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STOP MURDOCH!

Print boss plans to smash the unions

RUPERT Murdoch, international press baron and owner of the Times, Sunday Times, News of the World and the Sun, is out to smash the print unions.

He has set up a new printing plant in Wapping, East London. It will be operated by EETPU members, some of whom have been forced to act as scab printers with the connivance of union officials.

In an announcement on the front page of last weekend's Sunday Times, secretly inserted into the paper by management, Murdoch made it clear that he will start printing 16 pages of the Sunday Times at Wapping next weekend – without union agreement.

Murdoch has broken off talks with the print unions and told them: like it or lump it.

The draft deal that Murdoch has put forward is designed to abolish all the checks on management that the print unions have won over the years.

He wants a legally-binding agreement to no strikes. And he wants 'flexibility'. He wants to be able to push the workforce around.

Once introduced, 'flexibility'

will allow management to enforce wage cuts and more job losses at a later stage.

So the print bosses will be able to hi-jack all the benefits of new technology and smash some of Britain's strongest unions.

In the US the International Typographical Union, counterpart of the NGA, was destroyed. Murdoch, Maxwell and Shah want to do the same in Britain.

Finished

During the miners' strike Fleet Street workers stopped the 'Sun' when it tried to slander the NUM, and produced a 'Right of Reply special' backing the miners. If the print bosses get their way, all that will be finished.

Murdoch is deadly serious. He has flown to Britain specially in order to deal with the start-up at the new plant personally. Barbed wire and video cameras have been installed at Wapping to welcome trade unionists.

Unfortunately, the leaders of the print unions have not presented a united challenge to Murdoch.



Instead they have dithered and squabbled.

The EETPU leaders have said they are prepared to sign a single-union, legally-binding, no-strike deal for Wapping. The SOGAT leaders have hinted that they might do the same. NGA leaders have told Murdoch that they are willing to sign away the jobs of some of their compositor members.

NUJ leader Harry Conroy has

told Sunday Times and Times journalists that the union could sign a separate deal with Murdoch.

Mandate

But a united response is needed. SOGAT and the NGA balloted this Monday, 13th, on strike action at News International. The NUJ should follow suit and a majority for a strike should be used as a

mandate for action and not as another negotiating tool.

The TUC should organise mass pickets to stop production at Wapping.

If Murdoch slaps a writ on such action, then print workers throughout Fleet Street should organise solidarity action. And the TUC must back the print unions this time, instead of betraying them as it did at Warrington.

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Hattersley's local purge

Jim Denham reports

Two prominent left-wingers and a maverick right-winger have been expelled from Birmingham Sparkbrook Labour Party — Roy Hattersley's constituency.

The expulsions were pushed through by an unholy alliance of 'old guard' right-wingers and one Roger Murray, a former Communist Party member and now a prominent figure in the Labour Coordinating Committee.

The charges against left-wingers Kevin Scally and Amir Khan (a Birmingham City Councillor) stem from their participation in the Channel 4 'Bandung File' programme exposing corrupt practices within Sparkbrook CLP.

Bundle

Kevin Scally appeared in the programme with a bundle of membership applications, all apparently filled in by the same hand, and some giving non-existent addresses.

He had received the applications in his capacity as branch secretary of Sparkhill ward.

For this, he was charged with "bringing the Party into disrepute". In addition to his participation in the programme, Amir Khan had incurred the wrath of Roy Hattersley's supporters by campaigning for a Black Section in Sparkbrook.

The case of Mohammed Rafique is even more bizarre. A West Midlands County Councillor, Rafique has always sided with the right-wing against the likes of Scally and Khan. But Rafique fell out with Hattersley's supporters when he challenged right-winger John O'Keefe for the nomination as City Council candidate for Sparkbrook. Amidst angry scenes outside the selection meeting, (from which a number of Rafique supporters had been excluded), the County Councillor is alleged to have accused O'Keefe and his support-

ers of racism. For this he, too, has been expelled.

Over two-thirds of the total membership of Sparkhill Branch Labour Party, to which Scally and Khan belong, have signed a petition opposing the expulsions.

Birmingham Labour Briefing has held a special public meeting to launch a campaign against the expulsions of Scally and Kahn and also decided to support Rafique's campaign (which he seems to be building among his extensive contacts within the Asian community), despite considerable reservations about his past record.

On 11 December, a 100-strong demonstration lobbied the Sparkbrook GMC meeting in protest at Rafique's expulsion.

It seems quite likely that the appeals of Scally and Khan will be successful at regional level. But the Sparkbrook GMC may still refuse to reinstate them. Sparkbrook CLP must be flooded with resolutions demanding the reinstatement of all three expelled members.

The first issue of 'Witch-hunt News' is now available. Sponsored by Labour Left Co-ordination and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, in cooperation with the Campaign Group of MPs, it documents the details of the witch-hunt.

In addition to the threatened purge in Liverpool, there have been expulsions in Birmingham, Teesside, Sheffield, Exeter, Stevenage, Scotland and many other areas. Not all those victimised have been Militant supporters: supporters of Briefing and individual left activists have also been purged.

Witch-hunt News is available from: c/o 36 Melbourne Road, London E17. Make cheques payable to Witch-hunt News, 20p per copy (includes postage); £1 for ten copies (includes postage).

Don't use the courts!

Militant supporters have turned to the courts to prevent their expulsion from the Labour Party. In December, a High Court ruling prevented further action by Stevenage Labour Party against ten alleged Militant supporters.

Appealing to the capitalist courts thus seems to work. But it is terribly short-sighted.

The capitalist courts cannot and will not create democracy within the labour movement. But calling them in to regulate the labour movement's internal affairs can and will sap the movement's self-confidence and independence — it can undermine the spirit that can create labour movement democracy.

Militant should seek a united front against the witch-hunters not with the judges but with other left-wingers in the labour movement.

STOP THE WITCH HUNT

public meeting

Tuesday 21 January

7.45pm County Hall, London SE1

Sponsored by Labour Left Co-ordination, the Campaign Group of MPs and the Greater London Labour Party

Speakers:

Joan Maynard MP

Ken Livingstone, Leader GLC

Diane Abbott, PPC Hackney North

Amir Khan and Kevin Scally expelled from

Birmingham Sparkbrook

Exeter Labour Briefing

Campaign Group of MPs

Greater London LP Region

Socialist Worker and the witch hunt

Stan Crooke examines Socialist Worker's response to the witch-hunt in the Labour Party and the overtures they are making to Militant

Ever since it drifted out of the Labour Party in the late sixties, the Socialist Workers Party has polemicised against socialists joining the Labour Party. But now the SWP's main activity is a campaign against socialists being expelled from the Labour Party.

There is a contradiction here. If the witch-hunt is defeated, then socialists will be all the more likely to join and stay in the Labour Party, rather than the SWP. If, on the other hand, large numbers of socialists are expelled or leave the Labour Party in disgust, then some of them might join the SWP. If Labour leftists take the SWP's advice now and leave the Labour Party, then the witch-hunt will triumph by default. If you want to fight the witch-hunt, then you have to stay in the party.

The SWP argues that right-wing control of the Labour Party is inevitable anyway; what counts is preventing Labour leftists from becoming demoralised and instead recruiting them into a socialist alternative outside the Labour Party (i.e. the SWP).

But the SWP undermines this argument themselves. They claim that they feel obliged to oppose the witch-hunt in the Labour Party because, if successful, it would be a setback for the working class as a whole and lead to a witch-hunt in the unions as well. This is quite correct — and precisely why the fight against right wing control of the Labour Party is not a hopeless irrelevance.

Whether the left leaves voluntarily or gets booted out, the Labour Party would end up firmly in the hands of the overtly and self-consciously pro-capitalist elements.

Conclusion: the left should stay in and fight every inch of the way.

