

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

March on the Tories

BEAT THE BLUES

Demonstrate
Thursday 13th October
Assemble 2pm the Level
Brighton
Called by the Sussex Area NUS

This is Tory Britain!

After Blackpool

By Eric Heffer MP

Look at this year's Conference and you can see that the trends I predicted in 'Labour's Future' have gone further and quicker than even I thought they would.

'Aims and Values', and many of the Policy Review statements, lay the basis for transforming the Party into a kind of SDP. Side by side with the policy changes were the constitutional changes. Those give greater power to the NEC — and, in effect, greater power to the leadership in the Party.

The leadership argued that they now have a mandate for those changes. But that's not quite accurate, because you can't take the leadership vote in isolation.

The vote has strengthened them — do not underestimate that. On the other hand, Conference decisions on ET, trade union legislation, unilateral nuclear disarmament and a few other items were very powerful thrusts in the opposite direction. They counteracted the overall trend of the Conference.

This means that from now on the leadership will be working very much harder in the trade unions to get the decisions they want at the next Conference — the crucial Conference which will look at the final outcome of the various Policy Reviews.

At this Conference the wirepullers and puppet-masters were at work: it was a very manipulated Conference indeed. The debates were organised so that the various resolutions were thrown in together, and this meant that there was a certain amount of confusion. There was no coherent debate on any issue.

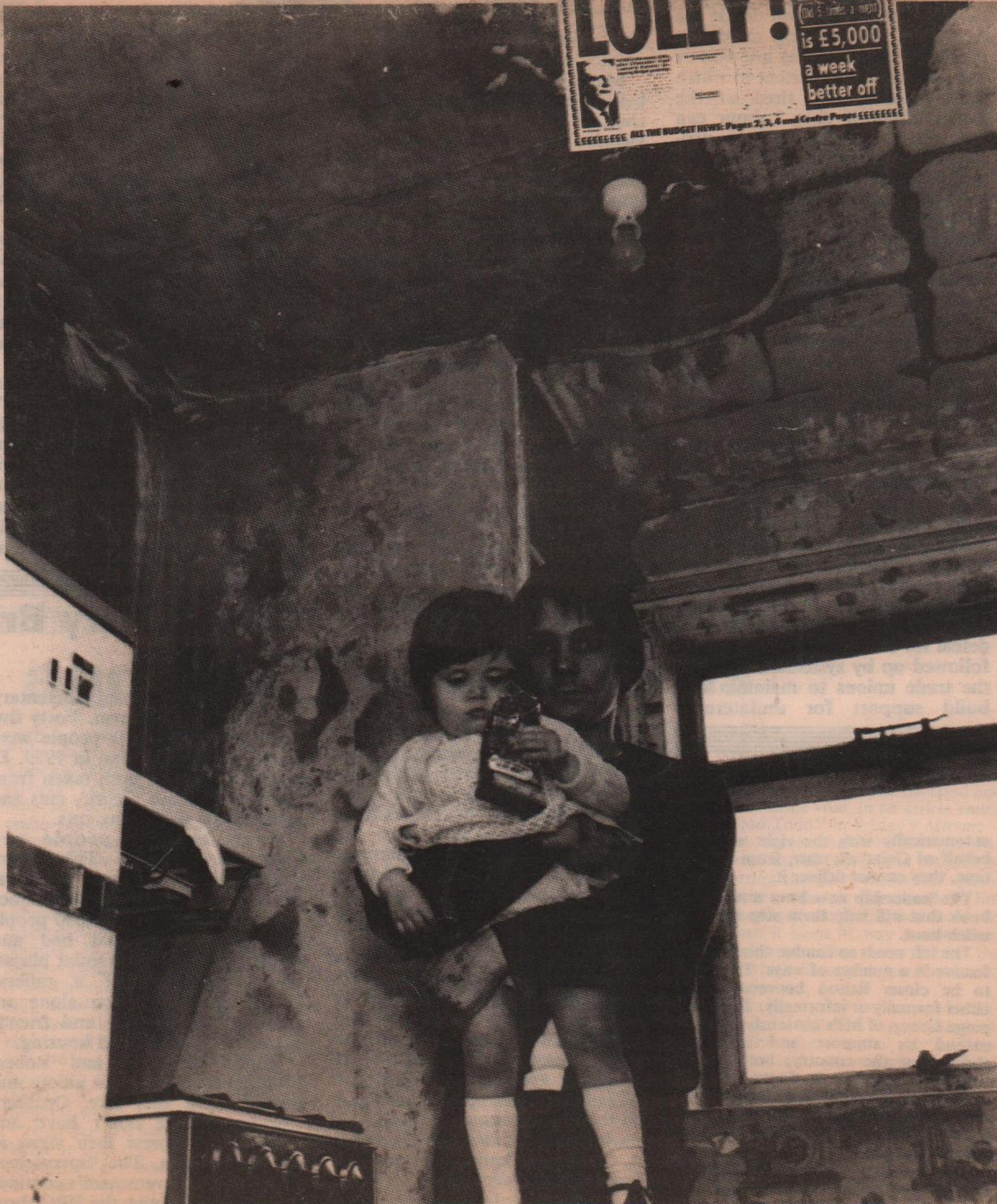
The Party leadership was up there on a platform, looking to me very much like the Presidium of the Russian Communist Party. Undoubtedly there is increased bureaucratic centralised control of the Party, with an almost Stalinist hue to it.

From the point of view of the Left, it has to be said that this Conference marked further steps away from socialist principles. The Kinnockite right wing definitely strengthened itself there.

The old right wing sometimes appeared to be almost socialist by comparison! Hattersley, for example, said that he was for the abolition of the House of Lords. At the same time, of course, he was very happy with what is being done against the left.

And now? We have to strengthen our efforts inside the Party. We must organise much more effectively. We must make serious contact with the rank and file of the trade unions, and link up with those trade unionists and officials who have at least some sympathy with us.

I thought Bill Jordan summed up the issue of the block vote, that is now being raised. He said they were quite happy to forgo it provided that the block vote was dissolved directly to individual political levy-paying trade unionists,



Despite what the Sun says, many people in Britain face much worse conditions in Thatcher's Britain. Mark from Birmingham, above, is typical of many unemployed. Photo: Nigel Clapp.

Tory Britain is a mean, cruel society. The Tories say they offer freedom. It is a mean, cruel freedom.

Employers are free to sack workers. There are still 2.7 million unemployed if the figures are calculated without the statistical tricks which the Tories have introduced since 1982. The Government is free to sack workers at GCHQ for belonging to trade unions.

The workers aren't free to belong to a union. 2.7 million aren't free from the grimness of enforced unemployment — or enforced cheap labour on a Government scheme.

Employers are free to impose speed-up and make bigger and bigger profits. Workers aren't free to strike effectively. Successive Tory laws have imposed more restrictions on strikes and picketing than in any other country in Western Europe.

The law is now used against unions about once a fortnight on average. No-one can count how often workers and unions hold back from effective action for fear of the law.

Scabs are free to break strikes. The Tories have promised to protect them against union discipline — even if the union has had a ballot in best Tory-approved form. Already they have protection against picketing.

But the scabs' 'right to work' doesn't extend to a right to work for the millions of jobless.

The SAS, the Army and the Northern Ireland police are effectively free to shoot to kill. The British police are free to shoot, and increasingly likely to get away with killing.

Oppressed people aren't free to fight back. John Stalker wasn't free to investigate 'shoot-to-kill' in Northern Ireland fully and properly.

The profiteers and exploiters are free to spend their riches just as they like. The amount they have to contribute through taxes to public spending has been steadily reduced.

Millions are not free from gruelling, spirit-crushing want. Twenty million people now live below the

Turn to page 2

Turn to page 2

Yugoslav crisis fuels nationalism

Workers and students in Yugoslavia are continuing their protests against the government's austerity programme.

The government is now threatening a state of emergency as discontent at low wages and galloping inflation intermeshes with the nationalist discontent which bubbled up 3 months ago in Serbia.

Montenegro is already under a state of emergency. Its capital, Titograd, has been flooded with riot police and 'anti-terrorist' units. On Saturday a mass demonstration was attacked by police, using batons, electric prods, and teargas.

Workers and students in the industrial centre of Nicsic immediately occupied public buildings and laid siege to Party offices in protest at the police brutality.

Then on Monday, a leading

Montenegri Party official, Radivoje Bradjovic, was sent to the massive Boris Kidric ironworks to calm the crowds. Instead, he burst into tears and handed in his resignation.

Crowds of workers waved flags and banners saying 'Long live the working class!' One worker is reported to have said 'This looks like the October revolution'.

The government has accused Serbian nationalists of plotting a coup in Montenegro. It may be right. The Serbian section of the bureaucracy is using economic discontent to boost its chauvinist claims over minority areas.

The movement in Yugoslavia shows what could happen in other state-monopoly societies as perestroika is shown for what it is — an attempt to gain economic stability at the expense of the workers.



Police confront demonstrators in Montenegro

A lame 'soft left'

By Vladimir Derer
(Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, in personal capacity)

Last week Conference was widely expected to approve the Party's present direction. Subsequent events by and large confirm this, in particular the re-election of the leader and the deputy leader. 'Aims & Values' and all the Policy Review statements were passed massively, as were the new rules to tighten the leadership's grip on the Party, and hamper the expression of opposition. For railroading this through Conference the party leadership has relied entirely on trade union block votes — obediently delivered despite the doubts some TU leaders and delegations have expressed.

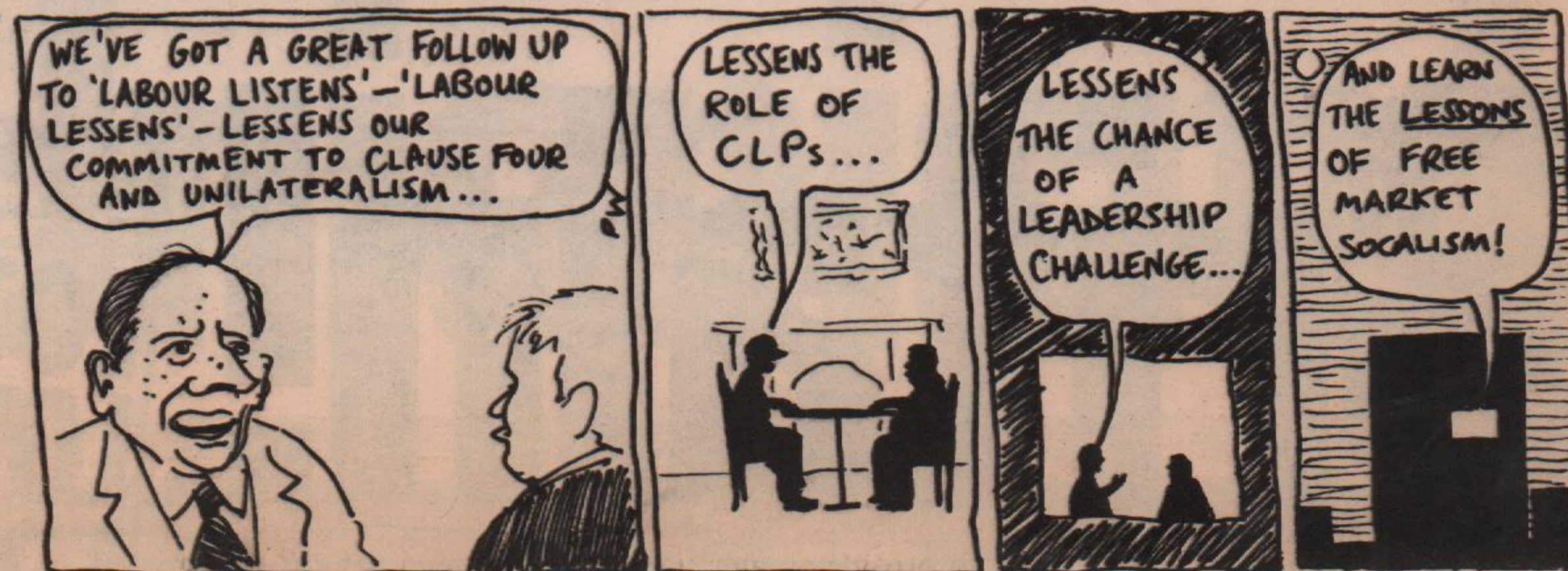
But the wish to maintain the status quo was not limited to the trade union hierarchy. The vote on leader and deputy leader proves this. Hattersley received 60% of votes even amongst CLPs, where he was expected to be most vulnerable.

The reason for supporting the status quo is fear of upsetting the applecart. It had little to do with belief in the personal merits of the leader and his deputy. The great

majority of members feel that change would diminish Labour's chances. This is why they are prepared to lamely go along with the 'new realism' of the Policy Review.

Abandoning the party's traditional commitments will divide the party and will not help us to win elections. Whether they are won or lost depends on the extent to which the electorate gets tired of the Tories. Once it does Labour can win on a credible radical programme. On the other hand, all that a programme based on concessions to Thatcherism will do is to prevent a Labour government from adopting policies indispensable to tackling Britain's economic problems — and once again lose it electoral support.

But not everything at Conference was negative. The votes cast for the Campaign Group/Labour Left Liaison slate rose slightly. The defeat of the leadership on the 'One Woman on the Shortlist' reform means that women can no longer be excluded from shortlists and that MPs cannot avoid re-selection. The success of the resolution demanding more votes for CLPs was also accomplished against bitter NEC opposition. Above all, Conference not only reaffirmed unilateral nuclear disarmament but threw out the fudge resolution. This was a serious defeat for the leadership. It must be followed up by systematic work in the trade unions to maintain and build support for unilateralist



policy and to make advances on public ownership.

