

# A Socialist ACTION

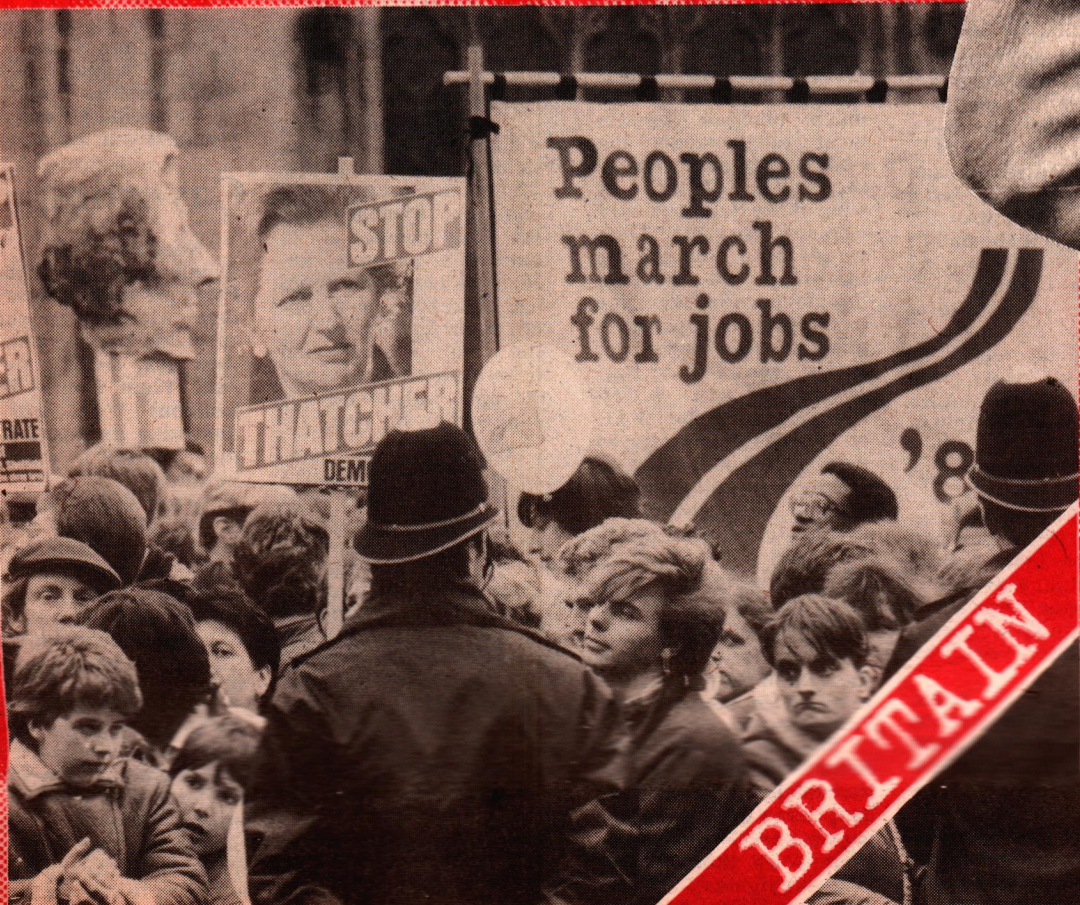
SOLIDARNOŚĆ

## Defend our unions

Katowice -- Workers unfurl Solidarnosc banner during papal mass.... thousands march through Warsaw chanting 'Solidarity'....

London -- New laws against unions announced in Queen's Speech.... miners leader Arthur Scargill has called for political strikes

WILL THE TUC ACT?



Santiago -- Copper miners call for new national strike for the release of union leader Rodolfo Seguel

POLAND

**MODERN TIMES**

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!  
"YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR..."

HiL

I told you not to let him near that Polish vodka, for chrissake!

Photo: JOHN HARRIS



## Labour leadership

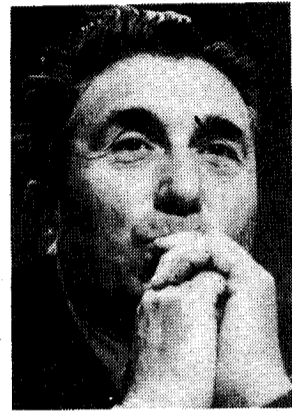
# Socialism or survival Chapple's choice

LABOUR'S LEADERSHIP election will be the first opportunity for the labour movement to draw out the lessons of the general election disaster.

The right-wing are already using their privileged access to the Tory press to put their message across: 'Labour's defeat was due to left-wing policies.'

Frank Chapple, chairman of the TUC and general secretary of the electrician's union has gone furthest, in the *Times*, where he argues that the choice is now between 'socialism' and 'survival'.

Hattersley, who like Shore, sets Labour's first priority as adopting SDP-type policies and expelling the left wing of the Party.



Frank Chapple

Photo: JOHN HARRIS

By Redmond O'Neill

It won't come as any surprise to learn that Chapple favours dropping socialism! He proposes that the unions do Norman Tebbit's work for him, by breaking from the Labour Party so that renegades like himself can freely call for a vote, not only for Labour, but also for the Social Democratic Party and Liberals.

In the Labour leadership contest Chapple favours support for the candidate he sees as most likely to eradicate 'socialism' within the Labour Party — Peter Shore.

Other right-wing trade union-leaders take a longer view. They recognise that Shore, along with Dennis Healey and Callaghan, is widely understood to have sabotaged Labour's election campaign by denouncing conference policies.

Led by the executive committee of the AUEW they are backing Hat-

terley's camp makes great play of the fact that a MORI poll indicates that most non-Labour voters would like to see him leading the Labour Party. In other words all those who would like the Labour Party to be more like the Alliance and Tories should vote for Hattersley!

him to their biennial conference this year.

The right wing's main argument against Kinnock is that he would preserve the status quo, simply continuing the failures of the Foot regime without Foot.

In fact the only difference between Foot and Kinnock is that Kinnock has already stated that he will take the Party further to the right: pursuing the witch hunts and dropping opposition to the EEC.

dinating Committee have already endorsed him.

Kinnock's 'party unity' will be of the sort that continues the witch hunt and discipline parties who refuse to go along. It will be of the sort of 'unity' that gives the right-wing immunity to attack Labour's conference policies and the left, but prevents the left from fighting back.

It will be 'unity' which allows the right to organise their forces for a renewed

### What worries the bureaucrats backing Kinnock is the continuation of war between the 'extremes' of the 'left' and 'right' within the Party

What worries the bureaucrats backing Kinnock is the continuation of war between the 'extremes' of the 'left' and 'right' within the Party.

What would the price of unity around Kinnock be? Kinnock himself has already made this clear. His backroom deal with Hattersley that both will stand for deputy leader effectively creates a 'centre-right' ticket for the leadership election.

offensive against democracy, policy and their supporters in the party.

The general election campaign itself gave a clear answer to those in the LCC, and some of the leaders of CLPD, who argue that our first priority should be 'unity'.

It was the Foot leadership who gave Healey, Hattersley and Shore pride of place in Labour's campaign.

It was Foot's refusal to defend party policy against Healey and Callaghan which the media exploited to say that Labour didn't know what its policies were.

### Appeal

Nonetheless many on the left risk being seduced by Kinnock's appeal for party unity. For example, the Scottish Labour Coord-



Eric Heffer

Photo: GM COOKSON

ination for them to unite their campaigns into a single left slate for the leadership. That slate should be endorsed and campaigned for by Benn and Scargill.

The backing of the campaign for Eric Heffer by CLPD is a welcome step forward.

Hattersley claims that democracy in the campaign will aid him. In fact his only major union backer is the AUEW where the membership has no say whatsoever in who the executive supports.

The left must campaign for the maximum involvement of the trade union membership in deciding how the union votes will be cast. That means Broad Lefts endorsing Heffer and Meacher and campaigning for special branch meetings to hear all sides and vote on candidates.

It means the final decision for the casting of the union's votes must lie with the sovereign bodies of the union — its conference.

In the constituencies it will be necessary to resist the pseudo-unity arguments in favour of Kinnock.

Of course, in the last resort, it may be necessary to back Kinnock to stop the right. But meanwhile it would be a massive retreat for the overwhelming majority of CLP's who in the past backed Benn to now give their first choice to Kinnock.

The right wing will be wanting to claim that this election marks the end of the 'Bennite left' in the Labour Party.

The maximum vote for Heffer and Meacher will be a demonstration that the right wing will be fought every step of the way.

It will prepare the ground for building a wing of the Labour Party which through the struggles against the Tory government can prove that only the left can rebuild Labour's support.

## Model resolutions for Labour Party conference

### Women's organisation within the party

THIS CLP notes the effects of privatisation and members of the NEC's Women's Division be women, they should also represent women and be accountable to them.

Further, conference notes that the Women's Division of the NEC is the only one not directly elected by its section — women — a privilege long conceded to the trade unions, the socialist societies and the Young Socialists.

Conference therefore resolves that the Women's Division of the NEC should be elected by the National Conference of Labour Women. Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to draft amendments to the Labour Party's constitution and Standing Orders, incorporating this principle, and to submit these amendments for approval by conference no later than October 1984.

(This resolution is supported by the CLPD Women's Action Committee).

### Abortion

THIS CLP notes the effects of privatisation and the cutbacks in NHS facilities on women's access to safe, free abortions on the NHS. We note the boost that the election of the Tory government has given to the right-wing 'Moral Majority' in organisations like LIFE and SPUC to launch attacks on women's freedom of choice over the termination of her pregnancy.

We also note the mobilisations of similar organisations in Ireland, Spain and the USA. As the economic crisis drives women out of the workforce we believe that these organisations will step up their campaigns for restrictive legislation.

This conference reaffirms its commitment to a free and comprehensive abortion service available on request, through the National Health Service.

We pledge to campaign for a statutory duty on the NHS to provide adequate abortion facilities in all areas and for an end to all legislation which restricts a woman's right to choose.

In the light of conference and TUC policy on this issue we note with alarm the clause referring to abortion in Labour's Manifesto which simply talks of 'defending women's existing right of choice'. Such a backdown by the NEC on women's rights will not win women's votes away from the SDP/Liberal Alliance.

This conference therefore resolves to censure the NEC for misrepresenting conference policies and betraying the demands of women in its 1983 manifesto on this topic.

# Women ignored — WAC fight back!



Jo Richardson

Photo: SOCIALIST ACTION

IN THE FRANTIC flurry to line up trade union votes in the Labour Party leadership stakes women have once again been swept aside. Masculine ego knows best especially when it comes to 'political credibility' and their own political careers.

Jo Richardson might have stood (for deputy) if this potent combination hadn't made itself so thoroughly felt in such true courteous and brotherly fashion — 'well, ... Jo really isn't very well ... and ...'

In the two or three days of furious discussion about the left's candidates not one man raised his voice in unequivocal enthusiasm for Richardson's candidature — it was an hedged round with ifs and buts.

Feminists in the party fought a desperate rear-guard action against the weight of the brotherly advice as they saw their one chance of having a real

voice in a party campaign being taken — oh-so-gently — from them.

It is perfectly true that Jo Richardson suffers from arthritis. But a pro-

liferation of other Labour Party notables aren't 100 per cent fit either — including Tony Benn — and they don't incur patronising worry about their capabilities.

By Sarah Roelofs, Islington South CLP WAC representative, personal capacity

It is also perfectly true that Jo Richardson has not had ministerial experience — but neither has odds-on-nice-guy Kinnock. Moreover, Jo Richardson would have had ministerial experience (necessary for women only) if she hadn't consistently supported Tony Benn in the deputy-leadership contest three years ago.

Instead it was Joan Lester who was given responsibility for women in the Shadow Cabinet, despite Jo's better record on campaigning for women's rights.

Organised through the Women's Action Committee feminists in the Labour Party would have run a very different leadership campaign to the presidential style ones currently on offer.

For a start it would have been led by women and it would have been collective and democratic involving everyone who wished to participate. It would have focussed on policies and not on one individual.

This would have meant it was unnecessary for Jo herself to go rushing

around the country fulfilling all the speaking engagements herself. Women on her campaign committee could have spoken on her behalf. And both the left and feminists would have had a candidate they really believed in, really supported and could really campaign for.

Far from the left wing seizing an opportunity to promote a woman candidate, and put flesh on their much talked-of commitment to women's liberation they have allowed the right to be the only wing of the Party to field a woman. Gwyneth Dunwoody who, though she has supported the National Abortion Campaign in the past, is opposed to positive action for women.

At last year's Labour Party Conference she vociferously opposed the WAC resolutions for increased democracy for women in the party arguing the infamous 'I-got-here-on-my-own-merit's' line.

### Colours

These are Dunwoody's true colours for she is on the right of the party and is standing in tandem with Peter Shore.

Even worse, the only Bennite candidate for the leadership, Eric Heffer, happens to have one glaring weakness — you guessed it — on abortion and women's rights.

It was Heffer who was responsible for the removal of Party policy of

abortion on request from the manifesto. Feminists will have no option but to vote for Heffer through loyalty to the left and feeling that they at least stand a better chance under the rest of his policies, but women are becoming very tired of being ignored by the left in the party when it comes to crunch issues like leadership elections.

### Pink

This only leaves Michael Meacher of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee. Meacher took very little persuading to stand by as a deputy candidate while his colleagues were expressing deep concern about Jo Richardson. And no sooner had Richardson declined than our pink knight was — plop! — into the ring.

While Meacher is certainly the best feminists have got — he at least gives verbal support to women's rights — we've known his ilk of old. In practical campaigning and fighting terms such 'support' usually amounts to the merest tokenism. Moreover, Meacher is a prominent LCC member and the LCC — bless their pale pink socks — aren't even supporting Heffer for the leadership, but Kinnock instead.

One further point should be made about this debacle. This concerns slates for the NEC elections. Some time ago Frances Morrell, a leading

member of WAC, was persuaded to stand for a second time for the Women's Section. Now she is suddenly dropped from the LCC/CLPD slate.

Apparently the likes of LCC member Peter Hain and CLPD's Victor Schonfield were a trifle worried by Morrell's principled opposition to CLPD's support for a 'witch-hunting' register. So principled socialist-feminists watch out!

### Cavorting

Needless to say feminists in the Labour Party are finding their patience with such masculine cavorting running out. At their next meeting on 25 June (11am, County Hall, London) WAC will be discussing its position on the whole wretched business.

What seems clear now is that WAC will not be throwing its campaigning strength behind any of the leadership candidates, but will be working out ways to consolidate its rank and file support among women in the party.

One proposal is that the WAC demand for at least one woman on parliamentary short-lists be changed to insist on all woman short-lists. Such radical thinking indicates feminists increasing determination to make a more-resolute-than-Thatcher stand within the Labour Party.

# The return of hanging?

ONE OF the first results of the big Tory majority in the new parliament is that the return of hanging is being openly discussed.

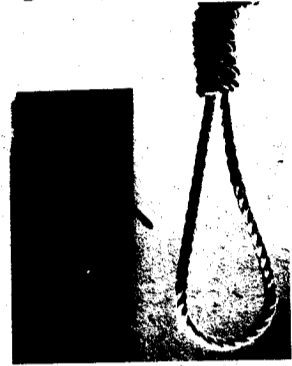
Right wing Tory MP Teddy Taylor is busy organising in the House of Commons to try to get a vote on hanging before Christmas.

In the last parliament the attempt to reintroduce capital punishment was defeated, but only because of the overwhelming vote of the opposition benches against it.

Well known socialists like Aneurin Bevan and Stafford Cripps abstained. Eventually the House of Lords refused to sanction abolition, and Attlee's government declined to take matters further.

The final abolition of all hanging, except for war time military offences, was in 1969. Between 1961 executions were only carried out for certain types of murder — by shooting, killing of a policeman and so forth. But since that time the neanderthal section of the Tory party has consistently campaigned for reintroduction.

This time round Teddy



While only about ten MPs from Labour and the Alliance voted for hanging, more than two thirds of the Tories did so.

Among the Tory hangers were, naturally the prime minister and other leaders of the party. Now that there are twice as many Tory MPs as Labour MPs, a free vote on hanging is liable to give a very different result.

The first vote in the House of Commons against capital punishment was in 1948, a reflection of the large majority of Labour MPs after the 1945



Taylor and his friends claim that they have a majority for hanging 'if the issue is posed in the right



Pro-capital punishment students greeting recent execution in Texas

way'. In other words, they will first go for a vote in favour of hanging for crimes of 'terrorism' and the killing of police officers and prison warders, and the use of firearms.

There is one massive problem for their plans. If 'crimes of terrorism' and the use of firearms is to be the criterion, then the first victims of the reintroduction of capital punishment are likely to be Irish

Republicans. The hanging of Republicans would lead to an enormous outcry in Ireland, both north and south of the border. It is difficult to see how any British government would dare to risk the scale of disorders which would follow the execution of Irish freedom fighters.

But this kind of objection might not hold much

sway with the Tory back-benchers who scent blood. A free vote might yet result in victory for them.

Recent Supreme Court decisions in the United States have resulted in a spate of executions, as the long term prisoners in death row go to their deaths, one by one. Various forms of execution have been used in different states — the electric chair, gassing, shooting by

firing squad and in one case a lethal injection. But no form of execution is 'humane'.