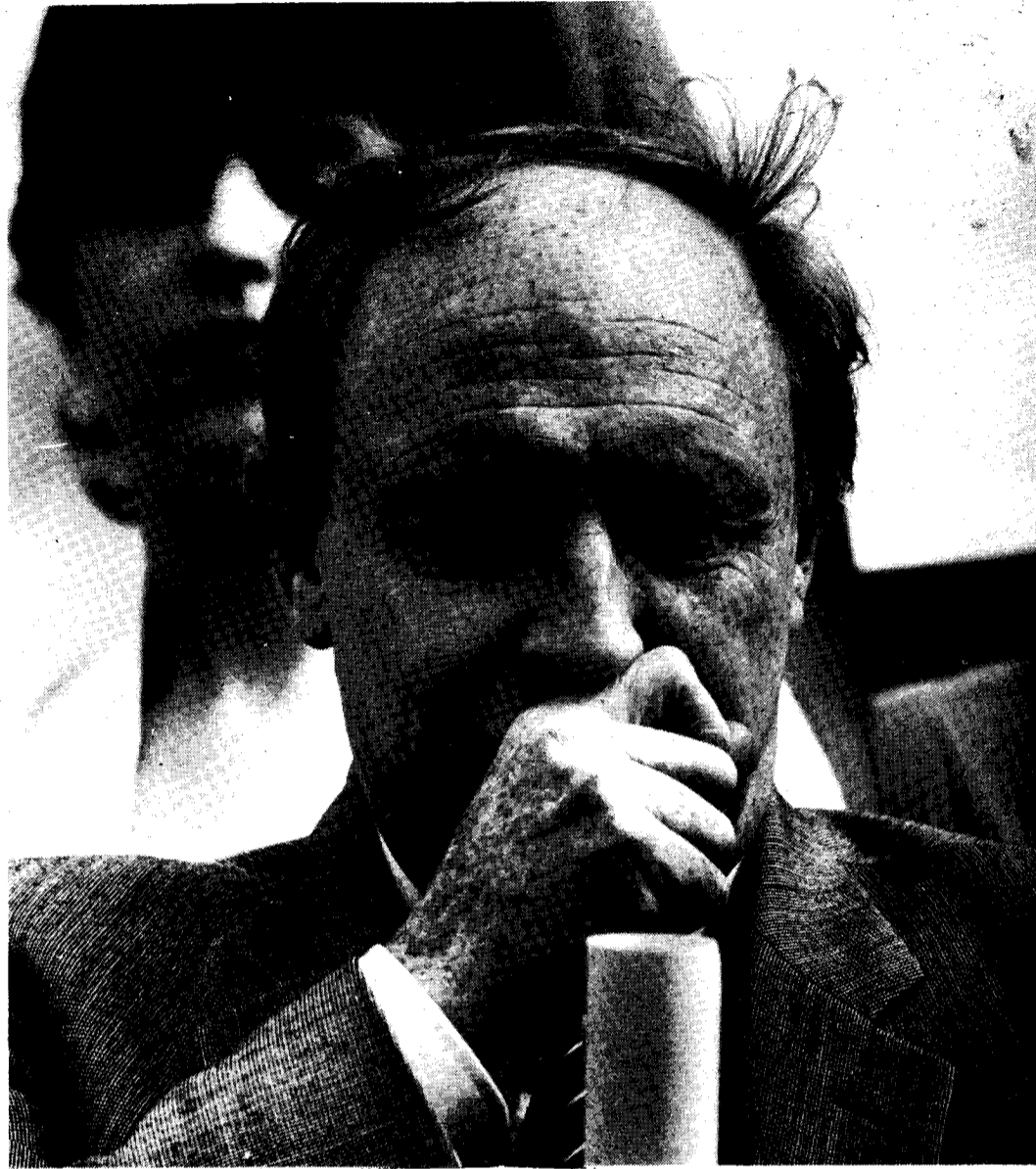
The centrepiece of the SWP campaign is a petition opposing the NEC inquiry into Liverpool Labour Party and the consequent threat of disciplinary action.

The petition has been launched in typical SWP-sectarian fashion: without any consultation with the Labour left, least of all Militant, the immediate object of the witch-hunt. And since the petition is being circulated by an organisation outside the Labour Party the NEC (to whom the petition is addressed) will only throw it in the bin anyway.

If the SWP really wanted to fight the witch-hunt — rather than just getting themselves well placed to pick up the debris — they would have fastened upon some petition or initiative from within the Labour Party, and promoted it. In fact they believe, and repeatedly proclaim, that fighting the witch-hunt is a waste of time. SWP gate receipts are all that matters to them.

At a rally in Glasgow in 1981, when the left was already beginning to come under attack, SWP leader Tony Cliff was asked what support the left could expect from the SWP. He replied:

"The left wouldn't touch the SWP with a bargepole. We'd be the kiss of death for them...You (i.e. the left) are on your way out. We can give you an address (for joining us). You don't want



Neil Kinnock cannot be fought by staying outside the Labour Party and giving him a clear run. Photo: Andrew Moore.

our help because we remind you too much of your past...

"Will the left collapse to the right or to us? I think they'll collapse to the right because all they do is sit around on their backsides instead of getting down to the picket lines."

What lies behind the SWP's apparent about-turn is that they hope to recruit some Militant supporters — not by convincing them politically but by getting them fed up and weary of the fight within the Labour Party.

Conciliatory

Hence the conciliatory approach towards Militant by the SWP over the past twelve months:

*When the black community in Liverpool opposed Militant supporter Samson Bond being parachuted in as race relations adviser, Socialist Worker 912 declared that while Militant may have been mistaken in certain respects, the Black Caucus was "even more mistaken...to create an atmosphere which the Liberals and Tories are trying to exploit."

*SW 941 described as "unfortunate" and "a mistake" the voting by Militant supporters in Pollok CLP (Glasgow) for a right wing candidate in the reselection contest, as a manoeuvre to carve out the soft-left alternative to the Militant nomination; it directed its main fire at the non-Militant left for failing to support the Militant nomination.

SW 941 also delivered a stern rebuke to Labour leftists who criticise Militant's politics: "It is at best foolish and at worst gross opportunism for anyone else to denounce Militant in the sectarian language which has been used of late".

*Whereas the SWP pamphlet "Labour Party — Myth and Reality" (1981) attacked Marxists such as Militant, standing in public elections on a Labour ticket ("They are in a false position from the start...The electors do not know their real views — they have been kidded...they tie one hand behind their backs by sailing under false colours"), a much softer tone has been adopted of late: "These are people who joined the Labour Party because they want to see the lives of working class people improved. Some of them even have a vision of a socialist society." (SW 964).

*Speaking at this year's SWP conference, Tony Cliff claimed "We've seen a wholesale drift to the right with Militant as the one group that hasn't shifted like this. So, under such conditions, you can't concentrate on the differences between us and Militant."

The clearest example of the SWP's clumsy efforts to ingratiate themselves with Militant is Liverpool. Last year, the SWP denounced the Militant-backed deal between Liverpool and the Tories as "sold down the Mersey". This year, the SWP has discovered that Liverpool has a "left wing council" (SW 956) or even a "socialist council" (SW 965), which "okay, at the end of the day, was forced into a deal with the Swiss banks" (SW 965).

To be sure, the SWP has not dropped all criticism of Militant's role in the Liverpool debacle.

But there is far less criticism than last year, when Militant actually did better. Nowhere, for example, does the SWP point out that the deal with the Swiss banks had already been fixed up

in August, so that Liverpool council's confrontation with the Tories was 50% bluff.

All accusations against Militant's behaviour in Liverpool are denounced as "a concoction of media lies and innuendo" (SW 965) Militant supporters are subject to a "spate of vilification, abuse and organisational attacks." (SW 966).

No mention by the SWP that Militant has left itself wide open to such attacks by the notorious system of patronage it operates in Liverpool. No mention of its insulting attitude towards blacks, voluntary sector workers, white-collar workers and just about anyone else who disagreed with Militant. No mention of the "Hotton Factor" and his unusual holiday in Tangiers, etc., etc.

Cover-up

Socialists must certainly condemn and oppose the NEC inquiry and any subsequent expulsions. But that does not mean lying, swallowing lies or covering up Militant's own breaches of labour movement democracy.

Parading around with their petition and mollycoddling Militant is just the SWP's latest recruitment gimmick. SW 965 let the cat out of the bag when it declared: "By campaigning against the witch-hunt...we can begin to draw together that minority of activists who will be so central in resisting future sell-outs from Kinnock and his friends".

In other words: use the petition to establish a relationship with Militant supporters; don't concentrate on political differences with them; tell them that their only problem is that they're in the Labour Party; and recruit them to the SWP.

STOP THE WITCH HUNT! FIGHT THE TORIES!

The latest MORI poll is good news for the Labour Party, and bad news for the Tories. It gives Labour 38%, the Tories 33% and the Alliance 28% of the poll.

Last month Labour and Tory were neck and neck.

The uproar caused by Heseltine's resignation, his accusation of Cabinet misconduct, and now Leon Brittan's confessions that he is an idiot who doesn't know what is going on in his own Ministry, will certainly have helped the Tories to slide still further.

What is the Labour leadership doing? Neil Kinnock missed the

boat on the Westland scandal. Perhaps it could not be expected that Kinnock and co. would spell out an internationalist opposition to all bosses of whatever nationality, and to an industry that builds weapons of destruction and military equipment; but even in terms of the Labour leadership's characteristic chauvinism, the silence has been deafening.

David Owen has been allowed to make the running.

According to a report in the Guardian (13 January), Labour is now seeing as a priority the 'reclaiming' of

the issue of public order...The message from the Labour leadership to the black communities and to workers in struggle is: don't worry, we can be just as repressive as the Tories.

Vendetta

Most important of all for the Kinnockites is their vendetta against the left in their own party. Expulsions and suspensions of Labour Party members are increasing at an alarming rate — even if the bulk of them remain unpublicised.

The Labour Party leaders must call a

halt to the witch-hunt. It doesn't help Labour's election chances if its leaders tell the world that they think its members are raving lunatics.