Many party members mistakenly believe that concessions to Thatcherism are essential for a Labour victory. They take little account of what programme Labour would need once elected. A significant section of the party, the 'soft left', has based its whole strategy for Labour on this false belief. It is a strategy which aims to produce an image of party unity by delivering votes to the leadership. This is done in the hope that subsequently the leadership will listen to the reservations the 'soft left' has about the party's direction. But in reality the only language the leadership understands is that of votes at Conference. Once it has secured these, it ignores the complaints of the 'soft left'.

An example of the pathetic ineffectiveness of the 'soft left's' strategy was provided by Ron Todd's intervention. Having first helped to persuade his union's Executive Committee and delegation that 'Aims & Values' was a "philosophical statement", and the Policy Review Reports only "provisional" and therefore to be safely voted for, he then poured scorn on the NEC document and rejected the general thrust of the Reports. In doing so he succeeded in getting the worst of all worlds in both press and the party. Kinnock's footmen promptly denouncing him for 'breaking ranks' and Conference seeming to agree. For the party to have been influenced to question the documents it would have been necessary to make criticisms of them public long before Conference started and to recommend unequivocally that 'Aims & Values' be voted down. As it was the challenge to this document was left entirely to CLPs. Despite shortage of time 12 sought to strengthen the document on public ownership and 3 demanded that a commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament be inserted in it. Once it was known that the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) had ruled out of order these

amendments, no less than 33 CLPs passed emergency resolutions demanding that the decision be reversed. These emergency resolutions in turn were also ruled out by the CAC. Support for their reinstatement by reference back of the CAC Report was sought but the request was ignored even by sympathetic unions.

All the 'soft left', whether in the unions or CLPs, has in fact achieved is that the leadership now has the approval of Conference for a course which will undermine the credibility of and support for the next Labour government.

Next year Conference will be asked to accept the Policy Review's final recommendations. The task facing those who don't wish Labour to capitulate to Thatcherism is daunting. But this year's decisions on unilateralism, dissatisfaction with the leadership's economic policy and grudging acceptance of

some of the democratic demands of women, Black people and the CLPs set the agenda for the coming year. It will involve translating the 'second thoughts' some unions are having on these issues into TU conference decisions. The work to get resolutions submitted by trade union branches must start now. The same goes for Regional Conferences. It is vital, however, that debate on the Party's future is conducted within the party and unions so that they are not seen as undermining Party unity. Just as vital is to change the NEC — every position must go on being contested. But here too campaigning must be only through party channels.

There is a growing realisation in the party that unilateralism and public ownership are to be jettisoned. Only the concerned, systematic and relentless activity of all those party members who see the danger can prevent this.

This is Tory Britain

From page 1

poverty line of supplementary benefit plus 40 per cent. Forty five per cent of Britain's people were worse off in 1987 than in 1979. £3 billion a year has been taken from the poor in social security cuts and given to the rich in tax cuts.

Over 112,000 people are registered homeless. This figure grossly underestimates the real number, since single people cannot register as homeless. 25,000 people are living in squalid bed and breakfast hotels and similar places. Over a quarter of a million households in London alone are sharing with relatives and friends because they can't find housing.

Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell are free to bust unions and publish what they like. Ordinary working people don't have any freedom to express their views in the mass media. The 'Spycatcher' case and the Government's continuing campaign about the BBC show

the Tories' commitment to wide-ranging restrictions on free comment and free information.

Profiteers are free to coin gains from sickness and suffering. 78 new private hospitals were opened between 1979 and 1987, while 161 NHS hospitals were shut.

The 90-odd per cent of the population who still rely on the NHS are not free from avoidable suffering. Infant mortality is now increasing in Britain. Last year a doctor estimated 15 people a day were dying needlessly because of NHS cuts.

Safety provision in industry has been cut back, both by profit-hungry employers and by the Government's reducing money for official inspectorates. The results: Zeebrugge, Piper Alpha, Kings Cross.

It is a mean, cruel society, this Tory Britain — free for a few, despotic and harassing for the majority. Let's organise the fight back!

After Blackpool

From page 1

without those same trade unionists necessarily having to be active in the Party.

Without that, he said, it stays as it is now. In other words, we'll wield it exactly as we want to on behalf of the right against the left.

I don't think we should be arguing for the unions to get rid of the block vote. However, I think it was good that we passed the resolution that the influence of the block vote should be diminished, and the influence of the constituency vote increased. But that is different from what some of the others want — to get the unions distanced from the Labour Party.

We are in the same situation now as we were under Gaitskell, with one exception. Then, the block vote was

automatically with the right wing on behalf of Gaitskell; now, from time to time, they cannot deliver it.

The leadership now have a new rule book that will help them step up their witch-hunt.

The left needs to combat this new offensive in a number of ways. There has to be closer liaison between CLPs, either formally or informally. The Campaign Group of MPs obviously needs to extend its support and influence throughout the country, both in the trade unions and in the Party.

But at the Parliamentary level we will also need to discuss with the better people in the Tribune Group, because they are not all lost.

The true and fundamental answer is for the left to build itself up in the CLPs and in the unions.

Labour: stay in and fight!

EDITORIAL

Neil Kinnock got help from a strange quarter last week.

The Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) made yet another of their boringly familiar calls for left-wing activists to quit the fight inside the Labour Party.

According to Socialist Worker, staying inside the mass political wing of the British labour movement is a waste of time for socialists because the action is to be found elsewhere:

"Demoralisation is unjustified. The right in the Labour Party may have triumphed but there is still plenty that socialists can do outside the Party. The crisis in the NHS is just one example of the Tories unpopularity. The Poll Tax is another and the Housing Bill yet another..."

"Together these issues have mobilised more working people than at any time since the miners' strike... they will not be won to socialism by activists who spend half their time working to build a Labour Party dominated by the Kinnock-Hattersley machine."

This is inaccurate and stupid and it is a counsel of despair.

Many of the activists in the NHS and in the Poll Tax and Housing campaigns are members of the Labour Party already and look to the Labour Party for political answers and a political lead. So how are the SWP going to win these people to socialism by telling them to quit activity inside the Labour Party, the political wing of the multi-millions labour movement?

We need to beat back the Tories' attacks, yes! But we also need something to replace the Tories with. We need an alternative government, a government based on and accountable to the labour movement and prepared to decisively take on the power of the bosses.

Right now, the official labour movement is a long way from being able to provide such an alternative. But an alternative government is needed nonetheless and the workers involved in the various direct action campaigns against the Tories know this.

Workers know that being angry with the Tories isn't enough, they understand the need for a political alternative and therefore turn to the only alternative that is available, the Labour Party. They turn to parliamentary politics.



Labour Party conference delegates signal defiance

To attempt to avoid the existing parliamentary politics of the working class is to turn your backs on the working class as it actually exists.

The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci made a similar point when he explained why the supporters of self-sufficient militant direct action of his day — the syndicalists — failed to provide an alternative in the working class movement to the reformist socialists.

"The workers and peasants felt that, so long as the propertied class and the democratic-parliamentary State are dictating the laws of history, any attempt to remove oneself from the sphere of operation of these laws is inane and ridiculous. There is no denying the fact that within the general configuration of an industrial society, each man can actively participate in affairs and modify his surroundings only to the extent that he operates as an individual and citizen, as a member of the democratic-parliamentary State. The liberal experience is not worthless and can only be transcended after it has been experienced. The apoliticism of the apoliticals was merely a degeneration of politics: to reject the State and fight against it is just as much a political act as to take part in the general historical activity that is channelled into Parliament and the municipal councils, the

popular institutions of the State. The quality of the political act varies. The syndicalists worked outside of reality, and hence their politics were fundamentally mistaken. On the other hand, the parliamentary socialists worked in close contact with events, and while they could make mistakes (and indeed they committed many mistakes, and grievous ones too), they made no mistake in the direction their activity took and so they

triumphed in the 'competition'; the broad masses, the people who objectively modify social relations through their intervention,

Favoured

favoured the Socialist Party. Notwithstanding all its mistakes and shortcomings, the Party did succeed, in the final analysis, in accomplishing its mission: to transform the proletariat into

something whereas before it had been nothing, to give it an awareness, to point the liberation movement firmly and enthusiastically in the direction corresponding in its general lines to the process of historical development of human society.

The gravest error of the socialist movement was akin to that of the syndicalists. Participating in the general activity of human society within the State, the socialists forgot that their role had to be essentially one of criticism, of antithesis. Instead of mastering reality, they allowed themselves to be absorbed by it."

The SWP are just making the same mistake as the Italian syndicalists, except that they do it 70 years later — 70 years of bitter experience.

According to Lindsey German: "But the left has not recognised the real issues. Every attempt to reform the Labour Party has failed — not because of lack of effort, but because of the fundamental nature of the Party."

The block vote goes to the roots of Labour, which was formed to represent the trade unions in parliament. Every time the left makes real gains that vote is used against them."

The argument can only possibly make sense if Socialist Worker believes it is impossible and pointless to fight to try and transform the unions. If we don't manage to change the way the block vote is used then we're not going to get very far in the unions.

Logically they should say that socialists shouldn't work in the unions either!

'The emancipation of the working class is also the emancipation of all human beings without distinction of sex or race'

Karl Marx

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The Phoenix

Last week we superimposed a drawing of a mythical bird, the Phoenix, in red over the 'Where we Stand' box.

The Phoenix in myth was an immortal beast which could rise reborn out of its own ashes. Thus it seemed to us an appropriate image for what we are doing: working to make socialism rise from the ashes of reformism and Stalinism.

Forced to say so many negative

things about the would-be Marxist left, we felt the need for some symbolic way of asserting our unshakeable belief that socialism and Marxism will renew themselves. Thus the ancient symbol of the Phoenix.

Some readers have protested that this is a fascist symbol.

It is certainly a symbol used by some fascists. But symbols like this have been put to many different uses over the ages. Right now, for example, there is an anarchist publisher called Phoenix Press. Presumably they chose it for reasons like our own.

Some of the people involved in Socialist Organiser issued a series of 'Phoenix Pamphlets' in the 1970s.

The Phoenix was the symbol of militant Irish Republicanism at its best, the symbol of the Fenians.

For us, to repeat, the Red Phoenix is a symbol of the socialist renewal we strive for.

The Boyo and the Toddosaurus

For a while, everything flooked hunky-dory for the Boyo. The lefties' leadership challenge had been brushed aside and his big speech seemed to go down pretty well. Even the press had to admit things were going smoothly.

The worst the Daily Express had been able to come up with was Tuesday's headline, "Kinnochio", above a story suggesting that the Dream Ticket had put itself in thrall to the union barons in order to get re-elected; hardly very original, that.

On Wednesday the Mail gave The Speech its lead story, under the headline, "Let's do it Maggie's way". ("Neil Kinnock, desperate to win the next election, yesterday called on Labour to challenge for power on Mrs Thatcher's terms...") which, coming from that paper, almost amounted to praise. The trusty Mirror, of course, was ecstatic: "Kinnock's day of triumph" it proclaimed on the front

page, complete with full-colour photo ("the smiles say it all as jubilant Neil Kinnock shares his triumph with wife Glenys yesterday"), while inside political editor Julia Langdon gave readers edited highlights of the "powerful and passionate statement".

The Financial Times leader called it "the best social democratic speech of the season" and went on to note approvingly that "it took account of the market, it accepted the need for competition. It recognised that a mixed, albeit regulated, economy was necessary if wealth was to be created." The FT's only reservation was the lack of a "credible defence policy" but, that aside, not a bad write-up. Of course, the FT's John Lloyd had written most of the speech in the first place. Come to think of it, Lloyd probably wrote their leader as well...

Then bloody Todd had to go and four things up with his "cordless telephone" speech at the Tribune rally. From then on everything went wrong: "Todd hits at Kinnock the Tory" (Daily Express front page, Wednesday); "Day of self destruction" (Daily Mail front page,

PRESS GANG

Daily Express

The Guardian

DAILY MIRROR
DAILY STAR

THE INDEPENDENT

By Jim Denham

Friday) especially after Brother Ron lined his block vote up with the constituency unilateralists to knock back the platform on defence.

Joe Haines, who was once part of

Harold Wilson's 'Kitchen Cabinet' and is now the Mirror Group's political editor, summed up how the Boyo himself felt on the subject of Todd and the T&G block vote, in an article entitled "Dino-Todd" in Friday's Mirror:

"The trade union block vote has fulfilled a useful function in the past by supporting the party leadership against the zanier proposals from the left. But once the block vote joins the blockhead vote then it is on its way to the Great Pasture in the Sky reserved for the species which Bernard Levin has named Toddosaurus..."

"There is only one question to be asked: 'Who the hell does Ron Todd think he is?' Elsewhere in that day's Mirror Todd came in for more stick: 14,073 out of 17,000 Mirror readers consulted in a telephone poll "blasted Ron Todd for his wrecking attack on Labour's new policies". What "new policies" these may be we are not told, but "wrecking defence of Labour's existing policies" wouldn't sound so good, would it? And the Mirror found no less than three T&G members (including one, Brian Nicholson, who was on the union's ex-

ecutive until he somehow got thrown out in a vote of the membership) to say things like, "He has really gone off the rails this time", and "As far as I am concerned Ron Todd is a has-been and will become extinct like the dinosaurs."

All of which no doubt made the Boyo feel a little better about things, coming as it did from Britain's only Labour-supporting daily.

Strangely, just about the only defence of Todd to be found anywhere in the press came from Paul Johnson in Thursday's Mail — and a pretty backhanded defence it is too:

"What Todd, in his friendly way, has spotted is that Labour may end up with smart image and a slick agenda, but with no body and no soul. The truth is that Kinnock's new position halfway between socialism and capitalism contains too many contradictions. It is clearly a con. And what Todd wants to know — what all of us need to know — is who is being conned."

