC, which

had only just been re-elected then resigned on the spot. They were only persuaded to return after Tom Jackson, at his last conference, persuaded the Telecoms conference to take another vote, this time a vote of confidence in the TGMC.

In the general conference of both sections, the UCW executive plans to amalgamate with other unions in the Post Office and British Telecoms, including supervisory grades, were rejected, as delegates objected to linking up with managers.

June 8th

An emergency resolution to support the NHS workers was submitted by Coventry Tels branch and called for a one-day strike by UCW members on June 8. It wasn't taken.

But UCW members are starting to show they will stand up and be counted against Tory attacks. And many delegates made it clear they expected the union's leadership to stand up too.



FBU action threat wins concessions

A threatened work-to-rule by members of the Fire Brigades Union, due to start on 31 May was postponed last week after settlement proposals were made by the employers.

The work to rule was called as a result of a long-standing dispute over representation on the National Joint Council (NJC) where wages and conditions of service are decided.

This was refused consistently and finally the FBU called a work-to-rule.

It appears that a settlement has been reached and the basis of this is that there will be an independent head-count of members of both the FBU and of NAFO and the NJC will be reconstituted on the basis of this count.

The previous week the national conference of the FBU took place and was notable for two particular decisions that were taken.

Firstly, a resolution in opposition to the Tebbit bill was passed. As well as the normal wordy resolutions there were two specific commitments made - that the FBU should refuse to pay any fines under the law and should also refuse to appear in court if charged under the law and that both of these points should be taken up with the TUC.

Falklands

A resolution on the Falkland Islands from Strathclyde Brigade, calling for the withdrawal of the fleet was defeated by a large majority and a mildly worded resolution merely calling for the implementation of the United Nations resolution was passed. There was however a ritual condemnation of the Tories for getting "Britain" into this position to start with.

Doug Mackay

Representation

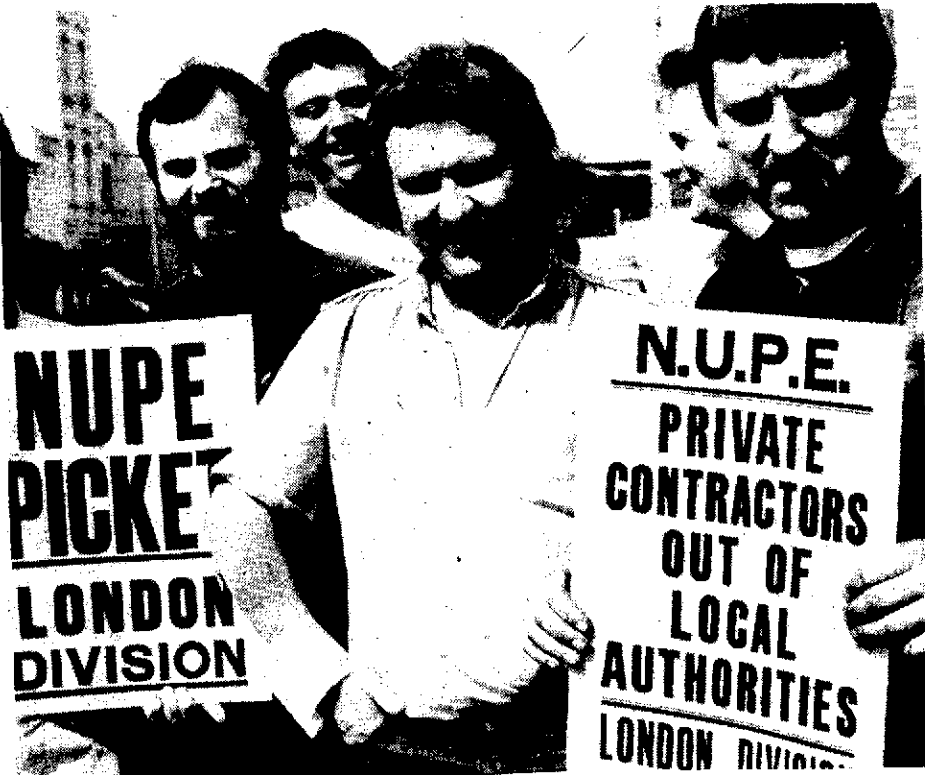
The Fire Brigades Union had felt that they were under-represented on the Officers Committee of the NJC and that so-called officers "union", the National Association of Fire Officers (NAFO), were over-represented.