Britain's own long-perfected hanging technique has resulted in numerous cases of decapitation and slow strangulation. The fact that so many Tory MPs are seriously prepared to countenance a return to this barbarism is a sure indicator of the social reaction the Tories have set in

motion. The maintenance of capital punishment is an indication of the lack of civilisation of a society.

Any chance of its reintroduction in Britain would be an enormous step backwards. That's why if the hanging lobby looks at all likely to get its way, the whole of the labour and socialist movement must exert every effort to build a gigantic movement to stop it

# Queen's speech: Tories unveil 'secret agenda'

THATCHER SAID she needed 'a second, and maybe third' term of office to complete her programme. The package of legislation being served up in this week's Queens Speech at the state opening of parliament makes it clear that the Tories aim to use this period of government to strike a decisive blow at the workers movement to strengthen policy and judicial powers and to weaken the state sector of the economy.

Norman Tebbit will bring forward more trade union legislation. While the more extreme idea of ending union funding of the Labour Party altogether is being dropped, measures very dangerous to the Labour movement are being introduced.

Ballots will have to be held every ten years or so on whether the union should have a political fund to help finance Labour. The Tories will try to ensure that a 'contracting in' system of political levies is introduced.

These measures could lead either to whole unions having to drop affiliation to the Labour Party, or to a big reduction in the number of members paying the political levy. Either way, the plan aims to strike a body blow at the financing of the Labour Party.



Police powers will make it easier to scab on strikes

Other items of trade union legislation will include compulsory ballots for strikes and an attack on the closed shop.

Measures need to be taken from the previous parliament are the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill and

the plans to privatise British Telecoms.

The Police Bill is the most fundamental attack on democratic rights since the war. Its provisions would give the police

into buildings; the ability to hold suspects in police stations for up to four days and deny suspects a solicitor for 48 hours.

up road blocks for as long as they want, even isolating whole communities if they think a crime is about to be committed.

tion and search, including the age-old right of *habeus corpus*.

If this were not bad enough following the passage of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill...

ed, which will be even more repressive. The Jellicoe Report suggested new restrictions on the right to demonstrate as well.

A rapid confrontation with the Post Office Engineers' Union will develop as the Tories push forward their privatisation plan. As reported on page 15, POEU members have been sent home already for refusing to link up the state system with the private Mercury system.

The offensive against the nationalised industries will be extended to include private ownership of British Airways and parts of the National Bus Company, in a first step towards privatisation of any part of the transport system which might be profitable. A new Housing Bill will be introduced as a further attack on council housing.

Much of this programme was not contained in the Tory manifesto. With just 42 per cent of the vote, Thatcher has no mandate to launch this fundamental attack on the workers movement and civil liberties. Labour movement resistance must include an immediate campaign against the police bill and support for POEU resistance to privatisation.

Respectable parliamentary resistance will not be enough to stop these measures. Only the Labour and Trade Union movement can do this.

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)



# Scotland the grave?

IF YOU ARE speaking about who can speak for Scotland we have as strong a claim as anyone' says George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland. 'We have a wider spread of our members than any other party'.

But, the Scottish Tories are the only significant party with absolutely no right to speak on behalf of the Scottish people.

In 1979 916,000 Scots voted Tory. They won 22 Scottish seats. Despite the relentless media pressure for a Tory victory their 1983 vote dropped by nearly 500,000.

But Labour's vote dropped by more than 500,000 to 969,000 giving them 41 seats, a decline since 1979 of three seats.

The real victors of the 1983 election in Scotland, are the SNP/Liberal Alliance.

Contrary to the expectations of many spectators, the Alliance made spectacular advances in Scotland. In 1979 the Liberal vote was 255,000. In 1983 the Alliance scored nearly 700,000 votes. This put them 275,000 behind Labour and 120,000 behind the Tories.

by Brian Heron

Whereas the Alliance scored 11.8 per cent better than the Liberals in the 1979 election across the United Kingdom, in Scotland the improvement was by 15.8 per cent. From three Scottish seats they jumped to eight.

For a long time observers of Scottish politics have believed that the deeper class polarisation at a social level in Scotland could be equated with a weak performance for the Alliance. This has proven to be utterly false.

Another argument was that the existence of the SNP left no room for an expansion of the Alliance.

In 1979 the SNP polled 300,000 votes. In 1983 they polled just over 330,000 votes — a decline of 5.5 per cent from 17.3 per cent. They retained two seats.

Jim Sillars, erstwhile darling of the nationalist left, reflects the disarray in the nationalist camp. His latest battle for the rights of Scotland to an Assembly and the rights of socialists in the SNP is to be conducted from a two-man management consultancy post in Saudi Arabia. He was policy vice chair of the SNP.

Account must be taken of the growing realisation among Scottish Labour voters that their vote could not produce a Labour government at Westminster.

Nevertheless, an eve of poll attitude survey conducted by the Scotsman indicated that 66 per cent of

Labour voters, who maintained their commitment to the part understood that Labour could not win nationally.

There are deeper processes at work than tactical voting against the Tories. The Hillhead result alone confirms this view. Jenkins, after a lacklustre campaign won by just over 1,000 votes, in what was estimated to be a Labour seat, with a popular Labour candidate.

The reality is that the Alliance took a large number of votes from Labour, which suffered a 7.2 per cent decline in its share of the poll since 1979, more than any other party in Scotland. To do as well as it did, the Alliance had to be the overwhelmingly most important recipient of that Labour decline.

The 2.3 per cent decline in the Tories Scottish vote and the 5.5 per cent decline in the SNP vote taken together, and assuming that they all went to the SNP, still leaves half the SNP increase in votes unaccounted for. The fact is that the proletarian majority of Scotland politically split in its allegiance, like its English counterparts, but to a considerably lesser degree.

## Come

Labour in Scotland won 34.3 per cent of the popular vote; that is exactly 5 per cent more than Labour won across the U.K. This was enough to give Labour 41 of the 72 Scottish seats. The vast majority of those seats were concentrated in the West of Scotland's misnamed industrial belt. Glasgow and Liverpool were the only major cities in the country not to return Tory MPs.

But it is the decline of the Tory vote (double the drop in the U.K. as a whole) and the national victory for the Tories



SNP Conference now the labour movement will lead fight for devolution.

which now underscores the prospects for Scottish Labour.

As the election drew closer leading officials of the Scottish Labour Party predicted a divergence between north and south of the border. To that end, the commitment to the fight for a Scottish Assembly was renewed.

Labour leader, George Galloway, called for a Labour Movement Assembly to initiate the fight with Westminster following the election.

## Deeper

There is no doubt that the overt commitment to an Assembly by the Alliance aided their Scottish operation.

The chairperson of the SNP, William Wilson, has already written to the LP and the Alliance asking for co-ordination in the campaign for an Assembly, and Scottish Labour MP's met this week to discuss Labour's campaign against Westminster.

Exactly the same strains on the Labour Party nationally produced by the split in political allegiance of the labour movement are becoming rapidly apparent on the Assembly issue.

That is why it is necessary to give a detailed and scrupulous account of the results of the election in Scotland — avoiding all

triumphant and over-optimistic analysis.

Literally within hours of the election a split was opening up in the Scottish Labour's parliamentary leadership.

Bruce Millan, Labour's uninspiring shadow Scottish Secretary, believes, according to the Glasgow Herald, that the 'road to devolution is strewn with glass'.

The inevitable weakness of a parliamentary campaign unavoidably raises the importance of an extra-parliamentary campaign for the Assembly. It is in this area where the Labour Party desperately requires an early Scottish initiative.

It is in this field, with the popular support that the Labour Party has together with its intimate links with the Scottish TUC that an early and decisive break can and would be made with those in the Labour Party who seek to make political and even organisational concessions to the Alliance.

## Argument

Extra-parliamentary action (inevitably involving the political strikes called for by Scargill) is the touchstone for those who seek to defend class independence in the struggle for an Assembly.

The fight for an Assembly will come from the organised labour

movement in Scotland or it will come from nowhere.

The slump in the SNP's vote does not indicate the lack of support for this project but rather the realistic feeling that only the labour movement in Scotland can deliver.

Forces outside the Labour Party and the trade unions in Scotland (like the Scottish Socialist Society) can enter important debates; but first must decide where it must concentrate its efforts.

## Drew

It is the right wing of the Scottish labour movement that will use any 'honest brokerage' on offer between the parties in Scotland.

They will use it to break the back of the independent mass action campaign which must be fought for and launched by the Scottish Labour Party and trade unions.

Today the issue is to organise the forces at the base of the labour movement who want to launch that fight. It is the relationship of forces there which will determine how far the Assembly is used as the watchword of the battle against Thatcher; and how far its powers will ultimately extend should it be wrung from the hands of the ruling class.

We must start now; Thatcher has no mandate in Scotland.

# IRELAND UNFREE



## What next for Prior's Assembly?

THE FUTURE of the Northern Ireland Assembly, James Prior's brainchild, has not been aided by the election results in the six counties.

The Assembly was first thought of at the closing stages of the H-block hunger strike. It was the 'Irish dimension' that Prior could use to sell the idea he was doing something more for the future of Ireland than allowing its youth to starve to death.

With the decline of the H-block movement, it started to resemble an attempt to give unimpeded Loyalist rule in the North a democratic facade. The Council of Ireland mooted in the original plans dropped from sight and only the Dublin government persisted.

The 1982 elections to the Assembly gave a massive spur to the Democratic Unionist Party of Ian Paisley who demanded the Assembly be given full powers to administer the affairs of the province and bring back the hated Stormont parliament that fell in 1973.

The Official Unionist Party, tied more closely to the old Tory traditions of integration into the United Kingdom, slipped in the ratings.

In the same elections the success of Sinn Fein, joining the electoral arena for the first time since the troops went in, contributed to the continuing decline of the Social Democratic and Labour Party who had lost any direction but collaboration. So successful was Sinn Fein, they managed to hold the line on a nationalist abstention from the sham Assembly.

The failure of the Assembly even to hold together the Loyalist camp is seen from the results of the Westminster elections where parties most closely identified with collaboration with the British declined, and those wanting a fight went up.

This was the secret of Paisley's rise and he will not be slow to reassume his bombastic mantle accordingly.



Enoch Powell, Official Unionist candidate, scraped home in elections.

It was expected that the failure of the Assembly would put Prior's head on the chopping block when Thatcher was demonstrating the art of butchery as applied to the Cabinet. But the 'super wet' is still there.

This can only mean one thing. Thatcher has in mind a massive strengthening of the state apparatus in Britain to push ahead with attacks on the unions and Labour Party, on the welfare state and on blacks. She is going to prepare the ground for that by more repression in Ireland which will impose a powerful loyalist Assembly.

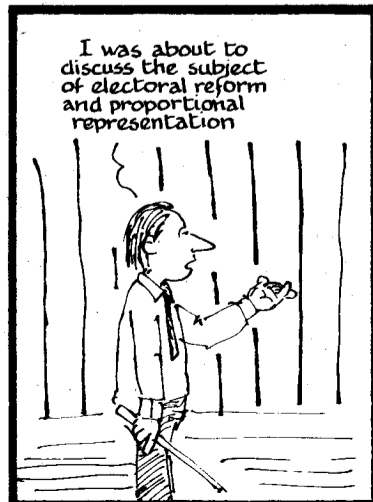
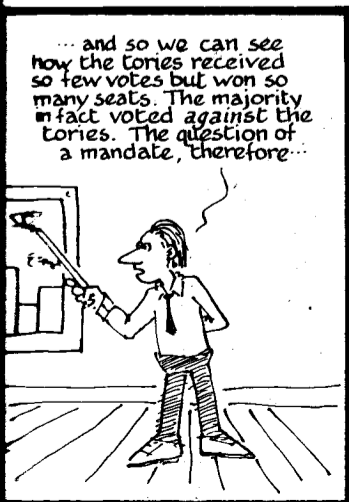
The failure of the Dublin government's attempt to boost the SDLP vote in the elections by setting up an 'all Ireland Forum' that excluded Sinn Fein shows that the Southern government cannot easily halt the rise of militant revolutionary nationalism.

Further 'softening up' of the minority spearheaded by the military in an attempt to reunify the loyalists is the prospect for the coming year. British Labour must say clearly it gives no credibility to the fake Assembly set up in the gerrymandered six-county state in the North.

## A PIECE OF THE ACTION



by GORMAC #15 6/83







## The Women's Movement response

AS MELANIE PHILLIPS pointed out in an article in *The Guardian* the day before the general election, the women's movement has always found Mrs Thatcher rather difficult to handle.

Images of the 'Iron Maiden' apart, what really underlies the difficulty is that the women's movement over the last ten years has tried to steer clear of 'male politics' and concentrate instead on women's issues.

This was always difficult because, although unity can be achieved among women around the struggles and demands of women — abortion, contraception, equal pay and education and so on — more and more women have been forced to link these to the broader question of what kind of economic and social strategy will achieve them.

By Valerie Coultas

So we have seen women joining political parties of the left, particularly the Labour Party has recently had a big influx of feminist women into its ranks.

Outwrite, unequivocal as usual, came out with a clear line. 'Because the thought of another Thatcher government fills us with absolute horror, those of us who can will be voting Labour on Polling Day'.

They then listed their reasons. Tory attitudes on disarmament, racism, health care, law and order, unemployment, the 'family', education and homelessness all being reasons to vote against the Tories and for Labour.

The Rights of Women (ROW) collective, at a press conference called to discuss women's issues in the election, took a different view.

Their pamphlet *Women Fight the Tories* carried detailed information specifying what four years of Tory rule had meant for women, laying this information out in the context of the seven demands.

'Another five years could prove disastrous', they argue. 'They are putting us out of paid jobs, cutting the welfare services and threatening to restrict us to "our place" in the home. The Tories view women as a nation of housekeepers.'

But Jenny Earl, speaking for the ROW collective, said that they couldn't agree on calling for a Labour vote. She suggested that women should vote against the

Tories but that each candidate should be judged locally on women's issues because neither of the other groupings had a brilliant record on women.

The press conference turned into a lively forum for debate at this point. One of the women from Channel 4's *Broadside* suggested that the Labour Party had far more to say in its manifesto on women — calling for increases in child benefits, positive action programmes, the establishment of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value — than any of the other parties.

It was pointed out that there were women standing from both the SDP and the Labour Party who could legitimately claim the title feminist and that this was a crucial decision for women because their votes could make the difference between a coalition or a Labour government.

Shirley Williams, some one added in, is anti-abortion. But still the representatives were not to be budged, one or two women said they would personally be voting Labour but they felt that it was up to women to decide.

Asked about the Tory manifesto commitment to ban videos the issue was left aside because no woman from Women Against Violence Against Women was present.

*Spare Rib* played it much safer than this and said absolutely nothing. Nothing about a government being returned to power that will create more poverty, unemployment and unhappiness for women than we have experienced for decades.

It's about time the feminist press became more political and stuck its neck out against both blue and pink Tories. It'll have to if Maggie stays in power for another five years.

Another action around issues shouldn't mean the smothering of political views within the women's movement. Abstaining on giving your opinion nowadays is an invitation to tactical voting.

# What happened to women in the election?

ONE THING is certain — they didn't get into parliament. The election has resulted in precisely 23 women MPs, just one more than in 1979. If women hadn't already realised the degree to which they are excluded from political life in Britain, this result will tell them in no uncertain terms.

But whether women got into parliament or not, the labour movement has to learn some urgent lessons from the way that they voted.

What appears to be the most reliable survey of women's voting patterns the BBC's poll, analysed by Ivor Crewe in *The Guardian* last week.

By Jude Woodward

This demonstrated two important facts. One, for the first time since women have had the vote, more men voted for the Tory Party than women. But secondly that the women who stopped voting Tory are being won to the Alliance and not to the Labour Party. More women than men voted for the Alliance. How should we understand this result?

The decline of the Tories' support among women is the continuation of a long term trend. After the first world war the Tory Party established a firm base of support among women. The fact that a Tory government gave women the vote cannot have been an insignificant factor in this.

When the overwhelming majority of women didn't work, weren't organised in trade unions, and were isolated in the home it was not surprising that the Tory Party's values of law and order, family life and 'stability' should have had more sway among women.

Since the second world war all this has begun to change decisively. The massive entry of women into the workforce has altered the shape of the labour movement. In the early seventies membership of trade unions was maintained and increased as a direct result of the new unionisation of millions of women.

## Care

The welfare state has benefited women in particular, relieving women of sole responsibility for the care of the young, the sick and the elderly. The rise of the women's liberation movement as a direct result of these factors acted to deepen the consciousness among women that they have rights too, and that change is in their interests.

Today women are turning away from the Party which threatens to remove these rights and at a faster rate than men.

It is this historic shift in the political loyalties of millions of women which is reflected in the increasingly assertive and radical role of women within the labour movement.

The role of women in the fight against the missiles at Greenham Common, the radicalism of the Labour Party women's conference and the increasing pressure of women on the unions to take up and defend their hard won rights, are all examples of this.

But these women have not yet succeeded in forcing the leadership of the labour movement to itself champion the cause of women. That is why the ruling class has been able to present the SDP/Alliance as an alternative pole for those women breaking from the Tory Party.