But then, the Mail is a Tory rag and Johnson is a half-crazed born-again Thatcherite. So we needn't take any notice of what he says, eh Neil?

4 LETTERS



Fire-bombers for foetus rights?

GRAFFITI

US anti-abortionists are out in force to oppose Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis.

They have begun a campaign of disruption of Dukakis' election rallies — Dukakis is in favour of a woman's right to choose — and during the Atlanta Democratic convention anti-abortionists laid siege to abortion clinics in the city.

The anti-abortion lobby in the US is extremely strong — boosted by Reagan's up-front anti-abortion stand — and have no qualms about resorting to illegal and quasi-terrorist action. Abortion clinics, and family planning clinics which offer abortion advice, have been picketed, stormed and even firebombed.

Several states operate stringent restrictions on abortion — appeals against such laws are generally unlikely to succeed due to Reagan's practice of appointing judges opposed to abortion.

In Minnesota a woman under 18 who wants an abortion has to have the written consent of both parents, whether or not she has any contact with them, or obtain the approval of a state judge. Since the law has been in effect the birth rate for girls aged 15-17 has risen by 50%.

To top it all, the Department of Health and Human Services has just announced that it will enact rules which allow it to withhold funds from family planning clinics if they give women advice or information on abortion.

Some radical anti-abortionists compare their struggle for the rights of the foetus with the black civil rights movement. Who do they think they're kidding?

Is the *Sun* trying to clean up its image? The paper which screamed 'Gotcha' when the Belgrano was sunk and has a pathological hatred of the Japanese (the 'Nips' as they call them) has launched its own anti-racist campaign.

Our ever-so-concerned *Sun* journalists are truly shocked at the extent of racism which still exists in Britain. As its contribution to the fight against racism the *Sun* gives helpful advice to black people on how "to spot and cope with a race-hate bigot". Here's a taste of their advice.

"A racist restaurant will tell a black couple they don't have a free table when it is obvious the place is half empty." True enough. The *Sun's* advice: "Find somewhere else to eat." Helpful, eh. The advice continues in the same vein. If you have a racist

boss — "make sure your behaviour doesn't justify the stereotype he has labelled you." If you have racist workmates, "Never get into rows with them — that will put you in the wrong."

Best of all, if you have racist neighbours, "Don't irritate them by playing loud reggae music in the middle of the night."

The *Sun's* "answer" to racism not only perpetuates traditional racist stereotypes, it tells black people to be good, keep quiet, and integrate. In fact, to give up the fight against racism and become the sort of black person racists can tolerate. If you are black and fight back, well you're setting yourself up, aren't you?

Romania's President Ceaucescu, Eastern Europe's most monarchical despot, has finally clashed with Gorbachev.

Whilst in the Soviet Union criticism is rife of the disasters of mega-centralised planning, the message doesn't seem to have filtered through to Romania. Ceaucescu's latest plan is to re-vitalise agriculture by...bulldozing thousands of villages.

"Systematisation", as the project is coyly termed, will mean uprooting villagers to new, big "agro-industrial centres", villagers homes will be literally flattened — their new 'homes' in the centres are popularly called 'stables'.

Gorbachev has publicly criticised Ceaucescu's plan, as has the Hungarian government. Two million ethnic Hungarians lives in Rumania and they will be particularly badly affected by the changes. Hungary sees the plans as a deliberate attempt to smash up the Magyan culture.

No-one is sure yet whether Ceaucescu will get away with his scheme. For sure he is a massive embarrassment to the Soviet modernisers. Their best hope may be that the aged and ill Ceaucescu will pop off and give them a chance to sponsor a less eccentric successor.

Early signs are that the new Employment Training scheme (ET) is a flop.

Some training agents in London have reported a 45% drop out rate so far — closely following figures from trials earlier this year where 55% dropped out before embarking on training with managers.

One scheme in Brixton has had only 35 referrals for 360 places. 14 have already dropped out. Many schemes are way behind in filling their quotas — so far behind that they will be unviable unless the government bails them out.

Unlike Neil Kinnock and some of his trade union friends, it seems the unemployed are clear they want nothing to do with the Tories' latest cheap labour scheme.

Woosnam: a true son of the Thatcherite age

THIS SPORTING LIFE

By Janine Booth

Ian Woosnam! You vile, money-grabbing, unprincipled scoundrel with no national pride! You traitor to the cry of the fatherland, you anti-patriotic beast!

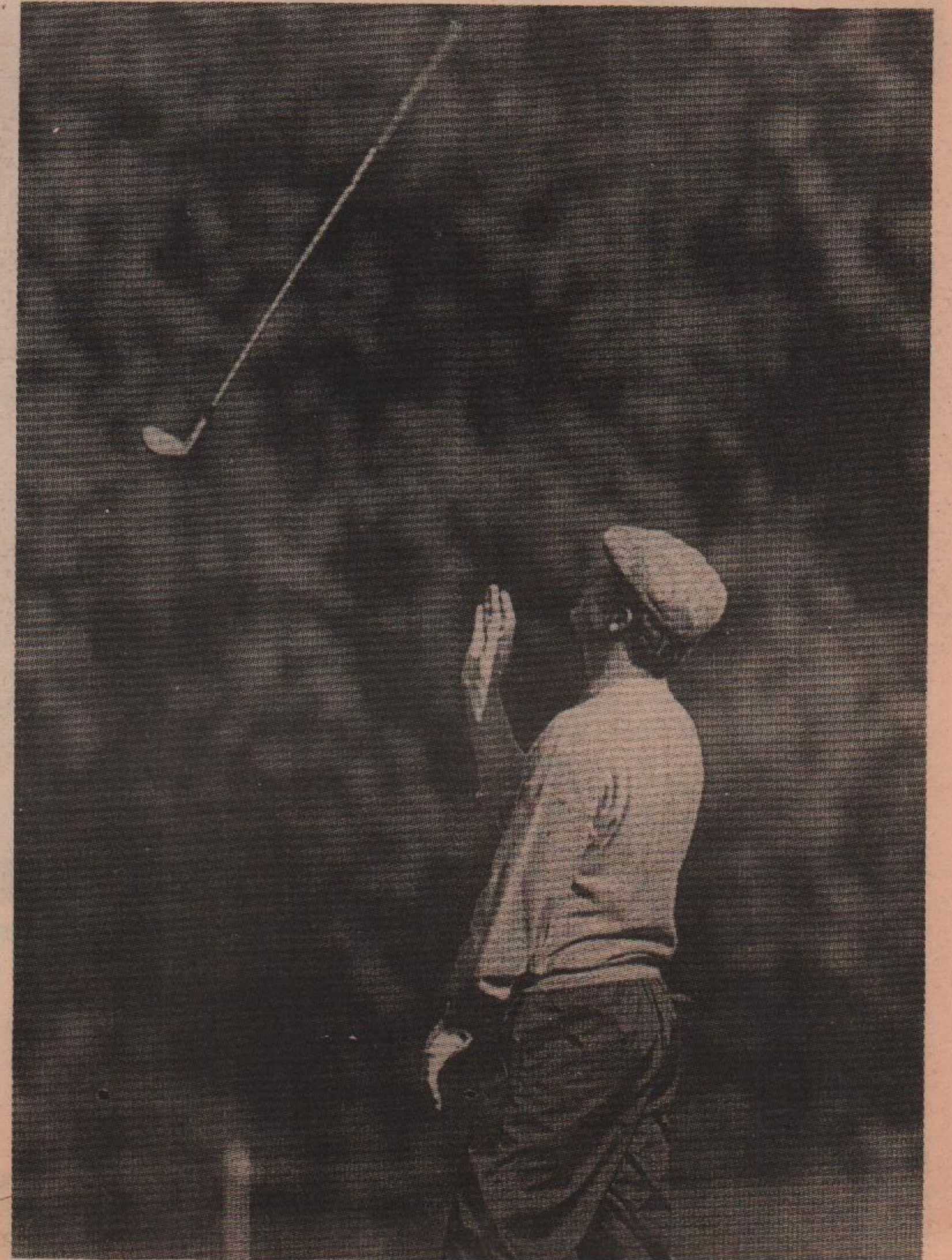
So spake the *Daily Mirror* when Mr Woosnam (top golf pro of Wales) announced his intention to play in South Africa's Sun City tournament rather than lead the Welsh team in defence of their World Cup.

The nationalistic chest-beating of Maxwell's *Mirror*, though, has almost entirely missed the point. Woosnam has proven himself a true son of the Thatcher age, passing up one of the major tournaments of his sport in pursuit of the racist rand. Sun City, apparently, pays appearance fees, whereas the World Cup proffers only prize money.

Along the same lines, England have called off the cricket tour of India after being refused visas for members of the squad who have played in Apartheid South Africa.

Leading transgressor Graham Gooch expressed sympathy for England's young cricketers — sympathy that isn't quite so forthcoming for the young cricketers of South Africa prevented from fulfilling their potential because they are black.

It seems that, so long as South Africa has sufficient quantities of dosh to buy off sports people with low threshold of principles, then it will always be able to undermine the sporting boycott. Perhaps then we should rely not on the likes of Ian Woosnam and Graham Gooch to fight apartheid, but on collective action in support of South African workers.



Congratulations to Grandstand on 30 years of Saturday afternoon sports broadcasting. The anniversary show served up the twin delights of golf and racing, which goes to show that, 30 years on, it still has a long way to go before it becomes an entertaining, informative programme. Still, it must inevitably have suffered from ITV's greedy, selfish deal with the Football League, whereby they secured exclusive rights to cover all League

soccer matches.

The answer to last week's trivia question is: Halifax Town, Oxford United, Exeter City, Wrexham and Crewe Alexandra.

This week's teaser: Name the four men who have played soccer for England with three 'o's in their surnames. Please note that only three of them were during this century! (Answer, as always, next week).

Is state monopoly better?

LETTERS

I agree with Duncan Chapple (letters, SO 374) that workers in Burma should organise independently of the middle-class opposition and fight for socialism.

But should those workers ally with the middle class opposition? At present the workers are not an independent political force; the middle-class opposition is the only force in the political arena. What's our attitude? Socialist Organiser says we should side with the opposition because it fights for democracy, in however limited a way. Militant says the same thing.

But Militant is illogical. Militant says that it would be a 'catastrophe' for the

present staid economy in Burma to be replaced by a private-profit system. So why not oppose the mass movement which is driving towards that 'catastrophe', and support the regime which is fending it off?

In 1962-4 the military seized power in Burma, and created a totalitarian state. Burma's industrialists and merchants — mostly Indians and Pakistanis — were driven out of the country. The military took over their businesses, and ran them according to government-decreed production targets and prices. All independent clubs, parties, unions and associations were replaced by or converted into offshoots of the army commanders' 'Burmese Socialist Programme Party'.

"If capitalist profit has been abolished... that's good", writes Duncan. Here it's not so simple. What replaced private capitalist profit? Not a cooperative commonwealth, but the exploitation of the workers and peasants by a state-

monopoly bureaucracy.

You might argue that this new exploitation was different (in technical economic terms) from the old — but scarcely that it was better. It was worse, because it went together with the suppression of even the feeble democratic liberties that Burma had before 1962.

In Vietnam or in Nicaragua, we sided with mass movements of workers and peasants against imperialism and oligarchy, even when we calculated that their leaderships were on the road to a bureaucratic state-monopoly system. We side with the movement in such cases despite the leadership and in order to be better able at the next stage to mobilise workers and peasants against the consolidation of bureaucratic state monopoly.

None of that means that bureaucratic state monopoly is better than private capitalism. It isn't — and that is the issue in Burma. We fight for socialism — but we have no reason to defend bureaucratic state monopoly, even against private capitalism.

Alan Gilbert, Camden

No illusions in Todd!

Todd is right' what a surprise! It is highly unlikely that anyone who had any doubts about that would be reading the pages of Socialist Organiser.

SO should have been saying what was all the fuss about? OK, Ron Todd made a challenge to the leadership's complacency — but that was only after voting for them.

It is a reflection of how right-wing the Labour Party is that Ron Todd is now the mouthpiece of the left. Socialists shouldn't add to the flag-waving, hero-worship of the man wielding the block vote. Yes, stay positive, yes, keep fighting, but don't win support by spreading illusions.

Comradely,
Helen McHale,
Manchester

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**Meeting with guest
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Thatcher's fragile success

After nine years in power, 'Thatcherism' seems triumphant. Some people argue that Thatcher has made a revolution in British politics and opened a new era. Martin Thomas argues that the Tories' success is less solid than it appears.

A cheap-labour production site within Europe for the multinationals, free of strong trade unions — that's the Tory vision of Britain's future.

They also count on gains from two other sources — the City's business as an international finance centre, and British overseas investments.

The Tories have some reason to be pleased with themselves. Trade union membership has been cut by 25% since 1979. Anti-strike laws have been effectively imposed. Speed-up, and the axing of vast chunks of less profitable industry, has raised productivity fairly fast since 1981. Britain has got more than any other European country of the swelling flow of Japanese foreign investment.

Britain's own net overseas assets are now bigger than any other country's except Japan's. British capitalists have bought out large sections of American business. And the City has maintained its role as an international finance centre.

But all this adds up to a lot less than reversing the long-term relative decline of British capitalism. For all the talk of Thatcherism and Reaganism as the ideologies of a new capitalist era, they have in fact been the policies of capitalist states in relative decline, and which continue to be in relative decline.

Formulas

The Tories' formulas make British capitalism more dependent than ever on the ups and downs of the world economy. The British economy's recovery since 1982 owes more to the international expansion

powered by the US budget and trade deficits than to anything the Tories have done. The stock market crash of October last year gave warning of how fragile it is.

