

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST



Tories terrorise the unemployed

See centre pages

NUS conference:

Pages 5 and 12

Reagan pays for murder



US terror in Nicaragua

The picture on the left shows the mutilated body of a Nicaraguan killed by the so-called Contra terrorist organisation, which conducts murderous raids into Nicaragua to kill innocent people and cause economic havoc and destruction there.

The picture on the right shows the bemused face of a muddled, ignorant and very right-wing old buffer who happens to be the most popular president in US history, Ronald Reagan.

This old man finances the Contra Butchers, many of whom are former members of the 'National Guard' which terrorised the people of Nicaragua for the former dictator Somoza until he was overthrown in the popular Sandanista revolution of 1979.

Reagan's government is being rocked by a scandal caused by the revelation that it had secretly shipped arms to Iran — a country to which it is officially very hostile and denounces as a supporter of international terrorism. Everyone knows how hostile



to 'terrorists' Mr Reagan is, for in April his aeroplanes bombed Libya killing children to punish the Libyan government for supporting 'international terrorism'.

It has now come out that the money paid to the world's leading professional anti-terrorist for arms by the terroristic and vicious Iranian government was used to finance the Contra terrorists in their war against the people of Nicaragua!

Proof

This is one more proof that those who rule America today are among the biggest connivers, gangsters, terrorists — and double-dyed hypocrits! — in the world.

HANDS OF NICARAGUA!

WHETTON'S
WEEK



Labour and the UDM

The lifting of the South Wales overtime ban is perhaps inevitable since the Coal Board have conceded the pay offer and back pay. I would have liked to see them continue until the Coal Board had made some commitment on sacked miners, but I suppose it is understandable.

I believe the UDM's decision to stand a candidate in Mansfield would jeopardise the Labour seat there. We warned all through the strike what these people were like. Nobody listened to us, particularly the leadership of the Labour Party. Now they've had their noses rubbed in; and to come dashing up on a peace-seeking mission is a little bit ludicrous. It's too late and the poison has gone too deep.

As for us, it's part of Newark Labour Party's standing orders that to be a member you have to be a member of a bona fide trade union. If Militant and all the others are in defiance of rules, standing orders and the constitution, then certainly these so-called individual UDM members are.

And the Labour Party leadership should realise what these UDM people have done to us. They've seen people with 30 years' work in the industry sacked and done nothing; they've organised to try and smash our union; and now they're organising against the Labour Party.

Paul Whetton is the secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

Certainly I would take back into the NUM any UDM members who wanted to come back over — with a few exceptions. But there will be no truck as far as I'm concerned with the organisation known as the UDM!

I'm not at all surprised at what Don Concannon is doing. He seems to have got himself in a hole and doesn't know which way to turn to get out of it. All I can say is the sooner he goes, the better.

He talked about "political apartheid" in Nottinghamshire. There certainly is "apartheid", but it's us who are getting the raw deal. Everybody is bending over backwards to encourage the UDM: the Coal Board, the government, the media — all attempting to stamp out the NUM.

But we are here to stay, never mind what Concannon says, or what any "peace-keeping" mission from the NEC might come up with. Concannon is going along with the threat of many more pit closures, not just in other coalfields but in Nottinghamshire itself.

The sacked and jailed miners' campaign is still going. People forget there are still 500 sacked and/or jailed miners. It's refreshing to go to places for meetings, like Southampton last week, and find that students and workers still remember those 500. We are having a Christmas Party for the sacked miners' kids in the Welfare, and we've also invited the Silentside strikers and their families to join us with their kids and enjoy themselves, as a sign of solidarity of workers in struggle. And that in itself is helping to keep the issue alive.

We are asking people to affiliate to the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign.

I went to the church service at the weekend in Sheffield for the 177 South African miners who were effectively murdered and I think it is very important that we identify with our black comrades in South Africa. Some South African NUM leaders were there. They certainly helped us in our dispute, and we intend to help them as much as we can during their difficult times. We will maintain direct links with them, exchange ideas and perhaps assist financially where possible. Certainly we must keep those close links together.

Bigots protected

Meeting last Wednesday, 26 November, the Labour Party National Executive Committee (NEC) gave the thumbs up to religious bigotry by curtailing the suspension of Midlothian Labour District Councillor Ian Campbell.

Speaking at a rally of the Orange Order in Leith at the close of June, Campbell had referred to Catholics as "the enemy", called for the closure of Catholic schools, and appealed to Protestants to withhold TV licence fees because of alleged Catholic influence on television programmes.

Campbell — who had come close

By Stan Crooke

to being elected chairperson of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the leading local government position in Scotland, shortly before his diatribe — subsequently resigned from being convenor of Midlothian District Council, and also from membership of the Orange Order.

The Council Labour Group condemned Campbell's speech, disassociated itself from his views, and withdrew the Labour whip from him indefinitely. He was not, however, expelled from the Labour Party.

Even so, Campbell regarded such a penalty as "too severe" and appealed against the indefinite suspension. The appeal hearing, held last month in Edinburgh agreed with him and proposed that the suspension be limited to six months, until the end of February. Last week's meeting of the NEC agreed to this recommendation.

Sordid

Even from Kinnock's own sordid standpoint of crude electoral opportunism, such a decision is amazing — the large Catholic vote, especially in the West of Scotland, will be less than enthusiastic about backing a party which includes the likes of

Campbell among its members.

But such a consideration is of less than secondary importance against the basic point of principle. Substitute "Jew" for "Catholic" in Campbell's diatribe and the poisonous venom of Campbell's speech becomes self-evident. Even so, Campbell has received no more than a slap across the wrist from the NEC. Thus, while the NEC has sanctioned the expulsion of a total of five socialists from the Labour Party in Scotland after they challenged undemocratic practices in different CLPs, on the grounds of "bringing the party into disrepute", it seems that the NEC has now decided that narrow religious bigotry does bring the party into disrepute

Labour's unjust procedures

From CLPD

The Labour Party's new disciplinary procedures closely reflect the intentions of the dominant group in the National Executive Committee (NEC). They will provide procedures which will avoid the most obvious injustices while ensuring that left activists can easily be expelled from the party.

The fact that the distribution of seats will give the unions a seven votes to four majority will predispose the National Constitutional Committee (NCC) to expel left activists, and any possible tendency towards tolerance can easily be stamped out by the NEC using its power to interpret the Constitution and Rules. In addition the new rule concerning conduct prejudicial to the party may be used to legitimise action against those who organise to gain acceptance for their viewpoint.

The powers of the NCC have been restricted to making disciplinary decisions on matters referred to it by CLPs and the NEC, and certain local government matters. It may provide some protection against CLPs who use minor local disagreements to expel members who are in a minority. It may also provide for some consistency in disciplinary matters, but as the Constitution will still be interpreted by a capricious and intolerant NEC, future guidelines are likely to be restrictive.

The procedures prevent the person accused calling witnesses unless permission is granted by the NCC while allowing the 'prosecution' an unfettered right to call witnesses.

The NCC may refuse to allow legal representation and no person other than a lawyer may represent the accused. This denial of representation is most likely to lead to injustice in cases involving persons who are unable properly to represent themselves, and cannot obtain the services of a lawyer.

The rules allow the NCC to ask witnesses questions but do not say whether the accused has a right to question those giving evidence against him.

The new procedures include some straws for victims to clutch at, such as the emphasis on the desirability of warnings and disciplinary action only being a last resort. These will provide some opportunity for argument but when the vote is taken the will of the right wing majority will assert itself.

In view of the inability of the new procedures to prevent the expulsions of left activists the forthcoming



Picket at Chilean Embassy in solidarity with the struggle against the regime. Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

elections to the NCC cannot be viewed with unalloyed enthusiasm. Anyone serving on the NCC as a representative of the CLPs is likely to be in a permanent minority. However, there are still arguments which can be put by the minority on the NEC. The NCC will function whatever the attitude of the left, and it is important to ensure that it is not entirely composed of those who preach intolerance. CLPD will be seeking to ensure that the outcome of the elections is as favourable as the present climate permits.

In the meantime there will be some on the right who are preparing to achieve political advances by intimidation and I am preparing my defence. It begins 'I am not and never have been...'

Support this slate

DIVISION 3 — CLPs (3 members)
John Burrows, (Chesterfield CLP); Mandy Moore, (Tottenham CLP); Ken Slater, (Hyndburn CLP).

DIVISION 4 — Women (2 members)
Vera Derer, (Hendon South CLP); Margaret Vallins, (Chesterfield CLPD). CLPD also supports the following candidates for Divisions 1 and 2:

DIVISION 1 — Trade Unions (5 members).

Owen Briscoe, (NUM); John Jones, (TASS); T. O'Neill, (Bakers); Alan Quinn, (TGWU); Irene Rowe, (FTATU).

DIVISION 2 — Socialist and Co-op Organisations (1 member).
Jim Layzell (Co-op Retail Services Limited, London Region, Political Committee).



Lebanon fighting

Bitter fighting between Palestinians and the Shi'ite Moslem Amal movement, thought to be the strongest militia in Lebanon, is continuing in Southern Lebanon.

The Palestinians, and particularly the PLO is fighting primarily to try to secure the existence of thousands of dispossessed Palestinians in refugee camps in Beirut, Sidon and Tyre, and secondly to weaken the position of the Syrian-backed Shi'ites in the south which the PLO sees as objectively aiding Israeli interests by keeping the Israeli-Lebanon border area relatively quiet.

The fighting, which began at Rashidiyeh camp near Tyre (close to the Israeli border) two months ago, has now spread to Maghdousheh, east of the

port city of Sidon, a hillside village overlooking the largest concentrations of Palestinians in Lebanon, and to Chatilla and Bourj Barajneh camps, east of Beirut near the Druze mountains.

Against the odds (Amal has been using Syrian tanks), the PLO seems to be getting the upper hand in these battles. This means that Israel is likely to step up their regular bombings of Palestinian refugee camps and to increase its blockading of the port and coastline of Sidon. And the possibility of a further military invasion by the Israeli army may be brought nearer.

Repression in Seoul

Over 70,000 riot police sealed off Seoul, the capital of South Korea, at the weekend to suppress a demonstration calling for

civil rights and constitutional change.

Tube stations were closed, taxi drivers told not to pick up young people, and tear gas and batons liberally used to break up any groups of people who looked as if they might be attempting to attend the rally. 2000 people who did manage to get through to the rally called by the New Korea Democratic Party, the country's main opposition group, were picked up and detained by the police.

US falls behind

West Germany seems set to take over from the US this year as the world's largest exporter of goods — a position the US has held for over 60 years since taking over from Britain in 1921.

According to a forecast published by GATT (the Geneva-based General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade organisation) US exports rose in value by just over 1% to \$180 billion in the first ten months of this year, while West German exports increased by 34.5% to \$200 billion. However, when imports are taken into account, the US remains the world's biggest trading nation.

El Vino's

Psst...Crusader here. The Voice of Britain. I'll say this only once so play close attention. My mission is to unmask pinko traitors. I've plenty of suspects. Sir Roger Hollis for starters. Problem: He is dead. My masters at SSERPXE want live mole — better copy. Then intelligence expert Nigel West (cover — mild mannered Tory candidate for Torbay 'Rupert Allason') comes up with astonishing accusation — Lord Rothschild is our man. He arranged for publication of Wright's book. How did Rothschild know Wright? West says the man who masterminded the meeting between Rothschild and Wright NONE OTHER THAN ANTHONY BLUNT!

But my masters don't like this. Peer of the realm, great family and all that. Rothschild definately not a pinko traitor. Former SSERPXE Chapman Pincher, brought out of retirement to clear Rothschild.

by Jim Denham

Now Pincher mixed up in whole business. Vitaly important to kill rumour that Rothschild and former MI6 head, Sir Arthur Franks passed state secrets to Pincher for his book. Then story comes out that 'M' herself sanctioned Pincher's book written in conjunction with Wright!