The SDP was launched with much trumpeting about women. Shirley Williams was able to present herself as the tribune of a very definite layer of women: the journalists, teachers, lawyers and newscasters, tinged with feminism as they fought to get on in a man's world. Polly Toynbee, *Guardian* women's editor stood for them in the election. The SDP was the only party to insist that a woman had to be included on the shortlist for the selection of every parliamentary candidate.

On this basis they made a special appeal to women, that at last there was a party that put women first. The voting shows their success.

## Promote

What about the Labour Party? It did promote more women candidates than in previous elections but in Tory or marginal seats. It promoted policies on women, but it didn't see them as electorally important.

The Labour Party has to catch up with the times. The ranks of the labour movement still believe that women vote Tory; that women got Thatcher in, that women break strikes, that women are a lost cause.

Over the next months women in the labour movement have to bring home to the Labour Party and trade union leaderships that fighting for women is not some added extra. It is a life or death question for defending and rebuilding the labour movement.

The Tories have got Thatcher. The Alliance has got Shirley Williams. The CLPD's Women's Action Committee wanted the left to back Jo Richardson for deputy leader of the Labour Party. That would have been a good start. It is not the answer but it does show you are serious.

So would fighting for the democratic reforms demand by the Labour Women's Conference.

The labour movement has to stand up for women. Only with the backing of the labour movement can the fight be won at Greenham Common.

The stakes are high. We have to accept it's largely down to women. We have to fight to bring the Labour Party into the nineteen eighties.



Less women than ever are supporting the Tories



## Red, white or pink?

WHILE on the subject of electing women, the battle for the leadership cannot be giving anyone much cause for celebration, least of all women.

Choosing between Shore and Hattersley is as much as agonising over Omo or Persil. And if you don't fancy the white right, how about Kinnock for a pink tint — the sort that washes out after a single application?

But all is not lost for the left, Eric Heffer has entered the fray. Hang on though, isn't Eric the one who ensured that the Labour Party's position on abortion was deleted from the manifesto at the National Executive?

Compiled by HILARY DRIVER. Send contributions to 'Male Order' Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday a week prior to publication.

## Leading lady

BUT why are there no women candidates standing for the left? A rumour is circulating the Labour left in London that is a sorry tale.

Once upon a time (not so many days ago) an informal meeting of the left took place to discuss who should stand for leader and deputy leader.

Jo Richardson was proposed as a candidate for deputy leader, but expressed some doubts as to whether she was up to it. Michael Meacher

chivalrously leapt up and proclaimed 'I can do that. Gissa a job!' But Michael is not the villain of this tale.

The editor of a well-known weekly Labour paper (not *Labour Weekly*) is reputed to have vehemently opposed Jo standing, on the grounds that, being a woman, she wouldn't be supported by the unions.

Positive action is alive and dead! It would appear the fight will have to be won over the bodies of some of our 'comrades' on the left.

## Bright on the horizon!

ONE practical way of fighting back is to get as many left women delegates to the Conference as possible, and it's not too late to organise to get an additional CLP woman's delegate to Conference. Written details must be sent in by 5 August, and it will involve some work, so share it around.

What you need to find out is the number of individual women members, plus the number of women in all affiliated organisations (ie trade unions, socialist societies, Co-op etc), who are resident in your constituency.

Written evidence (presumably a letter from officer of affiliated body) is necessary, and it

has to be based on 1982 figures.

If the total number of women comes to 1500 or more you've got your woman delegate who can be elected at the same time as your 'regular' delegate (who can also be a woman, of course). Get in touch with your CLP secretary for details.

## Bad form

LABOUR had a section of its manifesto devoted to women's rights and although not the full programme we'd like to see, it was way above the other two main parties in this respect.

Unfortunately, not much of it filtered through in the national campaign, although some local parties produced very good material. However, it

seems the question of women's oppression still hasn't penetrated the hearts and minds of the Party bureaucracy who produce guidelines and instructions for the local parties.

'Form O' is a summary of election offences which many readers will have seen displayed in committee rooms on 9 June. It explains that the election of .... for this constituency will be rendered VOID if any of his assistants commits any of the following offences.

And 'Form L' instructs polling agents that *The Election Agent or Sub-Agent will indicate those sections to which he desires the Polling Agent to give attention, and will delete such as he may wish not to apply.*



# WORLD IN ACTION

## Pope pleads for peace

IN HIS VISIT to Poland the Pope has been urging the Polish people to have patience. His speeches have been void of any appeal for the lifting of martial law.

In this he has followed the line of Cardinal Glemp who has attacked mass mobilisations such as those which took place around May Day this year.

Nevertheless the occasion of the Pope's visit has been used by Polish workers to relaunch street demonstrations.

After the Pope's first church service, thousands of Poles marched through Warsaw chanting 'Solidarity'.

Meanwhile Lech Walesa remains under virtual house arrest under surveillance by three security police 24 hours a day 'for his own protection'.

## Afghan talks enter new round

TALKS between Afghani and Pakistani negotiators in Geneva have begun with the objective of finding a settlement for the ongoing war in the region.

Points on the agenda include a timetable for the withdrawal of the 100,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, conditions for the return of the three million Afghan refugees and guarantees of non-interference by other countries.

While little progress is expected from the talks, it is an indication of the lack of military success by the Soviet Union in the fighting against the rightist guerilla forces that they are happening at all.



Li Xiannian and Zhao Ziyang

## Another president, another congress

ANOTHER unanimous election for President took place at another Peoples Congress last week.

Li Xiannian the former minister of finance took over the largely ceremonial position of Chinese President once held by Mao Tse-

## Another landslide victory

TO NOBODY'S surprise Yuri Andropov was unanimously elected President of the Soviet Union adding the title to that of general secretary of the CPSU.

A nice twist was given the occasion by having it proposed by Andropov's previous chief rival, Konstantin Chernenko.

At the same meeting the Supreme Soviet mandated its negotiators to put forward the idea of a nuclear freeze to the USA, Britain, France and China.

## Moi's amnesty ruse

DESPITE the announcement made by President Moi of Kenya on 1 June that he had released 8,463 prisoners including 22 'detainees', so far no person officially detained without trial has been released.

Kenya has one of the highest prison populations in the world. The release of 8,000 prisoners out of a total of 132,000 at the last count, was intended to reduce prison running costs rather than releasing political detainees.

The Kenyan government has so far refused to meet world-wide demands for the release of intellectuals and other political prisoners.

Copies of demands to the Kenyan government that they should do so should be sent to Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya, 76 Stroud Green Road, London N4 3EN (01-272 4889).

tung's rival Liu Shaohui.

The election will make no difference to the four and a half year rule of Deng Xiaoping, 78, the leader of the 'reform' faction of the Chinese bureaucracy.

Deng has claimed credit for the 32.6 per cent growth in output achieved in that time.

But in a prime-ministerial address Zhao Ziyang explained that inefficient industries will face shut down or amalgamation in an effort to overcome a £4 billion 1982 budget deficit.

# New strikes threaten Pinochet

CHILEAN COPPER MINERS started an illegal strike last week to demand the release of the jailed president of their union. The arrest of Rudolfo Segel came after a national day of protest on Tuesday 14 June which ended in clashes between demonstrators and police.

The protest, like that of 11 May, was called by the copper union and four trade union federations. The strikes pose a new threat to General Pinochet's regime presiding over a deep economic crisis.

The events of 11 May had been preceded by mass demonstrations in March, where to shouts of 'Pinochet murderer' and 'Jobs, bread, justice and freedom' hundreds of people demonstrated in Santiago, Valparaiso and Concepcion. There were violent clashes between demonstrators and the police helped by right wing civilian gangs, with the result of more than 350 arrests.

By Colin Stevens

The events of 11 May showed unquestionably that the repositioning of the Chilean workers movement is under way. This qualitative new situation, we hope, will help dispel the many illusions spread by the Popular Unity parties, illusions to which many exiles have fallen pray.

All dreams that the junta would collapse by its own internal contradictions, that it would be removed by the US government because of international public opinion difficulties, or that it would be removed by a coalition of bourgeois oppositionist parties and 'democratic' generals ought to be forgotten.

Experience has shown that only the workers movement has the social coherence and homogeneity to fight Pinochet. The organised working class has shown that it is the only social force capable of giving leadership for everybody else in the struggle to rid the country of the present government.

## Process

The process of working class repositioning goes back to 1976-80 when the first mobilisations took place around mass redundancies, elementary union rights, factory closures, etc. All this happened within the restrictive framework of the Labour Plan imposed by the military junta regulating the operation and activities of unions.

At that time some strikes took place mainly in proletarian strongholds like the steel and mining industries. Since 1980 the movement, always struggling, has engaged in a process of trade union reorganisation.

The process of reorganisation is still fragmentary and uneven. The reasons are not hard to imagine: the multiplicity of unions sanctified by the Labour Plan and wholeheartedly encouraged by the authorities through their agents in the workers movement — plus ten years of unrestrained repression — have brought about dispersion and disunity. Yet the underlying trend of trade unionism at the shop floor level is one of increasing militancy.

In the Chilean context

it is extremely difficult for any union in isolation to engage in a direct confrontation with their bosses, because that also means a direct confrontation with the government. Hence the need to organise solidarity campaigns and activities to support the workers in struggle. And this has been precisely the pattern of development in several localities especially in the capital Santiago and other cities with large proletarian concentrations.

Witness to these developments are the proliferation of 'zonal coordinations' which embrace unions, neighbourhood committees, women's commissions, committees of the unemployed, community associations, youth committees, relatives of political prisoners and the homeless. The backbone that keeps these coordinations together is in most cases the body of union delegates from the factories in the vicinity. These structures provide strike funds, medical attention, legal advice and training.

## Proliferation

These structures stem from the *cordones industriales* experience that the working class went through during the years 1972-73. The most clear indication of that is the geographical location of these bodies. For example in Santiago, Vicuna Mackenna, Cerrillos, Maipu, Santa Rosa, Panamericana Norte, Estacion Central, Recoleta, are all *barrios* that witnessed the emergence and development of *cordones* at the height of the class conflict under Allende.

However advanced these local initiatives may be, their localism precludes their further political and organisational development. Their local existence makes them more vulnerable to repression and limits their horizon. It follows that the central question the Chilean working class faces is the organisation of a single national united trade union.

## Pressure

There are several so called 'national' trade unions. Bodies such as the CNS, FUT, UDT and others claim to represent the trade union movement. But these claims are empty boasts. It is no exaggeration to say that these bodies have no links whatsoever with the local organisations of struggle. The thrust of their strategy is to extract minor concessions from the junta through pressure-politics.

This explains for example the 'Social Pact' proposed by the CNS to the dictatorship (a proposal endorsed by the other groups), it also explains the appeal for a broad oppositionist front made by



Ten years ago the people mobilised against the right wing threat to the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende

Tucapel Jimenes (president of the Civil Service union) before he was murdered by the secret police. Not a single strike has taken place since the beginnings of the repositioning in 1976 which has been led or materially supported by any of these groupings.

They represent mere superstructures set up by the reformist parties linked to Popular Unity and by the Christian Democrats. Their lack of a rank and file implantation is explained by the politics of these parties. They all put forward class collaborationist policies that would make even the most right wing European social democrat blush.

Basically, they propose the setting up of a 'broad alliance' comprising Communists, Socialists, Christian Democrats, the extremely reactionary southern landowners — victims of the monetarist policies of the government.

Also proposed for the alliance are Generals like Gustavo Leigh, (a member of the first military junta until 1977 when he was dismissed by Pinochet), most of the National party (the party of landowners and Chilean oligarchy) now very dissatisfied with the economic recession, Leon Vilarin and Rafael

Cumsille (the first leaders of the truckworkers and the second leader of the retailers' association) both ill-famed for their instrumental role in creating the conditions for the overthrow of Allende, and other prominent industrialists.

Of course, the political independence of the working class would be totally submerged in such a front, which would be dominated by its bourgeois segments.

## Parties

In summary, the parties responsible for the 1973 defeat are totally handicapped in providing the basis, let alone leading, any process of trade union unity. The unity of the trade union movement is an essential ingredient of any vigorous and real repositioning, cannot be solved by any aggregation of these superstructures.

Any national reorganisation of the workers' movement, if it is to be meaningful at all and if the interests of the working class and oppressed are not to be betrayed again, must come from below and be established on a totally new basis.

No bureaucratic agreement at the summit can

substitute for the necessary profound debate and widest participation of the working class through their elected representatives.

This national debate must end up electing delegates from all over the country who will meet in a National Constituent Assembly of trade unions, where the workers will provide themselves with democratic structures, elected and representative leaders, a programme of struggle which includes demands for the restoration of all democratic rights, economic demands, and the way to achieve the overthrowing of the dictatorship.

This programme is the only way forward and the only means to attract other layers of unorganised workers up and down the country.

The task is difficult and there is much to be done, but this is the analysis that informs the practice of Chilean revolutionary socialists.

1. *Popular Unity*: the alliance of parties which led the 1970-3 Allende government. Dominated by the Socialist and Communist Parties.
2. *Cordones industriales*: workers committees of a proto-soviet character which grew up in the workers areas during 1972-3.



# Rebuilding Labour among skilled workers

FOLLOWING the election a debate has opened up in the labour movement around the causes of Labour's defeat, how the Tories can be defeated and how Labour can be rebuilt.

Here John Ross argues against the view that the majority skilled working class is lost forever to the Labour Party and proposes the minimum steps to win it back.

**THE MOST** catastrophic of all falls in support for the Labour Party in the last 10 years has been among skilled manual workers, as demonstrated by the opinion poll studies we show on this page. Less than a decade ago, in the election of October 1974, Labour led the Tories massively among skilled workers — by around 49 per cent to 26 per cent. By 1983 the situation had been totally reversed with the Tories leading Labour among skilled workers by 40 per cent to 32 per cent.

What is shown by opinion polls is confirmed by geographical analyses of the distribution of voting. Thatcher won her electoral victory of 1979 with huge swings of 7.1 per cent and 6.2 per cent to the Tories in Birmingham and Outer London — just the areas of the country with the highest concentrations of skilled manual workers.

Those on the left who try to claim that the results of the 1979 and 1983 elections reflect just movements of the 'middle classes' are merely deluding themselves.

An enormous desertion of the Labour Party by an important section of the working class has taken place. Indeed all studies show that both in the 1979 and 1983 elections support for Labour among clerical workers and 'professional' groups scarcely fell at all.

## Votes

It was almost entirely through a loss of votes among the manual working class that the Labour vote went down.

It is also among skilled manual workers that probably the most vital political battles in any trade unions in the coming years are going to be fought. Norman Tebbit and David Owen have as their chief political goal the aim of smashing the Labour Party links of such unions as the electricians and engineers — the unions containing the highest proportion of skilled manual workers. Tebbit and Owen are greatly aided in their goals by Duffy and Chapple.

In short to win back the mass support of that almost 20 per cent of skilled workers who have stopped voting Labour in the last ten years is one of the most urgent single tasks facing the labour movement. Regaining that support means rejecting all the fictions that are put around concerning what has happened and resolutely concentrating on the facts.

The number one fiction which has to be rejected is that Labour lost the support of skilled workers because its policies were 'too left wing' and therefore Labour must go even further over to the right.