A new book on 'The Politics of Thatcherism' concludes that the Tories have "not so far demonstrated that (they) can reverse the decline (of British capitalism). What (they have) discovered is a formula for managing the decline, and its consequences."

The continuing feebleness of British manufacturing — which has only just got back to the level of output it had before the terrible slump of the early Thatcher years, 1979-81, makes British capitalism very shaky. The boost provided by North Sea Oil income is now on the way out.

Culture

For all the talk about changing Britain's culture, "remarkably large majorities remain opposed to many of the policy shifts in welfare and social policy most sought by the Thatcher Government...a majority against privatisation...Only five per cent supported reductions in (public) services, even when they were linked to tax cuts..." There is no distinctively Thatcherite electorate, concludes author Andrew Gamble, and no Thatcherite consensus. Not even the Tory party is solidly Thatcherite.

Trade unions remain strong in many areas and able to win wage rises outstripping inflation. The Tories' triumph is fragile.

Even that fragile triumph only became possible after many missed opportunities by the labour movement and a fair amount of luck. To trace the origins of Thatcherism, we must go back to the early 1960s.

The British capitalist class was becoming acutely aware of their decline relative to other powers and of the need to seek new directions after the collapse of the British Empire. In 1960-1 the Tory Government and the leading bosses' organisation, the Federation of British Industry (now CBI), were converted to national economic planning.

In July 1961 the Government decided to start five year plans for public spending, linked to targets for national income. In August a new agency was set up for national planning — the National Economic Development Council, a joint body of government, employers and trade union leaders. It still exists in

a shadowy way.

Also in July, a freeze on wage rises was decreed; in February 1962 it was followed by a 2-2½% 'guiding light' and in July 1962 by a National Incomes Commission.

In August 1961 the Tory Government applied for Britain to join the EEC. This application was vetoed by France in 1963.

Harold Wilson and the Labour Party leadership took up the Tories' ideas — all except joining the EEC — with enthusiasm. After 'thirteen wasted years of Tory misrule', they promised Labour would introduce 'the white heat of the technological revolution'. Labour won the 1964 election with support from important sectors of capitalist opinion who thought that Labour could carry through the new policies better than the fuddy-duddy Tories. They also calculated that Labour would be better able to deal with the increasingly confident and militant trade unions.

Wilson tried. A National Plan was published in 1965. New ministries of Economic Affairs and of Technology were set up.

But these were the years — the late '60s — in which the long post-war period of relatively smooth capitalist expansion was coming to an end. By 1969-70 the Labour Government was mired in crisis, desperately and unsuccessfully trying to impose anti-strike laws on the trade unions. The National Plan had long since become waste paper.

The rank and file protested against the Labour Government's policies. But most of the Marxist left had quit the Labour Party. The protest was scattered in a flurry of different movements, rather than being focused on a fight to transform the labour movement. Labour and the left had missed one opportunity.

Selsdon

The Tories returned to office in 1970 with new ideas, worked out at a policy conference at Selsdon. State intervention would be cut, 'lame ducks' sacrificed, free enterprise and ruthless competition promoted. Sweeping anti-union laws were legislated. Under Heath, it was Thatcherism before Thatcher.

The Tories were knocked back by a victorious miners' strike in early 1972 and a mass strike wave to free five dockers jailed under anti-picketing laws in July 1972. The Government did a U-turn. It increased public spending, intervened in industry, and legislated a series of

wage controls. Battered by a new world slump and a new miners' strike, it finally collapsed in early 1974.

The industrial militancy of the working class had won great victories. But these were negative victories. The Tories had been knocked back. The workers' movement had not pushed through any positive solutions of its own.

Could it do so? That depended on politics; and the tragedy in 1974 is that the victorious working class had nothing better to replace the Tories with than the same Harold Wilson who had ruled so disastrously in 1964-70.

Wilson started by undoing some Tory legislation and making some gestures towards the 1964 policies of state-promoted industrial expansion. By August 1975 all that had been abandoned, and the Labour Government was back to crisis-management and wage controls. The fiasco of a much more concerted effort at such state-promoted industrial expansion by the French Socialist Party government in 1981-3 would prove that such policies are powerless against the pressures of the increasingly open and fast-moving system of international finance and trade.

Replacing

This new failure by Labour opened the way for the Tories to return. In opposition the Tories had become more hard-nosed, with Thatcher replacing Heath as leader in 1975. The New Right within the Tory Party had become more vocal.

Just as Labour had picked up the theme of planned expansion from the Tories in 1964, now the Tories were the bold advocates of the policies of 'monetarism' (cash squeezes, supposedly to stop inflation) and drastic cuts in public spending being shamefacedly pioneered by the Labour Government.

Thatcher's other main theme was Britain's military strength. Her first notable speech as Tory leader was against detente. It won her the name 'the Iron Lady'.

Thatcher was more cautious on two other fronts. On the trade unions presumably she kept quiet because she had a worked-out policy of proceeding step-by-step, cautiously but ruthlessly. In 1978 Nicholas Ridley prepared a secret report for the Tory leadership on how to deal with strikes — a plan that was followed through fairly closely up to and through the miners' strike of 1984-85.

On privatisation Thatcher was cautious probably because she was sceptical. Some New Right ideologists were already demanding wholesale sell-offs of public enterprise, but most Tories were dubious. The Tory manifesto of 1979 ventured no more than the thought that "in some cases, it may be appropriate to sell back to private enterprise assets of activities where willing buyers can be found".

Only in practice did the Tories discover how privatisation could serve them, bringing cash into the state budget, bribing voters with cut-price shares and easy gains, and undercutting public-sector trade unions.

Thatcher won in 1979 more by Labour's default than by the Tories' achievement. Her position as party leader was still insecure. At the 1975 Tory Party conference, an unprecedented one-third of the conference had voted no confidence in her.

The Tories' first measures were to cut public spending and restrict supplies of cash and credit. At the same time the capitalist world was going into a slump, triggered by a new round of oil price rises. The result was devastating. Within 2½ years one-quarter of the jobs in British manufacturing were lost. Unemployment rose to three million.

By the end of 1981, Thatcher was the most unpopular Prime Minister since 1945. The Tories' opinion poll score was the lowest ever recorded by a governing party.

Saved

Again, the Tories were saved by the failures of the labour movement and the left. The TUC let the steel workers go down to defeat in 1980, and after a couple of days of action abandoned all attempts at a general campaign against the government.

A sizeable new left had emerged in the Labour Party; and it was in a position to lead a fight back even despite the TUC. Leftists like Ted Knight and Ken Livingstone led local councils. They talked about confronting the Government. In practice they chose to manage the Tory cuts through rate rises. Capitulation followed capitulation.

The Tory Government had quietly shelved the dogmas of monetarism, but it had held firm through the storm. Its Falklands War victory in summer 1982 gave it a tremendous boost. The world economy recovered slightly. The Tories found successful policies, like privatisation and selling off council houses. The great healthworkers' struggle of 1982 was allowed by the trade union leaders to dissipate in scattered actions. The Tories gradually tightened their legal grip on the trade unions, scoring a decisive victory in the print unions' battle against Eddie Shah in Warrington in late 1983.

For years Arthur Scargill had been arguing that the miners must launch a decisive fight against pit closures. But the fight had been put off. Now the Tories chose their time for their showdown with the vanguard of the British trade unionism. The 1984-5 strike was longer and more costly than the Tories bargained for, but they won it. And that laid the basis for their present confidence.

It serves no purpose to ignore or minimise our defeats. But it serves no good purpose, either, to overestimate the Tories' strength or the coherence of their policies. The Tories have got where they are through avoidable failures by the labour movement and the left. They can still be defeated.

"The Free Economy and the Strong State: The Politics of Thatcherism", by Andrew Gamble. Macmillan. £7.95.

Putting class politics on the agenda

Much has been said in recent time about People's Power, whether in the Philippines, in Pakistan or Zimbabwe, but also in South Africa.

In every instance 'People' has come to mean a motley alliance of workers, peasants, middle classes and part of the bourgeoisie, with the politics of the latter being dominant.

In no instance has the bourgeoisie been dispossessed or its state machinery smashed. Wherever dictatorships, minority regimes and oppressive governments have been toppled in political revolutions based on People's Power, there the labouring classes wait in vain for the social revolution they expected to materialise.

We said earlier that alliances between the working class and the middle classes should be formed only if the working class hold the leading position in such alliances, and only if the alliance in no way restricts the clear, frank and unafraid assertion of the proletarian programme for working class power and for socialism. Such alliances can be formed only on the basis of independent leadership of the working class, only on the basis of class struggle, and only on the basis of the working class programme. The primary alliances are between various formations within the working class: everything else is secondary, albeit important.

In South Africa the most strategical alliance is that between the working class and the mass of rural poor, including the poor peasants. Politically there should be no problem consolidating this alliance on the understanding that only the working class has a real interest in, and the capability of, solving their problems. The bourgeoisie and its hangers-on are incapable of a radical agrarian reform policy with the necessary complementing socialist industrialisation policy, which alone can overcome the historical underdevelopment of the rural areas.

Building this alliance organisationally is another question. Needless to say it will have to cover organising in the bantustans, on the

Socialist Organiser has just received the latest issue of the South African socialist journal 'Free Azania'.

Traditionally, Free Azania has given expression to the ideas associated with the Cape Action League (CAL).

For several years now CAL have been associated with the left wing of the black consciousness movement and have worked in the National Forum alliance. However, the latest issue of Free Azania includes two discussion pieces that clearly represent a step beyond these established positions.

In particular, the South African comrades are arguing for a united front around COSATU's recent call for united action and for 'a mass working class party based upon the trade unions and those community organisations with a working class character'.

We reprint below excerpts from these documents.

commercial farms, in rural settlements, in small towns and peri-urban areas, everywhere developing special concrete demands to link in with a working class programme. This great task needs a workers' party.

The next major area of alliance is with the urban poor and the unemployed. Here too there is no political problem as the demands of the urban working class can be extended to cover this whole arena, although again the organisational forms of consolidating the alliance is a big problem. It means building structures to link into townships, ghettos, and shanty towns, as well as suburbs where this strata is concentrated. But this is where the community organisations have largely emerged and it is with them that alliances will be consolidated always keeping the class content to the fore. This stratum has many links into social, sport, cultural and other specialised organisations of the working class, which also needs to be addressed.

Neither the Congress Alliance, nor the Unity Movement, nor the United Democratic Front, nor the National Forum are workers' united fronts. They are all, to one degree or another, variants of the popular front. Depending on the pressure of class struggle in periods of upturn, they have all performed as intermediate formations in one degree or another — that is, as

popular fronts who have nevertheless 'encouraged' (mainly they trail behind the spontaneous formation of) independent self-organisation.

Any apparent 'class consistency' is due largely to the political impact of the overwhelming proletarian membership of mass organisations, and is not a result of class conscious politics of the leadership. Which is to say that, despite these organisations being multi-class formations based on non-proletarian programmes, when it comes to upturn in mass struggle the working class inevitably makes itself felt in township and factory struggles alike.

It is necessary to break out of this strait-jacket of the past and put a clear class politics on the agenda in the form of a mass working class party based upon the trade unions and those community organisations with a working class character.

To achieve this task it is necessary too for the leadership to recognise the prior need for a vanguard party to lead such a transformation. Class politics consistently break through in mass struggles but continually flounder because of the lack of class leadership. The mass struggles already suffer an extreme degree of repression due to the extremely conservative nature of the regime. We might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb! No form of qualitatively different repression can be

brought against a mass workers party as is today being wreaked upon mass struggles although the class remains tied to liberation politics.

The tragedy of the past period, which has to be avoided in future, was that despite ever increasing class pressure from the base, the leadership remained capable of downplaying class aspects, and highlighting nationalist aspects of the struggle. The uneven consciousness in the working class and the lack of a viable alternative leadership made their task that much easier. It's the masses who paid the price for the tardiness of the left!

Let us be clear about what we are saying. We have neither the power nor any interest in wanting to disband, proscribe or in any way limit the activities of these liberatory movements. On the contrary, we stand opposed to any attack made upon the structures or personnel of these movements by the ruling class or its agents, and we would be among the first to defend them from repression.

We also should strive consistently to enter into joint activity with their base formation in order to present our class politics before the mass following they have. We do this in order to realign the movement towards consistent class politics. There exists no principled difference between working with the base organisations and working with the structures whether at regional or national level.

The opposite is true: we seek to form United Fronts with these liberatory formations in order to place our class politics and programme before the mass followings these movements undoubtedly have. We also encourage progressive elements within these formations to fight for a change in their political programmes and leadership.

We reject as misguided the approach of those who argue against joint actions. To refuse united front activity is to abandon the mass support to the politics of the reformists and liberals, while we thrash about in splendid isolation. If the dominant ideas in society were those of class struggle politics, and if these politics attracted the majority support, then we would not need to enter any fronts. But such is not the reality and until it is we should actively seek joint actions.

We do not believe, and are duly bound to say, that the present political programmes of the liberation movements are consistent with the class goals of the proletariat, although there is much in those programmes that the workers do support and which constitute the basis of joint actions. Nevertheless, our priority is to build a working class leadership. But the Charterists, etc. constitute mass formations much larger than any socialist groupings, or amalgam of groupings, in South Africa today.

A tactically wise and anti-sectarian leadership is therefore required to apply the united front tactic, to raise criticism of nationalist politics (without estranging the membership) and still to avoid the twin errors of opportunism and collaboration. To steer a path through this minefield requires the capacity of a socialist vanguard party.