And a Labour government committed to a purge of the left now will be one committed to the interests of big business in office. It is a sad prospect for the labour movement.

Labour can and must seize upon the Tories' waning popularity to organise an enormous campaign for a Labour vote.

It should be a campaign that exposes the harsh realities of Thatcher's

Britain.

But above all it should be a campaign of *action*: mass demonstrations and public meetings. The Labour Party should prove itself a force to be reckoned with.

Local Labour Parties should turn outwards to build the campaign: organise street meetings, campaign on local issues and on South Africa, disarmament. The Labour Party should actively support the working class and oppressed in struggle.

Stop the witch-hunt! Fight the Tories!

Euro-capitalism versus Thatcher

Clive Bradley looks at the issues

What lies behind Michael Heseltine's resignation from the cabinet over the Westland affair?

No doubt in part, as Heseltine says, it is about Thatcher's dictatorial handling of Cabinet meetings. Beyond that Heseltine must see a future for himself as Tory Party leader, and has calculated that now is the best time to begin his bid.

Tensions

Underlying the dispute, however, are tensions within the British capitalist class about their international alignments. Heseltine is firmly in favour of maintaining and developing a European alliance — building up the EEC as an imperialist centre in competition with the USA. Thatcher, it seems, leans more to the transatlantic alliance.

Aptly, the issue has focused on an arms industry.

The EEC was set up fundamentally because West European states are too small to be effective units in major modern industries. Capitalism has outgrown the old national frontiers; the capitalist classes are not able to rise above their competitive conflicts sufficiently to create a West European super-state, but they have made some limited moves towards federation.

Arms industries are among those in which a cross-European 'home market' is necessary.

Moreover, economics is not separate from politics. The EEC has also tried to develop a common foreign policy which, on issues like Central America, Israel/Palestine, relations with the USSR and sanctions against Libya, differs markedly from the US's.

French imperialism — and the EEC has, of course, never proved successful in suppressing conflicts between its different imperialist member states —



"I'll cry at my party..." Photo: John Harris

has attempted to develop its own military strategy independent of NATO, of which it is not a full member. Its autonomous role in Lebanon, Chad, and sub-Saharan Africa are examples. France also has a huge arms export industry.

But there have been pointers towards a broader European military axis — 'Euro-defence' — for some time. This would not be in competition with NATO, but it would allow for flexibility and freedom of action for the European powers.

In early 1984, President Mitterrand began to advocate revival of the long-since defunct West European Union (WEU). A streamlined Europe-wide arms industry, producing non-nuclear precision missiles and high-technology weapons could partially replace expensive reliance on American nuclear weapons.

The Economist put it like this: "Every pound, franc, lira and mark thus saved means a more efficient defence of Europe, plus a chance to make a more serious contribution to the defence of

the Gulf".

European ventures have been underway for some time: the Jaguar strike aircraft was an Anglo-French product, the Tornado was jointly produced by the British, Germans and Italians.

As Heseltine has said, the idea of a European bid for Westland follows on from the 1978 Declaration of Principles agreed by Britain, France, Germany and Italy, which provided for European cooperation in helicopter production. More recently, the 1985 statement on the Defence Estimates "emphasised the importance of Europe coming together in equal partnership with the US" as Heseltine put it.

Economically, Europe has been hit by high US interest rates, and is under pressure in highly competitive areas such as information technology. Over recent years there have been major EEC vs. US quarrels about trade in steel and in farm products.

Greater integration of Euro-

pean markets is a logical response to American (and Japanese) competition.

the US, on the other hand, is increasingly prepared to serve its own interests at the expense of its allies. Reagan's administration is both economically protectionist and given to heavy-handed gunboat diplomacy that has often embarrassed even the British government (as in Grenada).

Closer

For reasons of geography and of history (such as a common language) Britain is closer to the US than other West European countries. And because of its big empire, Britain joined the EEC much later than France, Germany, Italy or Benelux. British investments in the US are bigger than any other West European country's; 41% of all US investments in the EEC are in Britain.

Britain is thus 'in the middle'. To an extent, the British ruling class has a choice to make: America or Europe. The

Thatcher government is extremely reluctant to put its close political and economic alliance with Reagan into any jeopardy; other sections of the bourgeoisie believe that a European orientation is the only viable option.

Of course, from the point of view of British workers it is no choice. Our allies are workers everywhere: in Europe and in the USA, and the British, American and European bosses' are our enemies.

It is important to uphold this internationalist principle. After years of a narrow British chauvinist opposition to the EEC, the current Labour establishment has lately moved towards a pro-EEC position in accord with the views of pro-European sections of the bosses. Many on the left spread anti-American chauvinism in the guise of 'anti-imperialism'.

The factions of the ruling class want what is 'best for Britain' — that is, what is best for them. The labour movement should keep its independence and their in-fighting.

SCIENCE FOR PEOPLE

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The rich get richer. In 1976 the average upper or middle class household (the top 20%) had nine times the income of the average household in the bottom 40%. By 1983, according to figures just published by the government, the top 20% averaged 14 times the income of the bottom 40%.

The government report, 'Social Trends', also survey-

ed housework.

In over 70% of married couples the woman still has to do most of the cooking and cleaning. Result: women have much less free time than men.

Male full-time workers average 33½ hours free time a week — housewives 32 hours, and female full-time workers only 24½ hours.

By jingo!

Reagan's threats to Libya, union-busting in the print, Orange mobilisations in Northern Ireland, attacks on the jury system... last week had no shortage of things for socialists to oppose.

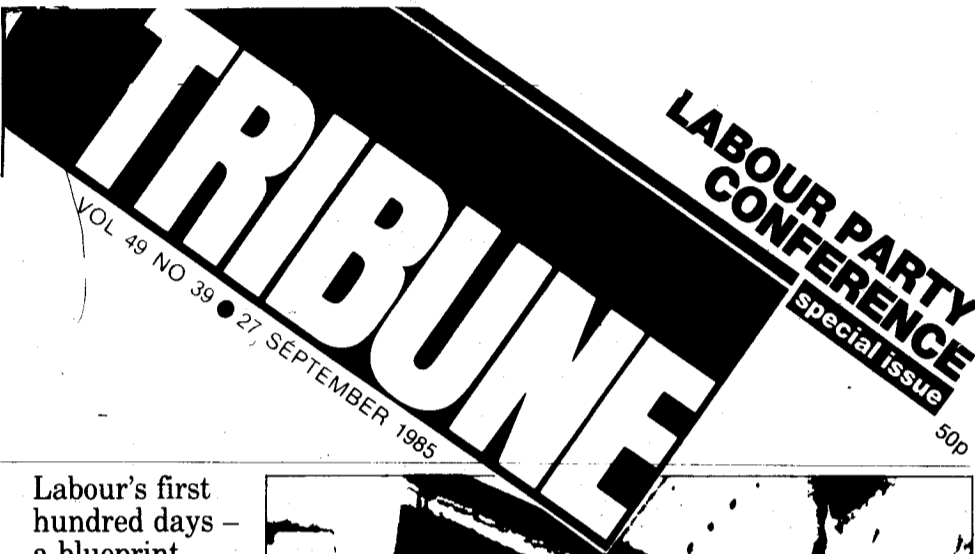
But the new 'cuddly left' Tribune chose for its front page headline: "Why socialists should oppose... Channel fixed link"!

When someone gives you a dozen reasons or excuses for something, you can usually be sure that none is the real one. Tribune's writer, Stephen Love, does not quite achieve the vast variety of "good reasons" which some people on the left used to give for preferring an 'independent' capitalist Britain to the EEC, but he makes a good start.

Jobs would be lost on ferries. Britain can't afford it anyway. The approaches to the Channel Tunnel will destroy beauty spots. Industry would tend to concentrate more in the South East.

"Our" merchant shipping will suffer. Invading armies could use the tunnel. Rabies may enter Britain, and so may exports from West Germany. British interests dominate the ferry link, whereas the tunnel would be 50/50, so France would gain more from a tunnel...

As the argument multiply, they become more grossly



Labour's first hundred days — a blueprint
PETER HAIN

centre pages



nationalistic, and convince me (at least) that Tribune's real reason for opposing the tunnel is the same old little-Englandism that has stunted the British labour movement for decades.

Of course the Tories will have the Channel Tunnel

built in their own way. There will be tolls, passport checks, and customs barriers which will cost more time and energy than the tunnel saves. There will — so the rail-only tunnel consortium proposes — be a ban on strikes by the rail staff work-

ing for the tunnel.

Plenty there for the labour movement to oppose... without trying to defend against modern technology the moat that separates this island from the rest of the world.

Grabbing a slot

Capitalism, so Marxists argue, was once a progressive force. And one way in which it was progressive was the change it wrought in society's treatment of children.

Early capitalism created not only the horrors of industrial child labour, but also the idea that this child labour was horrible and that children deserved special care and protection — much more than in previous societies.