The fact that this is precisely the explanation given by the entire Tory press, Healey, Callaghan, Chapple and Duffy should already give rise to great suspicion — for after all when have they ever given good advice to

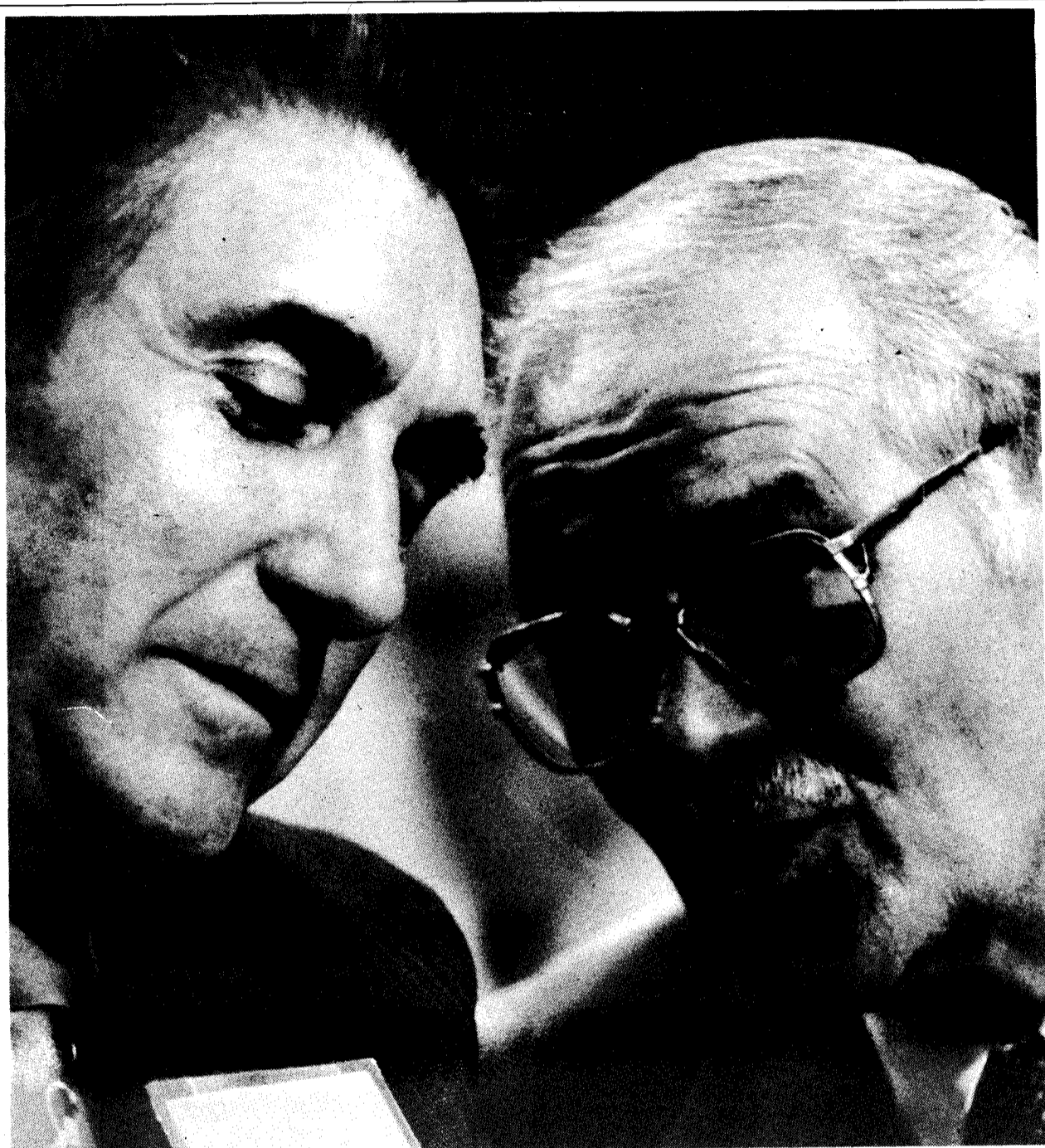


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Union bosses Duffy and Chapple

the Labour Party?

But more important than simply the origins of the 'go further to the right' line are the facts both of Labour support and of the real interests which sections of the working class have.

Furthermore for the preceding four years, ever since Tony Benn was removed from the Department of Industry, not a peep had been heard from the Labour left. The idea that the loss of support among skilled workers is due to 'extremist left wing policies' simply does not fit the facts.

The point can be made even more clearly by going back further in time. There are unfortunately no separate opinion poll studies for the skilled working class votes in the elections of 1970 and 1974 but the trend can be seen quite clearly by taking geographical shifts in the vote.

## Swing

If we take Birmingham, precisely the area of Thatcher's great electoral swing of 1979, then its pattern of voting is absolutely clear. The Tory victory of 1970 was in very considerable part due to an enormous swing in the West Midlands as a whole, and the built up area around Birmingham and Coventry in particular, away from the Labour Party.

The swing to the Tories in the Birmingham-Coventry built up area in 1970 was 6.1 per cent, and 5.8 per cent in the West Midlands as a whole, compared to 4.7 per cent in Britain as a whole. This West Midlands swing was easily the highest in the entire country and beat even the South East of England.

In 1974 exactly the same process happened but going in the opposite direction. In February 1974 Britain as

a whole swung by 1.1 per cent from the Tories to Labour. But the West Midlands swung by 3.9 per cent to Labour and the Birmingham-Coventry built up area by 5.8 per cent.

## By John Ross

The shift of skilled workers away from the Labour Party started long before the 1983 election or the rise of 'Bennism' after the 1979 election. The collapse of Labour Party support among skilled workers started dramatically before and during the 1979 election. The 9 per cent fall in support for Labour among skilled workers in 1983 is obviously just a continuation of the 8 per cent fall in 1979.

However in 1979, far from Labour having 'extremist' policies, and an 'extremist' manifesto, it fought the election on the record of a government which had pursued the most right wing line ever applied by the Labour Party.

## Shift

As for the manifesto, those with long memories will recall that 1979 was the election when Callaghan twice threatened to resign if the National Executive Committee did not accept the right wing manifesto he personally dictated to them.

Once more if you try to explain these shifts by 'left wing extremism' it simply will not fit the facts. In 1970 Labour fought the election on the basis of the absolutely right wing policies and manifesto pursued by the Wilson government. It was severely defeated both in Britain as a whole and, by all the evidence, in particular

among skilled workers.

In 1974 the Tory Party's support among the population as a whole, and the working class in particular, fell to the lowest level ever recorded.

## Fought

In 1974, however, the Labour Party fought the election on a manifesto which, for all its faults, was the most left wing since the Second World War. In contrast to 1970 Labour won the 1974 elections. The explanation that Labour loses because of 'left wing extremism' and that this particularly turns away skilled working class voters simply will not stand up to any factual examination of 1970, 1974 and 1979.

There is however one issue which both fits the overall decline of the Labour vote in the last fifteen years, explains the facts, and in particular explains Labour's loss of support among skilled workers. This is the issue of incomes policy.

If we take Labour's vote historically then the highest level of support ever recorded for the Labour Party in the opinion polls was 53.5 per cent in May 1966. Labour had won a general election two months earlier with a vote which at 48.0 per cent was scarcely any lower than the record Labour vote of 48.8 per cent in 1951. In June 1966 Roy Jenkins, then Labour Minister, announced that the Labour government was going to introduce wage controls.

The result was the beginning of the catastrophic fall in support from which Labour has never recovered. By a year later Labour was 6.5 per cent behind the Tories in the opinion polls and by December 1968 Labour support had fallen to under thirty per cent. Incomes policy, not 'left wing extremism' is what smashed the Labour Party's popularity in 1966.

It is also this which of course explains the outcome of the 1970, 1974, 1979 and 1983 elections and in particular the collapse of the Labour Party vote, and the rise of the Tories among skilled workers.

## Lost

The Tories lost in 1964 after the introduction of incomes policy in 1961.

Why was there the huge swing away from Labour in the West Midlands in 1970, to Labour in 1974 and then away from Labour in 1979?

The Labour Party applied an incomes policy from 1966 onwards among the skilled workers of the West Midlands and other areas swung massively away from Labour in 1970.

In 1972 Heath introduced an incomes policy and the skilled working class swung massively away from the Tories in 1974. Labour introduced an incomes policy in 1975 and in 1979 the skilled working class deserted it in droves.

Between 1979 and 1983 Thatcher rejected introducing a formal incomes policy and by 1983 the Tories won the election and were the largest party among skilled workers.

Incomes policy hits the better off sections of the working class, the skilled workers, most severely of all. Skilled workers have every objective reason to bitterly oppose incomes policy and they have done. What there is no evidence from the last twenty years whatever that skilled workers are put off by 'left wing extremism' there is absolutely massive evidence that they are put off by wage controls — quite logically as they have the most to lose from them.

The number one requirement for the Labour Party to regain its base among the skilled working class is complete and total rejection of a form of incomes policy.

Table 1

Percentage of skilled manual workers voting Tory, Labour, Liberal/Alliance

	October 1974	1979	1983	Change 1979-83
<i>Gallup Poll</i>				
Tory	-	46	39	- 7
Labour	-	47	35	- 12
Liberal/Alliance	-	11	27	+ 16
<i>MORI Poll</i>				
Tory	26	41	40	- 1
Labour	49	41	32	- 9
Liberal/Alliance	20	15	26	+ 11



# 'GOODBYE' TO THE WORKING CLASS

**THE AFTERMATH** of Labour's worst election defeat since the 1930s has of necessity sparked off a wide-ranging debate. The right wing of the movement claim that Labour was out of touch with the voters because its policies were too left wing. According to the likes of Chapple, Shore, Hattersley and Duffy the only

answer is to ditch radical policies and become more like the SDP.

Behind this argument, however, is a more fundamental one. The pundits are arguing that Labour is bound to lose if it has left wing policies because the traditional working class, especially the manual working class, is getting smaller.

## Must Labour stay a party of the past?

**Peter Jenkins**

Kinnock has an evangelist's fervour and a great deal of charm but he'll need every bit of it and more if he is to go out and win socialists

**LABOUR LOSING**

**Fraud**

Gaitskell's way of posing the question was a deliberate fraud. What was, and is, at issue in the nationalisation debate was not whether everything should be nationalised, but whether the commanding heights of the economy, together with the banks and finance houses should be nationalised. In other words, should there be some private enterprise within the framework of a socialist economy, or some nationalisation within the framework of a capitalist economy?

**By Phil Hearse**

Douglas Jay, another of the 'revisionist' authors, proposed getting rid of all references to nationalisation, breaking the links with the trade unions and dropping the very name 'Labour Party'. More significantly, he proposed 'dropping the principle of political independence' — in other words some sort of coalitionist deal with the Liberals.

Another leading right winger who joined the fray was Roy Jenkins, who wanted to drop nationalisation and revise the party constitution to lessen the power of the rank and file.

At the post-election Labour conference in November 1959 Gaitskell's keynote speech took up the theme of 'old dogmas'. '... Labour must no longer count on old eroding loyalties. It must recognise the changes, continue to defend the underdog, appeal to youthful idealism and above all try to broaden our base, be in touch with ordinary people and avoid becoming small cliques of isolated doctrine-ridden fanatics'.

Turning to nationalisation he argued that 'while we shall certainly want to extend social ownership ... our

goal is not 100 per cent state ownership'.

Clause Four of the Labour Party constitution, which calls for a socialised economy, he said 'lays us open to continual misrepresentation ... It implies that we wish to nationalise everything, but do we? Everything? The whole of light industry, the whole of agriculture, all the shops — every little pub and garage. Of course not. We have long ago come to accept the mixed economy'.

The formation of the Social Democratic Party can be traced directly to participants in the disputes over Labour's future after 1959.

**Labour and the working class**

THE DEBATE over whether the Labour Party can win as a class-based party revolves essentially around two questions — the structure of the working class and its consciousness. Is it true that the manual working class is declining? And is it true that workers are losing their traditional class consciousness?

In order to see the development of the British class structure it is worth looking at the accompanying tables. Table 1 shows that the proportion of the adult population engaged in paid labour hardly changed between 1961 and 1970. The figures would have to be adjusted now to take account of unemployment, but the basic point remains true — most people have to sell their labour in order to earn a living.

The majority of people who aren't working for someone else are either retired or dependent on someone else's income — or nowadays, receiving a state benefit. The working class has most definitely not disappeared.

Table 2 shows the shift from private employment to public employment.

Table 3, however, shows the most dramatic shift and one which has continued apace — a big shift away from manual to non-manual jobs.

**What conclusions can we draw from this? Without a shadow of a doubt the structure of the working class is changing, reflecting the decline of the traditional British manufacturing industries.**

In that sense there is a 'new' working class, one more likely to be working in non-manual jobs or in the public sector. But the shift in employment patterns has not reduced the size of the working class. Nor can any automatic conclusions be drawn about the consciousness of the working class from this new employment pattern. In the 1983 general election the section of workers who voted most heavily for Labour were public sector workers (46 per cent). So it is just not true that a party based on the working class will be appealing to a 'minority'.

However, the underlying trends to which Crosland referred did continue and with them Labour's secular decline. Before we jump to conclusions about who might be the best Harold Wilson for 1988 some measure is needed of the Labour Party's predicament today compared with the future it faced in 1959.

In 1959 it polled 43.9 per cent of the popular vote; last week it polled 27.6 per cent. Over three general elections from 1951 to 1959 Labour's share of the vote dropped by 5 per cent, over three general elections since October 1954 it has fallen by more than 11.5 per cent. The swing required to win power in 1964 was a little less than 3 per cent. In 1968 it will be a Herculean 12 per cent.

In the 1959 General Election 52 per cent of the working class voted for the Labour Party. In 1964 it did in 1959, 45 per cent of Gallup respondents thought the trade unions 'too powerful'. Last year the proportion was 63 per cent according to Gallup's post-election survey for the BBC. Trade unionists voted 39 per cent Labour, 32 per cent Conservative, 28 per cent SDP-Liberal Alliance.

Professor Ivor Crewe, in his fascinating analysis of the Gallup survey in *Tonday's class*, and *Tuesday's Guardian*, concludes: 'The old working class is now too small to give Labour electoral victory; the new working class too big to be ignored'. 'The new working class' is Mark Abrams' affluent working class, some 30 per cent of the population, the 'home-owning, car-owning, working class' which half of it now living in the South, two-thirds of it employed in the private sector.

Mr Kinnock has an evangelist's fervour and a great deal of charm but he'll need every bit of it and more if he is to go out and win socialists.

General Election was essentially 'revisionist' and Crosland's proposal to negotiate the agreement with the Americans by which Britain had acquired a 'so-called independent nuclear deterrent' in the form of the Polaris but was otherwise staunchly pro-NATO and multi-racialist, and the right was once more firmly in control of the National Executive Committee and the annual conference.

Crosland had also warned, however, that 'a party of the past could always win a sudden crisis or because the governing party had been in power for too long, but he doubted both the wisdom and the dignity of relying upon this — especially since, if the underlying trends continue, they may well be reflected not in a Labour victory but in a stabilising swing towards the Liberals'.

In 1964, after 13 years of Tory rule, the electorate decided that it was time for a change and returned a Labour government to power. In 1966, however, having proved himself in office, Wilson turned that into a decisive victory. In February 1974, in a sudden crisis Labour was returned, more to form a minority government which in turned into a majority in the 1974 election.

The 'new' working class is no longer concerned with old fashioned class war slogans, but individualistic goals like owning their own homes, and higher incomes. Such people are not interested in old dogmas like nationalisation and socialism and will never vote for a party hidebound by the myths of yesteryear. In essence, these are the arguments put forward by *Guardian* commentator Peter Jenkins, a well known supporter of the SDP. Jenkins points to the low proportion of trade unionists who voted for the Labour Party.

There's an awful feeling of *deja vu* about this argument. For it was exactly this proposition that the Gaitskellite right wing of the Labour Party put forward after Labour's defeat at the general election in 1959.

## The fight over Clause Four

IN THE mid-1950s, a group of right wing Labour theorists came forward with what was called the 'revisionist' argument. The most prominent of them was Anthony Crosland, whose book, *The Future of Socialism* (1956), had a profound effect on the thinking of the right wing.

Crosland argued that capitalism was becoming 'humanised' by the gradual re-distribution of wealth through progressive taxes and more democratic owners of companies. Managers were becoming much more important than owners of capital.

The old goals of nationalisation and

social ownership were becoming irrelevant to the affluent society, as everyone was becoming more equal. Further, state intervention in the economy through Keynesian planning techniques was abolishing capitalist crises.

Hugh Gaitskell, who became Labour leader in 1955, embraced these arguments.

The 1959 election was fought by Tory leader Harold Macmillan under the slogan 'Peace and Prosperity'. The late '50s were the height of the post war capitalist boom, which for a while disguised the economic decline of British capitalism.

The notion that Britain was getting more prosperous under the Tories seemed to be true. Most working class people were indeed becoming used to rising living standards. Labour's own promises of more social welfare and prosperity failed to cut into Macmillan's appeal and Labour lost the election decisively. Gaitskell drew the conclusion that Labour had lost working class votes to the Tories because of its old-fashioned socialist dogmas.

## By Phil Hearse

Douglas Jay, another of the 'revisionist' authors, proposed getting rid of all references to nationalisation, breaking the links with the trade unions and dropping the very name 'Labour Party'. More significantly, he proposed 'dropping the principle of political independence' — in other words some sort of coalitionist deal with the Liberals.

Another leading right winger who joined the fray was Roy Jenkins, who wanted to drop nationalisation and revise the party constitution to lessen the power of the rank and file.

At the post-election Labour conference in November 1959 Gaitskell's keynote speech took up the theme of 'old dogmas'. '... Labour must no longer count on old eroding loyalties. It must recognise the changes, continue to defend the underdog, appeal to youthful idealism and above all try to broaden our base, be in touch with ordinary people and avoid becoming small cliques of isolated doctrine-ridden fanatics'.

Turning to nationalisation he argued that 'while we shall certainly want to extend social ownership ... our

## Fraud

Gaitskell's way of posing the question was a deliberate fraud. What was, and is, at issue in the nationalisation debate was not whether everything should be nationalised, but whether the commanding heights of the economy, together with the banks and finance houses should be nationalised. In other words, should there be some private enterprise within the framework of a socialist economy, or some nationalisation within the framework of a capitalist economy?

The issue of Clause Four was largely a symbolic one. Many of the constituency delegates and trade unionists who regularly voted against further nationalisation were against the removal of Clause Four from the constitution.

The ensuing row was really over whether Labour should cease to be a party based on the working class, committed at least in name to socialism, or whether it should become just another capitalist party like today's SDP.

Gaitskell's speech was booed by sections of the conference. Michael Foot, who had just been defeated in the election, strode to the platform to launch a bitter attack on the leadership. The conference ended with Aneurin Bevan coming to the leadership's rescue by saying that since everyone agreed that not everything should be nationalised, everyone was really in agreement!

The uproar in the party over Clause Four was enormous. Eventually Gaitskell had to back down and abandon the attempt to scrap it. The fight between Labour's left and right had within a year shifted to the question of unilateral nuclear disarmament. But the essence of the dispute over the future of the Labour Party never went away.