Workers have the power to destroy a

After CO which w

The objective situation is an extraordinary one. What is at stake for the state is its urgent need to defeat the entire mass movement, thereby enabling government and capital to do battle with their deep economic problems as well as their regrouping to overcome their general lack of political support. At stake for the liberation struggle is the survival and growth of the labour movement as we know it today, and the probable loss of all the gains made by the popular struggles in the last period. Unity is essential to avoid a major defeat. We need to rebuild our organisations.

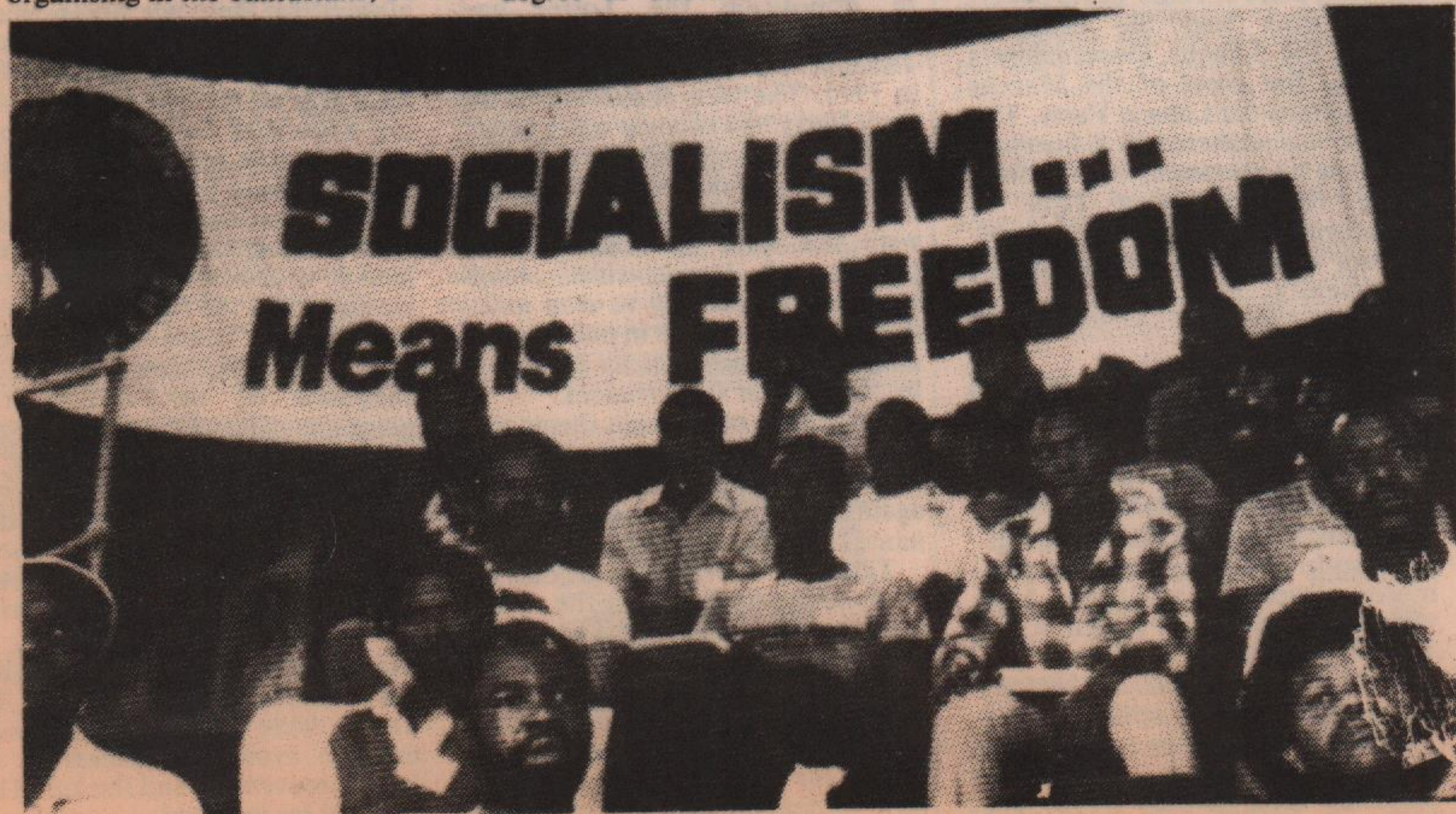
An extraordinary situation requires an extraordinary response.

The major decisions of COSATU's congress are well known:

- * To hold demonstrations at organised factories every Tuesday to protest against the LRAB. (These should be given wide support);
- * The call for three days (June 6-8) of national peaceful protest against the banning of 17 organisations and the clamp on COSATU's political activities. (This and similar action in the future should be built upon);
- * To convene a conference of a broad range of political organisations to focus on opposing apartheid repression. (Issue statements of support).

COSATU's CEC, together with its 'traditional allies' are drawing up a programme of action "consistent with its support of the Freedom Charter" and will invite organisations to participate in a broad anti-apartheid conference "on the basis of disciplined mandates, democracy and free and open debate" (Not a moment should be spared in preparing for this).

COSATU CEC is discussing a union proposal that COSATU's af-



Banner at black miners union Conference



apartheid COSATU Congress: Way forward?

... concentrate on building industrial area committees to strengthen solidarity across union lines. (To assist in this, NACTU should move to extend the initiative already started around the IMF International Metalworkers Federation).

The central class gain of the Congress is the decision that "COSATU must not hesitate to take political action to defend and advance the interests of its members and the working class in general". This is what we should focus on.

The declaration should be read in conjunction with the COSATU decision that "non-racialism" was not a criteria for participation; with the ANC-NACTU statement that the Freedom Charter should not be a stumbling block to unity; with Rambo's statement that the ANC is willing to unite and co-operate with the PAC.

All in all the subjective situation is fluid. It is wide open to an imaginative intervention designed to lead organised resistance onto a line of advance consistent with the interests of the working class, of the oppressed masses in general, as well as its democratic supporters. In such a situation, to focus on sectarian nuance at the expense of the objective needs would be to blind oneself to the revolutionary potential. Matching the subjective situation to the objective needs will be a great test of leadership.

All the talk of unity reflects the widespread recognition that the advance of the mass movement has been halted, that the state is determined to definitively defeat the struggle for another whole period, and that defensive positions cannot be held without also taking bold initiatives to shift the balance

of forces. And this is the point; there exists no organised force capable on its own of achieving this shift of forces. Unity is therefore crucial to organisational survival and to the advance of mass struggles before the state delivers a definitive defeat and regroup.

There can be no valid objection to the COSATU-UDF alliance drafting the programme of action for the coming anti-apartheid conference. Those feeling excluded should draft their alternative programme and canvass its adoption as widely as possible. Similarly, objections to the terms of the invitation to conference should be publicly argued for. In order for objections to be taken seriously an obvious pre-condition is that very visible active support be given for all the proposals put forward at the COSATU conference.

To win any objection to the participation of groups like the Five Freedoms Forum would require that alternative proposals be argued for; but in any event no breaking of unity can be contemplated over so minor a formation! In fact the widest participation of all anti-apartheid groupings prepared to accept the terms of the united front should be welcomed. Certainly fight for your own terms to be accepted, but don't premise your fight on the exclusion of others! They will exclude themselves if they find the terms of the united front unacceptable.

It is preferable to expose any limitations which "white liberal" groups may have by criticising their actual practice, i.e. any attempts on their part to subvert, to compromise, to withdraw support in face of repression etc. For as long as any participant sticks to the terms of the United Front they have as much right as anyone to participate. After all "white liberals" will not be in control of

either the leadership or the politics of the United Front — not unless we hand it over to them by abstaining on false principles.

If non-Congress alliance groups like NACTU, AZAFO, CAL etc, expect to be taken seriously at the coming conference they have to be seen to be arguing in favour of participation, while simultaneously stating any reservations they may have. It is already certain that the Freedom Charter will not become the focus of joint-actions (that never made sense, not even to its formulators!) But to acknowledge the existence of ideological groupings mean to be serious about taking their sensitivities into account. Any "take it or leave it" attitude on anyone's part to any "pure principles approach" means simply that unity in action is being rejected.

The steps outlined at the COSATU Congress are a perfectly good starting point for building the fightback. Further initiatives still to be proposed at the coming conference are correctly perceived as defensive of both workers' and broad democratic rights. COSATU's approach is inclusive of all anti-apartheid forces, thereby achieving the maximum strength from mass solidarity. This is a fine start which should be built and extended. If the COSATU initiative fails, we all fail and the people suffer.

Today everyone knows that the state will not sit back and let all this happen. Conference should therefore recognise the need for organised self-defence if the actions planned are not to be driven back by the first counter-attack from the state. In the final analysis any shift in the overall balance of forces can best be achieved through a general strike (built through successive dress rehearsals) under a Joint

Union High-Command, one which is supported by a mass campaign involving all anti-apartheid forces.

The political task facing the movement is not simply to protest the LRA, the banning, the wage freeze, the curbs on foreign funding etc and then learn to live with them. Our task is to defeat these attacks and lay the basis for a resurgence of the mass democratic movement. This is the way forward.

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 managers' privileges.

Socialism 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 worldwide, including the struggle of workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist

Glossary

African National Congress (ANC): Largest single opposition force in South Africa formed in 1912, banned in 1960, operates from exile and underground. Combines diplomatic pressure with guerilla war.

Congress Alliance: 1950s Alliance of the ANC, Indian Congress, Coloured People's Congress and the Congress of Democrats (whites). All these groups supported the Freedom Charter which outlined a series of democratic demands for a post-apartheid South Africa. The name Congress Alliance is still used today to describe those groupings on the same ideological wavelength as the ANC.

Charterists: Supporters of the ANC's Freedom Charter.

United Democratic Front: Open mass legal organisation in the Charterist tradition, formed in 1983. Effectively banned in March this year.

National Forum: Alternative opposition front to the UDF. Much smaller in size and influence though far from negligible. Contains left black consciousness groups such as:

AZAPO: Azanian People's Organisation, who support a struggle for socialism to be led by the black working class. However their socialism is undefined and unspecific.

PAC: Pan African Congress, split from ANC in the 50s on a communalist basis, their slogan then was 'Africa for the Africans!' Have evolved to the 'left' over recent years and adopted Maoist phrases.

COSATU: Congress of South African Trade Unions. Giant trade union federation. Organised on a non-racial, democratic basis, includes major mining, metal and textile unions. At least 800,000 strong. COSATU has adopted the Freedom Charter but there are also many socialists or 'workerists' in the federation.

NACTU: Smaller union federation. Tends more towards non-ANC forces.

Five Freedoms Forum: White liberal extra-parliamentary opposition group. Has courted former leader of the official parliamentary opposition Van Syl Slabbert and leading 'liberal' capitalists from the giant monopolies like Anglo American.

Unity Movement: Small, Cape-based opposition movement. Committed to non-collaboration with the apartheid state on principle and possessing extremely sectarian politics.

LRA Labour Relation Amendment Bill, new anti-union laws based on the Tory anti-union laws in Britain.

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 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.

The Trotskyists and Israel, 1948

Politicians and diplomats are still trying to find a formula for the disastrous situation into which Palestine has been plunged by the UNO deciding upon partition. Is this a "breach of international peace" or are we dealing with merely "hostile acts"? As far as we are concerned there is no point in this distinction. We are daily witnessing the killing or maiming of men and women, old and young, Jew or Arab. As always, the working masses and the poor suffer most.

Not so very long ago the Arab and Jewish workers were united in strikes against a foreign oppressor. This common struggle has been put to an end. Today the workers are being incited to kill each other. The inciters have succeeded.

"The British want to frustrate partition by means of Arab terrorism", explain the Zionists. As if this communal strife were not the very instrument by which partition is brought about! It was easy for the imperialists to foresee that and well may they be satisfied with the course of events.

What axe have Bevin-Churchill to grind?

Britain was a loser in the last world war. She has lost the bulk of her foreign assets. Her industry is lagging behind. Building up her productive apparatus requires dollars and manpower.

"Keeping order" in Palestine costs England over 35 million pounds a year, an amount which exceeds the profit she can extort from this country. Partition will release her from her financial obligations, enable her to employ her soldiers in the productive process while her source of income will remain intact. But this is not all. By partition a wedge is driven between the Arab and Jewish worker. The Zionist

state with its provocative lines of demarcation will bring about the blossoming forth of irredentist (revenge) movements on either side, there will be fighting for an "Arab Palestine" and for a "Jewish state within the historic frontiers of Eretz Israel (Israel's Land)". As a result the chauvinistic atmosphere created thus will poison the Arab world in the Middle East and throttle the anti-imperialist fight of the masses, while Zionists and Arab feudalists will vie for imperialist favours.

The price Britain has to pay for the advantages gained by partition is to renounce her ruling monopoly in this country. On the other hand, Wall Street has to come out into the open and contribute its share toward the foul business of safeguarding imperialist positions. This, of course, blackens the "democratic" reputation of the dollar state while at the same time it adds to the prestige of Great Britain. Partition, therefore is a compromise between the imperialist robbers arising from a changed power constellation.

The function of the UNO

If the Anglo-American imperialists had forced this "solution" on Palestine of their own, the rotten game would have been patent in the whole Arab East. However, they dodged: the "problem" was passed on to the UNO. The function of the UNO was to sweeten the bitter dish cooked in the imperialist cuisine, dressing it, in Bevin's words, with the twaddle of the "conscience of the world that has passed judgement". Exactly. And the diplomats of the lesser countries danced to the tune of the dollar flute, reiterating the "public opinion of the world". And the peculiar casts in this performance enabled Great Britain to appear as the Guardian Angel overflowing with sympathy for either side.

And the Soviet Union? Why did not her representatives call the UNO game the swindle it really is? Apparently the present policy of the SU is not concerned with the

In the maelstrom

This is the last item in our series of Marxist documents from the late '40s about the Jews and Arabs in Palestine.