Things looking very bad. Armstrong making complete pillock of himself down-under. Haver's refusing to carry the can and is threatening to spill the beans if Armstrong doesn't change his story in court. SSERPXE Control says: 'Take the heat off 'M' at all costs'. Pincher says Labour party masterminding 'dirty tricks' campaign to same HMG over bungled Sidney job. Kinnock putting Party before country etc.

Best of all we can reveal that Kinnock has been colluding with that smart arsed, Aussie lawyer. Damn near treachery when you think about it!

Oops! How did we know about Kinnock's collusion? Oh dear! Don't say Pincher's old cronies in MI5 put a tap on the Welsh windbag's phone? Not just after it's come out about the Young Turks burglarising Wilson, plotting military coups and so on? Very bad timing. Fouled up the whole SSERPXE operation. Campbell-Savours, Dalyell and the rest of the pinko rabble baying for M's blood, demanding investigations into MI5 etc.

New instructions now issued from Control: 'Abort whole operation'. Find a Fall-guy to take the blame for the whole balls-up. Bad luck on Sir Robert. But then he did take a swing a one of our photographers, didn't he? How about, 'he's a wally amongst the Wallabies'?



The heroic miners took on the Tory Government and fought against pit closures for 'economic' reasons, and for people to be put before profit. These ideas implied socialism. Photo: John Harris

Tell Sid, the answer is Socialism

A system of society in which the workshops, factories, docks, railways, shipyards etc. shall be owned by the nation... seems best calculated to secure the highest form of industrial efficiency combined with the greatest amount of individual freedom from state despotism...

State ownership and control is not necessarily socialist — if it were, then the army and the navy, the police, the judges, the gaolers, the informers and the hangmen would all be socialist functionaries as they are all state officials — but the ownership by the state of all the lands and material for labour combined with the cooperative control by the workers of such land and materials, would be socialist...

To the cry of the middle-class reformers, 'Make this or that the property of the government', we reply — 'yes, in proportion as the workers are ready to make the government their property'.

James Connolly

EDITORIAL

There are overwhelming reasons why the labour movement should oppose and fight every single act of privatisation. Privatisation is a central part of the Tory onslaught on working class wages and conditions. Privatisation is another name for a series of organised robberies of society orchestrated for the rich by the Tory government. It is part of an ideological offensive against any sort of socialism. So 'Sid' should be told not to let himself be used and conned.

There is more to it though, and it is more complicated than it seems.

Why have the Tories got away with so much without provoking a powerful working class movement against privatisation? And the signs are that if the government lasts it will be able to press ahead with more and bigger denationalisations without provoking much of a fight, except perhaps from those whose conditions are immediately and directly affected.

Much that the Tories are doing is popular and much that they are dismantling is unpopular. The labour movement has been put on the defensive politically and ideologically.

What is the answer to what ideologically committed, militantly capitalist, Tory government is doing? When Mrs Thatcher says she is out to change the political balance in Britain decisively and to kill socialism, what do we say? It isn't enough to say 'Defend Nationalisation' — though we should say that.

One reason why the working class hasn't roused itself to fight against privatisation is that Nationalisation in Britain has never been working class or socialist. The model of the public corporation adopted for Nationalised bodies by the 1945 government locked the Nationalised industries into the control of government appointed directors bound the

workers to exploitation for decades to come, to pay compensation to the shareholders.

The workers controlled nothing, least of all their own workaday lives. Even when Nationalisation was very popular and brought serious improvements to the workers — as it did in the coal industry, for example — it still had all these disadvantages. And it brought other disadvantages.

In the coal industry nationalisation was the signal for a close collaboration between the union leaders — Arthur Horner and then Will Painter, both CP members — and the state-appointed management, a partnership which lasted for almost a quarter of a century.

And look what that got the miners — a slow slide in wages, bitter strikes in the 70s, vicious hatching from Ian McGregor in the 80s.

Coal, steel and British Leyland, the industries in which the professional industrial thugs, McGregor and Michael Edwards — the latter appointed by a Labour government — operated most brutally against the workers, are all nationalised industries!

Leon Trotsky

Socialist supported nationalisation as a means of ending exploitation of workers by the bourgeoisie. In Britain nationalisation has been only a different technique for organising that exploitation, always closely integrated with 'privatised' exploitation.

For it to have been otherwise the working class would have had to get rid of all the exploiters, taken political power, and run both industry and society in its own interests.

That is the difference between socialist nationalisation and what we have had. The Irish socialist James Connolly put it all very succinctly long ago. So did Leon Trotsky.

In a pamphlet, 'The death agony of capitalism and the tasks of the Fourth International' — which militant with its idolitrous worship of bureaucratic nationalisation and its practice, where it has had power, in Liverpool of bureaucratic and often bone-headed municipal 'socialism', would do well to remember — Leon Trotsky wrote:

The point is that nationalisation is

The difference between these demands and the muddle-headed reformist slogan of 'nationalisation' lies in the following: (1) we reject indemnification; (2) we warn the masses against demagogues of the People's Front who, giving lip-service to nationalisation, remain in reality agents of capital; (3) we call upon the masses to rely only upon their own revolutionary strength; (4) we link up the question of expropriation with that of seizure of power by the workers and farmers.

only a means to an end: working class emancipation from exploitation. It is not itself the end, and if we forget that we not only confuse the means with the end, but risk losing sight of our real goal.

The problem the left faces with the ideological offensive of the Tories is that much of the demagogic attacks by the Tories on bureaucracy and so on rings true to many workers and therefore a defence of the old bureaucratic nationalisation and municipalisation rings very hollow.

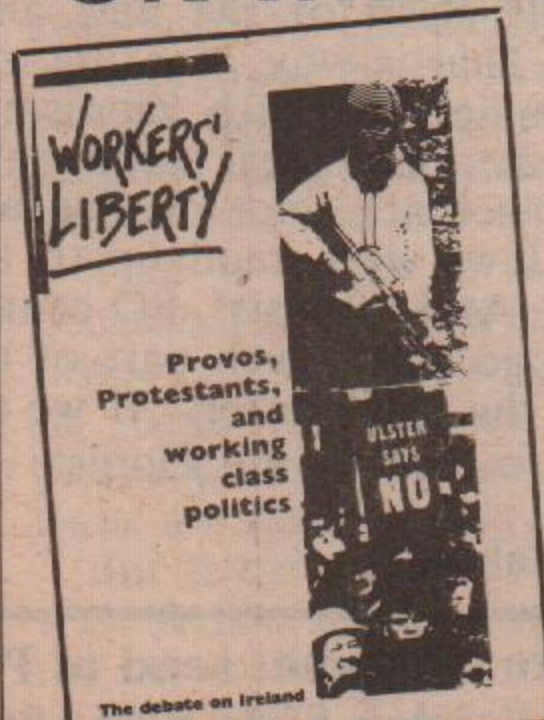
Socialist

The left must not allow its hostility to what the Tories are doing to trap us into a blind political defence of the old pre-Thatcher status quo, of which we were long the most severe critics, albeit from the left.

We must combine defence of working class jobs and conditions in the industries being privatised and active resistance to privatisation with a vigorous ideological offensive of our own in which we counterpose to Thatcherism not bureaucratic nationalisation but libertarian socialism — real socialist forms of public ownership, under workers' control locally and nationally.

Tell Sid the answer is socialism.

Provos, Protestants and working class politics
THE DEBATE ON IRELAND



A unique confrontation between the views on the left. What sort of united Ireland could win the support of Protestants? What way to working class unity?

Workers Liberty no. 5 is available, price £1 plus 18p postage, from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

Stand up to Ideological Terrorism!

Dear Comrades
After Clive Bradley's letter in last weeks SO I'm not sure what his quarrel with Mick Ackersley and Jack Cleary is about. Clive objected to Mick Ackersley's assertion that Zionism logically means support for the right of Israel to exist and that those who support its right to exist are Zionist. Now Clive — who does support the right of Israel to exist concedes that if this is all that is meant by 'Zionism' then he too is a Zionist: 'It would be logically irrefutable'.

Clive insists that Zionism means other things too. Yet nobody proposed that we formally adopt the name — or the ideas and attitudes of the campaigning Zionists, who are usually Jewish chauvinists.

Israel was created by 'a movement of colonial conquest' — of sorts. But people who emphasise this are usually concerned with more than precise classification. They use it to justify a denial of Israel's right to exist and to back up a proposal to roll back the film of history by destroying the Jewish nation in Palestine. It encapsulates a reactionary Arab Revanchist and chauvinist programme.

In any case support for Israel's right to exist does not necessarily imply support for the 'movement of colonial conquest'. We can only relate to that now as an event of past history.

Setting up a Jewish state was a false way to fight anti-semitism in Europe? I'm not so sure about that. By the end of his life Trotsky — though he rejected the Zionist enterprise in Palestine — had come round to the view that a Jewish state was necessary (see SO number 226 — April 10th 1986: 'Trotsky and the Jewish question').

The historic fact is that Zionism wasn't able to save Europe's Jews from anti-semitism, or from massacre. Nothing but the socialist revolution would have saved the Jews. The fascist armies might very well have got to Palestine — they almost did early in the war — and turned it into a death trap for the Jews. Yet that didn't happen: The Jews of Palestine survived, while the Jews of Poland and most of Europe were murdered in their millions. That fact makes one wish that what Isaac Deutscher called 'The Liferaft State' had come into existence before the war.

History

History tells us that all methods of fighting Anti-semitism in Europe failed, and that our method — assimilation — failed more thoroughly and disastrously than the Zionist method; and that it failed most completely in the country where the Jews had been most assimilated — Germany. Trotsky faced up to that fact after a lifetime spent as an assimilatist.

I don't conclude that, therefore, those who said to the Jews 'assimilate and fight for the socialist revolution' were wrong. The tragic outcome wasn't inevitable. But that's how it turned out.

The massacre of the Jews — like so much else — was a byproduct of the defeat of the revolutionary socialist workers movement in the early twentieth century. But the workers were defeated; and the Jews were massacred; and as a knock-on effect terrible things were done — and are still being done — to the Palestinian Arabs (though incomparably less terrible things than were done to the Jews in Europe). From 1986 it is a matter of evaluating the history of the Jews in the 20th century and not what it was in 1900, a choice of programmes — Zionism or assimilation — to fight for.

Israel is a state for all Jews as opposed to a state for its citizens? Yes, but what is wrong with that?

As an ideal a state in which Jews



Palestinians leaving refugee camp near Sidon after bombing by Shi-ite Moslems.

and Arabs would coexist a equal citizens is very attractive. But haven't we all agreed — very belatedly to be sure — that it is a utopia behind which hides the Arab chauvinist demand for the conquest and destruction of the Jewish nation?

Either the Jews have a right to their state, or they don't. And if they do we can't make it conditional on us liking or approving everything they do. Of course while defending Israel's right to exist we champion the Palestinian Arabs within Israel and on the occupied West Bank; we support those Jews who fight Jewish Chauvinism and so on. I can't see why — within that framework and within those qualifications — it is of special concern that Israel says all Jews in the world have a right to Israeli citizenship. Israel is a state conceived as a refuge for all the victims of anti-semitism — why demand that the Israeli's forget this? The law of (Jewish) return and the treatment of the Palestinian Arabs are separable and should be separated.

Surely the big issue here, though, is not just whether our support for the right of the Jews to have a state makes us — strictly speaking — Zionist or not. What makes that important and worth arguing about is that 'Zionist' now is used on the left as a term of condemnation whose emotional content — used to bludgeon, intimidate and stigmatise — is about equal to the term 'racist' and not too far away from 'fascist'. That is the political issue here.