## Increase

Right up until the mid-70s trade unionism was increasing rapidly, especially among white collar and public sector workers. Only the rise of unemployment has pushed the number of trade unionists down. The fundamental reflexes of class consciousness and solidarity have not disappeared.

But what is unfortunately true is that the rise of trade unionism and of industrial militancy in the 1970s has not led to automatic support for the Labour Party as opposed to the SDP and the Tories — in the election only 39 per cent of trade unionists voted for Labour.

The reason for this is nothing to do with Labour being too 'left wing', or too fixated on the working class.



# KING CLASS?



Aneurin Bevan (right) came to Hugh Gaitskell's rescue over nationalisation at the 1959 Party conference

The shift away from Labour among trade unionists reflected the fact that Labour's right-wing dominated campaign could not unite the employed and the unemployed, the skilled and the unskilled, the working class and other sections of the oppressed around fighting socialist policies.

To do that would have meant an entirely different kind of campaign, one which linked up with struggle and the mass campaigns, not one sabotaged by the right wing.

Beside the betrayal of its own leadership, Labour had another problem in the 1983 election. Among employed workers, living standards under the Tories have not gone down dramatically — but they did go down under the last Labour government. But this present 'honeymoon' period with the Tories will end. As the oil revenues start to disappear the Tories will be forced into savage attacks on the working class.

In the coming struggles, Labour must seize the initiative by basing itself on the interests of the overwhelming majority — the working class.

To move to the right, to become the kind of party that the latter-day Gaitskellites want, to become an SDP mark 2, would be to decline even faster.

The Labour Party can be rebuilt, not on the basis of becoming a 'classless' party, but by presenting a clear radical alternative to the SDP. A mass party which champions every industrial struggle, every campaign for nuclear disarmament, every struggle by the oppressed in this country.

The splitting of the anti-Tory vote at this election is just a stage in the fight for such a Labour Party. But it was not class-based politics which led to Labour's defeat, it was the sabotage of a right wing which wants to say goodbye to the working class.

In the next few years more and more workers are going to discover that there are no individual solutions to their problems. 'Affluent' workers are going to be few and far between. The 'old-fashioned' people in the labour movement are those who confuse the myths of the 1960s with the realities of the 1980s.

● Tables from *The development of the British working class* by Jean Gardiner in *Aaronovitch and Smith (eds) The Political Economy of British Capitalism* (McGraw-Hill, 1981).



Roy Jenkins, ex-SDP leader, has already waved goodbye to the working class. Should the Labour Party join him?

## Economic activity of population of Great Britain, 1961-77

	Percentage of population	
	1961	1977
<i>Economically active</i>		
Self-employed and employers	4.3	4.4
Employees in employment	54.6	54.4
Part-time workers (included above)	5.2*	10.4
Male workers (included above)	36.3	32.4
Female workers (included above)	18.3	22.0
Unemployed	1.0	3.4
<b>Total economically active</b>	<b>59.9</b>	<b>62.2</b>
<i>Economically inactive</i>		
Students	2.5	3.0
Retired	6.2	11.7
Housewives and other persons	31.4	23.1
<b>Total economically inactive</b>	<b>40.1</b>	<b>37.8</b>
<b>Total adult population (thousands)</b>	<b>39 569</b>	<b>41 353</b>

Source: *Social Trends*, (1974), *General Household Survey* (1977), *Annual Abstract* (1979).

## Employment in public and private sectors for the UK, 1951-76

	Percentage of total		
	1951*	1961	1976
Military	3.6	1.9	1.2
Civil central government	4.9	5.3	8.1
Local authority	6.1	7.6	12.1
Public corporations	12.1	9.0	8.1
<b>Total public</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>29.5</b>
<b>Private</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>76.1</b>	<b>70.5</b>

\* Great Britain only.

Sources: *Social Trends* (1979), *British Labour Statistics Historical Abstract* (1979).

## The occupied population of Great Britain by major occupational groups, 1911-66

Occupational groups	As a percentage of total occupied populations	
	1911	1966
Employers and proprietors	6.7	3.4
Non-manual workers	18.7	38.3
Managers and administrators	3.4	6.1
Higher professionals	1.0	3.4
Lower professionals and technicians	3.1	6.5
Foremen and inspectors	1.3	3.0
Clerks	4.5	13.2
Salesmen and shop assistants	5.4	6.1
<b>Manual workers</b>	<b>74.6</b>	<b>58.3</b>
Skilled	30.5	23.7
Semi-skilled	34.4	26.1
Unskilled	9.6	8.5
<b>Total occupied population</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: *His and Hers* (1972).

Photo: GIM COOKSON



# Socialist Action

## The Common Market. Labour ducks the issue

FOLLOWING Thatcher's 'triumph' or 'humiliation' at the EEC summit, depending on which paper you read, Labour has to answer the simple question: are you in favour of immediate withdrawal? We believe the answer should be an emphatic yes.

Unfortunately this has not been the response from any of the four candidates for the Labour leadership.

While Roy Hattersley has made no secret of his opposition to Party policy on the question, for Peter Shore and Neil Kinnock it represents a conversion. Even Eric Heffer has knowingly hinted that 'a lot can happen' to the Party's policy over the next five years.

The capitalist press are licking their lips over such an easy victory for the campaign they have been pressing against Labour's central policy commitments.

Why should the labour movement be in favour of immediate withdrawal and not renegotiation of the Treaty of Rome? First and foremost because the Common Market is the multinationals' market.

The objective of the Common Market when it was established was to rationalise Western Europe capitalism.

The Tories made much of the argument that withdrawal from the EEC would result in the loss of two and a half million during the election. Labour's spokespeople could have hit back showing that the decimation of the steel industry and the hit-list for the coal industry were examples of the Common Market's rationalisation policy. But the Tories were allowed to get away with it.

The reason is not just the perfidy of those who ran Labour's campaign — although that was the chief factor. The fact is that withdrawal from the Common Market by a Labour government will signal the beginning of a break by Britain with the laws of the international capitalist order — a break with the system that condemns millions to misery and wastes the massive productive resources which this country still has.

There would be retaliation, as there has been against other countries who have taken such a step — Nicaragua being the latest example.

Any government which withdrew would therefore have to introduce further measures to defend the economy against sabotage: nationalisation of foreign trade would be absolutely necessary.

A massive step towards a planned economy would have to be taken. This is the main reason why Labour's leaders are running shy. The Tories have exposed the nakedness of their policies.

Withdrawal from the EEC only makes sense in the context of a socialist economic policy. The task therefore is not to drop the commitment for immediate withdrawal from the Common Market, but to make it more consistent by spelling out the consequences of withdrawal and the policies necessary to meet them.

The hopefuls in the Labour leadership, especially those who claim to be left candidates, should note that their eagerness to abandon conference policy is not shared by the rank and file.

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Photo: STEVE BENBOW (Network) available in postcard series

### Slipman should be sacked

I SHOULD like to support Geoff Martin's appeal to NUPE members for the sacking of Sue Slipman, but I should like to situate it in a slightly different context.

In my belief, Slipman has jeopardised the jobs and working conditions of hundreds of thousands of the workers whom she is paid by NUPE to represent.

However, I do not believe that the main issue is the granting of paid leave to campaign in the election. (My view is that NUPE, forced by legislation to grant her leave to do this dirty work, should not pay her for it).

For me, the main issue is that she is allowed to continue her work as a full timer as a prominent member of the

SDP. It is the tradition of revolutionary socialists to be against bans and proscriptions from labour movement bodies.

However, NUPE full time officers are not elected by their members — therefore the demand for 'sacking' corresponds to the campaign for 'non-election' as the only way rank and file NUPE members can hope to influence events.

Therefore, I believe it is right that NUPE branches demand Slipman's sacking, on the grounds that she is attacking the rights of the members and the union she is supposed to be representing. But all NUPE branches should vow never to be caught in this position again. Only through annual

election, and the right to recall, can all full time officers be made accountable to their members.

Relevant resolutions to next year's NUPE Rules Revision Conference can ensure that we don't have to wait for such an extreme and obvious abuse of trade union position to pull our representatives into line.

As for the Executive Council, they should make plain where they stand by issuing a statement completely denouncing Slipman's campaign and the policies of the party she represents.

DAVE BENLOW,  
Branch Secretary,  
Wandsworth District  
NUPE.

### CND should have supported Labour

PHIL Hearse's article, 'Crisis looms for CND', makes some admirable criticisms of the pathetic showing that CND made in the election.

However, Phil makes a serious error in suggesting CND should not have called for a Labour vote. In fact only a policy which committed the whole organisation to campaign for Labour stood any chance of success.

Individuals like Bruce Kent and EP Thompson can't be expected to speak on Labour platforms, when they are

precisely the people steering the disarmament movement in the direction of middle-class 'pressure group' politics. The apoliticians in CND have always feared deterring Liberals and non-aligned supporters of the movement.

But the real point is, which party represented their interests? In practice it was and is Labour. An independent CND campaign would not only have increased the pressure on multilateralist backsliders but also have led CND activists to an understanding of the

nature of the Labour bureaucracy.

In future when we call for a 'Labour movement orientation' we must make it clear we mean the labour movement of rank and file democracy and not cynical betrayal.

The main task is to pull back the fighting minority from futile adventurism and into a sober and long-term struggle to root out both the Labour traitors and the middle-class pacifist leadership of CND.

JOHN KREEGER,  
London WC1.

### Alternative to war

COMRADE Baker (SA 13) accuses me of supporting Thatcher's task force and the 'Fortress Falklands' policy. This is dishonest and slanderous.

I opposed the former at the time, and would welcome a serious labour movement campaign against the latter now.

Our disagreement is over whether the strategy of the British left against Thatcher is to hope for her defeat in a war with Argentina, or whether the labour movement must take the lead in preventing a new war breaking out in the South Atlantic.

Comrade Baker believes that the nationalist passions of the Argentine people can be used to do what the British labour movement has been unable to do, and put an end to Thatcher's triumphal procession. This is a cynical and desperate policy.

In the first place, it prevents the British

labour movement from offering internationalist aid to the Argentine workers. Their job, it seems, is not to fight for their own liberation, but to buckle down to preparing a new onslaught on Thatcher's fortress, for comrade Baker's benefit.

In the second place defeats for the ruling class only turn into victories for the working class on the condition that the latter can offer a perspective for reconstruction.

The reason why the working class must come to power is because it alone can do away with war and social conflicts on the basis of co-operative production. The taking of power by the workers and the abolition of the whole apparatus of nation-state conflicts are equivalent processes.

If the British working class is to lead British society, it must show that it is prepared, in all

seriousness, to fight now for an alternative to capitalist war.

Come to think of it, comrade Baker supports Thatcher's policy, since it will lead to the war which he craves.

COLIN MEADE,  
Surbiton.

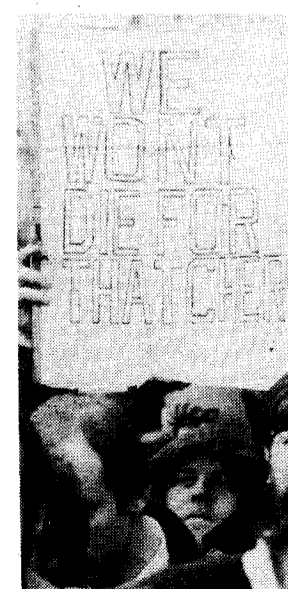


Photo: GM COOKSON

## LETTERS



Photo: MORNING STAR

Picket outside South Africa house protests against executions

### Executions protest

WE, the undersigned, members of a local workforce, wish to protest strongly at the execution of Simon Mogerane, Gerry Mosololi and Marcus Motaung of the African National Congress.

This will increase our determination to step up

the fight against apartheid and to help to bring about a country ruled by a majority of its citizens.

IAN MARTIN, union rep plus Dave Chapple, John Bjergfelt, Phil Haycock, Gordon Howard, Roland Fisher and Roland Taysum

### Malvinas diversion

JOHN BAKER (SA 13) must be very confused if he thinks either Colin Meade or myself 'back Thatcher's unjust claim' to the Malvinas/Falklands.

In fact I pointed out in my original letter on the issue that the first duty of socialists is to oppose their own imperialism.

BUT ... does that automatically mean that any country (imperialist or not) coming into conflict with British imperialism is progressive? Surely not.

We take our stance from the interests of the working class, completely independently of the position of the bourgeoisie here, in Argentina, or anywhere else.

What interests do workers in Argentina have in pursuing the Malvinas claim any further? It could only be a diversion away from the fight against their own reactionary (and pro-imperialist) rulers — a diversion which would cost yet more Argentinian working class lives.

'It's a historical fact,' says John, 'that from the moment of her foundation the Malvinas islands were a part of Argentina as much as Buenos Aires itself.' This statement is historically inaccurate —

France claimed the islands first, until Spain took them in the 1760's.

Between 1765 and 1770 Britain 'possessed' them, then Spain reclaimed them until 1816 when they were claimed by Argentina. There was no significant Argentinian population in 1833 when Britain took over.

But apart from this, the real point is that for Marxists nations are people, not geography. There are no Argentinians on the islands, and the islanders themselves oppose no-one (unlike the Ulster protestants, for instance).

So why support Argentina's claim? The only explanation can be some sort of mystical, irredentist\* nationalism quite alien to Marxism.

That such nationalism, is, in John's case, undoubtedly borne of a genuine hatred of Thatcher and of British imperialism, does not make it any the less wrong or any the less disastrous in so far as its consequences for Argentinian workers go.

For British and Argentinian workers, the main enemy is at home!

JOE GUARNIERI,  
Birmingham.

\* Irredentist refers to an Italian party which advocated the recovery and union to Italy of all Italian-speaking districts now subject to other countries.

## Write to us!

This is your page. Send us your comments, criticisms or even congratulations. But please be brief — letters over 300 words will be cut. Write to: Letters, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP. (Tel: 01-359 8180)





## Come back Quatermass

PICTURE if you will a fourteen foot heaving mass of sybaritic ugliness, with a striking resemblance to Roy Jenkins. There you have the Hut of Kahn (or was it the Kahn of Hut?) chief obstacle to the progress of our chirpy bunch of heroes and heroines in the first twenty minutes of the latest edition of the Star War saga — *Return of the Jedi*.

Luke Skywalker, Chewbacca, Princess Liah, friends and 'droids' are attempting to rescue Hans Solo, who has ended up as the likely prize exhibit in the master of corruption's cavern of alien delights at the end of the last Star Wars film *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Reviewed by  
Brian Heron

Poor old Hans has been fused with 'carbonite' making him look like a new variety of ice lolly. He looks down at assorted alien grotesques jiggling around to music reminiscent of the Shadows, while their master eats live frogs and drops various recalitrants down a hole to be eaten by a great big horrible THING!

*The Return of the Jedi* (pro-republican knights, trained in the Mysteries of the universe) is full of

'horrible things' that try, in various ways, to eat the good guys. When they are not being saved from digestion they are whizzing around in and on various bits of supersonic hardware, while all around are, literally, loosing their heads.

The film pokes some fun (Hut's guards are walking versions of Disney's rhinoceros guards in the cartoon *Robin Hood*.) Ferocious teddy bears prove the undoing of the villains in the end. But that is about all that remains of any subtlety in this exciting dash round the technological universe.

As Reagan puts more miles between us and Vietnam all the shades between heroes and villains are lost. Gone is the independent and wilful princess. Gone is the reluctant and nervous Solo who was in it for the loot, the machinery which doesn't work, the need for heavy philosoph-

ising which marked *The Empire Strikes Back*.

The nearest thing to characters in the *Return of the Jedi* are the androids. The humans have become complete ciphers.

Believe it or not this detracts from the film. The makers of *Superman* started with the presence of Marlon Brando. *Star Wars* had Alec Guinness. When they appear to take it seriously it helps you swallow the mixture. *The Return* starts with princess Liah being 'forced' into a bikini for the glutinous delight of Hut. So its back to those lurid covers of the 1940's Sci-Fi magazines. Semi-clad young woman 'victim' being advanced upon by rapacious alien. A tried and true formula. Every bit as depressing now as it was then.

### Machinery

Once any semblance of character loses out to machinery, the first casualty is invariably women. The imperious princess is replaced by the moonstruck devotee of honcho Hans. All the nice ambiguities of her relationship with Skywalker (which threatened the

stability of the set up) are resolved.

She is able to faithfully spoon after both men. One neatly turns out to be her brother. Instead the 'real' conflict resolves itself into the fight between Skywalker and his dad — Darth Vader. Will young Luke be won over to the dark side of the force by letting his anger rise while his dear old dad tries to throttle him and cut his head off?

'Yes, ... I can feel your anger rising ... Kill your father and become my apprentice' says the mean old pasty-faced emperor. When Luke refuses and the emperor flashes a few thousand volts and dear old dad doesn't know which way to jump.

But everything turns out for the best in the end. We see Alec Guinness, Yoda (the now dead master of the good side of the force) and dad all lined up grinning away in their ethereal glow and their change of linen. They look like the picture of heaven in my old prayer book. Perhaps they have joined Alec Guinness in the '5 per cent of the Gross' club.