The statement printed here was an editorial in the Hebrew language publication 'Kol Ham'amad' ('Voice of the Class') of the Revolutionary Communist League of Palestine, a section of the Fourth International.

At that time there was only one organisation claiming to be the 'Fourth International'. The translation appeared in 'Fourth International' in May 1948. 'Fourth International' was the magazine of the SWP USA, led at that time by James P Cannon.

An editorial introduction to it in 'Fourth International' denounced the UN partition plan for Palestine, "which stifles the rising tide of class struggle in Palestine, blurs class lines and creates an atmosphere of antagonistic 'national unity' in both of the national communities in Palestine." Because of the "nationalist hysteria in both camps", the Communist Party of Palestine had split into two national sections.

Noting that the Jewish state had been set up and that the British-led armies of the surrounding Arab states had invaded, the editors of 'Fourth International' asserted

that: "Only the Palestinian Trotskyists have maintained the socialist position by calling upon Jewish and Arab workers to break away from the class enemies within their ranks and conduct their independent struggle against imperialism."

Unlike the earlier documents we have reprinted, this was produced by socialists living in the maelstrom of 1948 Palestine. We respect and honour their unflinching rejection of all nationalism and commitment to Arab-Jewish working class unity. We applaud their scornful dismissal of 'anti-imperialism': "Each side is 'anti-imperialist' to the bone, busy detecting the reactionary — in the opposite camp. And imperialism is always seen — helping the other side. But his kind of exposure is oil on the imperialist fire. For the inveigling policy of imperialism is based upon agents and agencies within both camps."

Nevertheless, it must be said that the document has little grip on the political realities. Its policies put the Trotskyists simply outside of politics as sectarian preachers of general socialist internationalism.

Next week we will carry an article making a critical assessment of this and the other documents we have reprinted.

fighting of the colonial masses. And as the Palestine question is a second-rate affair for the "Big", the Soviet diplomats saw fit to dwell upon what Stalin had said about "the Soviet Union being ready to meet America and Britain halfway, economic and social differences notwithstanding".

This is how the UNO has "solved" the Palestine problem. Yet it is the same unsavoury dish that has been set for India, Greece and Indo-China.

What do Jews stand to gain by partition?

The Zionists were overcome with a sense of triumph when offered the bone by the UNO cooks. "Our work, our righteous case have won... before the forum of the nations".

The Zionists have been in the habit of asking "justice" from the enemies of the Jewish people ever since Herzl: from the Tsar, the German Kaiser, the British imperialists, Wall Street. Now they saw their chance. Wall Street is distributing loans and "political independence". Of course, not for nothing. The price has to be paid in blood.

The Jewish state, this gift of Truman's and Bevin's gives the capitalist economy of the Zionists a respite. This economy rests on very flimsy foundations. Its products cannot compete on the world market. Its only hope is the inner market from which the Arab goods are debarred. Thus the problem of a Jewish immigration has come to be a problem of live or die.

The continuous flow of immigrants who would come with the remnants of their possessions is apt to increase the circulation of goods, will allow the bourgeois producers to dispose of their expensive wares. Mass immigration would also be

very useful as a means to force down wages which "weigh so heavily" on the Jewish industry. A state engaged in inevitable military conflicts would mean orders from the "Hebrew Army", a source of "Hebrew" profits not to be underrated at all. A state would mean thousands of snug berths for Zionist veteran functionaries.

Who is going to foot the bill?

The workers and the poor. They will have to pay the stiff prices following the ban on Arab goods. They will break down under the yoke of numberless taxes, direct and indirect. They will have to cover the deficit of the Jewish state. They are living in the open, having no roof over their heads, while these institutions have "more important business" to attend to.

The Jewish worker having been separated from his Arab colleague and prevented from fighting a common class struggle will be at the mercy of his class enemies, imperialism and the Zionist bourgeoisie. It will be easy to arouse him against his proletarian ally, the Arab worker, "who is depriving him of jobs and depressing the level of wages" (a method that has not failed in the past!). Not in vain has Weitzmann said that "the Jewish state will stem Communist influence". As a compensation, the Jewish worker is bestowed with the privilege of dying a hero's death on the altar of the Hebrew state.

And what promises does the Jewish state hold out? Does it really mean a step toward the solution of the Jewish problem?

The partition was not meant to solve Jewish misery nor is it likely ever to do so. This dwarf of a state which is too small to absorb the Jewish masses cannot even solve the problems of its citizens. The Hebrew state can only infest the

Arab East with anti-Semitism and may well turn out — as Trotsky said — a bloody trap for hundreds of thousands of Jews.

Partition is grist in the mill of the Arab reactionaries

The leaders of the Arab League reacted to the decision on partition with speeches full of threats and enthusiasm. As a matter of fact, a Zionist state is to them a godsend from Allah. Calling up the worker and fellow for the "holy war to save Palestine" is supposed to stifle their cries for bread, land and freedom. Another time-honoured method of diverting an embittered people against the Jewish and communist danger.

In Palestine the feudal rule has of late begun to lose ground. During the war the Arab working class has grown in numbers and political consciousness. Jewish and Arab workers stood up against the foreign oppressor, against whom they together went on strikes. A strong leftist trade union had come into existence; and the "Workers' Association" of the Arabs of Palestine" had been well on the way of freeing itself from the influence of the Husseinis. The murder of its leader, Sami Taha, committed by the hirelings of the Arab High Committee could not restrain this development. But where the Husseinis failed, the decision of the imperialist agency, the UNO, succeeded. The partition decision stifled the class struggle of the Palestine workers. The prospect of being in the hands of the Zionist "conquerors of soil and labour" is arousing fear and anxiety among the Arab workers and fellahs. Nationalist war slogans fall on fertile soil. And feudal murderers see their chance. Thus the policy of partition enables the feudalists to turn back the wheels of history.



Israeli flag being hoisted outside UN building



Palestinian uprising on the West Bank

A first summary

The early crop of partition policy: Jews and Arabs are drowned in a sea of chauvinist enthusiasm. Triumph on the one hand, rage and exasperation on the other. Communists are being murdered. Pogroms among Jews instigated. A tit for tat of murder and provocation. The 'strafing expeditions' of the Haganah are oil for the propaganda machine of the Arab patriots in their campaign to enlist the masses for more bloodshed. The military conflict and the smashing to pieces of the workers' movement are a boon to the chauvinist extremists in either camp.

What about the Jewish 'communists'?

The patriotic wave makes sitting on the fence very uncomfortable. The Zionist "Socialist" parties soon "corrected" their anti-imperialist phrases and stubborn "resistance" against "cutting up the country to pieces" and gave way to full and enthusiastic support of the imperialist partition policy. That was a trifling matter, a question of merely changing Zionist tactics.

Yet the Communist Party of Palestine might have been expected to take up a different position. Have they not repeatedly warned against the fatal results bound to come with the establishment of a Jewish state? "Partition must needs

be disastrous for Jew and Arab alike... partition is an imperialist scheme intended to give the British rule a new lease on life ..." (evidence given by the PCP before the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry on Mar. 25, 1946). The secretary of the party loyally stuck to the UNO commission: "We refuse the partition scheme point-blank, as this scheme is detrimental to the interests of the two peoples." However, after this scheme had been pulled off with the support of the Soviet representatives, Kol Ha'Am (the Stalinist central organ) hastened to declare that "democracy and justice have won the day (!)" And overnight there appeared a newly baptised party: the name Communist Party of Palestine was changed to Communist Party of Eretz Israel (Communist Party of the Hebrew Land). Thus even the last vestige of contact with the Arab population was broken off. The gap that still separated them from Zionism was finally bridged. Instead of being the vanguard of the anti-imperialist struggle of the Arab and Jewish masses, the Palestine Communist Party became the "Communist" tail of the "left" Zionists. Precisely in an hour when Zionism shows to everyone its counter-revolutionary face, its blatant servility to imperialism. Thus the Communist Party itself held up all its former exposure of imperialist and Zionist deceptions to ridicule.

Why have they gone bankrupt? The policy of the Palestine Communist Party lacks any continuous line. The policy of the PCP reflects both the needs deriving from the class war of the Jewish worker in

Palestine and the needs of Soviet foreign policy. The needs of class war, however, required a consistent international policy, the negation of Zionism, of its discrimination between Arab and Jew. On the other hand the need to adjust the party line to the diplomatic manoeuvres of the S.U. calls for an "elastic" policy, one that lacks backbone. As a result we find the notorious shilly-shallying and zigzagging which has the PCP now to the Zionist wagon. The fifth wheel!

And the Arab 'communists'?

The Arab Stalinists, the "National Liberation League", did not

More on Israel Palestine

'Democracy, Not Revenge': available for 20p plus 14p post from SO, P.O.Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

fare better than their Jewish counterparts. They were in a pretty fix having to justify the Russian support of the Jewish state. The Arab workers could not be expected to accept this line. Not by a long shot. They knew the meddling of Soviet diplomacy for what it was: breaking up the Palestine workers' unity and a treacherous blow. After the pro-partition declaration of Zarakin, the National Liberation people found themselves surrounded by scorn and hostility.

The policy of the Soviet Union has undermined the position of the League among the Arab toilers. Thus it opened a door to the reactionary, chauvinist campaign against the "red danger". At present, the National Liberation League stands for peace and it is busy exposing the provocative role played by the British government. But since it had cried out for "national unity" (with the feudal Husseinis, the present war instigators during the past years), its present attitude fails to convince. But the National Liberation League did convince the Arab workers that the driving force behind its policy is not the interests of the Palestinian proletariat but that of the Kremlin.

A war of defence?

The two camps today mobilise the masses under the mask of "self-defence". "We have been attacked, let us defend ourselves!" say the Zionists. "Let us ward off the danger of a Jewish conquest!" declare the Arab Higher Committee. Where does the truth lie?

War is the continuation of politics by other means. The war led by the Arab feudalists is but the continuation of their reactionary war on the worker and the fellah who are striving to shake off oppression and exploitation. For the feudal effendis "Salvation of Palestine" means safeguarding their revenues at the expense of the fellahin, maintaining their autocratic rule in town and country, smashing the proletarian organisations and international class solidarity.

The war waged by the Zionists is the continuation of their expansionist policy based on discrimination between the two peoples: they defend kibbush avoda (ousting of Arab labour), kibbush adama (ousting of the fellah), boycott of Arab goods, "Hebrew rule". The military conflict is a direct result of the policy of the Zionist conquerors.

This war can not on either side be said to bear a progressive character. The war does not release progressive forces or do away with social and economic obstacles in the path of development of the two nations. Quite the opposite is true. It is apt to obscure the class antagonism and to open the gate for

nationalist excesses. It weakens the proletariat and strengthens imperialism in both camps.

What is to be done?

Each side is "anti-imperialist" to the bone, busy detecting the reactionary — in the opposite camp. And imperialism is always seen — helping the other side. But this kind of exposure is oil on the imperialist fire. For the inveigling policy of imperialism is based upon agents and agencies within both camps. Therefore we say to the Palestine people in reply to the patriotic warmongers: **make this war between Jews and Arabs, which serves the end of imperialism, the common war of both nations against imperialism!**

This is the only solution guaranteeing a real peace. This must be our goal which must be achieved without concessions to the chauvinist mood prevailing at present among the masses.

How can that be done?

"The main enemy is in our own country!" — this was what Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg had to say to the workers when imperialists and social democrats were inciting them to the slaughter of their fellow workers in other countries. In this spirit we say to the Jewish and Arab workers: the enemy is in your own camp!

Jewish workers! Get rid of the Zionist provocateurs who tell you to sacrifice yourself on the altar of the Hebrew state.

Arab worker and fellah! Get rid of the chauvinist provocateurs who are getting you into a mess of blood for their own sake and pocket.

Workers of the two people, unite in a common front against imperialism and its agents!

The problem worrying all in these days is the problem of security. Jewish workers ask: "How to protect our lives? Should we not support the 'Haganah'?" And the Arab workers and fellahin ask: "Ought we not to join the 'Najad' or 'Futuwah' to defend ourselves against the Zionists' attacks?"

A distinction must be made between the practical and the political sides of this question. We cannot thwart mobilisation and do not therefore tell workers to refuse to mobilise. But it is our duty to denounce the reactionary character of the chauvinist organisations, seen in their own house. **The only way to peace between the two peoples of this country is turning the guns against the instigators of murder in both camps.**

Instead of the abstract "anti-imperialist" phrases of the social-patriots which cover up their servility to imperialism, we are showing a practical way to fight against the foreign oppressor: unmasking its local agents, undermining their influence; so that the Arab worker and fellah will understand that the military campaign against the Jews helps to bring about partition and helps only the feudalists and imperialists, while it is fought on his back and paid for by his blood; so that the Jewish worker recognises at last the illusion of Zionism and understands that **he will not be free and safe as long as he has not done away with national discrimination, isolationism and imperialist loyalty.**

We have to keep up contact between the workers of both peoples at whatever place of work that this can still be done in order to prevent provocative acts and to safeguard the lives of the workers and on the roads. Let us form revolutionary cadres. In this burning hell of chauvinism we have to hold up the banner of international brotherhood.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Democracy, not revenge!

The way to Arab-Jewish workers' unity

Why 'two states'?

INSIDE: Look the life into itself! Tackle on the Arab scene! Unmasking the forces! Glimpses of the conflict!

Vietnam prettied up

CINEMA

By Belinda Weaver

Good Morning, Vietnam may be the first movie to look back on Vietnam with affectionate nostalgia. This is Vietnam-as-comedy, a rich source of satire and black humour. The tone isn't quite as nonchalant as "M*A*S*H", but it's in a similar vein.