It is necessary for us to stand up to this thinly disguised anti-semitism and to insist that it is based on ideological lies and on pseudo-historical myths about how Israel came into existence.

'The Zionists'

Think about it. On the left 'The Zionists' — read the very big majority of Jews — are stigmatised as Imperialists and racists of the very worst sort. Israel is Imperialism incarnate, with its tentacles everywhere. It was the undercover workings of powerful Jewish conspirators which led to the creation of Israel. Comparisons with Nazism come easy to those who see it like this and are frequently used. It may be only the demented 'Petro-dollar anti-Zionism' of Gerry Healy's old WRP who say all this clearly, but nevertheless that picture is widespread.

All this — despite the crimes of Israel against the Palestinian Arabs — is preposterous! The Jews have been chief single victim of Imperialism in the 20th century. The supposedly 'all-powerful' pre-Israel world Jewish community couldn't even save its own from massacre. It couldn't secure en-

try visas for refugees from Nazism into Britain, the USA, or into any other country — not even to save their lives.

The picture of Zionism and Israel as a creation and tool of Imperialism (as distinct from an ally playing power politics with various imperialisms) is a grotesque historic libel and misrepresentation. That isn't how things happened, or why, whatever the long term plans and machinations of the Zionist movement. The Jews who made modern Israel possible fled to Palestine from murderous Fascism. As late as the all decisive war in 1948 Israel depended not on monopoly capitalist Imperialism but on Moscow and its Czech satellite for the arms without which they might have lost.

Demonic

The picture of modern history and the Jews' demonic place in it, now dominant on the left is if you think about it, not too far off a 'left-wing' version of the 'Blood libel' of the Christian anti-semites, according to which Jews murdered children during their religious rituals.

You don't need to regard Israel and Zionists as they are regarded on much of the left to be able to oppose and condemn aspects of Israel and to demand justice for the Palestinian Arabs.

In fact our equivelant of the blood libel — which owes a great deal to the thinly disguised anti-semitism of the Stalinist movement and its post 1948 campaigns against 'Zionism' — serves another purpose: It backs up and legitimises 'socialist' support for the Arab chauvinist programme of conquering and annihilating the Jewish nation in Palestine.

Clive Bradley has as little time for this horrible nonsense as I have. But I think he hasn't freed himself from emotional attitudes and from hints and half-thoughts which imply attitudes and policies he both rejects and condemns.

The job of SO is to help the left scour itself clean of the new anti-semitism. That is why, working in a political milieu in which Zionism is used as a demonological name tag to morally blackmail and ideologically terrorise Jews who stand up to the hysterical 'Anti-Zionists', SO cannot afford to go along even part of the way with the blackmailers. If we are Zionists, so then we are Zionists.

John O'Mahony

Letters are welcome: send to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. 300 words or less, please, or we may have to cut them.

GRAFFITI

Psst! Do you want to buy a council estate?

Under a new bill soon to become law — The Housing and Planning Bill — Councils are to be given new powers over their tenants in favour of private business.

The councils will have the right to sell their estates and their tenants to private

companies, to evict tenants in order to sell estates, and to transfer the management and maintenance of estates to private agencies. The only tenants' right protected, surprise, surprise, is the right to buy.

What all this means is that tenants' rights to

security of tenure will be undermined, guarantees about rent levels will disappear, accountability and tenant involvement (limited as it is) will end, and homelessness and transfer and waiting lists will increase.



Biased either way

Remember the Tory attacks on the BBC? Now read on. Jeffrey Archer's television series 'First Among Equals' which finishes this Tuesday ends with a new Prime Minister walking into number 10. In the book it is the Labour leader who takes office. But wouldn't it be pro-

Labour propaganda even though Archer is a former Deputy Chairman of the Tory Party? Maybe the Tory dog Tebbit, Archer's old boss would come after them with his fangs bared? So Granada, the TV company which adapted Archer's book, has filmed two different endings! Ac-

ording to Granada the closeness of the Tories and Labour in the opinion polls demands that Granada give 'careful consideration to the real political climate in Britain'. Yes, but which party leader takes over Number Ten? we'll know on Tuesday.

Who are they kidding?

'The average British worker now earns £184.70 a week before tax' — or so the newspapers said last week.

It doesn't sound so bad. But maybe you're wondering why everyone you know is 'below average'?

A closer look at the figures explains a lot. Take 80 workers at £100 a week and 20 at £500 a week, and their 'average pay' is £180 a week, though the great majority get much less. And Britain's pay structure is rather like that.

At the top end, about 10% of employees get over £300 a week. But the most common wage level is £100 to £150 a week.

The figures are also skewed by the fact that

they include only full-time workers, while an increasing proportion of workers are part-time.

The gap between the 'average' and reality was highlighted last week by figures from Manchester City Council, which showed that 44%

of workers in Greater Manchester are on wages below the European poverty line of about £120 a week. And those are the people in work! 24% are unemployed, and a total of 31% are drawing supplementary benefit.

Sentence before trial

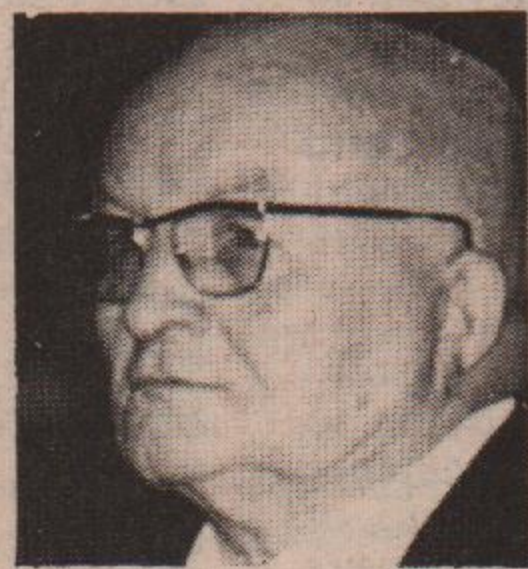
A report just released from the Home Office backs up the continual erosion of the rights of remand prisoners. Some remand prisoners — unconvicted and untried men and women held in gaols and police cells — who make up more than one-fifth of the 47,000 prisoners in England and Wales, are now held for up to 2 years

before being brought to trial.

At present though they have an automatic right to appear every 8 days before a magistrate's court to argue their case for liberty. The new proposals in the Criminal Justice Bill mean that the defendant will have the absolute right to appear before a court only once a month.

From one dictator to another

According to sources from Workers' Press, Gerry Healy, long time Tinpot dictator of the old Workers' Revolutionary Party, appeared in Greece a couple of weeks ago at a socialist rally and announced that Russia's dictator, Stalin's heir, Gorbachov, is, with his alleged reforming zeal, likely to lead the political revolution in the USSR. In other words, the Caesar of the arch-conservative, anti-



Gerry Healy

democratic, vastly privileged and parasitic, self-serving beauracracy which rules the USSR, is to lead the urgently necessary and long overdue, workers' overthrow of the totalitarian state that they rule over! Yes, and Margaret Thatcher will one day lead the Socialist Revolution in Britain.

MPs' collective bargaining

Pay rises of £2,000 plus are on the way next month for Thatcher and her Cabinet and also for MPs. The Prime Minister's salary then will be £58,650, Cabinet members get £47,000, and ordinary Ministers £36,750. MPs personal salaries rise to £18,500. Incidentally Neil Kinnock as leader of the opposition, will be getting £44,100.

FEMINISM, YES! FEMOCRACY, NO!

By Jane Ashworth and Michele Carlisle

During this year there has been an unfortunate and alarming growth of the politics of the hierarchy of oppression. It runs something like this: 'How dare you disagree with me. I am a woman. If you disagree with me you are either a sexist, or not a real woman — you are a member of a male dominated organisation.'

Another example might be: 'Not only did you disagree with a woman, you also shouted at her', by this type of logic you are not only a sexist but a sexual harasser. Never mind that if a woman did exactly the same, the incident would be understood as a row, if a man does it it is sexual harassment. (see footnote).

Fortunately this method of political argument — if you can call it that — is still confined to a few HE colleges. But it might spread.

SSiN

SSiN calls this type of logic 'femocracy'. That word means a stealing of feminism and abusing it for personal career advancement — just as bureaucrats use rule books and procedural points as an excuse for doing nothing.

There is no doubt that some women cry 'sexist' when politically challenged, and even claim they don't have to answer — after all they are the true women's activists. And as women's activists they know not only the collective, subjective experience of all women, but have the sole franchise on interpreting this experience.

They are the pure feminists, they claim, they are unfettered by left wing (or any other ideology). They have distilled an objective truth which cannot be challenged, because every one else's view of the world is 'male'.

So basically, it's bad luck if you fall foul of a femocrat. Objective arguments don't matter, facts don't matter much either. It is impossible to win. The rules of their game forbid honest debate.

Oddly enough femocrats only attack the left. Ruining someone's reputation with an accusation of harassment is fair game. Never mind if it's not true, never mind finding out the facts, never mind a fair trial and natural justice, if these femocratic cliques want to victimise someone they will.

And if your enemy is a woman and so isn't going to be labelled a sexist too easily, then throw in another accusation, like homophobe or anti-semitic.

Not only do femocrats deny that there is a real world that can be argued over and analysed by scientific objective methods. They are denying much that is progressive in our society — like natural justice and a recognition of the value of objectivity over subjectivity. Denying others the right to argue leads to verbal vigilante groups who feel free from any constraints. They can assert and slander and no-one has the right to object.

That is rather a large problem, because if the logic is carried through properly it would put femocrats back in time to before the Greek philosophers who worked out that there are objective facts.

But there are also more problems with femocracy. Femocrats cheapen the very struggles that they claim to be promoting. There are real issues at stake like sexism, anti-semitism, anti-black and gay prejudice, anti-black racism. Femocrats will not try to con-

vince people and build campaigns. Infact they function as 'thought police'. They patrol activists' minds looking for a slip, not to try to explain why someone is wrong to say, for example, chairman but to denounce them for it, to score points, to 'prove' that someone is a sexist. Femocracy is also politically introverted.

Why bother to go out and fight for working class socialism, when the problem is all these members of oppressing groups, particularly men?

For the femocrats it's all a matter of listing a hierarchy of oppression, and the ruling class (when it gets attention at all) is just one more power group. It's all a matter of groups in society, who oppress in varying degrees and should be forced to 'give up their power'.

This is wrong. It is true that various strata in society have privileges but the fundamental power relationship is between the bourgeoisie and the working class.

The power that a working-class man has over a working-class woman is absolutely negligible when compared to the murdering, decadent, crushing power of the international ruling class.

Within that relationship of ruling class and working class, all women are oppressed and working-class women are doubly oppressed — as workers and as women. The key to women's liberation is the class struggle. Only with the creation of a society which produces for need and not for profit, which runs its 'social services' to suit everyone; which is free from the reactionary ideology which divides the working class, by giving some workers privileges over others — like men's power over women; only in such a society will women be truly liberated.

The root of women's oppression lies in the structure of society. While women are trained and channelled into a life of domestic drudgery; while other avenues are closed off, while the ruling class relies on a woman's unpaid labour to service its male workers and rear the next generation of factory and cannon fodder. Then women will be oppressed. Only in a socialist society when the necessary resources can be put into communalising domestic labour, where women are treated as individuals and not as just potential wives, mothers and sex objects. Only then will there be the material base for women's liberation.

Yes, we want a movement which fights for everyone, not just for white straight men.

Yes, we want a movement that fights sexism and racism.

But we don't want femocracy or femocrats.

Footnote

This type of nonsense gives ammunition to sexists. Traditionally, when feminists have said that women who are accusing men of sexual harassment must be taken seriously, we mean they shouldn't automatically be dismissed as 'hysterical' or out to ruin someone who has 'spurned them'. The argument is that sexist prejudices should be put aside to make sure the woman has a fair hearing on an equal basis to the man.