But if the US represents the future of capitalism then the system is destroying its own achievements.

1.8 million children are reported missing each year in the US. "In Philadelphia" reports the Times (8 January), "they have drawn up a profile of the most common of their 6000 annual runaways: aged 15 and female, probably physically or sexually assaulted at home and, if not retrieved fast, virtually certain to be exploited as a prostitute or involved in child pornography."

National estimates are that taking into account suicides, drugs, murders and sexual abuses, some 15% of US teenagers are "unlikely to see a productive adulthood".

The WRP split, and the consequent exposure in full daylight of Labour Herald's dependence on Gerry Healy and his oil-rich Arab capitalist patrons, seems to have sunk the Herald's hopes of becoming recognised as the paper of the Campaign Group of MPs.

So could someone else grab the slot? Socialist Action seems to think so, and in its latest issue editor John Ross tries to get in on the act with all the finesse of a drunken gate-crasher at a chic party.

Grabbing the sleeves of the left-wing MPs, he lectures them at great length about how the left is divided into good guys and two sorts of bad guys.

There are the Kinnockites — bad. There are the 'ultra-left', principally Socialist Organiser and Labour Briefing — also bad. And in the middle between them (where else?) are the forces of light — the 'class struggle left'.

This 'class struggle left' is a strange mixture. As well as

Arthur Scargill, the Campaign Group, and the Labour Party black sections, it includes "the demands of" the Labour Women's Action Committee but not the actual women in it (at least, "not all" of them) and "a series of individual forces" in the trade unions and Labour Parties.

Ultra-left

Ross does not claim that this assortment can or should just adopt Socialist Action as its paper. But, in a sort of literary equivalent to a deafening whisper accompanied by much heavy breathing, he hints that SA might perhaps become central to a new broad left paper.

Little chance of that, fortunately. But SO readers may be interested to know why we are considered 'ultra-left'.

Mainly, Ross claims, because of "positions such as that we face a 'revolutionary crisis' in Britain in the

Towards a Red-Green coalition?

By Les Hearn

The winter issue of New Ground (journal of Green Socialism) shows how greens are turning to the labour movement and how the labour movement is taking up environmental demands.

There are reports of the gains of Labour and TUC conferences, much due to the work of supporters of SERA (Socialist Environment and Resources Association), publishers of New Ground.

An account of a fringe debate at Labour Party conference has Jonathon Porritt (of the Green Party and Friends of the Earth) rather petulantly accusing the Labour Party of "stealing" green clothes.

Unfortunately, his suspicion of the seriousness with which our "leaders" taken green issues is quite well-founded. Robin Cook MP responded well on behalf of the "green wing" of the Labour Party, but showed disdain for the electoral threat posed by the Green Party. This disappointed the author of this report, one of a group of SERA supporters who have been floating the idea of an electoral pact between Labour and Green Parties.

Rainbow

So far, this has not caught on but it might, should Proportional Representation be brought in. This is the subject of two articles which argue that PR should be supported by socialists and that, if this resulted in coalitions of the "rainbow" variety, this might not be a bad thing!

A briefing supporter describes how Labour's policy for Environmental Protection could be implemented by local councils, involving the people in taking control of their environments. (The next issue of New Ground will look in depth at how green policies should be and are being included in Labour's council election manifestos).

The scandal of hospital cleanliness has been well aired over the past couple of years, with deaths from food poisoning and Legionnaires' Disease. I recently summarised the Environmental Health Officers' report on hospital kitchens (cockroach soup, bird-lime jelly, etc). In New Ground, Jake Jackson of the GMBATU links all these with the fight to abolish "Crown Immunity".

According to this principle, because the Queen cannot sue herself, we have to accept hospital filth. Jake Jackson outlines the need for a political campaign by trade unions, Labour Party and environmentalists to remove Crown Immunity.

This is already TUC policy but there has been a signal lack of any campaign. Worse, the last Labour government under Callaghan was opposed to the removal of Crown Immunity.

Undoubtedly, loss of Crown Immunity would cost lots of money as the incredible backlog of maintenance was taken up. However, this particular campaign against cuts could easily gain mass support.

Jake Jackson ends by identify-



Science

ing areas such as Crown Immunity, acid rain and nuclear power as being the sort of issues on which the labour movement can start winning back the "ideological ground lost to Thatcher".

*Special offer: a trial copy of New Ground can be obtained by sending four 1st class or five 2nd class stamps, together with your name and address to 9 Poland St., London W1V 3DG.

Over the last few years, environmental issues have been seen as more and more important inside the labour movement. The word "environment" here has a broad definition, issues being taken up ranging from nuclear waste dumping to "houses with gardens".

For some, lip service to green issues can be an opportunistic attempt to jump on a passing bandwagon, saying things that are emotionally popular but commit one to doing very little. That, I suspect, is how the Labour leadership sees it.

However, people committed to the environment and who are socialists are starting to realise that reformist leaders are only too ready to sacrifice "difficult" issues, even though they be Labour Party policy.

Cynicism

For instance, there is widespread cynicism that despite a 62% vote at Labour Party conference for phasing out nuclear power, Kinnock has remained quiet while keeping pro-nuclear John Cunningham as Environment spokesperson.

What we have to offer the green movement here is our knowledge as revolutionary socialists that reformist politics lead Labour leaders to turn rightwards. While they try to turn capitalist crisis into the prosperity needed for reforms to be achievable, they are forced to deny their own policies and the urgent needs of their followers, even suppressing them if they will not be "reasonable".

On the other hand, the insights of the green movement can be invaluable to revolutionary socialists, many of whom seem to accept unthinkingly the message of capitalism that resources are unlimited and the oceans are bottomless dustbins.

Some also accept the distinction of Stalinism that we have merely to nationalise the means of production and then intensify the methods of mass production with the division of labour and alienation.

Reds and Greens need each other!

A very brutal oppression

Iranian women socialists in exile analyse the attack on women's rights by the Khomeiny regime

(Iranian Women's Association, c/o Migrant Services Unit, London Voluntary Services Council, 68 Chalton St, London NW1 1JR).

In Iran, like in many backward capitalist countries, women's oppression in both spheres takes a very brutal form. Women from birth till death are considered to be men's property.

As young girls they are disciplined and heavily protected by their parents. They must remain a virgin so sex before marriage is forbidden and discouraged. If there is a situation where a girl is suspected of not being a virgin, she could become a public disgrace if she is of a lower class family. Among the upper classes there are always ways of evading the issue!

The common desire of parents is to bring up their girls "pure" and "innocent" and ready to take up their roles as wives and mothers. Women are taught to obey men and to serve them and their children.

Even when they are fortunate enough to receive education and, particularly higher education, the aim is to broaden their scope in choosing their future husbands.

On the other hand they could marry at the age of 9, which is the legal minimum age of marriage for girls. Social rules have always reinforced women's inferiority in society with or without state intervention.

During the Shah's reign when the legal minimum age of marriage for a girl was 16, there were a lot of girls who married at the age of 9. Father or a male guardian, in his absence, has to agree to a woman's marriage regardless of her age. Selection of spouses for women is purely the decision of fathers or male guardians.

Women who do not conform to

the dominant institutions are severely punished by their parents, the community, and now by the state. The Islamic Republic's dominant ideology is that a woman's place is at home with her children. The state praises women who are child bearers. Marriage is considered to be a religious duty of all Muslims.

The Law of Retribution has a brutal punishment for all those who do not respect the "sanctity" of marriage, e.g. "adulterous" women and prostitutes are stoned to death, lesbians are executed. The state, however, is in favour of state-controlled prostitution in the form of temporary marriage which could last as short as a few minutes!

Dependent

Women are economically dependent on men. Economic and emotional dependency forces women to accept cruelty and hardship from men.

During the Shah's time when women were given the right to divorce and to oppose polygamy, a large number of women found it extremely difficult to do so. Nowadays, the law does not permit a woman to divorce, nor to oppose polygamy. A woman can only divorce her husband in very special circumstances. Women cannot oppose polygamy at all!

Women are forced to reproduce. The state has taken full control over women's lives and their bodies. Abortion is illegal and contraceptives are restricted to those whom the state approves.

Women are not accepted as



legal guardians of their children. In the event of the death of their husbands, the immediate male relatives will be the children's guardians. Women cannot have custody of their children after divorce. They can only look after them for a specified period of time, namely seven years for a girl and two for a boy.

Women are forced to cover their hair with scarves, even the colour of which is determined by the state. They have to wear long and loose gowns with

trousers or thick stockings. The state's punishment for an unveiled woman is lashing (75 lashes) or imprisonment, and if it is repeated for a specified number of times, execution.

The Islamic mob injures women who are not veiled or who are showing bits of hair by cutting their faces with knives or razor blades, throwing acid at their faces, etc.

Sex segregation in offices, universities, schools, etc., is also used as a tool to remove women from active participation

in decision making.

Women workers have been sacked in great numbers as the economy, through bad management, is in deep crisis and unemployment is biting the hardest ever.