After the national strike in 1977-78, many firemen who were promoted to officer rank remained in the FBU, refusing to join NAFO because of the scabbing role they had played in the strike.

As a result, the officer membership of the FBU rose rapidly while that of the NAFO declined.

However, the representation on the officers committee of the NJC remained unchanged at NAFO 7, FBU 3.

For the last four years the FBU have made approaches for equal representation on the officers



As we go to press, council manual workers in Wandsworth are due to vote on a compromise deal recommended by union officials. Report next week.

80p per hour wage 40 million profit!

by Jim Denham

"WHAT are we on strike over? Wages... and conditions... and union rights" explained a woman picket outside Sandhar and Kang wholesale warehouse in Birmingham where 30 black workers have been on strike since May 18.

"We're not a bunch of people who've come out at the drop of a hat", she went on. "It's taken a long while to reach this stage. Some of the lads were working for as little as 80p per hour. A woman in the packing department was getting £1 an hour after five years service!"

Insulting

"When one of the customers asked about the poor wages he'd heard about a manager said 'It's not a bad wage for someone who doesn't speak English'."

"But the wages are only part of the story. We have no heating in the canteen all through winter. There's often no hot water, no soap and no toilet paper. Safety gear like gloves and shoes are unheard of."

"And then there's the attitude of management."

At this point, as though to prove the woman's argument, a (white) manager came up to the picket line and in the presence of the police began insulting the pickets in very personal terms.

"That's Ken James," said the woman. "He's the one who said it was a good wage for people who didn't speak English. You can see for yourself what kind of a man he is."

We were joined by an Asian man, Bhinder Singh. He explained how, as head

cashier in the food department, he had been sacked on the spot after 3½ years at S&K without a single complaint or warning.

"In one week I received three warnings for no good reason. It was obvious that management were out to get me. They've always been terrified of the union moving in here and they knew that workers had been joining the TGWU."

Ringleader

"They reckoned that I was the ringleader so I had to go."

"On the Friday (14th) I was called in by a director, Mr. U. Kang and sacked on the spot. They refused to even discuss it with Mr Partridge, the TGWU official and on Tuesday the whole workforce walked out."

S&K's response was typically arrogant. They issued a letter to the employees saying: "Any employee who wishes to take strike action is free to do so but please note that he will be automatically dismissed and will not be reinstated under any circumstances."

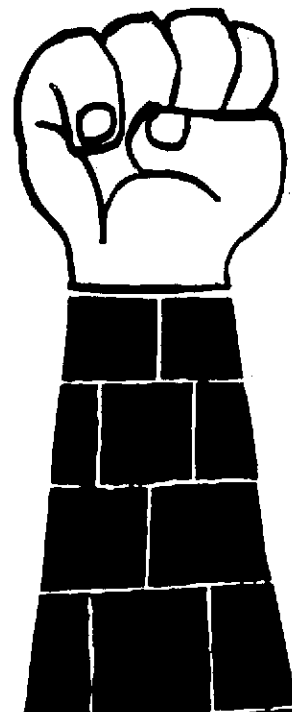
But the strikers are in good spirits: the action has been made official and all TGWU drivers are turning back (as are the majority of S&K's customers - mainly Asian small business people).

Spreading

S&K (who made a £40 million profit last year) recently opened two more warehouses in Coventry and Wolverhampton and the strikers are now spreading the picketing to these.

Donations, messages of support etc., to: S&K Strike Committee, c/o TGWU, 211, Broad Street, Birmingham B5.

£6000 fund



By far our worst week so far on the fund - £10 from a reader in Leeds, and not a penny more.

Anti-war campaigning, the health workers' pay fight, mobilising for the 'Women's Right to Work' march, organising against the Tebbit Bill - it's easy to see how fund-raising can get lost in this stream of activity.

But for campaigning we need the paper. And for the paper we need money.

The total so far is £1808.80, shown by the hollow section below.

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

Advertisement

Workers' Socialist League

SUMMER SCHOOL

Sun 25 July - Sun 1 Aug

Discussions on women's liberation, revolutionising the labour movement, Poland, Ireland, the world Trotskyist movement, and many other issues. Films, socials etc.

Spend the week in a rural setting in the East Midlands. Only £32.50 for accommodation, breakfast, tea, coffee and subsidised transport. Claimants £21.

Further details from "Summer School" PO Box 135 London N1 0DD

Socialist Organiser

MARCH FOR WOMEN'S JOBS!