I'll still queue for the next one though.

### Britain in the Thirties

Thursday 30 June, BBC2

FOLLOWING the programme about Mosley's followers, this week the series looks at the influx of refugees from Germany during the thirties.

It concentrates mainly on the benefits to science in this country by the recruitment of Jewish scientists.

### Civilisation

Friday 1 July, BBC2

HAVING departed for the Great Art Gallery In The Sky, the BBC are showing Lord Kenneth Clark's very knowledgeable but somewhat elitist (to say the least) look at the development of civilisation and culture.

Worth watching if you can put up with the pretentiousness.

disguise their hostility to the boycott. Fellow commentator Ron Pickering goes to South Africa to investigate.

It does seem to be a more in-depth analysis than usual with comparisons between the black townships and the whites-only clubs, plus interviews with blacks who argue strongly for the boycott.

### Opinions — Has the Labour Party a future?

Thursday 30 June, 8.00, Channel 4  
COMMUNIST Party member Bob Rowthorne leads off.

It certainly won't have a future if Rowthorne's rapidly right-ward moving views have anything to do with it.

# Planning and power

IT SHOULD be a fundamental socialist thesis that the anarchy of capitalist crisis can only be overcome by socialist planning. The question is: what kind of planning, in what context, and with what powers?

The most popular project inside the British workers movement is that of the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES), which has many variants, but in essence is constructed around the idea of planning agreements with the big corporations.

George Blazyca belongs to a developing school which wants to 'democratise' the AES, to put the emphasis on local council planning and workers' planning initiatives. His book begins with a critique of centralised planning on the East European model, which it argues has been a disaster. It claims the alternative is local planning initiatives, workers plans and local council planning to create jobs, which can start here and now, Thatcherism and the crisis notwithstanding.

Such an emphasis is confused and misleading — and potentially will lead workers into a blind alley. National planning in the contemporary industrialised countries has either been the bureaucratic planning of the Stalinist states, or the 'indicative' planning of the social democrats. But the failure of both types is not because it is national planning.

The 'East European Planning Disaster' as

Blazyca calls it is the failure of bureaucratic planning — national planning without workers initiative and workers control. Inevitably such a system leads to major breakdowns and crisis.

However we shouldn't ignore the immensely progressive aspects of such national planning, for example in carrying through the industrialisation of the Soviet economy. Social democratic 'indicative' planning has failed because it has refused to countenance any serious challenge to the power and prerogatives of capital.

### Problem

The problem with the alternative economic strategy is that it is a 'radical' variant of 'indicative' left Keynesianism. It is not that it is 'undemocratic' — although doubtless it is — but that it refuses to envisage an all-out assault on the power of capital.

Planning whether local or national can only be successful if the immense resources that capitalist Britain has at its disposal are put in the hands of the working class.

There is no socialist short cut which goes round the nationalisation of the banks, the finance houses

and the leading monopolies.

Workers control and local initiative will surely be needed to prevent this beginning becoming bureaucratic planning. But 'local' planning cannot substitute for it.

Attempts at local planning by Labour councils will in the coming years be increasingly constrained by huge social expenditure cuts. Labour councils are going to have to tread a fine dividing line between defence of working class gains and administering the capitalist crisis. Once you start to resort to rates increases to finance local plans, you are stepping over that line.

The only answer then is disengagement from local power. Workers plans, like the Lucas plan, have a vital role to play in preparing for workers administration of an overall socialist plan for the economy. They have a crucial educational and mobilising role. But they cannot substitute for, nor be put into effect without, an overall socialist plan for the economy.

Without understanding that, many illusions, ultimately reformist illusions, will be created.

### 'Planning is good for you — The case for Popular Control'

George Blazyca. Pluto Press. *Arguments for Socialist Series.* Pluto Press £2.50

## Ireland for beginners

I CAN see young militants put this book aside in disappointment, just as so many did with the *Beginners' Guides to Marx, Lenin and Trotsky*.

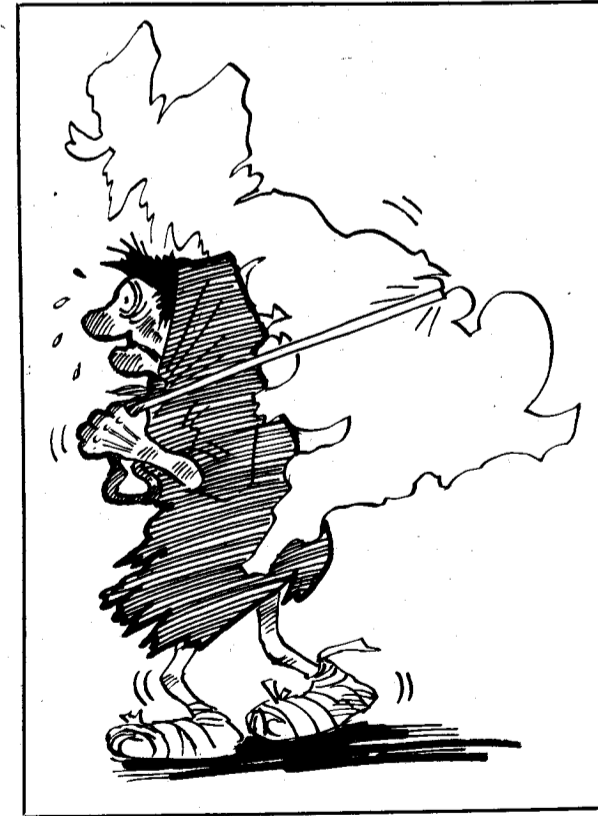
Irish history can't be reduced — or at least it shouldn't be — to a catalogue of names, dates and big events any more than Marxism is a family tree of philosophers.

Connolly was able to make Irish history understandable because he reduced it to its essential development and the struggles of competing class forces. Only then did he add the details.

Reviewed by  
Martin Collins

This is how Rius dealt with things in the *Beginners' Guide to Cuba*. He explained major historical developments and then the cartoons were used to introduce the characters.

Evan's drawings and texts depict major events and stereotyped 'prods' and 'taigs' appear about every 20 pages to give the 'rank and file' version of it all. This device fails miserably. We get lots about Connolly's attempts to win the nationalists to socialism but nothing about his arguments with the English, American and Irish socialists on the vital importance of the national struggle.



He pointed out how the national struggle would open up the permanent socialist character of the revolutionary process. The authors however fall prey to the notion that it is religion that divides the Irish workers not partition.

Thus the book fails to deal with the root of the problem which is that the division of the Irish working class can only be solved by the fight against British

imperialism. Only when the border has gone, can the secondary matter of the division between loyalists and nationalist be solved.

By putting religion first and the political cause last, the book can not explain what is happening in Ireland, nor can it provide a solution.

**Ireland for Beginners**  
By Phil Evans and Eileen Pollocks  
*Writers and Readers* £2.95.

## TV CHOICE

### Battle in Europe

Sunday 26 June, 10.55, Channel 4  
DONALD Trelford, editor of the *Observer* chairs a discussion in which a bunch of European journalists grill the NATO Supreme Commander of Europe on the nuclear build-up. Jonathan Dimpleby is the British scribbler.

### Vietnam — The End of the Tunnel

Monday 27 June, 9.00, Channel 4  
LAST of the series and the end of the war. The programme takes us up to April 1975 when the North Vietnamese tanks finally roll into the Presidential Palace.

The liberation forces describe the surrender. It's not widely known that Nixon had plans to re-invade Vietnam if the Thieu puppet government looked like being toppled, but Watergate put an end to that.

### South Africa, Sport and the Boycott

Tuesday 28 June, BBC1  
THE BBC's sports department has an appalling record for whitewashing apartheid and South African sport — the recent Jimmy Hill soccer team fiasco being one example. Commentators like Hill barely manage to



# DIARY

(These listings are free for all major labour movement and campaign activities. Semi-display advertisements cost 5p per word and must be paid in advance. Send to: *Diary, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP* to arrive not later than Thursday, one week prior to publication).

- **National Abortion Campaign** conference is now postponed until September. Next National Planning Meeting of NAC is Sat 2 July in Leeds. For details please contact NAC at 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Tel. 01-278 0153.
- **Anti-abortion rally: counter demonstration** organised by 'Ladies against Women' 25 June, Hyde Park ... fancy dress a must!
- **Labour Movement Conference on Ireland** 16 July, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Starts 10.45am. Delegates £3, observers £2. Further details: LMCI, Box 189, 32 Ivor Place, London NW1.
- **Release Nelson Mandela! Victory to the ANC!** Weekly picket of South Africa House, Trafalgar Square 5.30-7.30, Fridays. Called by City Anti-Apartheid Group.
- **Prevent and Survive** Symposium 2 July, 9.30-4.30 Central Hall Westminster. Entrance (incl lunch) £9 or £5 for students/nurses/UB40. Tickets from Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, 31 Stavordale Rd, London N5 (or at door).

- **Walk for Life** from Faslane nuclear submarine base to Greenham Common, 19 May to 6 August. For more details of events contact the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace (SCRAM), 11 Forth Street, Edinburgh 031-557 4284.
- **Who Killed Colin Roach?** Video film of the campaign available for meetings, youth clubs, schools etc from Roach Family Support Committee, 50 Rectory Road, London N16 7PP, 01-254 7480.
- **Youth CND Conference**, 2 July, Manchester. For details contact YCND, 11 Goodwin St. London N4.

## Fighting the missiles after the election

**East London CND Rally with Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill, Alf Lomas, Tony Hart (GLC), Jenny Edwards (CND). Chair: Jo Richardson** Wed 29 June, 7.30pm, East Ham Town Hall, London E6

- **Women for Life on Earth, 1983 Star** marches converging at Greenham on Hiroshima day, 8 August. Leaving County Hall, London on 29 July. Mixed. Contact 01-699 6712 for details.
- **Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine National Conference** Sun 26 June, 11am, County Hall, London SE1. Conference fee £2/£1 unwaived. Observers welcome. Further details from Andrew Hornung, 28 Carlton Mns, Holmleigh Rd, London N16.

- **Troops Out Movement** is organising a mass delegation to Northern Ireland on 6 & 7 August. Interested? Ring Gail 01-250 1293 for details.
- **Troops Out Movement benefit** 1 July with Carol Grimes and supporting women's band. Chat's Palace, 42/44 Brooksbys Walk, Homerton, London E9. £2.50/£1.50 unwaived.
- **Crisis in Zimbabwe** — a socialist perspective Public meeting organised by the Socialist Forum for Southern African Solidarity. Sat 25 June, 2pm, Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19.
- **Concert in aid of the campaign to release Nelson Mandela.** Sun 26 June, 7.15pm, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London SE1 8XX (928 3641). Ingrid Jacoby (piano), Felix Schmidt (cello). Tickets £1, £1.50, £2.00, £2.50 or £3 from box office. Organised by the Anti Apartheid Movement, 13 Selous St, London NW1 (387 7966).

● **Coventry Socialist Film Club** and West Midlands Arts present a film and video viewing session including: *Ballots and Bullets, Writing on the Wall, It ain't Half Racist, Mum!, True Romance etc ... and No Regrets and Risky Business.* Fri 1 July, 7.30pm, Howard Hall, Priory Walk, Coventry. Admission £1/50p unwaived.

● **SE England Trade Union Conference on Namibia** Sun 17 July, Oxford Hse, Derbyshire St, London E2. Further details from Namibia Support Committee 01-267 1941.

- **Anti-deportation picket in support of Parveen Khan and her children** 29 June, 9.45am, 5 Lower Belgrave St (near Victoria Station), London.
- **Labour CND South West** inaugural meeting Sun 26 June, 2.30pm, Taunton LP Cttee Rooms, 24 East Rd, Taunton.
- **Benefit concert for Women in Chile** Fri 24 June, Hampden Community Centre, 150 Ossulton St, London NW1, 7.30pm. Further information from Paula 691 2603 or 969 2292.
- **Scottish Socialist Society** day conference 2 July at the Mitchell Theatre to discuss strategies for the left in Scotland after the election.
- **The Politics of Health in Zimbabwe** Hour long video available for meetings or functions. £10 (payable in advance). Send to Books for South Africa Fund, PO Box 50, London N1.
- **Trade Unions and Revolution in Nicaragua.** New bulletin produced by Nicaragua Solidarity. 75p from NSC, 20 Compton Terrace, London N1.

● **SWAPO Women's Solidarity** sponsored cycle ride. London to Greenham Common Sat 2 July. Further details from 96 Gillespie Rd, London N5 01-359 9116.

● **Preparing for Power** Conference organised by the Revolutionary Communist Party. 16-22 July, Polytechnic of Central London. Over 80 workshops including Marxism after Marx, racism, women's oppression, Ireland etc. Phone 01 274 3951 for further details.

- **International blockade of Greenham 4-8 July.** Send sac for details to July 4 action, Greenham Office, 5 Leonard St, London EC2.
- **Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador Briefings** are produced by the Central America Information Service, 14 Brixton Rd, London SW9. If you would like to receive them regularly, please write enclosing your name and address.

### Socialist Action Forums

**EDINBURGH Socialist Action readers forum is on the last Thursday of every month. Phone 031-667 9630 for further information and details of venue.**

**HOUNSLOW Socialist Action forums held every other week. For details phone Ian 01-577 4329.**

### Socialist Action National Tour

*Socialist Action supporters are organising a national series of meetings to discuss What Next after the election? Come to the meeting in your town!*

**BRISTOL** Fri 24 June, speaker Valerie Coultas (contact 0272 510242)

**CAMDEN** Wed 29 June, 8pm, Camden Labour Club, Carol St NW1. Speaker Valerie Coultas (contact 387 1361)

**CARDIFF** Wed 22 June, speaker Valerie Coultas. **EDINBURGH** Wed 22 June, speaker Alan Freeman (contact 041-667 4116)

**HARINGEY** Thu 23 June, speaker Redmond O'Neill (contact 01-889 3487)

**Huddersfield** Thu 30 June, speaker Steve Potter (contact 0484 845623) **MANSFIELD** Tue 5 July, speaker Redmond O'Neill (contact 0623 653216) **LEAMINGTON** — to be arranged (contact 0926 313408)

**NEWHAM** Mon 27 June, speaker Pat Hickey (contact 01-470 4360) **MANCHESTER** Wed 22 June, speaker Bob Pennington (contact 061-236-4905) **NEWPORT** Thu 23 June, speaker Valerie Coultas **OXFORD** Mon 27 June (contact 0865 247624) **SE LONDON** Wed 29 June (contact 01-858-6865) **GLASGOW** Thu 30 June, speaker John Ross (contact 041-339 0333)

**A homage to 'Marcial' and 'Ana Maria'**

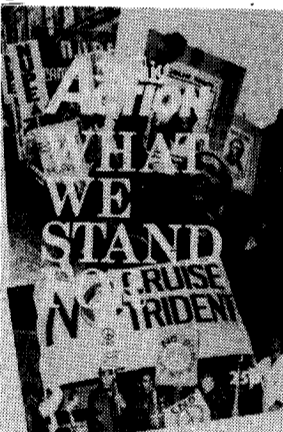


**Date:** Friday June 24th  
**Place:** L.S.E., Old Theatre, Houghton St WC1. Holborn  
**Time:** 7pm

— Waldo: Chilean Singer  
— A Theatre Play  
— Mauri Bonilla: Salvadorean Singer  
— Film of Marcial & Ana Maria — Biographical sketch of their lives.

## What we stand for pamphlet

The policies that Socialist Action stands for in this election and beyond. Send 25p plus 16p postage for your copy to *Socialist Action, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.*



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## A problem on the horizon

**WE WERE** pleasantly surprised this week to get a £5.00 cheque from someone who had won a bet that the Tories would get in but didn't have the heart to spend it. Not so good was the letter from the bank telling us that a reader in Manchester had sent us a rubber cheque for the same amount. We are still getting money in from our election appeal which has raised over £2,000 to help us toward our £19,500 target. With our post-election tour, *What Next for the Left?* kicked off by the successful London meeting with Ken Livingstone well under way, you can see we are using it to good effect. Many thanks to all those who sent in their hard earned cash. But if you look over at our chart, you may be able to detect a bigger

problem on the horizon. What happens if we get to the end of the month and we haven't met the target? What happens if the CND chain hasn't covered the map?

### Area

All you have to do to have a say in it is the following. If you are in an area with other supporters, or organising one of the many *What Next for the Left?* meetings — send in your regular contribution for June with a little bit extra.

Get new readers of the paper to become supporters. Make sure they know all the benefits of being a supporter — free copies of new pamphlets, invitations to special events and schools, cheap books from *The Other Bookshop.* It costs only £5 a month or £20 in one payment to get all this. Help put a stop to Reagan's plans, help us make the target. Post off

your cheques, postal orders or cash today!