This is the usual theme of capitalist economies where women are used as a reserve army of workers. During recession they are first to lose their jobs and during expansion of production they are brought in to fill in unskilled and poorly paid jobs which men don't want to do.

Sacking women from their jobs has been justified by the

Islamic Republic as an act to put women in the "natural" places, i.e. home. Married women are forced to do part time jobs. The handful of nurseries in workplaces, which were not even sufficient to meet all needs, are closed down.

Before the Islamic Republic, backward practices which reinforced women's submission to men and their position as men's property existed and the state did not sufficiently intervene to change anything. The Shah introduced some reforms to involve women in production but they did not change women's social position fundamentally. The Islamic Republic, however, as its name suggests, enforces Islamic ideology.

Religion is no longer a private affair but an ideology on which the state bases its activities. Therefore, the call for separation of religion from the state is very important.

Women from Iran's national and religious minorities are heavily suppressed by the virtue of their belongings to a specific national or religious minority, e.g. Kurdish, Bahai, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Christian women, etc. The wholesale murder of Bahaiis in Iran and their persecution is a great concern.

Also the war that the regime has imposed on Kurdistan has had a devastating effect on women in Kurdish towns and villages. Women who are active in opposition to the regime face brutal torture in prisons. Young girls are raped before their execution because Islamic ideology places a dead virgin in "heaven".

Mothers are tortured in front of their children or vice versa. Pregnant women are brutally raped and tortured. Islamic ideology allows all that to happen as it considers women political prisoners as spoils of war who are, ultimately, subject to their captors.

We feel that we have to expose this brutal regime to everyone who has the slightest illusion about it.

As the media is silent about all that brutality, which goes on in Iran as part of an imperialist plot, and as Britain continues its silent support of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we must fill the gap!

S Africa

'One industry:one union!'

The formation of Cosatu — the Congress of South African Trade unions — at the beginning of December 1985 was an enormous step forward for the independent trade unions, and for the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

One of the principles of the new federation is 'one industry: one union'. Their objective is to build up strong industrial unions rather than a patchwork of general unions.

The trend in the trade union movement is already towards industrial unions — most notable of all being the giant National Union of Mineworkers. But this has led to some tension with general unions such as the significant South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU), particularly as the divisions often run in tandem to political disagreements.

Cosatu has identified 20 sectors as priorities for organisation in the period ahead.

Not all these sectors are industrial: one, for example, consists of domestic servants employed in white households.

And within different sectors, unions from different political

traditions will predominate. Three groups of unions came together to form Cosatu: affiliates of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) — the main non-racial federation since 1979; affiliates of the United Democratic Front, the broad anti-apartheid coalition politically close to the ANC tradition; and unions not affiliated either to the UDF or union federations, latterly including the NUM which split from the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), alleging that the federation was dragging its feet over union unity.

FOSATU

Unions previously affiliated to Fosatu will be in the majority in the car industry, chemicals, metal and engineering, paper, printing, furniture, textiles and clothing, and transport — six sectors in all.

UDF affiliates will be majority unions in farming, security (i.e. security guards), health services, rail, building, domestic, post office, education, cleaning, and liquor and catering — ten in all.

And independents will have a majority among local authority workers, food, mining and in commercial and distributive trades — four sectors in all.

The ex-Fosatu unions are, on the whole, bigger than the UDF union, however, and the 'independent' NUM is by far the biggest of all.

According to August 1985 figures (Azania Frontline, January 1986), several of the largest unions are 'independents'. After the NUM, with 200,000 there is the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers of South Africa (CCAWUSA) with 42,000 and the Food and Canning Workers' Union with 26,819.

The largest ex-Fosatu unions are the Metal and Allied Workers' union (MAWU), with 32,700; the National Union of Textile Workers, with 23,241; the Chemical Workers' Industry Union with 18,538; and the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union with 18,500.

Most of the other unions in Cosatu are a lot smaller. Unions like SAAWU and the General and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU), also a UDF-affiliate, are general unions which have to

be broken up into smaller units in accordance with the industrial union plan. This is also true for the Cape area-based 'independent', the General Workers' Union.

The UDF unions characteristically have much larger 'signed-up' than 'paid-up' memberships, whereas Fosatu unions were more tightly structured.

The major areas of union organisation are the mines; the metal and motor industries; commercial and catering; local authority workers; textiles; and the chemical industry.

Cosatu has yet to embrace all the non-racial trade unions. CUSA withdrew from unity talks — alleging that it was being badly treated, and critical of talks which did 'not enforce the principle of black leadership'.

The small Azanian Congress of Trade Unions (AZACTU), which is linked to the radical black consciousness group AZAPO, was apparently excluded from the last round of the talks, and there has been some acrimony over this.

A major task for Cosatu is to unite all the independent unions.

'Workers' Liberty' special issue on South Africa. 75p & p&p. from Socialist Organiser, 214 Sickert Court London N1 2SY.

More on South Africa

Azania Frontline: 35p from AZISC, BM Box 4863, London WC1N 3XX

AZANIA FRONTLINE

Newsletter of the Azania (South Africa) Liberation Support Committee

WORKERS' LIBERTY

Breaking the chains



Black workers and the struggle for liberation in South Africa



NO 12 JANUARY 1986 35p

CONFRONTATION

The present confrontation in the print has been building up for a long time — ever since the Times dispute in 1978.

The print bosses are seeking to use new technology to undermine the traditional strength of the unions. Essentially it is a battle over who controls the work process and who will benefit from new technology: the bosses or the workers?

The print unions go back centuries, longer than most other unions. Over time they have built up considerable strength. In Fleet Street, pay and staffing levels are more favourable than in any other industry. Outside Fleet Street, pay and conditions are nowhere near as good, but they are better than in most industries dominated by small businesses.

However, recent developments in technology could undermine the unions' position.

Typesetting used to be a highly skilled craft, with a seven-year apprenticeship. Modern technology has changed this dramatically.

Computerised typesetting makes it possible to input information from a number of different sources: journalists, sub-editors, advertising, camera room and then design and lay-out the page on a visual display unit (VDU). It can then be turned into a plate at a printing works miles away. The traditional typesetting job practically disappears.

Quarrelled

The unions' policy is to accept new technology, but to demand safeguards for jobs and conditions. However, as a result of their centuries-old craft mentality, the unions have quarrelled with each other about how to respond and have ended up divided. The bosses have already scored big victories as a result in the provincial press.

Last July the NGA did a deal with Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers to phase out typesetting jobs and have NGA members retrained as sub-editors, working directly onto phototypesetters. This was followed by a further inter-union disputes in the provincial press.

Then in July Eddie Shah lined up his single union, no-strike deal with the EETPU.

August saw Robert Maxwell organ-

Rupert Murdoch is out to smash the trade unions. He insists that they sign an agreement making any strike illegal — or he will go ahead without them. Eddie Shah and Robert Maxwell want the same. Tom Rigby reports.

ise a lock-out at the Mirror and move the printing of the Sporting Life out of London.

In September, it was revealed that the EETPU was recruiting workers for Rupert Murdoch's new works at Wapping through its Southampton office (see this page).

Murdoch's plans for using the private couriers TNT will mean job losses for SOGAT and NUR members.

The fact that Rupert Murdoch is now prepared to go ahead without agreement and print 16 pages at least of the Sunday Times at Wapping has brought things to a head.

The kind of deal that Murdoch wants to impose on the Wapping workers (see this page) will stress 'flexibility', i.e. an end to traditional job descriptions. If Murdoch is successful and implements 'flexibility' in a printing plant, it will be the beginning of the end of the power of the modern machine room — the skilled printers who can exert tremendous leverage on the bosses.

The door will be open for a massive attack on the NGA which could destroy the union.

US equivalent

This has already happened to the US equivalent of the NGA the International Typographical Union (ITU), which was forced into signing an 11-year 'no strike' deal when a strike in 1975 by Washington Post press operators was isolated by union officials. The result for Washington Post workers was speed-up and 50% job cuts.

A legally-binding deal can put more pressure on a union than even the most draconian of the Tories' anti-strike laws. It means that strikes are illegal even when the Tory laws would permit them. The maximum single fine under the 1982 Employment Act is £250,000 but in the case of a breach of a legally-binding agreement damages could be unlimited. Imagine the effect this could have on the print unions' already timid leaderships.

United

The only way for the print unions to survive is to develop a united response.

The left in the print unions is starting to move in this direction.

The NGA Broad Left has put forward the following platform.

a) all new technology deals to be negotiated jointly by all affected chapels on the principle of only union fingers on the equipment and based on the following prerequisites:

- 1) No loss of jobs.
2. All new technology to be operated by union members only. This to be the base for building 100% trade union membership in editorial, advertising, clerical, composing and machine rooms, distribution and maintenance.
3. Common rates and conditions built on the best in any production area.