THE IDEA of a women's march for jobs provides exciting challenges and possibilities to the women's and labour movement.

We in Women's Fight-back are raising it for several reasons.

*The fight for equal and positive working opportunities for women is not an issue which will fade away after 5 June. On the contrary, it will be even more necessary to fight. The Tories will try to tighten the screws by hacking away still further at hard-won rights and creating still more unemployment.

Tebbit's Law

*As we have pointed out before, the new employment law, unless fought, will make it harder still for women to win advances through strong union organisation and industrial action.

*A women's march

will provide a focus and impetus to build on the mass support we get on 5 June.

This support will come from women everywhere — active in groups, campaigns, unions and Labour Party Women's Sections.

Support

*The People's March for Jobs generated a fantastic amount of grass roots support in the areas it passed through.

The idea came from rank and file trade unionists in Merseyside. Although it was 'taken over' by trade union bureaucrats, it was the support of rank and file unionists and activists which ensured its success, and the massive degree of solidarity and support from the people the marchers met en route.

We can build on this goodwill, linking

Local committees across the country have been organising for months for the Women's Right to Work march this Saturday (leaves County Hall, London, 10.30am) and the Labour Party Women's Festival that afternoon (Battersea Park, noon). And then what next? WENDY MUSTILL reports.

together men and women workers, employed and unwaged, black and white, labour organisations and community groups, trades councils and Labour Party branches — in a new and exciting way.

And we can make sure the Women's March is not subject to the same bureaucratic grip as the People's March.

A women's march for jobs would involve women in all areas from all walks of life in a venture which would give rise to new opportunities for political discussion, forging links, learning through experience,

challenging both the Tories and the trade union leadership which consistently refuses to treat women's issues seriously and take any initiatives.

The biggest

Planning a march will provide us with an ongoing opportunity to focus our energies and anger into something constructive, and to learn and get together during the process.

Let's start working now for the biggest women's demonstration for our rights this country has ever seen.



Meeting called by the Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work to discuss plans after June 5:

Saturday July 3, from 11am in Manchester. Open to delegates from local Action Committees and all others interested.

FOR A WOMANS RIGHT TO WORK

NHS PAY - ALL OUT NOW!



by Anna Lunts

THE pay fight in the NHS has now reached a crucial stage. Hospital workers are becoming increasingly impatient with the campaign of selective strikes, limited industrial action and 24-hour stoppages.

Many are now calling for indefinite, all-out action as the only way to win their 12% claim. The TUC Health Services Committee on 9 June promises to be a landmark in the struggle.

If the NUPE representatives can commit the other TUC Health Service unions to calling all-out action in line with the NUPE conference vote, we shall see a much-needed escalation of the dispute.

Unfortunately, the emergency resolution calling for all-out action which was passed unanimously at NUPE conference, contained

a let-out clause for the Executive as the resolution stated that industrial action was to be taken alongside other health service unions.

This has enabled the NUPE Executive to stall on the date of June 4 as stated in the resolution, by saying that they will have to consult the other unions first.

This is despite a petition signed by 400 delegates at the conference demanding that NUPE take a clear lead by calling all-out action anyway.

Strength

There is no doubt that if NUPE had called out its Health Service members from June 4, it would then be arguing from a position of strength on the TUC Health Services Committee for the other unions to give their support to that action.

A large and vocal lobby

of the TUC Health Services Committee is now needed to put pressure on the other health service unions to accept the NUPE recommendation.

Some areas have already decided to take all-out action from the 4th or the 8th (when the next 24-hour strike is scheduled to take place).

It is vital that militants argue for their hospitals to join those that are already out by taking all-out action from the 4th or the 8th in advance of the TUC decision. This would be the best way of putting pressure on the TUC Health Services Committee to call all-out action.

Promises of help and financial support from industrial workers are now coming thick and fast. The overwhelming vote of the South Wales miners to take 24-hour strike action in

solidarity shows the potential for turning the fight against the 4% offer into a national working class offensive against the Tories.

Such solidarity action would be completely illegal under the Tebbit Bill and combined with the restrictions on picketing contained in the 1980 Prior Employment Act, will make the miners' action a direct challenge to the Tories' attempts to shackle the trade unions.

Threat

And from June 7 there is a possibility of industrial action on the railways over pay and closures.

The possibility of determined all-out strike action in the health service, linked to other struggles could provide a real threat to the Tories' attempt to drive down working class living standards.