### Thanks this week to:

Nigel Calder	£108.68
Bury supporters	10.00
Aberdeen	70.00
Crawley	15.00
Brighton	5.00
Haringey	12.00
E Saraga	5.00
Anon	1.00
G Monks	1.00
Anon	14.00
Huddersfield	25.00
East London	300.00
Swansea	80.00
Bristol	40.00
Southampton	60.00
SE London	10.00
R Rae	4.00
J Hartley	5.00
E Coleman	12.00
Middlesborough	40.00
Cardiff	100.00
Oxford	120.00
Liverpool	40.00
Leeds	50.00
Hemel	25.00
Leamington	26.00
J Blanco White	40.00

### Election appeal

Birmingham	50.00
South West London	50.00
Aberdeen	40.00
Glasgow	11.00
Livingstone meeting	139.27
Ealing Social	28.00
'I'll gotten gains'	5.00
<b>Total this week:</b>	<b>£1,541.95</b>
<b>Total so far:</b>	<b>£12,024.53</b>

When we have reached our Spring Appeal target of £19,500, the map will be covered by a massive CND chain. So help us to stop the missiles! Send us a contribution today to Spring Appeal, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP.

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Age .... Union/CLP (if any) .....

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Please do not send the Bankers Order direct to your bank. Thank you.



# What future for Hong Kong?

AMONG the topics for discussion at the National Peoples Congress currently in session in Beijing (Peking) is the eventual status of the British crown colony of Hong Kong, the 'lease' of which runs out in 1997.

With the memory of the Falklands War only one year old the British labour movement must come to an attitude on the Hong Kong question.

We start consideration of this subject with a contribution from October Review, a revolutionary Marxist journal published in Chinese in Hong Kong. The translation is by October Review.

IN ORDER to assure their investment prospects, the Hong Kong and British capitalists have urged Britain to propose to China the question of Hong Kong's future. So, Beijing and London each has to clarify its position on this unresolved historical question. On the other hand, the labouring people of Hong Kong, who constitute the majority of the population and the makers of Hong Kong's prosperity, have maintained a different mentality.

## Tradition

The Hong Kong working class have a glorious tradition of patriotic, revolutionary struggles. During the Second Chinese Revolution (1925-27) over 250,000 Hong Kong workers participated in the Guangdong-Hong Kong strike which lasted 28 months. The workers waged anti-imperialist actions against Japan during the Second World War and against British colonialism after 1949.

The workers greeted the successful 1949 revolution, supported China's economic reforms, and hoped for the establishment of a truly democratic socialist system so that China could quickly overcome her backwardness and poverty and help liberate the Hong Kong people from imperialism.

It is a historical task for the Chinese to regain sovereignty and end colonial rule. To 'maintain the status quo' is contrary to China's national interests.

Events of the past months show that the colonialists have met with frustrations but they are arranging to give necessary concessions in order to continue squeezing profits in Hong Kong. The Chinese government hopes for an unchanged capitalist system after sovereignty has been regained over Hong Kong. As for the great majority of the people of Hong Kong, they reject the Chinese Communist Party's bureaucratic rule, and have fallen into a dilemma.

Under this particular situation, the slogan 'self-rule of Hong Kong by the Hong Kong people' has been raised. The basic cause for this situation (and Mrs Thatcher even shamelessly declared herself as the caretaker of the welfare of the Hong Kong people) is the corrupt rule of the CCP for three decades which has given rise to a deep crisis of faith and confidence among the people in China and Hong Kong.

When the CCP leaders propose 'self-rule of Hong Kong', they are more or less admitting the above painful fact. But more important still,



Mass rally against the denial of democratic rights in Hong Kong practiced under the British administration.

they are aiming at pleasing the imperialists and capitalists in Hong Kong. They hope that the minimum convulsions will incur, sovereignty can be smoothly transferred, and Hong Kong can remain a free port or financial centre and continue to be a source of foreign currency.

But when the CCP regains sovereignty over Hong Kong, establishes it as a 'special zone', allows 'one country with two systems' and tolerates the existence of foreign and Chinese capitalists, it will not however tolerate the exercise of true democratic freedoms by the people. This is evident from the three decades of CCP rule in China, from the present secret way by which Britain and Beijing negotiate the future of Hong Kong, and from the fact that the Hong Kong people's democratic freedoms have never been mentioned.

On the other hand, the maintenance of capitalism in Hong Kong means the preservation of colonial economic forces in Hong Kong. With the Constitution of the People's Republic of China protecting the capitalist order, it actually means the establishment of a varied form of colonial rule in Hong Kong, the new element added being the joint exploitation of the CCP bureaucrats and the red capitalists. The majority of the Hong Kong residents are unwilling to accept this schema of retaining old chains and adding new oppression.

One must fight for a desired perspective by one's own efforts. If the people of Hong Kong do not want to passively accept their fate, they must make a conscious choice and fight for a truly democratic self-rule of Hong Kong and give the idea the content they desire.

## Highest

To realise this, a people's congress elected on a fully democratic basis must be set up. It will become the highest organ of power and will have the full power to decide all important questions. The congress will elect a standing committee to exercise its powers while it is not in convention. This is the most concrete, democratic and effective form of self-rule of Hong Kong by the Hong Kong people.

For this form of self-rule to be ultimately achieved, one must first strive for the following:

1. Political democratisation. Make use of all channels to express political views on the present and future of Hong Kong. Expose the reaction of theories which uphold the effectiveness of the colonial treaties and Britain's continued rule of Hong Kong. Explain the necessity of self-rule of Hong Kong by the Hong Kong people on a fully democratic basis. The Chinese labouring people who constitute the majority of Hong Kong's population have the right and the ability to decide their own destiny.

2. Guarantee that all citizens in Hong Kong enjoy all democratic rights including the rights of speech, strike, rally, association and formation of political parties. All political organisations have the right of public rally, postulation of their ideas, winning of mass support and intervention in politics. Abolish all political repression and colonial laws and regulations. Heighten the people's political consciousness and enthusiasm for intervention in politics.

3. Concrete guarantee of the interests of the people, especially the labouring masses. Practice a social insurance system, with unemployment aids and compensations for unpaid wages or dismissal. Prevent capitalists

from arbitrary closure of factories. Freeze all price increases of public utilities and rental of public housing. Nationalise public utilities. Sliding scale of workers' wages.

4. The ten billions of Hong Kong dollars of reserves comes from the labour of the Hong Kong people and it should be used for Hong Kong's education, health and other social welfare enterprises. It could finance various public construction works to alleviate the unemployment problem.

5. For the above ideals to become the reality, Hong Kong's citizens and workers must first organise themselves around trade unions, labour associations and progressive social groups. Where there are no trade unions, the workers should at once organise one in production units. Promote grassroots general elections, union democratisation. Get rid of the control of the union bureaucracy. All trade unions and progressive groups should practise a great alliance and set up a united front.

6. Make use of all opportunities to participate in democratic elections, such as participation in elections to district councils and the Urban Council. Although the powers of these institutions are very limited, the majority of their members belong to the upper and middle strata of society, and there is as yet no real representative of the labouring classes, yet this does not prevent the citizens to make use of all opportunities of democratic elections to voice their opinion, intervene in social affairs, and strive for the expansion of the powers of these institutions, so that they can have the power to resolve major problems in the district. All councillors must be democratically elected and subject to recall by the electors at any time.

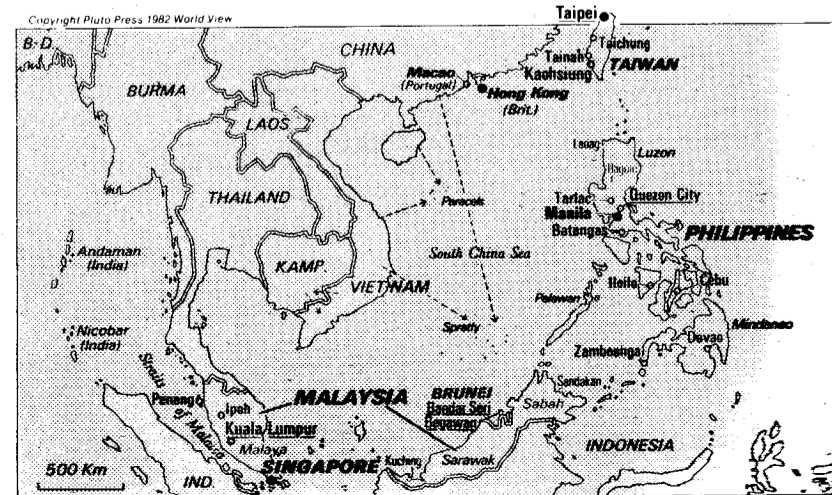
7. The link between Hong Kong and mainland China, Taiwan and Macau is close and inseparable. Important developments of one part have much impact on the other parts. The people of Hong Kong must be closely concerned about the situation and developments of the mainland, Taiwan and Macau, and actively support the struggles of people in the mainland and Taiwan for basic democratic rights and economic interests.

## Waning

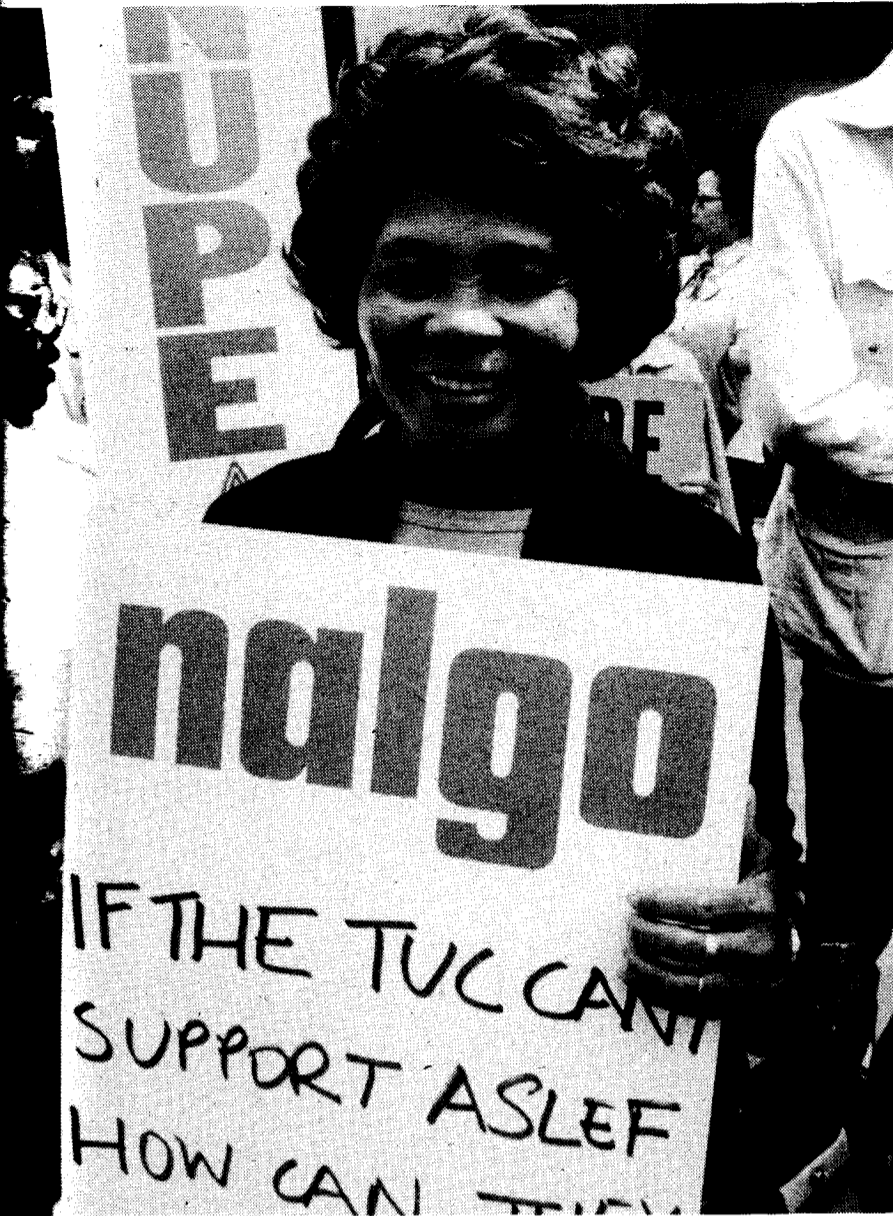
Hong Kong cannot develop independently from China. In a capitalist world that is suffering a general recession and waning, Hong Kong cannot have any perspective of reformism. Only by the political intervention of the Hong Kong labouring people can the term 'self-rule of Hong Kong by the Hong Kong people' be given any actual meaning and prospect. By the gains of their struggles, the Hong Kong people can encourage the struggle of workers and peasants in the mainland for socialist democracy.

Only when this struggle in the mainland is expanded and developed with the ultimate abolition of the rule of bureaucratic dictatorship can the Hong Kong people restore their confidence in their motherland and help the construction of new socialist China.

3 January 1983







Black Nalگو members a force for change.

## NALGO conference: black workers make voice heard

**THE SHADOW** of Labour's defeat in the general election lay heavily across the 1983 conference of the National and Local Government Officers Association in the Isle of Man.

Delegates were acutely aware that as a public sector union they were in the firing line for the Tories' attacks on jobs and conditions.

Conference marked a small but by no means decisive shift to the right. At the same time, the left showed clear steps towards organising its forces for the battles ahead.

In the first major debate, on pay, conference voted to accept a 4 per cent offer, but delegates made it clear that they were deeply dissatisfied with the executive's handling of the claim.

Branches had instructed the NEC to pursue a claim with a substantial flat rate component, ie £15, and to avoid the percentage claims which fell into the incomes policy trap.

In the event, the NEC had let the flat rate claim go by default. Delegates went on to censure the NEC for its failure to campaign in the membership for the full claim.

The censure debate, while centering on wages, reflected the wider concerns of delegates. It was clear that many NALGO activists are distinctly unhappy with the present leadership and regard it as an inadequate instrument for the future fights with

the Tories. Unfortunately, there was no alternative leadership capable of putting up a challenge to the right. Steps are being taken to rectify this.

A Broad Left rally, at which Ian Stevenson from Bury spoke, was attended by nearly 200 people.

The Bury branch has recently conducted a successful fight against privatisation of refuse collection.

The meeting decided on a number of steps towards establishing a national Broad Left in the union. Activists recognised that a Broad Left which was concerned only with elections was not an adequate organisation for dealing with the problems faced by the union.

Equally, however, effective building in the workplace needed to be combined with a fight to establish a more adequate leadership at national

level. The meeting decided to build a conference on privatisation in the autumn and to establish a steering committee to contact all the branches of NALGO in the next few months, with the aim of preparing for setting up a Broad Left over the next year.

The combination of preparing for a left that can challenge for leadership of the union with building on the fight against privatisation is a major step forward for the union.

This turn towards preparing NALGO for the battles ahead was also shown in a debate on campaigning for an effective shop stewards system.

Again, conference voted overwhelmingly for a motion from Newham and other branches which instructed the NEC to campaign for all branches to establish a shop stewards organisation.

The overwhelming vote on the shop stewards system is an important break with the professional association traditions that have dominated the union for many years. It was yet another indication that the union is preparing for a battle to defend the members against the Tory attacks.

There was a major debate on the issue of racism in the union. Conference was sharply divided on a motion from the Metropolitan District Council, inspired by the Black Workers Group. The motion called for 'affirmative action by the union at all levels to combat personal and institutional racism'.

On two issues in particular, there was opposition in conference. One was the drawing up of 'appropriate rules and procedures to discipline and expel NALGO members found to guilty of perpetuating racism'. The other was on a call for 'all vacancies to be advertised externally and internally simultaneously'.

The motion was defeated by 219,600 to 43,900. Despite this the Black Workers Group was put firmly on the map in NALGO, and will be continuing its campaign in the next year.

Increasingly NALGO is less and less like the professional union of yesteryear. It is more and more made up of low paid workers, many of them women and black. These are the forces of change which will show itself in the face of the Tories' attacks.

## COHSE conference: defend the health service

by Mark Whyte,  
delegate COHSE 211 branch (personal capacity)  
LAST WEEK'S conference of COHSE, the health workers union, provided an early indication of the mood of trade unionists in the wake of the Tories' general election victory.

Despite a certain amount of demoralisation following the betrayal of our long pay dispute last year, the conference showed that there is still plenty of willingness for a fight back against the Tories.

From our National Executive Committee we heard a lot of rhetoric against the Tories and we were urged to organise for Labour victory at the general election.

Many delegates replied that we could not wait five years, but must begin to build a movement of opposition to kick out the Tories and defend the NHS immediately.

Evidence of the support for a fight back was given by the passing of a resolution, by a 2-1 majority, committing the union to all-out defiance of the Tories anti-union legislation, despite cautious calls from the NEC to abide by the law and not to put the union's funds in danger.

### Agreed

The conference agreed that the greatest threat facing the NHS was that of privatisation and the growth of private medicine. Conference committed the NEC to launch a massive campaign, including industrial action against privatisation.

Unfortunately another motion calling for official backing for any industrial action against privatisation, and calling for a national conference of all NHS shop stewards in TUC unions was narrowly defeated. After the ex-

perience of the way that the TUC health services committee failed to give an adequate lead during the pay dispute, such a conference could have represented a big step forward.

Following the pay dispute many strong joint union shop stewards committees have been formed. It's a shame therefore that the conference voted against moves to amalgamate with NUPE.

Such isolationism will need to be combatted and unity built at a local level, if we are to successfully defeat the Tories' plans for the NHS.