The film is a showcase for Robin Williams, as Adrian Cronauer, a US Forces DJ who broke ground in Vietnam by playing rock and roll, sending up the war, and reporting censored news. It's a one-man show. The other characters exist for Williams to bounce off and to give him a cheerleading audience for his studio shows.

Cronauer banished Mantovani and Percy Faith from the airwaves, swore on air, and satirised US politicians and army top brass. He was tolerated as a licensed turn because he was good for morale; the troops loved him. He also didn't go too far. He pushed back the boundaries, but not that much. He had too much to protect. One more slip might send him out into jungle combat, which could only end in 'coming home in a box'. NOT for Adrian Cronauer, thank you very much.

Williams is so diverting and endearing in the role that it takes a while to realise that Cronauer isn't all that nice. His comedy is based on all the standard Army prejudices

against gays, foreigners, the authorities. When he takes up some Vietnamese as a class to teach, it's to woo the Vietnamese girl he wants. And friend or not, he sends up the Vietnamese too, mimicking their stumbling English. They're just another audience for his compulsive comic turns. He doesn't learn any of their language or try to adapt to their ways, even when he's wooing his girl.

The war itself is fairly distant. The US Forces we see are shown in pristine choppers and patrol boats, photographed against romantic dawns and sunsets. Vietnam looks like some lush tropical paradise, full of cheerful extended peasant families. A few shots of burning villages, a few Vietcong kids with rifles, and a bomb is about the extent of it. Cronauer's studio is a cosy little nest, very safe and secure.

Cronauer isn't opposed to the war, though he doesn't want to fight it himself. He's romantic and misty-eyed about the 'boys' who are fighting it. When he tells uncensored stories on air, it's not because he's against the war, but against the way it's being fought. He thinks 'our boys' should know that the 'enemy' isn't just 'out there' but all around, in the south as well as the north, in even the demilitarised zones. He wants the boys to have all the information they need to save their skins; the army top brass want to keep up morale.

Time has lent the proper irony to some of Cronauer's statements, such as when he yells at his friend Tuan, "We're here to help you people!" But these ironies are largely implicit in the story and in the characters, rather than spelled out.



Robin Williams as the dissident DJ

It is left to Tuan to scream out the real truth about Vietnam.

Williams is certainly an extraordinary performer, talking at in-

credible speeds in a sometimes bewildering array of accents. His brain seems to be working at a furious pace, yet he's smiling and

fooling as if it's no effort at all. He could make almost any character he played likeable. Let's just hope he never signs up to play Stalin.

The futility of the Falklands War

TELEVISION

By Jean Lane

It is no wonder the Tories tried to stop the showing of the film *Tumbledown* (BBC1, last Saturday) when it was first put on TV in May. The play, by Charles Woods, shows the stark and brutal reality of how futile the Falklands war was.

The war is shown from the point of view of Lieutenant Robert Lawrence (Colin Firth), an officer in the Scots Guards, with an impeccable military and, no doubt, class pedigree. The fact that someone with a background such as his can come to the conclusion that "it wasn't worth it" adds weight to the film's message.

Robert Lawrence is Action Man personified. Infuriated with the

"bloody public duties" the Scots Guards get to do in their red ceremonial jackets with brass buttons and bearskin hats, he is jealous when the Royal Marines and the Paratroop Regiments get sent to the Falklands. He trains "his boys" US-style with vigorous running and chanting route marches while his officer friend Hugh is happy to get away with ceremonies and boot cleaning.

His regiment does get sent to the Falklands and, once there, Lawrence shows himself to be a leader of men, volunteering his platoon for the most dangerous assault on the isolated rear side of Tumbledown Mountain which is held by Argentinian forces. In the ensuing battle, most of his platoon are either killed or seriously wounded and he gets shot in the head after racing up the mountain with a rifle blazing from each hand. It's the stuff heroes are made of, isn't it?

But he was kept waiting for four hours before being operated on in

the field because they thought he was going to die anyway. He got sent to England without even his parents knowing until the last minute, and shuffled quietly, with the other injured soldiers, through an out-of-the-way airfield so that no-one would see the real effects of the war.

He was paralysed down one side of his body. When he was sent to a new hospital to continue his treatment, there was no bed prepared for him, no-one knew he was coming and his records could not be found. No-one told him whether he would be able to continue to serve in the army, whether he would get a pension or an award from the South Atlantic fund.

And, finally, he manages to get into a suit and goes to Westminster Abbey for the big, publicised, televised memorial service, where the Royal Family and big names came to mourn the dead heroes. He was kept right at the back, stuck in his wheelchair where he could see

nothing and no-one could see him.

And he was not wheeled out till everyone, including the cameramen, had gone. "As if I shouldn't have come back," he says.

The service was not to mourn those killed in a senseless war. It was propaganda for the war and an opinion-poll booster for Thatcher and the Tories; serving the same purpose that the Sun newspaper's 'Gotcha!'-type headlines served.

This isn't just alternative propaganda. The characters are real. Robert Lawrence does not suddenly become an anti-war veteran as a result of his experiences. With his background it would be unlikely. He is confused and angry about what is happening to him. "I am an officer of the Scots Guards," he screams proudly at a patient who tells him that smoking is not allowed.

Yet, when a doctor, who also happens to be a lieutenant-colonel, fails to discuss his medical condi-

tion with him and then pulls rank on him to shut him up, Lawrence tells him he can take his rank and shove it.

Also, though, the horror of having killed Argentinian soldiers leaves an obvious scar — "Have you ever killed someone? Bits blowing off? I've done that. You stab. You keep on stabbing!" he savagely informs the nurses.

He is also proud of what he has been through and wants recognition for it. "I am going to walk. I am going to march, in uniform. Show them this," pointing to his head. "I'm proud of it".

The men under his command are not portrayed as working class heroes, either. They are shown — probably accurately — as a mixture of lumpen, skinhead thugs, punks and working class youth who joined the army to get away from unemployment and poverty.

Some of them, Pongo in particular, looked as if, had they not been getting shot at in the Falklands, would have been beating up black people in Newham or Lewisham.

They never even got as far as Westminster Abbey. They watched the memorial service safely hidden from public view in their hospital ward. Lawrence was eventually getting questions asked because his father was influential enough to cause a stink. He was a wing-commander. His "boys" would have got told nothing at all. Lawrence got recommended for a military cross. They would not even have got thanks.

There was no need to dress up the characters as better or bigger than they were. Even with all his privileges, despite all his advantages, his conclusion about the war was the same. "It wasn't worth it."

Kinnock on his knees

By Paul Woolley

While workers are straining nerve and muscle
All the time while we labour
He is hiding behind our banner
All the time our hearts are beating
All the time this sheep is bleating

When we fight for some basic rights
He is holding back
He is frightened of the flak
He is scared of the law
He is kneeling on the floor

We are crying

We are dying
We are being broken — minds and bones
Now the bosses are in the driving seat
We are losing our homes
Being sacked or poll taxed
And the kids aren't getting enough to eat

The bosses are in charge
Their profits going up like rockets
While we pay the price the hundredth time
Us bags of flesh and bone on the market
Scraping together for a lager and lime

When those Tory bastards say:
"You must cut your coat
According to your cloth"

They really mean: "Cut your throat
Or fuck off"

Yes, mate, we need a bloody fightback
Against the Tory attack

Meanwhile this sheep is at conference
Beating his chest, ranting against the left
This 'leader' who won't lead us, or even follow
Whose bullets are misdirected
Whose shouts are hollow

We can't afford the bosses
But we can't afford him
This sheep that's bleating
While we're getting a beating

Ron on his tod?

INSIDE THE UNIONS

By Sleeper

Depending upon who you talk to (or what newspaper you read), Ron Todd is a bully, a traitor, a hypocrite, a weakling, an opportunist or just plain stupid. For some people he's even a bit of a hero just at the moment.

The truth is that Todd is none of these things (or, perhaps, a little bit of all of them). But what goes on inside the head of the general secretary of the TGWU is less important than what he represents. Whatever else Todd may or may not be, he certainly is a bureaucrat.

For some people, that might as well be the end of that discussion; bureaucrats are the labour lieutenants of capital, enjoying a privileged lifestyle on the backs of their members, selling out strikes and policing the rank and file for the gaffers.

But the real world is a little more complicated than that. After all, Arthur Scargill is a bureaucrat. But whatever else may be wrong with him, no-one can seriously doubt Scargill's commitment to the miners' strike of '84/85, or his evident willingness to take on the Tories.

No-one in their right mind would suggest that there is no real difference bet-

ween a Scargill and a Hammond or a Jordan.

If Scargill belongs to that rare breed of British trade union leaders who have been consciously anti-capitalist (Scargill's hero A J Cook is the other obvious example), Ron Todd comes from much more familiar stock — left of centre leaders who will defend their members' interests and stand by basic labour movement principles, within the limitations of a thoroughly reformist political framework.

Todd stands firmly in the tradition of his predecessors, Moss Evans, Jack Jones and — especially — Frank Cousins.

Until the election of Cousins in the late '50s, the T&G had been firmly in the camp of the right, under the autocratic leadership of, first, Ernest Bevin and then Arthur Deakin.

Bevin had established the union as a major force in Labour Party affairs and he played an important role in installing Clement Attlee as Labour leader in the '30s. Similarly, Deakin masterminded the succession of Hugh Gaitskell's attempt to drop Clause 4 from the Labour Party constitution and threw the union's block vote behind unilateral nuclear disarmament. Cousins was quite capable of selling out strikes, but he did shift the union decisively to the left, and established a T&G commitment to unilateralism that has lasted to this day.

Cousins was also firmly opposed to incomes policy (in 1967 he resigned as Minister of Technology in Harold Wilson's government over the issue)

although his successor Jack Jones was the architect of the 'Social Contract' — an incomes policy by another name.

Cousins also partially democratised the union, giving more authority to the lay executive and the regional committees. He deliberately refrained from asserting the almost dictatorial power that the T&G constitution gives to the general secretary — a power that Bevin and Deakin had exercised to the full.

The parallels are obvious. Todd is no militant class warrior. His shock-horror

'cordless telephones' speech was actually intended as a clarion call to 'traditional' Labour against both the social-democratic 'modernisers' and the Benn-Heffer 'fundamentalists'. Had the speech not come within hours of Kinno's big turn at Conference and if Todd had avoided one or two emotive phrases it would not have been particularly noteworthy. As it is, Todd now seems to be on a collision course with Kinno — especially on the issue of defence.

The right wing of the T&G have already seized on Todd's 'disloyal' speech to step up their campaign against Todd and his supporters. Ever since Todd won the election for general secretary in 1985, a well organised right wing group around Welsh Regional Secretary, George Wright, (the defeated candidate in 1985) and Brian Nicholson (the union's president until he was defeated in the executive elections earlier this year) and the T&G's Labour Party NEC representative, Eddie Haigh, has been waging a secretive,

bureaucratic war against Todd and his supporters.

A particular target has been the union's unilateral nuclear disarmament policy, which the right nearly succeeded in overturning at last year's Biennial Delegate Conference.

Another favourite target has been Todd's deputy, Bill Morris, who just happens to be black. The Nicholson group which controlled the executive until this year, kept Morris off the TUC General Council and the Labour Party NEC, and conducted a vicious witch-hunting campaign denegrating Morris' character and competence.

Despite losing their majority on the executive, the right have not given up. At the

last Executive Council they staged a walk-out after failing to remove left winger Steve Riley (who defeated Nicholson in the executive elections) over a technicality. Some of the more vituperative of the recent press attacks on Todd originated from the Nicholsonites, who have close contacts with various industrial correspondents.

Todd's vision of trade unionism and, indeed, in the end, of socialism, is certainly bureaucratic and reformist. But he stands for certain basic principles. He opposed the AEU's business union sweetheart deals at Ford, Dundee and Coca-Cola. He led the attack on cheap labour Employment Training at the TUC Congress.

If he now takes up cudgels against Kinno's attempts to ditch unilateralism and embrace pale pink Thatcherism, he deserves to be supported. Without illusions, of course!

Socialist Teachers Alliance meets

By Tim Peacock

The Socialist Teachers' Alliance (STA) has taken an important step towards becoming a genuine national rank and file left in the National Union of Teachers.

The AGM on Saturday 24 September agreed organisational changes which should enable the STA to grow out of its London base and build groups around the country. A regional structure is to be set up with regional convenors responsible for organising local STA groups.

The Executive Committee has been broadened to include representation from outside London for the first time, and regular meetings, open to all members, will be held around the coun-

try.

In the past the STA has been a loose coalition of individuals coming together successfully in London to control the union, and at national conferences to oppose the leadership, but in most other areas lacking any perspective as a campaigning body.

More recently, successful local groups have been built in Notts, Derby and Manchester by holding public meetings, producing bulletins, and involving teachers in a comradely, non-sectarian way.

This is the model that the STA has now adopted for its organisation. The STA now needs to establish itself as a clearly identifiable opposition, along these lines, in several new areas. The prospects will then be brighter for fighting councils making cuts and for taking on the union leadership.

Unfortunately, there are still many problems with the STA. Anyone who was at the AGM and had read Paul Wooley's account of the NALGO Broad Left conference (SO 373), would have had an uncanny sense of déjà vu. The Teddy Bears' picnic? Yes, the STA has its share of Teddies, too.

Take the Socialist Workers Party for instance. They argued against even discussing STA organisation, preferring 'clarity of political analysis'. This of course would mean adopting the SWP's political analysis.

Sure, clarity is important, but without organisation you cannot get across your political message. And the SWP know this, so could it be that they don't want to build the STA at all, as it would interfere with building the SWP? And anyway what is the SWP's political analysis? They don't say how to fight New Realism, they just insist that we do so.