The current Femocratic dogma, that any accusation a woman makes against a man must necessarily be accepted is only the mirror image of the worst attitudes of sexist men. Women's liberation is about equality, not about denying men the basic democratic right of fair play. Sexism and Femocracy are horrible twins that mutually feed off each other.

Latest issue of Socialist Student available from 54A Peckham Rye, London SE15.



The power of student action

Over half a million students and youth demonstrated against new education proposals in France last week.

It was the largest youth demonstration ever in French history, and almost immediately the right wing government of Prime Minister Chirac caved in.

The bill, which has been withdrawn to be 'reconsidered and recast', and is already watered down from its original pre-election version, contains three main elements. It proposes to double entry fees, to establish differentiation of degrees by institution, and to abolish the right of all school-leavers who have passed a 'baccalaureat' to go to university: the bill would introduce further examinations.

Half a million demonstrate in Paris

Massive protests have been provoked causing a major crisis for the Chirac government. By 26 November, 20 universities were on strike. Thousands of school students in Paris joined in the strike, as well as the big demonstration. On 23 November, the teachers' unions, backed by the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, organised a huge demonstration against parallel

changes in school administration.

Another student demonstration, planned for 4 December, is expected to be the biggest yet — perhaps as much as a million.

Other factors have influenced the students, including the current massive overcrowding of French universities. The success of their campaign is alarming the right wing. Le Figaro (29 November) warned of the dangers of allowing the law to be decided by street agitation. The fascist Front Nationale organised a counter-demonstration to the march last week.

After the bill's withdrawal, Chirac appeared on TV, calling for seven to fifteen days of consultation until the amended bill is submitted to the National Assembly. The 4 December march will still go ahead.

Life in Thatcher's Britain



RESTART terrorising the unemployed

By March of 1987 every person who has been unemployed for twelve months or more will have been through a Restart interview. At the Tories' 1986 party conference it was also announced that the Restart scheme was to be extended to anyone unemployed for six months or more.

Interviews

The Restart interviews are carried out in Job Centres by specially-trained Restart teams. Failure on the part of the claimant to attend the interview results — after two 'invitations' to attend — in the claimant having his or her benefit cut off.

At the interview the claimant is 'offered' a variety of 'options'. Rather than run the risk of being deemed 'unavailable for work' for rejecting all 'options', many claimants unwillingly accept one of them:

- Community Programme: At present pays an average of £65 per week for a full-time post; but most posts are part-time.

- Enterprise Allowance Scheme: A scheme whereby the government pays you £40 a week to set yourself up in business; applies only to unemployed with access to £1,000 of their own; the scheme's major drawback is the proneness of businesses set up under

Stan Crooke examines 'Restart', the Tories' new scheme for "reducing unemployment". In fact it is a way of terrorising the unemployed and reducing the unemployment statistics.

it to go bankrupt.

- Training courses: The staple answer of the MSC and the Tories to unemployment; but being re-trained does not necessarily lead to being re-employed.

Voluntary

- Voluntary Work: Unwaged work, especially liked by the Tories due to its role in destroying existing jobs and dragging down rates of pay.

- Jobstart: A top-up temporary allowance paid out where the unemployed take up a job paying less than £80 a week.

- Jobclubs: Provision by Job Centres of special facilities (i.e. telephone and typewriter) for the unemployed to help them find work; claimants enjoying the use of such facilities are expected to make at least ten job applications per day, four days a week.

- Restart Counselling Courses: Particularly useless week-long courses in which claimants are lectured on the problems of being unemployed and taught that they are themselves to blame for being unemployed, by not seeking work energetically enough.

- A Job: A particularly scarce item, received by only 1% of those called for a Restart interview.



Knowsley North By-election: The Riley family — Anthony and Maria Jennifer (7), Anthony (6) and Sharon (2). Tony has been on the 'six months' work in a pub. Maria similarly has had a few months' family exit on £58 per week supplementary benefit. 'Restart' ca

The pathetic results of the Restart pilot schemes are also characteristic of Restart as a nationwide scheme. Preliminary results from the first two weeks of the national programme reveal that just 166 out of the 7,469 claimants interviewed were placed into jobs — including Community Programme. This is an even worse result than in the pilot areas: 2.2% as against 5.7%.

Claims by Tory ministers and their civil servants that Restart has enjoyed a success rate of 91% should therefore be treated with the contempt they deserve: by basing its figures on the number of "positive offers of some kind" made during a Restart interview rather than on the number of filled places or jobs, the Department of Employment has exaggerated the 'success' of Restart by up to twenty times.

Nonsense

One of the more senior officials in the MSC has even gone so far as to describe, in private, the grossly inflated claims of Employment Minister Kenneth Clarke about the success of Restart as "absolute nonsense". Not that any of this has stopped Tory ministers persisting in their outlandish claims about the 'success' of Restart.

Clearly, Restart is not a genuine attempt to make inroads into the problem of mass long-term unemployment. What, then, lies behind Restart?

Firstly, Restart is the government's attempt in the run-up to a General Election, to sway the electorate into believing that it is 'doing something' about long-term unemployment — which it itself has helped create.

Hence the vast amounts of money which the Tories are prepared to plough into Restart. Some £5.4 million has been invested in various media-hypes in order to provide Restart with a high public profile — and in sharp contrast to the Tories' arguments that there is 'no money in the kitty' to support even an extremely modest special employment creation scheme.

Hence also the insistence of Tory politicians as to the 'success' of Restart, despite the mass of evidence to the contrary. MSC-supremo Lord Young, for example, has argued that the small increase in the unemployment figures for August was due to Restart, whilst Kenneth Clarke told a

meeting of the Institute of Directors that claimants were just "melting away like snow" when called for a Restart interview. But why should all the facts to the contrary be considered when the goal is to con people into believing that the Tories are trying to cut unemployment?

Further evidence that Restart is, in part, a pre-election gimmick is to be found in the pattern of Department of Employment staffing for the Restart programme: of the eight staff working centrally on the programme (the majority of staff are employed by the MSC), two work in the Manpower Policy Division whilst six are Information Officers in the Department's Publicity and Promotions Unit.

Thus, the Tories cynically distort the reality of Restart with the deliberate intention of duping the electorate, especially those with a job and who might therefore be less concerned with the problems of mass unemployment. The unemployed themselves who are forced to go through the charade of Restart will not be so easily duped — but the Tories equally cynically recognise that only a low percentage of the unemployed bother to vote.

The second goal of Restart, following on from the above, is to divert attention away from the real causes of unemployment. Restart is underpinned by the notion that the unemployed themselves are to blame for unemployment, not the Tories' economic and political policies or the workings of the capitalist system.

Adverts

Thus, for example, one of the television adverts for Restart shows a large pent-up stock of industrial capacity — factory plant, computers, construction sites — lurking behind Job Centre doors, just waiting to employ the long-term unemployed. The impression thereby created is that unemployment is not due to job-scarcity but to a lack of motivation and drive on the part of the unemployed.

The blame-the-unemployed-for-being-unemployed syndrome is even more apparent in the week-long Restart 'counselling' course, one of the 'options' on offer at a Restart interview. The course does not offer a job but engages in fairly low-level social engineering. As the manual for the course tutors puts it: "It is hoped





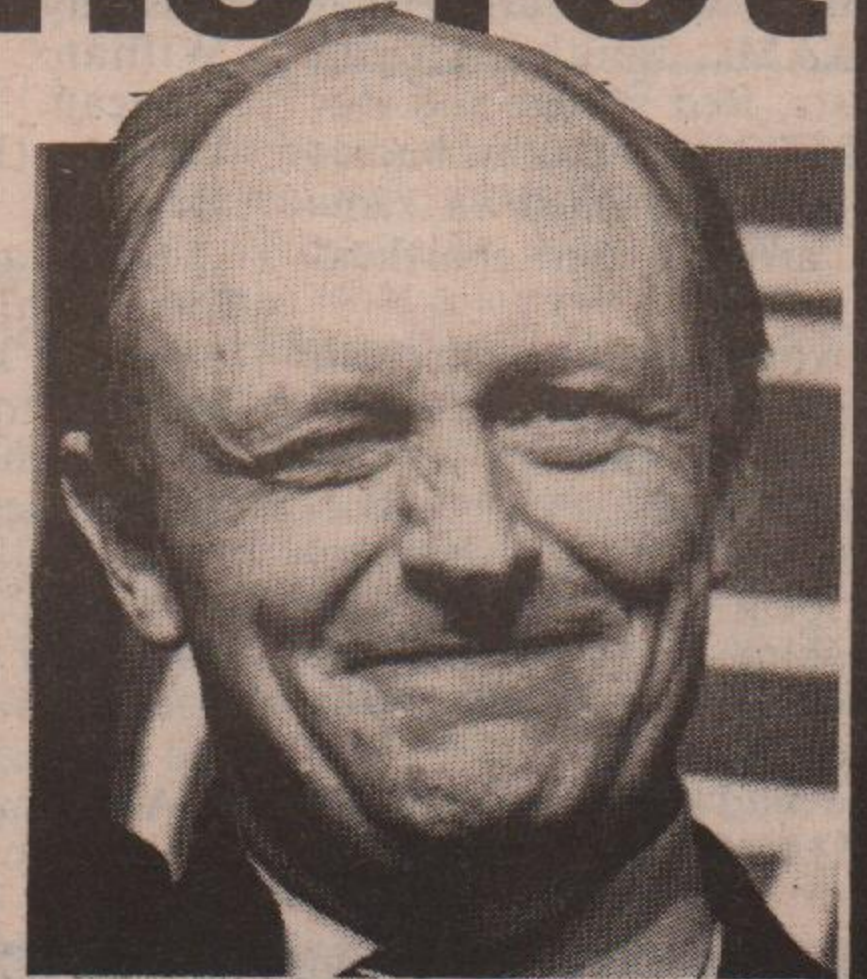
Maria Riley with their four children, Maria (7), double for 11 years and in that time has had only work behind a bar in the last ten years. They offer them nothing. Photo: John Harris, IFL.

Life in Thatcher's Britain



Will Labour stop the rot

Ian McCalman takes a look at Labour's plans for education.



The current issue of 'Socialism and Education', journal of the Socialist Education Association (SEA) is devoted to discussing a future Labour government's programme for education.

One of the key issues highlighted is the future of the fee-paying sector. Although less than 10% of the school population attend such schools (the figure in Scotland is less than 5%), the role of the "private" sector is significant and growing.

Its significance lies not only in that it makes education a privilege rather than a right. It also resides in the way in which the fee-paying sector serves as a bulwark of the class divided society we live in.

Of those who are educated in this way, an even smaller percentage attend the exclusive 'public' schools such as Eton, Harrow and Winchester. But their importance lies not in these numerical terms but in the manner in which they serve as training grounds for those who staff the ruling elites in our society, in the civil service, the military, the judiciary, etc.

Educated

The fee-paying sector has certainly been growing in recent years. The run-down of the state sector by the Tory government and the attendant conflicts with teachers' unions over salaries, conditions and resources have persuaded growing numbers of middle class parents to opt for the 'private' sector. In this they have received encouragement in the form of subsidies from the government

through the Assisted Places Scheme.

A starting point for a programme to tackle these issues must be the SEA resolution passed at this year's Labour Party conference. This states the need for the drafting of a 1988 Education Act prior to the next election which, among other demands, calls for "the end of subsidy to 'public' schools including the end of charity status, the assisted places scheme and the dismantling of the 'public' school system in this country beginning with the prevention of institutions charging fees to provide education in the statutory sector".

Obviously a resolution by its very nature must be cryptic but this seems to be condensed to the point of confusion.