B. To campaign among our members at chapel, branch and national level for:

1. Joint chapels in new technology areas.
2. No crossing of picket lines of chapels in dispute.

3. No preparation of copy for non-union companies and no processing or distribution of non-union originated material.

4. Amalgamation of all unions in the industry based on 100% trade unionism.

Positive moves also came from the NGA in early October. They worked out a joint approach on new technology for provincial newspapers. NGA members will be allowed to transfer to sub-editors jobs, but will then hold dual NGA/NUJ membership, paying union dues to the NGA, but being represented for bargaining purposes by the NUJ.

Excerpts from the agreement which Murdoch wants to impose on the unions.

1.1. There will be a legally-binding agreement...

1.2.1. ... the employees will respond flexibly to any changes required in working practices, working conditions and duties, technology and manning levels. Manning levels will be determined by the Employer.

1.2.2. ... new technology may be adopted at any time with consequential reductions in manning requirements.

1.2.3. ... There will be no demarcation lines ... there will not be a closed shop...

2. The Agreement shall continue... for... five years...

4. The Union will not be recognised in respect of employees of supervisory and management grades.

5.1. ... The starting time of an employee may be changed upon 7 days notice.

5.3. The employer will select all employees...

5.6. ... will not recognise or negotiate with... chapels or branches...

5.8. ... new employees will be subject to a six months' probationary period...

6.2. The employer may dismiss employees for 1) incapacity...

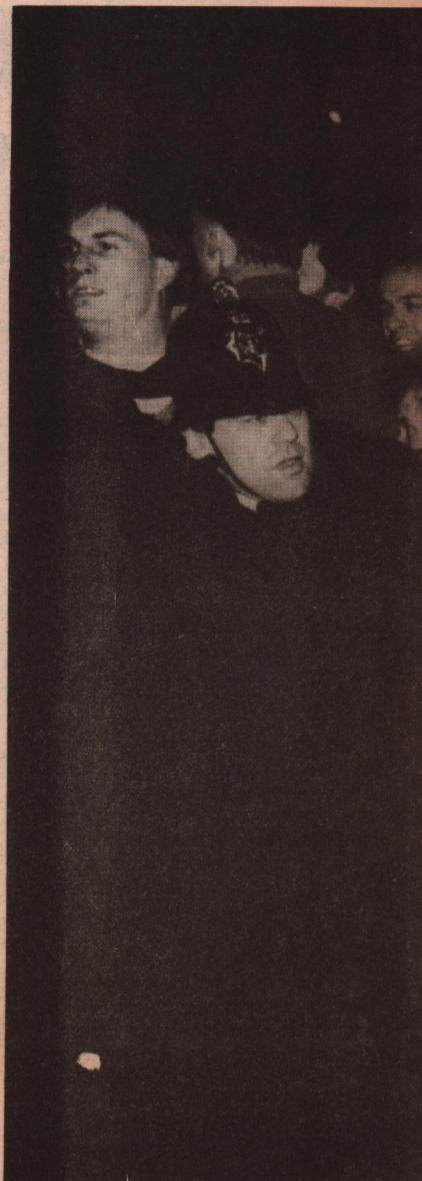
5) for breach of office rules and regulations...

11.2. The union representatives shall be elected by secret ballot...

11.3. ... to be eligible for election as a union representative an employee must have been employed by the employer for a minimum of two years. No individual who has received any formal warnings... will be eligible for election.

12.1. ... the union... will not... engage in... any strike or other industrial action...

12.2. All employees who take part in strike or other industrial action will be subject to immediate dismissal... no right to appeal...



Picket line at Warrington, 1983. Photo

The South

The story of Wapping begins in Southampton. An EETPU shop steward at Vosper Thornycroft shipyards phoned Mick Plumley. Had any Echo electricians gone for jobs at Wapping, he asked.

The steward was angry that EETPU officials were silent about a recruiting campaign in the Southampton area. He told of:

*interviews of 600 people for 500 jobs.

*coaches leaving Southampton at 6.45 am and returning from Wapping at 7.00 pm.

*interviews in London with EETPU area organiser and a "northern employment agency".

*local EETPU members apparently unaware of these developments and people on electricians' unemployed register conspicuous by their absence from Wapping plant.

The steward was worried. He asked does the NGA know about these events?

Plumley then contacted his NGA branch secretary and told him of the steward's story. It was confirmed that a similar story had been circulating...

Thursday September 5: A newspaper purporting to come from Wapping appears. Delegation to senior management who deny existence.

Saturday September 7: Senior union officials meet top management. They deny knowing anything about Wapping. Union asks for access to site. Answer: No. Company asks Pole-Carew to attend talks, he claims he is only doing a "feasibility study" for Murdoch. Wapping labour is "of a specialist nature". Company admits to newspaper and agrees to union request to meet Murdoch mid-September.

Two weeks later: EETPU shop steward calls Plumley again. He says he

The lessons of Stockport Messenger

The paralysis of the print unions and the new confidence of the Fleet Street bosses today can be traced back to the TUC's cynical betrayal of the NGA during the Stockport Messenger dispute in 1983.

The strike started when Eddie Shah sacked six printers for striking. It hit the headlines with powerful mass pickets and police thuggery outside the new non-union printworks which Shah started up in Warrington.

Shah got a writ to prevent the NGA organising mass pickets. The NGA's assets were seized by the court.

The initial response of the unions was very positive: the mass pickets were kept up and there was a two-day strike in Fleet Street on 25-26 November.

However, the union called off the pickets and went to ACAS. With all its assets frozen, the NGA was forced to negotiate from a position of weakness. The TUC general secretary Len Murray chose this opportunity to intervene.

On Black Wednesday, 14 December 1983, Murray got the TUC general

council to reject the recommendation of its Employment and Policy sub-committee to back the NGA and instead to throw in the towel.

The watchword for Murray was: don't break the law.

But in the Messenger dispute, even the sending of letters to advertisers notifying them of the NGA strike was declared unlawful. So when Murray wanted to uphold the law it did not mean preferring one form of action to another. It meant no action at all.

Blind alley

The TUC bureaucrats' conception of what a union is — a machine, an apparatus for bargaining — triumphed over the idea that the unions must be fighting organisations of the working class. The NGA was backed into a blind alley by the TUC General Council's over-inflated respect for the bosses' law.

Warrington was an important setback for the British labour movement. It strengthened the employers' resolve because they knew that the Tories new

anti-union laws had been tried out and shown to be effective.

Up until then most bosses had been cautious about using the new laws. Since then the laws have been used more and more frequently. The TUC's promises of defiance had been exposed as empty.

Warrington prepared the way for the courts' assaults on the NUM during the 1984-5 miners' strike. And the TUC's response was a slow motion replay.

For the print unions the main result of the Warrington betrayal is that they have been paralysed, unable to take effective action against the employers' offensive in the print industry for fear of legal action and isolation. The NGA is under severe financial pressure. The Financial Times estimates that the dispute could cost the NGA over £2m.

The lesson for today should be clear: unless the TUC and the labour movement as a whole rallies to the cause of the print workers and gives them the solidarity they need, then the courts will go in for the kill. There must be no repeat of the Warrington betrayal.

N IN THE PRINT

Stop the EETPU!



John Smith, IFL

Southampton connection

From the 'joint print unions' left paper 'Link-Up' (21 St. Louis Rd., London SE27).

knows that many people are going to train to work on presses and to operate VDUs to produce a newspaper. No further calls.

Plumley publishes story in chapel newsheet — opens the floodgates to further information.

"My neighbour — ex-coach driver — leaves his house early every morning and doesn't return until late. His wife has been blabbing to everyone about this well-paid job he's got at Wapping. He catches the coach there. He's just got a typewriter and I can hear him pounding away on it at night when he gets home" (Chapel member A).

Be flexible

"My brother-in-law's got a friend (EETPU) who has taken a well-paid job in Wapping. He doesn't know what is expected of him. He assumes some kind of maintenance work, but he's been told to be prepared to be flexible" (Chapel member B).

Similar stories come from other members.

September 20: Murdoch meets unions and issues statement condemning the unions. He makes clear that he intends to continue through the coming months to test the presses and publishing equipment. Talks must conclude not later than mid-December. If progress is made on "Post" negotiations then News of the World and Sun integration talks will follow. Company says 80 regulars and 50 casuals

employed at Wapping — all EETPU with "specialist ability".

Early October: EETPU national officer T. Rice says recruitment into Wapping will stop.

October, 2nd week: First meeting with company — unions seek to establish type of equipment. Company unable to give any conclusive answers, say no composing room. Unions again request to visit the plant; again denied.

Plumley now tries to spread the story through Southampton journalist contacts to get further information. The information begins to build up: journalist files story on basis of information already in hand, but story doesn't appear at first because no quotes forthcoming from News International. He discovers that all those working at Wapping are required to sign a contract in which they agree to cross picket lines.

Bournemouth NUJ Chapel officer has friend who has been at Wapping. His training has been suspended because the "heat is on EETPU". Another Chapel member says: "I know of two guys who went for interviews. One is working as a pressroom trainee for between £15,000 and £18,000. He is from Fawley and an EETPU member".