The conference adopted an excellent resolution calling for improvement in child care facilities in the NHS, improvements in the rights of working parents and opposition to nursery closures. Conference also finally resolved the long running dispute about affiliation to the National Abortion Campaign, following the NEC refusal to implement a conference resolution two years ago when delegates instructed the NEC to affiliate to NAC forthwith.

Conference approved moves to make the union's delegation to the Labour Party conference more democratic, but unfortunately we were unsuccessful in committing the union to opposition to the witch hunt.



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

COHSE members during 1982 dispute.

David Williams, COHSE's new general secretary, showed that he was committed to the witch hunt and a campaign to reverse this will now have to be built.

The broad left in the union, Group '81, formed at the 1981 conference, attracted considerable support throughout the week,

including several well attended fringe meetings. From the conference, supporters' meetings will be held in all regions followed by a national meeting later in the summer to decide policy and coordinate the fight back in the union.

\* An emergency resolution put to the conference to back Neil Kinnock for

the leadership of the Labour Party was not discussed.

Instead all COHSE branches will be sent copies of the manifestos for the leader and deputy leader. The Labour Party delegation of the union will be bound by the majority decision of the branches.

## Gay rights demo rocks Isle of Man

ONE OF the high points of the 1983 NALGO conference was a 300-strong demonstration in support of gay rights which presented a petition to the Manx Parliament.

By Theresa Conway

The petition protested against the laws which rule that male homosexuality is still completely illegal in

the Isle of Man. The demonstration received front page coverage in the local press and was mentioned on local radio and TV.

It was followed by a debate on conference floor which decided NALGO would not hold another conference on the island until the law was changed.

The motion also called on the union to boycott other venues where the local authority contravened NALGO policy on such issues as privatisation.

Earlier in the week

a highly successful fringe meeting on gay rights was held which discussed ways of fighting anti-gay prejudice in the union.

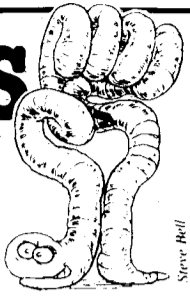
There was also a press conference to launch the union's new pamphlet on gay rights, possibly the first produced by any national trade union. Nevertheless NALGO leadership attitudes during the debate on the issue showed there is a long way to go.



Gay Pride March 1979



# WORM'S EYE VIEW



## Fair trading

SOCIALIST Action's award to industry goes this year to the British owned Falkland Islands Company which owns 43 per cent of the islands and employs nearly half the population.

OK, many true patriots got upset when the Argentinians occupied the island. But the company's enterprising bosses learned the first law of capitalism which is that profit comes first. Misfortune could be turned into hard cash.

When the Argentinians started digging trenches to resist the company's 'liberators' the company sold the Argentinians tons of wool to line their trenches and dug outs.

The company charged the Argentinians £2 a kilo instead of the market price of £1.40 a kilo, which was their contribution to the



Mr Needham chairperson of Coalite should call at our office so we can give him the Socialist Action Award to Industry.

undermining of Galtieri's economy. Believing in the old adage 'waste not want not', after the war it reclaimed the bales and shipped them back to Britain as damaged goods.

Now people are complaining about the company's lack of patriotism in trading with the enemy. How stupid can they get? According to Margaret Thatcher its patriotic to make a profit and that is exactly what this subsidiary of the

Derbyshire firm Coalite did.

Nor, I am glad to say, does the company believe in feather-bedding the public sector. The British army is charged £1.50 a head per night for billeting those 'brave lads' who freed the islands to boost Coalite's profits.

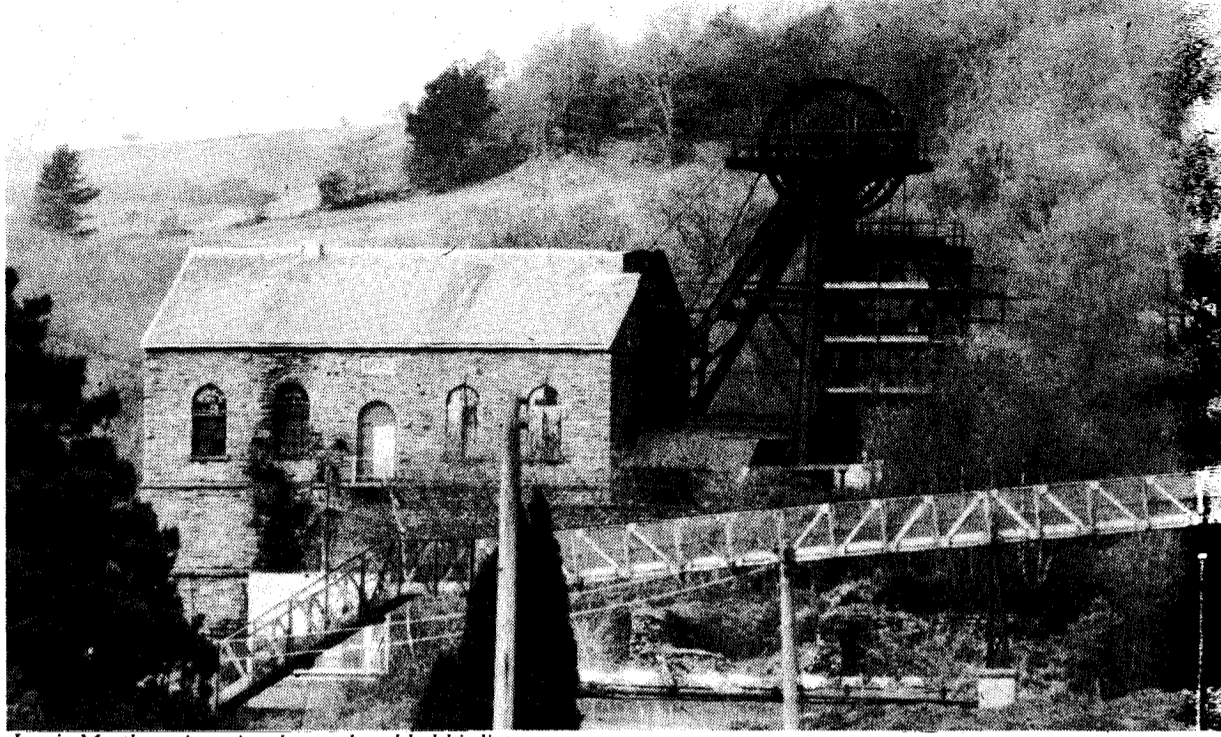
One of their three bedroomed houses in Goose Green housed 16 soldiers a night. When someone complained this was overcrowding the company explained most of the boys are afraid of the dark and don't like sleeping on their own.

That billet grossed Coalite £650 a month. Normally the cottage is rented out for £60 a month. You can see the advantages of privatisation over the heavily subsidised public sector — especially if you have shares in the private one.

However Coalite is not against a bit of charity. It even donated £50,000 out of its £5 million assets to the South Atlantic Fund for service men and their families. This presumably is marked down as tax-deductable.

Compiled by BOB PENNINGTON. Send contributions to Worm's Eye, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday a week prior to publication.

# Miners set to fight closures



Lewis Merthyr pit — its closure heralded hit list

THE WORST FEARS of the National Union of Mineworkers about the 'hit list' of so-called uneconomic pits have proved justified.

Less than a week after Thatcher was returned to Number 10, the National Coal Board announced closure plans involving the loss of 65,000 mining jobs.

Brynllyw colliery near Gorseinon is the latest South Wales pit to be threatened with 638 jobs at risk. Philip Weekes, the NCB area director, claims the pit is uneconomic, despite the report of an investigating team which included mining experts from the Board itself.

The report found that there were at least 15 years of workable reserves left in the pit and that Brynllyw should actually be expanded and new seams opened; but their recommendations have been overruled.

The miners at Brynllyw are in no mood to accept

the NCB's judgement. As Eric Davies, lodge secretary, puts it:

'The reason that we are in a precarious position is simply because we have been starved of men, machinery and development capital. The men at Brynllyw have had a stomachful of this.'

Now that the hit list has become a reality miners will be seeking to link together the threatened pits and develop solidarity action.

The situation at Brynllyw is not unique, but

left on their own they can be defeated, as the experience of Lewis Merthyr at the beginning of this year showed.

In their attempts to 'improve operating costs' and 'balance their books' the NCB are quite prepared to close pits with substantial workable reserves. Feasibility studies and 'expert' reports will not save such pits.

As Arthur Scargill said of the Tories' plans, last week, 'it is time to stand up and fight.'

# Telecoms Bill battle starts with Mercury

BT MANAGEMENT have thrown down the gauntlet to the newly elected left executive of the POEU. They have begun to send workers home for refusing to connect the privately owned Mercury system to the state network.

Mercury is a business communications system based on the latest development in office technology. This is the first challenge to the POEU conference decision to fight the privatisation of the industry.

The fight against privatisation and Mercury are linked. The business-only Mercury system was given permission by the government to compete against BT at an early stage. Most of the groundwork has been done, but without connection to the state system its cost would hugely increase.

By Pat Hickey

Mercury has run into a number of technical difficulties, which puts a question over its viability.

For example, the initial plan to lay the optical fibre cables alongside British Rail tracks has had to be abandoned, due to the effect of vibration. The latest idea is to connect it to British Rail's communication system.

Whatever its economic viability its political significance in opening up BT to private competition is important.

Alongside the encouragement of private competition the Tories are preparing further plans. The government will be reintroducing the Telecoms Bill, shelved when the general election was called.

However instead of a straight sell-off of 51 per cent as originally proposed the Tories will be adopting a more piecemeal approach.

This is not because the government is concerned to protect workers in BT. The reason is that the size of such a sell-off around £4bn would swamp the stock market. The new Bill, will allow the government to sell off BT by means to be decided later on.

The new approach is to achieve privatisation by selling off parts of the business such as specialised customer equipment and various business ser-

vices. The reorganisation within BT, based on local profit centres, will facilitate this approach.

Firms like Plessey's which are heavily dependent on BT orders and have enjoyed a virtual monopoly will be given time to adjust to the changed conditions.

But there will be no such breathing space for the workforce.

Management have opened their campaign by sending a letter to all workers and their homes last week trying to persuade them not to support the action. This is the first shot in their propaganda campaign to undermine the new executive.

## Mandate

But the POEU is shaping up for battle. Following the vote on no confidence in the union's Industrial Action Sub-Committee at annual conference, a new committee has been appointed, which more accurately reflects conference decisions.

Meetings are being held with the leaderships of the branches who led the action against the Telecoms Bill last time round, and an industrial



Post Office engineers on City of London picket before general election

Photo: GM COOKSON

action bulletin has gone out to branches already.

The mandate given to the committee by conference was to take industrial action as soon as the measure enters Parlia-

ment. This seems likely to coincide with the first reading of the Bill.

In the meantime the fight against Mercury will set the battle lines for the fight against the Tories.

# Union rights won in Manchester

AN IMPORTANT victory for union rights was won at the Manchester firm of Barber and Colman this week. On Monday the 100-strong Trafford Park work force voted to return to work after six days of strike action.

The company had conceded to their demands for union recognition and for the reinstatement of four of their colleagues who had been made compulsorily redundant.

Two of the four including Jon Silberman, who had been one of the prime movers behind the unionisation drive, had been given a matter of minutes to pack up and leave the premises.

Now there will be a period of six weeks during which there will be negotiations to find alternatives to compulsory redundancies.

Throughout the negotiations spanning the whole strike the management had stubbornly refused to accept reinstatement.

They know only too well how strong union organisation will lead to drastic changes in the Victorian working conditions and ultimately the wage rates of the workforce. They had proposed a number of different formulas which recognised the union, but which kept Jon and the others outside the gates.

What changed their minds was the escalation of the dispute to the other Barber and Colman factories in nearby Sale. The strike committee leafleted

the Sale factory on the fourth morning of the strike and arranged for some of the Sale workers, a dozen or so, to come to the pub at dinner-time to discuss what was going on.

In all nearly seventy turned up, taking over the beer garden. They then arranged for a second meeting the following day, at which about a hundred turned up and after a full discussion voted unanimously to support the Trafford Park workforce and respect their picket.

The developments at Sale forced management to concede. On Friday managing director Jim Norton was broadcasting on the radio threatening to close the factory and appealing to the strikers wives. By Saturday afternoon an agreement had been made with a negotiating team that guaranteed full union recognition and reinstatement.

The strike was well supported in the local labour movement. Some £300 was raised in the first week, but perhaps most important of all was the depth of action involved by all the strikers in the dispute.

Regular mass meetings were held, the overwhelming bulk of the workforce were on the picket line and every day about a quarter of the workforce were involved in delegations to other factories.

A strong rank and file strike committee gained invaluable experience. The stage is set for a strong new union shop in the heartland of Manchester industry.



# Socialist ACTION

# Solidarity!

## GREENHAM COMMON

against nuclear weapons can easily become lost in futile confrontations with the cops.

What is needed is to tap the huge support that exists in the labour movement — and especially from the unions — and build mass action against the missiles, including strike action.

It is important to support the blockade, and just as crucial to lobby the unions and the TUC to demand that they start to organise their own initiatives in the anti-missiles campaign.

The Transport and General Workers Union conference also meets from 4-8 July, and has a unilateralist policy and argues for the TUC to take action against the missiles. At the same time as the blockade, the T&G conference should be lobbied to ensure they strengthen their commitment to stop cruise and Trident, and force the TUC to organise action.

● *Continuous blockade of Greenham Common USAF base, 4-8 July.*

The demonstration at Greenham in December had just that effect. It was a show of strength of the women's peace movement and it generated confidence and a real feeling that we can win.

By Valerie Coultas

But after the mass arrests at Upper Heyford and the return of the Tories, it is unlikely that the July blockade won't exactly be treated with kid gloves by the police.

The energy, initiative and enthusiasm that the women's peace movement have brought to the fight

### Regional mobilisations:

Monday 4	International and Scotland
Tues 5	Wales Ireland, SW England
Weds 6	London
Thur 7	SE England
Fri 8	North and Midlands

Further information: send SAE to July 4 Action, London Greenham Office, 5 Leonard Street, London EC2 (01-251 3133)

FOR A week in July, the US airbase at Greenham will be the target of an international blockade.

The starting date is 4 July, which has been chosen because it is American independence day and women want to show their rejection of America's war plans for Europe.

Socialist Action will be arguing for labour movement delegations to support the blockade. We hope that it will be possible to build on the links made with the Labour Party and trade unions on the International Women's Day for Disarmament in May.

Every action in the campaign against the missiles has to be seen from the point of view of building the biggest wave of opposition to these deadly weapons.



Photo JOHN HARRIS

## Courtroom farce at Roach inquest

TO BE present at the inquest into the death of Colin Roach is to see close up the contempt the British legal system holds for black people.

The Roach family sit among their supporters in the public section of the court listening with pent-up anger to the arrogant police denials of their own statements, their own claims of police harassment and callousness.

Journalists wait bored, their notebooks on their knees, not concerned unless some sensational outburst takes place — something which will make good copy.

Meanwhile, the mockery of justice continues. The greatest victory for the Roach family would get would be the declaration of an open verdict, meaning that Colin

Christmas. Attempts were made in questioning him to prove Colin to have been mentally ill. David stated that Colin had never struck him as strange, just quiet. He did, though, David said, talk to himself. This was seen as very relevant. But then, David admitted, he talked to himself too.

Next, Detective Constable David Pointer was questioned. His story of the happenings on 12 January when Colin died was incoherent and contradictory.

When asked by Michael Mansfield, acting on behalf of the Roach family, how he knew it was

exactly 11.35pm when he discovered Colin's body he was completely unable to give a firm answer. He knew because it was in his diary.

But did he not write his diary up on the same day as he wrote the statement, the day after Colin's death? Then it must have been from the station duty book.

### Book

But when did he fill the duty book in? Several minutes after discovering Colin.

Then how did he know exactly what the time was? Pointer was stuck for a moment for an answer. He then fell back on claiming it was a policeman's intuition to have an awareness of the time of events.

A member of the jury, a young black man, asked to put a question to DC Pointer.

What time, he asked, did Pointer's questioning start that afternoon? The copper looked confused. After several seconds of deep thought, he answered. He was wrong. The point had been proven — never trust a copper's intuition.

Next in the dock came Sergeant Pearce. Under the questioning of Michael Mansfield his evidence, too, was shown to be full of holes.

The worst aspect of what he told the court,

though, was how he treated Colin Roach upon finding him slumped in the police station foyer. He admitted Colin could have been unconscious.

How did he try to find out whether he was still alive? By shouting at him, Pearce stated. But didn't he feel his pulse? Oh no, certainly not, because he might have been dead, and you never move a dead body. The court was stunned.

Whatever the verdict of the jury, and whatever the circumstances of Colin's death, which will remain extremely uncertain beyond this inquest, one thing is proven for certain. The police of Stoke Newington have a savage disregard and a brute hostility to the black community of the neighbourhood.

### Stop press

Monday, 20 June. After being out for three hours the jury in the Colin Roach inquest returned a majority verdict of 8 to 2 of suicide.

This followed clear directions from the coroner that no other verdict was appropriate.

Barnor Hesse, of the Roach Family Support Committee, announced that the verdict was irrelevant — all that would satisfy the Roach family and their supporters would be a full and public enquiry.



Photo G.M. COOKSON

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