There can be no dubiety concerning the ending of charges in the state sector (many Labour authorities have recently sharply increased fees for evening classes) and the abolition of the Assisted Places Scheme.

Why the resolution should reserve its fire for the 'public' schools rather than the whole fee-paying sector, however, is unclear. Tax concessions, including charity status, must be ended for all fee-paying schools. This must be part of a programme to integrate those schools into the state sector.

How that is to be done is a more complicated issue. Caroline Benn, in an article in the current issue of Socialism and Education, writes of "developing the private sector to serve the needs of the whole community". It would be interesting to know what kind of proposals she has in mind. The danger is that it may contain the seeds of growth rather than decline of the fee-paying sector.

The argument of the right is, as always, that such moves are a denial of freedom. Socialists have to counter this with the view that within the context of an unequal society, fee-paying in education, as in health, is a privilege aimed at creating greater inequalities.

This does not mean that socialists should be insensitive to the issue of freedom within the state sector. We should positively support moves to break up the present, monolithic, institutionalised, bureaucratic system of state schools. We should study the Scandinavian experience of parents and teachers being encouraged to set up small scale, experimental schools within the state sector. The ossified structures which exist at present hopefully in no way prefigure the kind of society socialists strive to create.

that those hardest hit by unemployment see this course as a very first step in becoming competitive in the labour market" and therefore the task of the course is to "help participants move from a reactive stance to unemployment ('waiting for something to happen') towards a more pro-active approach, which encompasses a belief that it is possible to exercise some control over what is happening to them."

Consoles

The course manual does, however, admit that "we must not hide from the fact that some course members will remain unemployed, possibly for a substantial time" but consoles itself with the thought that "the extent to which this course can help them better cope with unemployment will in itself be a valuable outcome".

From the point of view of the tutor's manual, therefore, unemployment is reduced to a set of personal problems, to be dealt with by lowering claimants' expectations as to what constitutes a reasonable rate of pay, by teaching them thrift, and by raising their motivation through a variety of ridiculous role-playing exercises.

What needs to be stressed is not how ridiculous such adverts or courses are, but the logic, for want of a better word, upon which they are based: since jobs are supposedly available for the asking, the eradication of unemployment merely involves motivating the unemployed to ask for them. Unemployment, therefore, is not the Tories' fault but the fault of the unemployed themselves.

A third goal of Restart is to cut the unemployment figures (which should not be confused with cutting unemployment). The two means whereby Restart achieves this are: encouraging claimants to de-register (or disqualifying claimants from registering); and 'encouraging' claimants to go on a fake 'job-creation' scheme.

Failure to attend a Restart interview, as pointed out above, leads to a suspension of benefits, on the basis of the assumption that non-attendance equals non-availability for work: the claimant is removed from the register. Although, at present, explicit compulsion relates only to attendance at an interview, this is not the only instrument with which claimants can be struck off the

register.

The Restart interview itself represents a means for policing a claimant's "availability for work", on the basis of recently introduced more stringent criteria.

Officials are now empowered to make subjective judgements on the basis of such criteria as whether or not the claimant is imposing restrictions on the hours which she or he is prepared to work, or whether or not she or he is "unreasonably" refusing a particular type of job.

As a Daily Telegraph article, based on a Department of Employment briefing, put it: "Special teams trained to detect false claimants for unemployment benefits have made many (claimants) have second thoughts (about claiming benefit)".

Compulsion

Moreover, although Restart is on record as being strictly voluntary, claimants, in practice, inevitably feel pressurised into taking up one of the 'options' on offer. Claimants are not unjustified in their suspicion that rejection of an option can lead to a cut-off of benefit.

Restart officials are charged with recording the reaction of claimants to the options on a response sheet — but there is no facility made on this sheet to allow for claimants rejecting all eight options.

The last Labour government's Social Security Act of 1975 allows for claimants to be disqualified from benefit if they ignore any "official recommendation given with a view to assisting him (sic) to find suitable employment" or if they ignore an opportunity of approved training "for the purpose of becoming or keeping fit for entry into, or return to, regular employment".

The wording of the 1975 legislation is obviously so lax that it amounts to a blank cheque for the Tories and the MSC. At present though, the Tories are having the best of both worlds.

They have not stated that a refusal of all options leads to disqualification from benefits, (which could create a dangerous electoral backlash). But neither have they openly stated that claimants are free to reject all options, thus leaving the threat of disqualification hanging over every Restart interview. And how many claimants are going to call the Tories' bluff by rejecting all the options when their sole source of income is at stake? As the Tories know full well

— not many.

The second way in which Restart helps doctor the unemployment figures is through channelling claimants onto Tory fake 'job-creation' schemes, under the threat of loss of benefit dealt with in the preceding paragraphs. Restart thus fits into the much broader Thatcherite project of restructuring the labour market at the expense of workers, by cutting wages, weakening trade unionism, and undermining free collective bargaining.

Two of the options offered at a Restart interview particularly contribute towards this goal: Job Start (a £20 weekly allowance paid out for a year where a job pays less than £80 a week) and the Community Programme (in which the predominantly part-time rates of pay amount to little more than what would be otherwise paid out in unemployment benefit).

Restart, therefore, is not to be supported under any circumstances: it is geared to promote the creation of a low-waged, marginalised (and even conscripted) labour market. It does not even pretend to take a serious stance on employment creation, but instead, enables more stringent management of the unemployed, in which further doctoring of the figures plays an ever stronger role.

'RESTART' — THE SUCCESS STORY OF THE DECADE?

Place	Number of letters sent out by Restart staff	How many got a job
Billingham	941	4
Preston	3,130	9
Huddersfield	2,554	15
Stoke	4,140	23
Port Talbot	2,615	53
Plymouth	2,537	7
Crawley	643	53
Ealing	2,260	38
Dundee	3,919	11

Interviewed:	28,175	100%
Placed in jobs:	295	1.0%
Community Programme:	1,310	4.6%
Jobclubs:	273	1.0%
Enterprise Allowance Scheme:	72	0.3%
Training Courses:	262	1.0%
Restart Courses:	2,114	7.5%
Voluntary Projects Programme:	84	0.3%

Breakdown of pilot scheme placements — taken from: 'Unemployment Bulletin' issue 21.

Revolutionaries in the real world

**By Mark
Osborn, editor
Youth Fightback**

stronger, campaigning branches of both organisations in the wake of such a tour.

Youth Fightback supporters heard how one of our comrades, Tom Rigby from Peckham LPYS, had very successfully helped take Brian Williams from the South African Electrical Workers Union (EAWTU), around British Plessey plants.

They raised cash and made links with British workers. Now our task is to use Tom's example to help us turn the YS as a whole towards coordinated action.

We will be producing our own posters, leaflets, speakers' notes and hopefully organising South African speakers to tour the country in early February.

Also on the campaigning front, conference discussed

women's liberation and the fight for women's rights. We passed a Charter demanding reproductive rights for young women. Youth Fightback supporters will be pushing for action round the charter in their unions and Labour Parties.

We will be demanding that the YS as a whole campaigns on this charter. Copies and speakers are available from Youth Fightback. The next Youth Fightback, out in the New Year, will be arguing for the charter.

At conference Youth Fightback debated Youth Action (neither Washington nor Moscow but Havana) and the SWP. The contrast was pretty sharp.

Youth Action fell into the swamp a long time ago and having developed gills they are now quite enjoying it. They have submerged the working class (and then themselves) to simply another part of the oppressed. They have written off the possibility of revolution in the advanced capitalist countries in the foreseeable future.

They have created illusions in "progressive" Stalinism — offering advice to, not revolution against the Vietnamese Communist Party leaders.

Their role is that of a co-ordinator and applauder of others.

In the mirror stood the SWP. Terribly revolutionary — except for the occasional raid, (on Militant, for example), where the odd recruit can be made and where politics are dropped for the occasion.

We came over as sensible revolutionaries, relating to the real world, championing the independence of the working class and its interests, but without stupid organisational fetishes that would seal us off from the political labour movement — the Labour Party.

The conference is over — and now comrades must get down to some hard work, organising local dates for the solidarity tour in early February.

Finally, special thanks to Matt for doing the food and social.



Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

Problems of research

In vitro fertilisation (IVF) techniques ("test-tube" pregnancies) have given new hope to many childless people. However, there are serious questions about the safety of these techniques, as revealed by Anita Direcks and Helen Bequaert Holmes in 'New Scientist' last month.

IVF is not just a matter of allowing an egg and sperm to join together in a dish and then putting the result into a woman's womb. The process of releasing a mature egg from the ovary once a month is a very complex one, controlled by several hormones (chemical messengers). These hormones, produced by different glands, in different amounts at different times are responsible for the maturing and release of the egg; preparation of the womb for the embryo to implant; maintenance and growth of the womb during pregnancy; causing birth to occur and causing milk to be produced.

Some of these hormones come from the pituitary gland at the base of the brain, some from the ovaries (including some from the corpus luteum or "yellow body", a temporary gland made of the cells that surround the mature egg before its release).

The development of the embryo is also under delicate hormone control, particularly development into male or female. Up to a certain age, embryos are indistinguishable. Then a group of cells starts to grow into either male or female parts. This is controlled by the ratio of sex hormones in the embryo (as all produce both "male" and "female" hormones). The ratio is determined by the sex chromosomes and a large change will result in an embryo whose cells are one sex but whose outward appearance is opposite. Smaller changes to the ratio can result in various deformities representing stages between male and female appearance. Alternatively, behaviour of the cells in the reproductive organs may be disrupted, making them cancerous.

The relevance of all this will be seen when we look at what actually goes on during IVF treatment. Firstly, the woman is given fertility drugs to stimulate the ovary to release lots of mature eggs. Once fertilised, these are introduced to the womb as small embryos. However, the woman's body is not necessarily prepared for pregnancy so hormones have to be given for weeks to prevent loss of the embryos. In many IVF patients there is no corpus luteum so the hormones from that have to be replaced artificially throughout the pregnancy.

It is plainly impossible to ensure that these administered hormones are in the "correct" quantities since there is no way of knowing what the "correct" quantities are for any individual. The delicate balance of natural hormones clearly goes out of the window.

This may result in an upsetting of the behaviour of the woman's glands, causing health problems (including

cancers). It may also disrupt the embryo's sexual development, causing problems in later life. This has already happened in one case (see below).

IVF is an example of a technology being introduced with inadequate research. It would be a tragedy if IVF created worse problems than those it seeks to solve. In the meantime, measures to prevent infertility (like withdrawal of the IUD and contraceptive pill) are not being taken.

THE DES STORY

In the late 1960s, seven Boston teenagers who went to hospital with pain and bleeding were found to have a rare cancer of the vagina. Their lives were only saved by the removal of their reproductive tracts. More or less by accident, it was discovered their mothers had been prescribed a drug called diethylstilboestrol (DES), during pregnancy.

Discovered in 1938, DES is a drug that mimics oestrogen, one of the hormones controlling reproductive events. When two researchers in Harvard discovered that oestrogen levels fell in women shortly before they developed complications in pregnancy, they decided to advise obstetricians to prescribe DES. They thought that DES would replace the oestrogen and prevent miscarriage.

632 patients were given DES and, in 1948, researchers wrote glowingly of the success of DES in preventing pregnancy complications. This was despite a lack of controls in the experiment (i.e. comparing results with a similar group of patients not receiving DES).

DES became standard treatment where miscarriage seemed likely. Its manufacturers advertised it for use in all pregnancies as a routine precaution, claiming "bigger and stronger babies".

However, as early as 1953, a properly controlled study showed no significant difference in miscarriage rates with DES. The research was ignored and DES prescribed to some three million women in America and Europe.