Sunday October 27: Another Chapel member phones to say Wapping coach leaves from Old Ship Inn, Bursdon, around 6 am every morning. Guy he met who is an EETPU member says he is working on 10 year old Goss presses installed three years ago. Says he is degreasing them and running them up. Only a couple of people know what they are doing, the rest are "a bunch of cowboys". He's definitely working for Murdoch — he's seen him in the Wapping canteen a couple of times. As a trade unionist he is uneasy, but the money is too good to turn down.

Monday October 28: Bournemouth NUJ reporter says that he knows of man who went for interview some weeks earlier. 100 interviewees went up to London. All paid £45. Man was hired on £15,000 p.a. contract to run until December. A graduate on the same coach came away with £30,000 p.a. job. Agency paid his wages. First man eventually suspended, told heat was on EETPU. Three of his mates still go up.

Wednesday October 30: Another reporter says he knows of guy who knows of 20 going up to Wapping. Originally three-month contract, now permanent. Agency paid for coach in first week, now they have to pay for coach themselves. He later reports that graduate electricians from Hamble college have got jobs in Wapping.

Monday November 4th: Federated Chapel meeting at Southampton. Van driver's rep says his mate goes up on coach leaving 6.30 am from Southampton central station. SOGAT FOC says guy phoned him a month earlier, annoyed about EETPU recruitment procedures. He went up to interview at local EETPU office. "I know a bit about printing," he told them, "I'm an ex-NGA member". Interview terminated.

Another Chapel member tells of mate who knows of independent operator which has got contract to start delivering newspapers from London on January 1 at rate of £178 per van per week.

Misled

The links between Southampton and Wapping have been largely ignored by union officials on the basis that if they give credence to the Southampton connection they will be duty bound to acknowledge that the company has consistently misled union officials.

Many militants in the labour movement are arguing that the only way to deal with the EETPU's policy of outright collaboration with the employers is to expel them from the TUC.

This argument has been gaining ground since the EETPU started negotiating a no-strike, single-union deal with Eddie Shah for the production of his new full-colour daily, Today. And has been given extra weight by the EETPU's threat to go it alone and sign a single union deal with Rupert Murdoch to operate the Wapping plant.

But will expelling the EETPU do any good? No!

Obviously throwing the EETPU out of the TUC will not make it more difficult for them to stitch up the kind of deals they want with Shah, Murdoch and the like.

In fact, being outside the TUC will force the EETPU leadership to be aggressive in order to survive. It would try to launch a right-wing 'alternative TUC'. And the fact is, at the moment, that it would probably succeed.

New centre

The EETPU already has links with the UDM. If expelled from the TUC, they would try to pull together right-wing unions like the AUEW and EMA with them. They would pick up the small 'no-strike' pseudo-unions in teaching, rail and local government. A new trade union centre would be formed — linked informally and maybe formally to the SDP, and no doubt massively financed by big business.

Only last week John Lyons, leader of the Engineers and Managers Association — the power industry's management union — joined the SDP. He is the first member of the TUC General Council to do so.

No alternative to 'illegality'

In December 1983 the NGA suffered a big defeat at the hands of Eddie Shah. Because of the TUC's failure to support the printworkers, a non-union printworks — only the second in the country — was established at Warrington, and the court proceedings cost the NGA perhaps £2 million.

Since then the print unions have been very wary, to say the least, of the Tories' anti-union laws.

The union leaders have concentrated on trying to get the best deals possible through negotiation and have avoided action at all costs. But the terms and conditions on offer from the print bosses have just got worse and worse.

Right now, what is needed is a mass picket outside Murdoch's Wapping plant to shut it down. But it would be illegal.

The TUC should be prepared to take the risk and call a mass picket at Wapping. The NGA — a relatively small union, with a precarious econom-

Of course the EETPU leaders may split from the TUC anyway. An argument could be made out for expelling them first. And indeed in a period when the trade union movement was stronger, the EETPU leaders could probably be held back by the threat of expulsion or isolated and marginalised if they continued to defy the TUC.

But it's no use pretending that the TUC is that strong now. It could become stronger — a TUC-organised campaign of mass picketing at Wapping would be a good way to start. A pro-TUC campaign among the EETPU members, over the heads of their leaders, could get the same positive response as the political funds campaign has won throughout the unions.

But to start by expelling the EETPU won't make the TUC stronger.

The way to fight the EETPU leadership is not to expel them. What is needed is a positive rank and file approach.

Militants in the print must attempt to draw EETPU members into united action. That should not be difficult as the EETPU branch in Fleet Street has a history of militancy shown by solidarity action for the health workers in 1982.

It could include joint chapel meetings and an inter-union agreement on the imposition of new technology modelled on the NGA/NUT deal for the provincial press signed last autumn.

We should propose that the TUC shuts down the scab printing operation at Wapping by mass picketing.

But the effect of expelling the EETPU now would probably be the destruction of effective trade unionism in the print, the growth of a new right wing trade union centre and a general increase in non-unionism.

It would mean cutting off your nose to spite your face.

ic position — should not be left to fight the anti-union laws alone.

Under the Tory anti-union laws, if workers on the Sun or any of Murdoch's other titles take strike action against the use of scab labour at Wapping this will also be illegal: the lesson is that the new print works at Wapping are part of a different company from News International and the industrial action could thus be defined as 'secondary'.

But the only alternative to going 'illegal' in defence of trade union rights, conditions and working practices is retreat after retreat until the unions are crushed.

If Murdoch is successful then the situation will be even worse. Under a legally-binding agreement, which is what he wants, almost any industrial action — even if otherwise legal under Tory laws — is subject to an indefinite fine. The union abandons practically all the legal rights that the labour movement in Britain has ever won.

'For your liberty and ours!'

In 1968 the Polish army joined the Warsaw Pact forces crushing the workers' movement in Czechoslovakia. Now Czechoslovak forces are part of the Kremlin-commanded threat to Polish workers. Against this counter-revolutionary 'internationalism', Solidarnosc left-wingers call for workers' unity across the borders, in all Eastern Europe and in the USSR.

It is not national antagonisms that frighten the Nomenklatura people in the Kremlin and Warsaw contrary to what might be thought. They exploit these antagonisms, setting workers of different nationalities against each other, and thereby keeping them from organising joint workers' action on an international scale. This has made it possible, for example in the USSR, to build up an ideological underpinning of Great Russian chauvinism for the rule of the Nomenklatura, in addition to the regime's base in the administrative and police apparatus.

Moreover, this has a reciprocal effect. Anti-Russian phobias serve as a "national" compensation for the oppression and exploitation suffered at the hands of the native Polish totalitarian bureaucracy. The Russians are fed on descriptions of the hatred that the Poles have for them. In this respect, unfortunately, the Soviet Communist Party propaganda does not have to make up a lot. By way of reaction, this fosters a still greater aversion to Poles among Russians and so on. While all this is going on, Chernenko and Jaruzelski are having a good time. They would rather not think about what would happen if the workers on both sides of the River Bug (the river running along the Polish-Russian border) got together one day and stopped hating each other.

Hatred

The Nomenklatura people are not worried about the lack of friendship and still less by hatred among nations, in particular in those countries under the domination of "fraternal parties". Because this is an essential precondition for the functioning of reciprocal interventions* within the framework of the "camp". What they are afraid of is that people will take the official friendship seriously, because from that it is only one step to internationalism, that is international solidarity among the workers and revolutionary struggle against the Nomenklatura and capital.

If we do not want to see bureaucratic movements and uprisings continually end in an impasse, it is necessary to combine social and national objectives with a clear definition of an international strategy. In the present geopolitical situation, we should regard every sort of non-internationalism as — to call things by their proper name — the concentrated expression of political cretinism. And this is both from the standpoint of the struggle for the liberation of the working class, as well as from the standpoint of the national struggle for the right of peoples to self-determination.

The national gulf deliberately widened by the totalitarian bureaucracy, that separates Polish workers from Ukrainian, Czech or Russian workers represents exactly the distance that separates these workers from freedom and these nations from

independence, both internally and externally.

There is an objective need for internationalising the dynamic of the processes of the August revolution that have arisen in Poland, which, as history has shown, is the weak link in the chain of the rule of the totalitarian bureaucracy. The only alternative to this is suicide in isolation. We do not have the means to afford the luxury of a philosophy of struggle confined to a national ghetto in the conditions of a determined political geography in the international arena.

Despite the bureaucratic counterrevolution initiated by the December 1981 putsch and which is continuing today, the revolutionary forces set in motion in August 1980 are continuing to operate. But whether they will be the spark that lights a future flame or the slowly dying embers of the past depends on solving the principle dilemma. Despite the metaphorical way this was put, the dramatic choice before us is quite clear: Either these forces will continue to develop along a revolutionary axis of internationalism, or they will continue to decline in the downward spiral of isolationism.