There are also those who see the STA as a talking shop for a wide variety of political issues, or a forum for pushing their cause. Not the sheer volume of motions and amendments on Iran,

Palestine, Ireland etc. Those questions are important but should not take precedence over the task in hand of organising the fight back in the NUT.

But the meeting came perilously close to dropping discussion on NUT motions in favour of international issues, before sense prevailed. For a union Broad Left not to discuss its union's national conference would be unbelievable. The SWP of course were furious: they wanted to peddle their line on Iran. The fact that only one in ten of the STA's membership attended the AGM shows that much work is needed to mobilise the STA's own membership many of whom joined at National Conference and have not been involved since.

The STA needs to break out of its cosy intellectualism and step beyond mouthing slogans about new realism. The organisational changes must be acted on.

Socialist Organiser supporters will continue to argue these points because we believe in turning the STA into an effective body. Contact SO teachers c/o Liam Conway, 34 Church Drive, Carrington, Notts 626 776.

Southwark HATS campaign

By Roy Webb

On Saturday 24th September 1988 the tenants of the Gloucester Grove and North Peckham Estates in Southwark got together and put on a grand information day aimed at getting the message across and rallying tenants to the growing campaign against the Housing Action Trusts declared by Nicholas Ridley.

Well attended, the day's events included some excellent Afro-Caribbean rhythms provided by "Peckham Positive" and the "People's Voice". There were events for children, with play equipment, a very good creche and some talented face painters.

As well as this were the vital information stalls, which carried a wealth of information about what HATS are all about and how to fight them. They also gave publicity about the forthcoming lobbies of the House of Lords on the 10th October, combined with a lobby of the Department of the Environment on the same day, as well as the Special Housing Committee on 13th October to be held in the North

Peckham Civic Centre, at which the tenants will be putting forward their demands for how they want the Council to fight the Bill.

Among the stalls was one from Southwark NALGO, with the Branch banner, and staffed by members of the NALGO Housing Section. The day was a magnificent demonstration of practical solidarity between the tenants' movement and the trades unions in beginning to build the united campaign that will be necessary to defeat the HATS and get rid of the Housing Bill.

NALGO Housing Section have already passed a resolution through the NALGO branch calling on all NALGO members not to have anything to do with any of the legislation laid down in the Housing Bill, and to refuse to co-operate with either HATS or with private landlords or property developers. This is an excellent basis for the campaign.

The Dulwich Labour Party has passed resolutions supporting the idea of non-cooperation with private landlords as far as refusing to give them information on tenants files. This needs to be broadened into a general opposition to HATS and the Council needs to commit itself to a position of non-cooperation with the Bill.

CPSA Broad Left dodges the issues

By Trudy Saunders, CPSA

The SWP may alter their line on issues more often than they change their underpants — but some things will always stay the same!

London CPSA Broad Left conference is one of them. As usual, SWP members put up motions criticising (and often rightly so) Militant supporters in the Broad Left — then proceeded to vote for these same Militant supporters in the elections!

And as usual, important Socialist Caucus motions on union democracy, black self-organisation and Broad Left women's officer were put on the end of the agenda and consequently guillotined.

The most important debate centred around the threatened sacking of 18 trade unionists at GCHQ. London Broad Left had the opportunity to vote through a strategy to pressurise the

right-wing leadership and to take on the Tories by acting clearly and decisively now.

This strategy called for the Broad Left to take a lead in organising unofficial action on the day the redundancy notices are issued to GCHQ trade unionists as well as putting up motions to branch meetings calling for official all-out indefinite strike action from 7 November.

The motion, put forward by Socialist Organiser supporters and backed by supporters of the Socialist Caucus (the left group in the Broad Left which includes SO supporters), also outlined a campaign for the Broad Left including meetings, leaflets (for both Civil Service trade unionists and non-Civil Service trade unionists) calling on them to take solidarity strike action on November 7, and a lobby of the TUC on 12 October when they meet to discuss support for GCHQ.

Socialist Organiser and Socialist Caucus supporters argued for the need to build for strike action now — before the redundancy notices are issued. The motion put forward was a clear, decisive strategy to win.

In stark contrast, the motions put for-

ROFs — fight the closures

By Paul Woolley

The closure of two Royal Ordnance factories (ROFs) at Patricroft, Manchester and Bishopton, Glasgow, hit national news last week.

British Aerospace, which bought ROFs from the government last year, say 1050 jobs will be axed at Bishopton and 1200 at Patricroft. The MOD has lodged a £400 million parts order, but ROF has to cut costs to meet it. Mr Don Ethell, managing director of ROF Ammunitions division, said "We have to establish competitiveness in the market place."

Workers at both factories walked out on hearing the news from ROF bosses last Friday. Local trade union officials and MPs have expressed "shock" and "disgust". But at Patricroft, at least, there have been many signs for several months.

A shop steward at the factory explained: "British Aerospace bought us last year. We lost 150 jobs then. Since then, they've been tightening the screws."

"They have spent a lot of money on things like painting up machines. They brought in a new labour officer — from ROF Enfield, which has already closed and 1100 jobs gone. We have had all kinds of 'flexibility' introduced and a lot of casuals taken on. We have had 'team briefings' — another of BAE's pet sports. They have assured us that complaints about safety will be picked up."

"They even did a MORI poll to 'find out what employees thought' and undermined the unions. Indications from the poll were that the workforce is sick to death of management — never told what is going on, never consulted. And now we find out that the factory is shutting down from TV news — not from management or the unions!

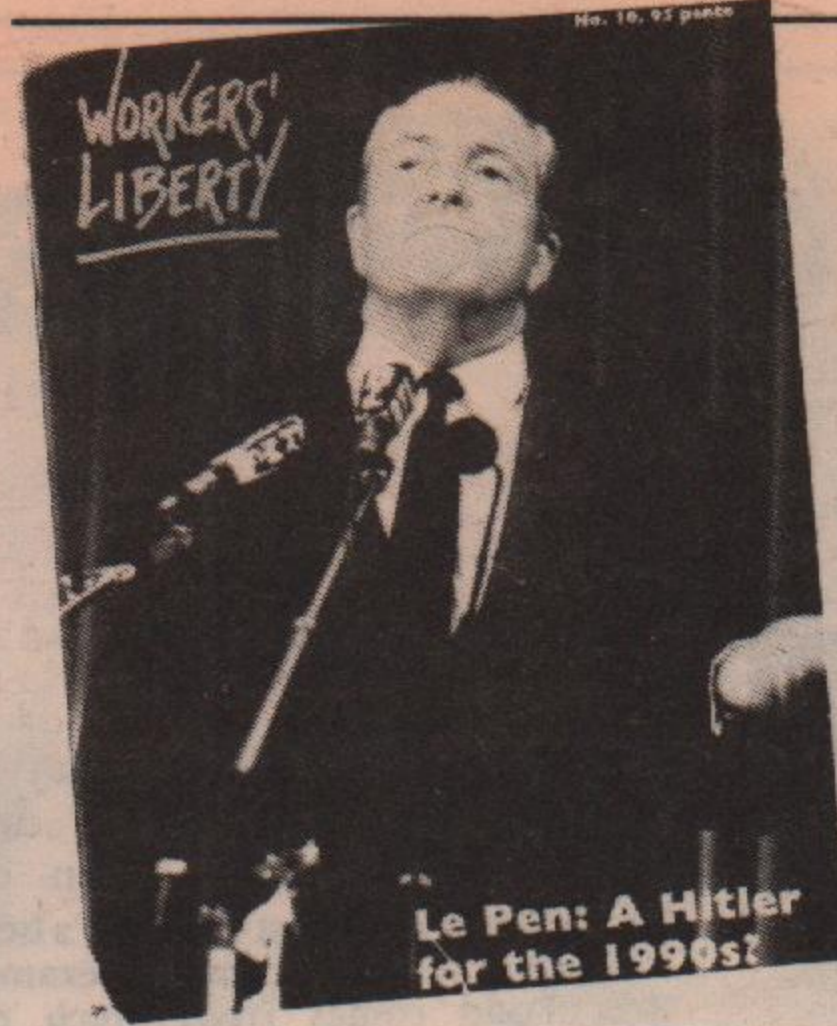
"The ironic thing is, we're all shareholders — they're not voting shares. It goes back to the buy-out by British Aerospace. We should have walked out then — fought the sell-off. I'm not sure how the workforce will react now — obviously, we need to fight the closure."

On Monday 10th October, union officials, the Labour leader of Salford Council and Labour MP Joan Lester met. They said there will be a campaign against the closure. Early signs are that this campaign will involve a petition and appeals to 'at risk local businesses'.

The 1,200 workers who face the chop have not been consulted about this 'campaign plan'. They should be running any fight against closure. Links must be made with the Bishopston rank and file. ROF is by far the largest employer in Eccles though. Its closure would create a ghost town. Local people know this and can be won to support a real fight. ROF workers need a battle plan and they should insist that the trade union officials and Labour MPs help them.

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Workers' Liberty No. 10 includes articles on the Stalinist roots of left anti-Semitism, the Gulf War, France in 1968, Zbigniew Kowaleski on Poland. 90p + postage, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

GCHQ: Defend Trade Unionism!

By Mike Grayson, CPSA

This Friday (Oct 14th) 14 trade unionists at Ministry of Defence GCHQ face an ultimatum from the Tories: 'Your union membership or your jobs'. Four more face redeployment.

For the GCHQ 18 who have put up with threats, harassment, intimidation and loss of pay and promotion for nearly 5 years in order to remain in their unions, the 'choice' is clear. They will lose their jobs unless the Civil Service unions force Thatcher to back down.

Thatcher now feels confident that she can sack the GCHQ trade unionists after years of proscastination. Why? The reason is clear. The largest Civil Service union, The Civil and Public Servants Association (CPSA) has one of the most cowardly, boot-licking, witch-hunting, right-wing leaderships in its history!

General Secretary John Ellis, recently boasted that the number of strikes in the union were at their lowest for years. The reason is not that civil servants don't want to fight Tory attacks on our jobs, but that Ellis and Co. have put an enormous amount of energy into smashing unofficial strikes and preventing official ones.

When the Tories announced the threatened sackings at GCHQ, tens of thousands of trade unionists in



the Civil Service walked out. There is real anger over this issue.

Predictably Ellis and Co. have responded by calling the least possible action — a one day strike on November 7 — over three weeks after 14 GCHQ trade unionists receive their marching orders!

It is down to the CPSEA Broad Left to act clearly and decisively to put pressure on the National Executive Committee to lead the union in a fight to defeat Thatcher. Pressure can be put on Ellis and Co. in two ways. Firstly by immediately putting out propaganda and organising branch meetings to pass motions calling for a ballot for a national all-out indefinite strike from November 7. Secondly, by taking a lead in organising unofficial strike action on October 14 and using this as a springboard for building for all-out action on November 7.



Drive out Pinochet!

Last week's opposition victory in the presidential plebiscite in Chile has raised hopes higher than at any time since the 1973 military coup.

General Pinochet asked 'his' people for a vote of confidence and 8 more years in power, and 55% said resoundingly No. 43% voted for Pinochet.

Pinochet is not obliged to resign and hasn't done so, although it seems he does intend to call elections. Whether the army tops will go along with this remains to be seen, although as the United States wants elections, it seems likely that Chile will see the controlled return to Parliamentary democracy that has been achieved in other Latin American countries.

Pinochet's rule could not end a day too soon. He came to power in a coup d'etat 15 years ago that led to 30,000 people or more losing their lives. President Salvador Allende was one of those killed.

Allende's 'Popular Unity' government, within which his own Socialist Party was dominant, came to power in a general election in 1970. It was a radical, reforming government, that took measures against foreign capital.

Chile became a polarised society. Workers and small peasants were involved in huge struggles. Elements of workers' control of the factories began.

But the capitalists and landlords tried to strangle these struggles and the Allende government — and were backed to the hilt by the United States, which was desperate to protect its own investments. Fascists were attacking militants and causing economic disruption.

Both Allende and the right-wing so-called Communist Party believed they could ally with 'progressive' capitalists to achieve their objectives. Eventually this category was extended to include the army top brass, who were brought into the government.

Working class militants feared action by the army, and called on

Allende to give them guns for self-defence. But Allende insisted that the army were loyal to the constitution.

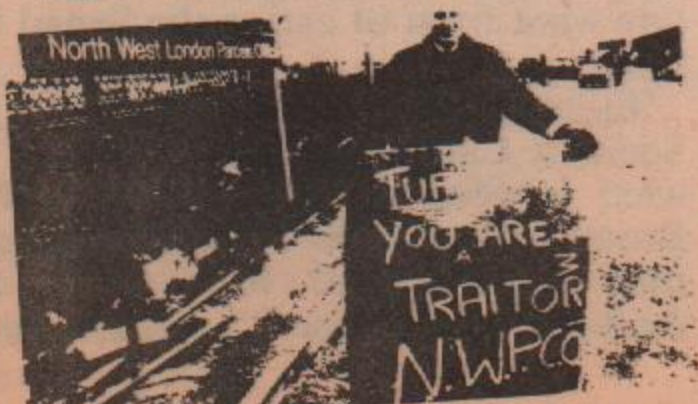
Then in September 1973 Pinochet struck. Socialists, trade unionists — anyone considered radical — were rounded up in a football stadium in Santiago and executed. As in Argentina, many people simply 'disappeared'.

The British *Times* commented that Pinochet had only done his constitutional duty.

There are many lessons in this bitter experience both for the Chilean labour movement and for socialists in Britain. The army is there to defend capitalism — even in countries with a Parliamentary tradition, as Chile had. There are no 'progressive' capitalists in the long run — and the workers' movement must fight independently for its own interests.

With Pinochet on the run, the Chilean opposition is out on the streets again. It is vital that lessons are learned, and old mistakes not repeated.

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