Though DES was useless, it was not without effect. Between 60% and 90% of "DES daughters" suffered from benign adenosis (misplaced glandular tissue) in the vagina and/or deformities of the womb, resulting in difficulty in becoming pregnant or having a full-term baby. One in 1000 contracted adenocarcinoma, cancer of the reproductive tract, fatal in between 10% and 80% of cases.

DES sons often have problems like undescended testes, cysts in the testes, very small penis, misplaced or constricted urethra (urine tube). Abnormal sperm are common, too.

These symptoms show that sex hormones given to the mother can interfere with reproductive development in the embryo. The mothers, too, suffered with a 50% increase in breast cancer. Though banned in the US and Europe (years after these effects were discovered) DES is still widely available in the Third World.

ACTIVISTS' DIARY

Why not form a Campaign Group?

A number of Labour Party members up and down the country have formed themselves into local Campaign groups.

These groups are organised on non-sectarian lines. The aim is to provide a unified left campaigning force in the constituencies.

If you have already done this and have not yet informed the Campaign Group, or if you wish to do so, please contact the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, c/o Alan Meale, secretary, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

From Resistance to Rebellion — an exhibition on Asian and Afro-Caribbean struggles in Britain since the Second World War.

19-30 January, LINC Resources Centre, Lydford Road, Reading. Ring 0753 23699 for details.

3-28 February, Dame Colet House, Ben Johnson Road, Stepney, London E1. Tel: 01-790 9077.

2-13 March, Multicultural Education Centre, Leeds 7. Tel: 0532 623448.

13-17 April, Wolverhampton CCR, Clarence Road, Wolverhampton, Tel: 0902 773589.

1-28 May, Highfields Community Centre, Leicester. Tel: 0533 531053.

1-12 June, Waltham Forest Leachers Centre, London E17. Tel: 01-521 3311.

For hire details contact Busi Chaane at the Institute of Race Relations, 2-6 Leeke Street, London WC1X 9HS. Tel: 01-837 0041.

Saturday 6 Dec: Action conference '86 Against Deportation and all Immigration Controls. Organised by Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign. Speakers include Bernie Grant, Dianne Abbot, anti-deportation campaigns. 10.00, Hackney Town Hall Mare St. London E8.

Wednesday 10 December, 5.30pm. Manchester University Students Union. 'Israel-Palestine — a socialist solution?' Speaker: John O'Mahony.

Thursday 11 December. Debate — Ireland and the theory of Permanent Revolution. Speakers: Simon Pirani, WRP, John O'Mahony, Socialist Organiser. 7.30pm, Woodside Halls, Glenfart Street, Glasgow.

Saturday 13 Dec: Conference for trade union sanctions against South Africa. 11 to

6, Carr's Lane Church Centre, Carr's Lane, Birmingham. Contact: Bronwen Handyside, 17 Porden Rd. Brixton, London SW2 5SA, tel. 01-274 7722 x2010.

National Print Support Groups demonstration. Saturday 13 December at 8.30 p.m. Assemble, Aldgate East tube station.

Sunday 14 December. 7.30 p.m. Meeting on the Arab/Israel conflict. Speaker: Clive Bradley. Land O Cakes pub, Great Ancoats St., Manchester.

NOLS CONFERENCE deadlines. Cards, motions, constitutional amendments by 9am, December 12. Delegates' deadline by 30 January.

Anti-Apartheid Movement AGM. 10 January 1987.

WHERE WE STAND

Socialist Organiser stands for workers' liberty, East and West. We aim to help organise the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions to fight to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

We want public ownership

of the major enterprises and a planned economy under workers' control. We want democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and management's privileges.

Socialist can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers

in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles world-wide, including the struggle of workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their own anti-socialist bureaucracies.

We stand:

For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of

housework. For a mass working class based women's movement.

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

For a united and free Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.

For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.

For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

We want Labour Party and trade union members who support our basic ideas to become supporters of the paper — to take a bundle of papers to sell each week and pay a small financial contribution to help meet the paper's deficit. Our policy is democratically controlled by our supporters through Annual General Meetings and an elected National Editorial Board.

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SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Britain's death squad exposed!

Ulster cops did shoot to kill

The Tories now homeless



Dexter Gordon's blues notes

Paying the price of racism

Paris became home for many black jazz musicians in the '50s and '60s, seeking to escape the racism, rip-offs and lack of recognition for their music in the US.

'Round Midnight' is the story of the relationship between Dale Turner, a tenor saxophonist, who comes to Paris and Francis, a French fan. It is loosely based on the true story of Bud Powell, the bebop pianist.

Turner is an alcoholic, ex-drug addict, who is locked in his room between gigs and not allowed the money he earns, so as to prevent him drinking it away. The only thing keeping him from destruction is his will to keep playing.

Turner is played by Dexter Gordon, himself one of the few survivors of the bop era of the '40s, who lived for 15 years in Europe. 6' 5" tall, with a slow voice like sandpaper and a convincing drunken lurch, Gordon's eyes show us that he's not just acting a part but reliving his own and his contemporaries' lives. (All the

Bruce Robinson went to see 'Around Midnight'.

musicians parts are played by real musicians such as Herbie Hancock and Bobby Hutcherson. This not only means we see real players playing real music but adds their conviction to the film).

At first the relationship between Francis and Dale is that of an adoring fan who buys his idol drinks. Their common love of the music gradually creates a real human feeling between them as Francis becomes Dale's guardian and invites him to live in his flat and Dale begins to respond by taking up composition and soprano saxophone again.

Francis is not altogether sympathetic. Everyone else is sacrificed to his support for Dale. He is as much of an addict as Dale — he

begins to neglect his 11 year old daughter, to stand outside a night club in a thunderstorm listening, as he can't afford to go in. At the end of the film, Dale returns to New York from his exile to the "same old shit" of pushers, rip-off agents and run-down hotels and dies soon after.

The story alone doesn't do justice to the film. Its atmosphere and the music help explain why both fans and musicians become so absorbed in jazz. It's often both touching and funny.

By building on the stories and feelings of real musicians it undermines many patronising stereotypes — for example, Dale amazes Francis by saying that his playing was influenced by the music of Debussy.

It shows the self-destructiveness of many jazz lives as not the price for creativity, but as the price for living in a system where the contributions of black musicians were constantly downgraded.

If I'm enthusiastic, that may just be because I'm a jazz addict myself. If you aren't, this could film could get you hooked.

An answer to violence against women

Cathy Nugent takes a look at the Socialist Workers' Party's recent writings on violence against women and women's oppression.

WOMAN'S EYE

This summer, a series of crime statistics documenting a substantial increase in the number of reported rapes were released. The gutter press reacted predictably, presenting rape as a frightening new phenomenon, advising all right-thinking men to lock up their wives and daughters, calling for more bobbies on the beat and stiffer sentencing.

Recently the Socialist Workers' Party has followed this up with a series of public meetings around the question of violence against women...where does it come from...is there an answer? These meetings have been exclusively concerned with rape — although domestic violence, sexual harassment and incest are all related issues.

Roots

In dealing with rape, the SWP's starting point has been, quite correctly, the roots of women's oppression. This is vital to enable us to define rape as a political question and to make the point that women are not to blame and do not invite sexual attacks, as is so often alleged.

However, the SWP do not get beyond this simple formula and fail to explain the relationships between men and women in our society.

They have little to say as an answer to violence against women apart from, ultimately, "socialism is the answer". This is a crass and inadequate response to the threat of intimidation and rape women face in their daily lives.

Julie Waterson in Socialist Worker Review 88 sets out a "socialist answer" to rape. The 'problem' for her, does not in any sense lie with male domination, supremacy or privilege. Rather it is the result of the roles men and women are conditioned into: the idea that woman is there to have and to hold, to be used and abused by man; the idea that man is protector and guardian and seducer of woman; the idea that woman is chaste wife and mother, but also seductress and whore. We are to believe that these ideas/values are fundamental, they cause the divisions between men and women.

Undoubtedly ideas about male and female roles help to perpetuate divisions between men and women. It is impossible to argue that pornography does not help to define male sexual fantasies and in some individual cases leads directly to sexual violence. But these ideas are rooted in the material privileges that all men, including working class men, have over women. These are the causes of the divisions.

For Waterson, "these ideas and the divisions they cause have to be seen in the framework of capitalist society"...a society where... "the majority of people, both working class men and women suffer because of their alienation. Where being forced to depend on selling your labour power means having no real control over where you live, where you work or what you earn". This causes misery and unhappiness and distorted sexual relationships. Men

rape because they need to prove their masculinity, need to feel successful. It is capitalist society that "determines what a successful man is".

This may well be part of the explanation. Men denied power in the workplace may "take it out" on women. But it does not explain why men choose women as their victims.

The pattern of working class men's and women's lives and of distorted sexual relationships is rooted in the degree of power men have over women. Research on domestic violence has shown up certain typical patterns: e.g. men may have a degree of financial control in the home, however poor or limited a working class family's income may be. If a woman asks her man for more money on pay day this is often followed up by her being bashed or raped before or after he's been to the pub. She has stepped out of line.

Other typical circumstances where domestic violence occurs is where she has not got the tea ready on time, where she is not ready and willing for sex and so on.

Men do rape and assault women to humiliate and intimidate them, and put women in their place not just because they need to try to be "successful men".

The fault is that the SWP's analysis comes from their inability to accept that working class men benefit from women's oppression. But it is also the inability to relate to the particular and concrete circumstances of women's lives. For a woman who has been sexually harassed, raped or beaten up, the immediate "problem" is men. This is something feminists have understood for quite some time.

By railing against sexism in the here and now and then jumping into the future to conclude that tuture socialism is the answer, the SWP never get beyond moral outrage when discussing the question of rape now. This will not help women come to terms with their own feelings about their relationships with men, nor will it produce many "converts" to socialism.

There aren't any easy answers to violence against women. Socialism is ultimately the answer, but part of the fight for socialism has to be the taking on board of the demands and struggles of women. At no point does Waterson mention the self-organisation of women.

Self-organisation

Women during the miners' strike organised themselves not only to support the strike, but also to fight back against the sexism on the picket lines, the sexism of their men. More than this: they began to see themselves as capable and strong individuals, equal to the men.

Women's self-organisation then is a key to fighting and removing sexist ideas. At the same time we must fight for better street lighting, minibus services, etc., which will help to combat the vulnerability of women. We must support the work of Rape Crisis Centres and Women's Aid.

Above all perhaps we need to debate violence against women in a much more thorough way and not take it up and drop it again when media interest die down — as the SWP do.

Political terror in Vietnam

The leader of the Vietnamese struggle against the United States, until his death in 1969, was Ho Chi Minh. This article, translated from the French journal 'Chroniques Vietnamiennes' explains how Ho and the peasant-based Vietnamese Communist Party were responsible for the destruction of Vietnam's once powerful working class-based Trotskyist movement. The article was translated by Richard Moore.

In 1946, when Ho Chi Minh came to France to negotiate with the French government over the future status of Vietnam, the Trotskyists and their sympathisers questioned him on the death of Ta Thu Thau. Three discussions took place between Ho Chi Minh and our comrades.

The first discussion took place with Daniel Guerin, the historian and writer and in his youth a friend of Ta Thu Thau in the '30s. Daniel Guerin related the essential points of the discussion in his book 'In the Service of the colonised' in these terms:

"During his stay in Paris in 1946 I had a long discussion with Ho Chi Minh, but the pleasure I experienced in hailing and celebrating with him the liberation of his country was overshadowed by not only ideological disagreements but also by the memory of Ta Thu Thau. Some over-zealous Stalinists around Ho Chi Minh had just, in effect, assassinated the former municipal councillor of Saigon for 'Trotskyism'.

"He was a patriot and we cried for him," Ho Chi Minh told me with sincere emotion but added immediately, 'but all those who don't toe the line that I determine will be broken'."

The second discussion took place with our comrade Rudolph Prager, a leading figure in the PCI (Parti Com-

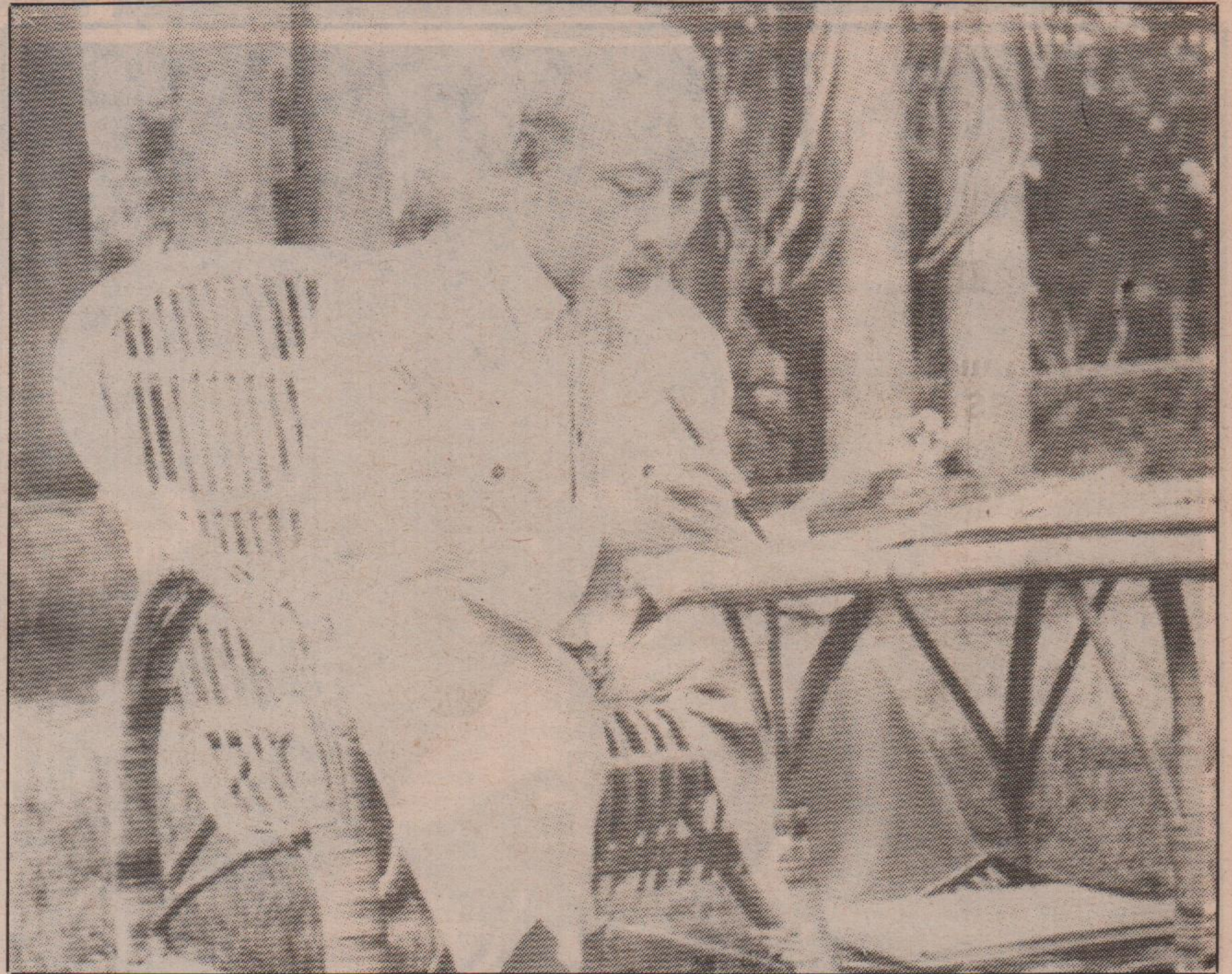
muniste Internationaliste — the French section of the 4th International). A summary appeared in La Verite on 19 July 1946 under the heading 'Who killed Ta Thu Thau?' and in the journal Fourth International (August-September 1946 edition) under the heading 'Indo-China — Assassination of Ta Thu Thau'.

Forty years have passed. We asked Prager what he thinks now of the issue and what he thinks of Ho Chi Minh's responsibility for this crime. He replied as follows:

Information

"In July 1946 Ho Chi Minh held a press conference in a Paris hotel. He presented his policy on the integration of Indo-China into the French Union. I waited for him at the exit of the conference hall to have a discussion in which I introduced myself as a member of the PCI secretariat. I demanded in the name of the movement that he shed some light on the death of Ta Thu Thau which had deeply disturbed us. He replied that he 'deeply regretted his disappearance' because Ta Thu Thau had been 'an irreproachable revolutionary'. On the circumstance of his death he had no information because the situation was troubled and uncontrollable in the country.

"Certain information that came from Vietnam at the time revealed that members of the Viet-Minh were



Ho Chi Minh

organising murders of Trotskyists throughout Vietnam. But we lacked any direct information from the Indochinese Trotskyists with whom all contact had been lost. Lacking certain proof of the responsibility of the Stalinists in this affair we had several theories and proposed to the representatives of the Viet-Minh that they set up a commission of inquiry made up of representatives of the French and Indochinese workers' movement so as to shed some light on the issue. However all our efforts were in vain.

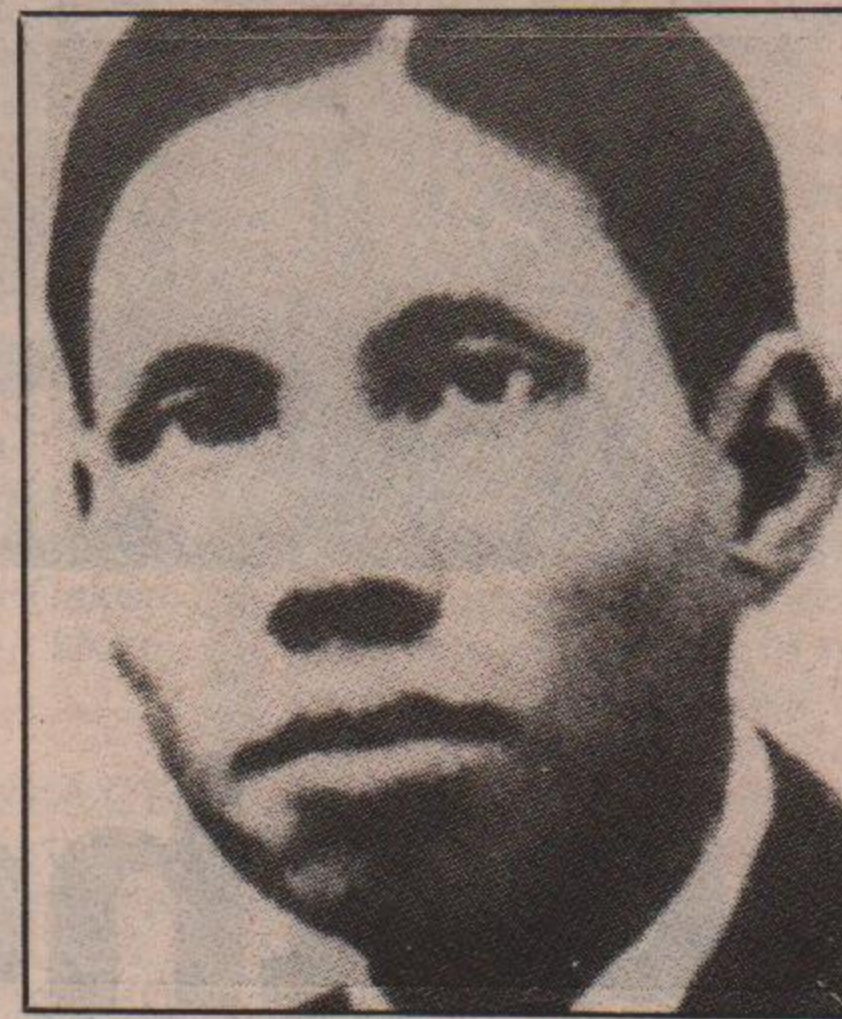
"In the following years the reports received from the Vietnamese Trotskyists and the information provided by those comrades who had succeeded in coming to Paris such as Luu Sanh Hanh, Trieu Son, Lang Tu Van etc., confirmed our fears and proved the responsibility of the Vietnamese Stalinists.

"We know now that the alleged authors of these executions, who are known, hold important posts in the Vietnamese Communist Party and the fact that these executions took place simultaneously throughout the country, shows clearly that it was a question of a concerted action which could have only been decided on by the insistence of the central body of the Party. These deeds have besides been accounted for in the official work 'The August Revolution' which appeared in Hanoi in 1960 in Vietnamese, and which quite naturally reproduced reports on the liquidation of Trotskyists in several provinces.

"It seems very dangerous and implausible to personally absolve Ho Chi Minh from any responsibility for these crimes, given his campaign of denunciation against the Trotskyists who were portrayed as 'spies and

criminals'. In 1939 he was already talking of the necessity of 'politically exterminating' Trotskyists. From political extermination to actual extermination is only a short step."

The third discussion took place between Ho Chi Minh and Hoang Don Tri who was accompanied by his comrade Le Van. An engineer at the Central School in Paris, Hoang Don Tri is the brother of Hoang Don Van,



Ta Thu Thau

the former minister of labour in the provisional Viet-Minh government in 1945. He was one of the first intellectuals, with Tran Duc Thoo, Huang Xuan Man, etc., who formed the leadership of the 'General Delegation of Vietnamese in France' in Paris in 1944-45, and which was dissolved by the French government by decree on 19 October 1945 because it was fighting for the independence of Vietnam. Like Le Van, Hoang Don Tri gave up political activity several years ago and his statement bears no polemical character.

"In 1946, at the time he came to France, I requested, in the name of my comrades, an interview with President Ho Chi Minh.

"After a discussion covering several diverse issues, I bluntly put my main question which accounted for my presence there. 'Mr President I am a former pupil of Ta Thu Thau and he is the best man I have known. He passionately loved the Vietnamese people in particular the poor and exploited classes. Why has he been killed and by whom?'

"The President, (after a moment of surprise for no Vietnamese person had asked him such a question, got out a cigarette, lit it and replied): Ta Thu Thau? (He pronounced it Ta Thuc Thau instead of Ta Thu Thau although I don't know why). Yes, he was a good man. But he was killed by mistake. Why do you want to raise this question? In these troubled times when thousands of people are dying,

why focus on the death of one single person? Why provoke discord and division among our struggling people?'

"Mr President, Ta Thu Thau was not one single person. He represented a political current, a concept of life and action for the people which interested many. His death in obscure circumstances has sown great doubt and suspicion. If your government had nothing to do with this tragic death, it has every interest in shedding light on this affair. It will gain prestige and the people will be welded together all the more in the fight for freedom. Obscurity divides, not clarity.

Sectarian

"The President: (Obviously used to being applauded and approved, he seemed ill at ease faced with my 'insolent' remarks. He took several drags from his cigarette). You are young and sectarian.

"No Mr President, we are not sectarian. The proof is that we initiated the formation of the General Delegation of Vietnamese in France in September 1944, which grouped together all the Vietnamese in France. And it is in the interest of all Vietnamese that we are demanding the formation of a commission of inquiry with the support of your government, to find out who was responsible for the death of Ta Thu Thau and his comrades.

"The President without giving me a straight answer and without giving any promises in either direction just gave me a large apple."

The war and the regime

Many people were won to socialism through the campaign in solidarity with Vietnam in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies. Despite the full-scale war by the United States, the Vietnamese people were eventually victorious: the United States was forced finally to withdraw in 1975, and its ally, the right wing government of South Vietnam, collapsed.

North Vietnam had been liberated from French rule, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. In 1945 the Republic of North Vietnam was declared and it was internationally recognised in 1954 after a protracted war of liberation against French imperialism. The Viet Minh was an alliance of the Communist

Party and various nationalists under Stalinist dominance, originally formed to fight the Japanese. Rural-based, it became the undisputed leader of the Vietnamese masses after smashing the leaders of the urban working class in 1945, who were Trotskyists.

The 1954 Geneva Agreement, signed by the Vietnamese under Russian pressure, in fact conceded a lot to French imperialism, including the division of the country into two states.

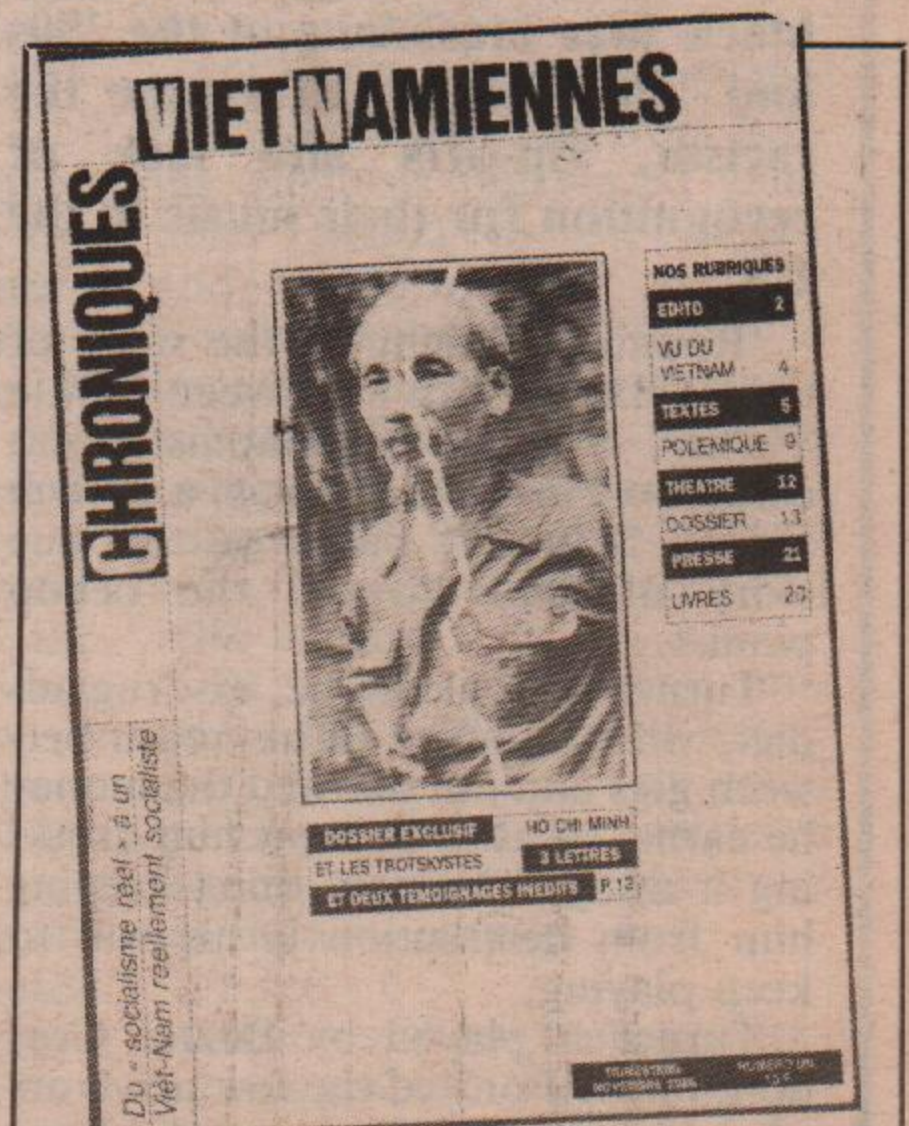
In the 1960s, North Vietnam and the "Viet Cong" forces that it supported in the South increasingly came into military conflict with the US.

In the US and Europe mass solidarity movements developed in support of the Vietnamese struggle. Particularly in 1968 and after, when the Viet Cong launched the Tet offensive against the US and US-backed forces, huge

demonstrations of students and young workers marched in most of the capital cities of Europe and in the USA itself, under anti-imperialist slogans.

Of course the solidarity movements quite rightly supported the Vietnamese National Liberation Front against the US. Unfortunately support was generally uncritical.

The role played by Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party in exterminating the Vietnamese Trotskyists laid the basis for the kind of state created after Vietnam's victory. Although capitalism was overthrown, the state is on the Russian model — allowing no democracy for the Vietnamese people and no independent working class organisation. It has waged a systematically racist policy against Vietnam's Chinese ethnic minority.



Chroniques Vietnamiennes is available for 85 francs, airmail from Chroniques Vietnamiennes, 2 rue Richard-Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

NUS: TIME TO FIGHT!

Motions for this year's National Union of Students Conference which is being held in Blackpool this week, propose a radically new campaigning approach for the one and a quarter million-strong organisation.

By Melanie Gingell

Making a break with tradition, colleges have decided to discuss the attacks on education and students' living standards (grants, benefits and housing regulations) all together as different aspects of the same Tory

onslaught. Usually NUS divides its campaigning work into different sections and if two campaigns meet up the link is both accidental and superficial.

While big colleges may be able to run a dozen or so campaigns, it is virtually impossible for smaller or less developed unions, particularly Further Education colleges, to do that.

Separating off issues also makes NUS weaker: there is no coherent integrated campaigning strategy. Days of action are called on, maybe, a couple of issues a year, but between them there is not even an attempt to pull the union together. Its campaigning potential is dissipated.

The NUS conference discussion will focus on the proposal to use Charters to link together student financial support and cuts. Those two issues are connected by the theme of access to education.

Cuts are being made, FE students have no grant and the Tories want to replace grants with loans. This means that the possibility of going to college is greatly diminished: many of the first courses to be cut are those geared towards re-starting education, like courses for mature students and women and black students. Cuts are also taking place in nurseries and disability access programmes, so the campaign charters should include demands specific to women, black students and others especially hit by the Tories. The demand for access to education ties everything together.

No to Baker, No to the deal!

By Liam Conway

At the NUT special conference at Blackpool last Saturday, over 45% of delegates voted against the deal, despite the usual one-sided debate. On a card vote, 122,557 favoured the deal and 100,973 opposed it. The executive couldn't even face the figures, so they were not revealed until after the conference had closed.

Delegates to conference are not mandated by associations so it is very likely that many more associations had policies opposing the settlement. Fringe meetings arranged by Socialist Teachers Alliance and progressive local associations highlighted the extent of the sell-out involved.

In return for an inadequate short-term pay rise, teachers will be forced to cover for absent colleagues, teach classes of 33 and over, and work at least four hours extra a week at the head's direction.

One delegate described the "yes" vote to such a deal as "the equivalent of turkeys voting for Christmas"! However, many members will be voting blind. Despite major sections of the union opposing this deal propaganda will be geared entirely for acceptance.

Monday's issue of "The Teacher", the NUT's newspaper, will hammer the message home and ballot papers will contain a detailed description of the executive's position only.

Activists everywhere must get out alternative propaganda calling for a "no" vote. Better still get local associations opposed to the deal to issue alternative arguments with every ballot paper.



March against the Public Order Bill organised by the Campaign Against Police Repression. Photo: Jez Coulson (IFL)

The greater the "no" vote, the greater the prospects for renewed action, unofficial if necessary.

A large "no" vote could even panic the government to enforcing its own settlement.

In such a situation activists must be at the forefront of an action campaign which condemns both deals. We must argue on the basis of 1986 conference policy: flat rate pay rises, class size maximum of 27, minimum marking and preparation time of 20% weekly, and no link with pay and conditions.

The Local Association Pay Action Campaign (LAPAC) and the Socialist Teachers' Alliance must

carry the campaign into every association in the country, especially those where union bodies carry out national executive instructions unquestioningly.

Finally we must link up with the Education Institute of Scotland (EIS) whose membership have already demonstrated that teachers have the stomach to fight with a massive "no" vote to the government's offer.

LAPAC MEETING
10.30am Elm Bank Teachers' Centre, Coventry
Saturday December 6
All activists to attend!

The MI5 scandal came very close to Mrs Thatcher this week when it emerged that Labour MPs had their telephones bugged.

The Speaker of the House of Commons — who has in the past displeased Thatcher by being stropky — has moved to investigate the issue.

Following allegations that Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock had his phone tapped, MP Tam Dalyell called for an emergency debate.

Dalyell himself was told by a mystery caller from the security services that his phone, too, is bugged. 'I would like you to believe that not all the security services are anti-Labour', Dalyell was told. 'Some of us feel we are being used and abused'.

When Labour MP Tony Banks

called for assurances that MPs were able to make telephone calls without being spied upon, the Speaker replied: 'I propose to look into that matter'.

This is just the latest revelation arising as a result of the MI5 trial in Australia.

If there is a real investigation into the bugging of Labour MPs, it could prove to be a major scandal for the Tory government. Against the Tories' will, more and more revelations are now emerging about the real role of MI5 — that it was involved in a plot authorised by Prime Minister Anthony Eden, to assassinate Egyptian President Nasser at the time of the Suez crisis; that it similarly tried to assassinate the Greek leader of the Cypriot EOKA movement, George Grivas; and that it bugged Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson.

Move this resolution

This LP (etc) considers the deal offered by the LEA Management Panel to the teaching unions to be unacceptable, because it will:

1. Introduce compulsory cover.
2. Introduce 4 hours extra per week of compulsory duties.
3. Remove the right to work to rule.

4. Institutionalise negotiations linking pay and conditions (like productivity deals).
5. Only give most teachers a tiny pay rise which is not renegotiable until 1988.

The deal will also create an 'Extra grade' for new teachers which will pay even less, and will be subject to constraint and heavy appraisal and the threat of immediate sacking.

We recognise that deteriorating working conditions for teachers mean poorer quality education. This LP calls on the Labour councillors and the Labour Party front bench to oppose the deal and to stop publically supporting it.

SSiN

The debate at conference will also stress how important it is to link up the student union with college trade unions. At Warwick University this term a Campaign Charter has been drawn up together with the college unions and includes their demands against privatisation and job loss.

Ideally NUS would have model charters sent out which would be amended to suit local conditions.

Within the overall framework specialist campaigns on a particular theme would also be run. Campaigning on a local level could then be structured through the Area NUS — which would help tie everything together and give less developed FE colleges an easy framework to slot into — knowing that their demands would be fought for by the entire NUS Area.

There is nothing necessarily radical about the idea of a Charter, because that is just a sheet of paper. What matters is how the demands are drawn up and fought for.

It will be proposed at conference that NUS should organise a national Higher Education rent strike to function as a backdrop to the campaign and to put immediate pressure on college authorities to concede.

From there on direct action would be needed: occupations, demonstrations, lobbies, a programme of continual harassment of the Tories, and of official bodies that will not meet our demands.

That would be a nationally co-ordinated campaign to demand adequate FE funding.

Clearly this type of campaign should be seen as an important part of winning the student vote for Labour. Being silent about government is stupid. Being silent about the forthcoming general election is absurd. All NUS's policies point to the need for a Labour government and NUS looks ridiculous putting out posters in Labour Party colours saying 'Vote Education'. It should be honest. But the NUS constitution forbids NUS from calling for a positive vote for any party. The Constitution must be changed and in the meantime NUS must follow the example of NUS Wales and tie in its demands with 'Tories Out'.

SSiN can be contacted at:
54a Peckham Rye,
London SE15

MI5 CRISIS LOOMS FOR TORIES