If we do not want to see Soviet tanks sent against a workers' revolution in Poland or in some other countries, we have to begin eliminating the anti-working class repressive forces and their social base in the Soviet Union itself. Exactly forty years after the export of the bureaucratic anti-imperialist revolution from the USSR to Poland, we find ourselves obliged to begin to export the anti-bureaucratic workers' revolution from Poland to the



The Prague Spring, 1968

USSR. This is not only possible and feasible, in particular considering the means at the disposal of the leading bodies of Solidarnosc and if there is a strategic reorientation and an attempt to find the concrete way of relating to the working class as the fundamental protagonist in the struggle. It is also

necessary.

The present phase can, and must, be characterised as a "revolution halted at the crossroads". The revolutionary situation has to be defined, as one that demands a choice between two alternatives — internationalisation or continuing self-limitation. Internationalism, so

much besmirched by fools and rightists, is first of all a historical social question of achieving the essential precondition for the workers' movement to act to emancipate labour. But it is also, in the strict sense, a practical question, how to fight so as not to lose again. It does not matter very much in fact whether defeat is the result of foreign intervention as was the case in Hungary or Czechoslovakia, or of a domestic counterrevolution. The latter was possible in Poland as a result of the revolution being paralysed by a general awareness of the external threat posed by the Soviet totalitarian bureaucracy.

Sisyphus

If our fight for freedom and independence is not to resemble a labour of Sisyphus, we have to reject the substance of nationalism that leads inevitably to isolating the struggle that we are waging and to defeat. Historical and ethnic antagonisms cannot replace the struggle for social and national liberation in its international dimension.

To be sure, we do not want to revive the errors of (Rosa) Luxemburgism, that is, a mechanical notion of internationalism that leads to underestimating the question of national independence. But it will not do either to fall into the opposite extreme, underestimating the importance of international workers' solidarity. Without the latter, and we cannot have any illusions about this, we have no chance of overthrowing the

system of rule of totalitarian bureaucracy. And we are not exaggerating!

As an appendix we present some concrete proposals for exporting the revolution.

□To wage an informational and agitational campaign directed at the Soviet military units stationed in Poland (for example, distribution of leaflets and press statements in Russian on the bases of these units, either by dumping them there or passing them from hand to hand).

□Organising radio broadcasts from Poland for Byelorussia, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, East Germany and the Ukraine, in the languages of these countries (for example, regular broadcasts from constantly moving transmitters, a means that is already used in Poland).

□Use of clandestine print shops and print shops outside the country for the needs of dissident and opposition groups in our neighbouring countries, but also organisation of Solidarnosc's own information service for these countries. Priority should be given to East Germany and Czechoslovakia, whose frontiers are particularly penetrable, and where we will get our first foreign readers.

□The establishment of durable international contacts and coordination of common anti-bureaucratic actions with opposition groups and independent groups in the nearest countries of the bureaucratic camp and the setting up for them of an independent information service in order to counteract the anti-Polish and anti-revolutionary propaganda conducted in these countries, for example, by disseminating the major documents of the August (Gdansk) accords.

Besides this "outward work", it seems important to undertake "inward work" also that will facilitate the former.

□Condemnation of Great Russian chauvinism which was combated by Lenin in his time, and clear support for the fight for national independence by the Soviet nations dominated by Russia. This should go hand in hand with stopping and condemning anti-Russian propaganda in the underground press. Just as earlier not every German was a fascist, today not every Russian is a chauvinist.

□Combating the national phobias, as well as having a critical attitude to tendentious nationalist literature and national history...

Bringing pressure to bear from below on the Solidarnosc leadership for developing international collaboration in particular with the Eastern European countries, which should be accompanied by an extensive testing by Solidarnosc of a political strategy and of public and active positions for relating to the national and social problems in the USSR on a fraternal revolutionary basis.

Proletarians of the world, unite for your liberty and ours!

Front Robotniczy (Workers' Front), No. 1, Warsaw, 12 August 1984.

*In 1968, the Polish army intervened in Czechoslovakia to crush the Prague Spring, along with the armies of East Germany and the Soviet Union. Now, if the Warsaw Pact undertook an intervention against Poland, Czechoslovak forces would probably be included.



CAMBODIA:

How communists became mass murderers

Martin Thomas reviews a new book about the origins of Pol Pot's reign of terror

Between 1975 and 1979 Cambodia was transformed into one big slave labour camp.

Everyone, regardless of age or condition, was forced to march into the countryside and to work on the land from 6 am to 5 pm (or sometimes 8 pm) under military supervision. No personal property was allowed, everyone had to wear the same black uniform, and only minimal nourishment was doled out at communal meals.

Some one and a half million people — one-fifth of the population — died from the hardships or in the repeated vast political purges before the regime was overthrown by a Vietnamese invasion in 1979.

Yet the installation of this regime — its military victory over the US-backed Lon Nol government in April 1975 — had been welcomed by most people on the left as a liberation. All these horrors were carried out in the name of democracy, equality, collectivism and liberation. Why and how?

Atrocious

Unlike previous societies which have generated atrocious regimes — Germany or the USSR in the 1930s, Chile in the early 1970s — Cambodia was not torn by acute social tensions. It was overwhelmingly a society of small self-sufficient peasants. There were no big landlords. The land is fertile. The peasants were poor, and often harassed by money-lenders, but they had a relatively secure and stable life.

Into this society there was introduced a peculiar version of the 'combined and uneven development' which Leon Trotsky described as a pattern in the Third World. Elsewhere modern industry came in alongside the peasant economy. Not in Cambodia. But in the 1940s a thin layer of Cambodian youth were introduced to Western education — to ideas, prospects, ambitions far removed from the static society of the Cambodian countryside.

Like middle-class groups in many other Third World countries, they set out to change their society — from above, by the use of state power. The Sihanouk (1941-70) and Lon Nol (1970-9) governments attempted to modernise, but floundered in corruption. Meanwhile, especially after the US invasion in 1970, Cambodian society was pulverised. By 1975 half the population were refugees from

US bombing raids.

The Pol Pot regime of 1975-9 came to power as the final, most drastic attempt to make Cambodia a dynamic nation. A small group of ultra-nationalists were able to rule the war-shattered, bewildered people, and remould society according to doctrine.

Ben Kiernan's book builds up a detailed picture of how this happened. Kiernan has studied masses of documents in the Khmer language and interviewed many refugees, and his account will probably be definitive, though the huge accumulation of detail is sometimes confusing.

In 1949 the first major group of Khmer students to study abroad arrived in Paris. Most of them lived in the same student hostel, and most had been to school together in Cambodia, at the elite Lycee Sisowath.

They formed a 'Marxist Circle' which over the 1950s included most of the future leaders of the 'Khmer Rouge' — Pol Pot himself, Ieng Sary, Rath Samouenn, Hou Youn, Thiounn Mumm and his brothers Thioeunn, Prasith and Chum, Touch Phoeun, Khieu Samphan, Khieu Ponnary (who married Pol Pot) and her sister Khieu Thirith (who married Ieng Sary). Most were from well-off backgrounds: the Thiounn family was closely connected to royalty, Pol Pot had spent much of his childhood in the royal household, Ieng Sary's family were landowners, Khieu Samphan's father was a judge and so was the Khieu sisters.

But whatever their origins — Hou Youn came from a peasant family, and Hu Nim, another future Khmer Rouge leader who was at school with the rest but did not go to Paris, from a poor peasant background — these men and women were culturally separated from Cambodian society by an enormous gulf. They seem to have developed ambivalent attitudes, ultra-nationalist and probably resentful of foreigners who scorned Cambodia as an insignificant backwater, yet impatiently hostile to many of the habits and customs of the Cambodian people.

Some of their distance from the people can be gauged from the fact that Khieu Ponnary was the first Khmer woman ever to get the equivalent of A-levels.

Over the 1950s they returned to Cambodia. A Communist party of sorts existed there, but it was weak; radical political activity, like such industry as there was (chiefly rubber plan-



Above: Khmer Rouge troops. Right: Pol Pot.

tations), was dominated by Vietnamese and Chinese living in Cambodia rather than ethnic Khmers. (The only recorded Trotskyist activity in Cambodia, in 1938, also depended on the Vietnamese community in Phnom Penh).

In 1954, as part of the Geneva settlement that arranged France's withdrawal from its former colonies in Indochina, the Cambodian revolutionaries were constrained to accept Prince Sihanouk. The French-trained militants resented this,

Similarly, when her sister Khieu Ponnary married Pol Pot on Bastille Day 1956, two officials of the Phnom Penh municipal government arranged for the couple to obtain a nice block of land...The two officials were...a former member of the 'Marxist Circle' in Paris...and Bonnary's cousin...later a leading member of the Lon Nol regime".

In 1960 the Paris group — "twenty or so educated and confident young militants, concentrated in the capital", as Kier-

"Crude communism is only the culmination... of this levelling-down proceeding from the preconceived minimum... How little this annulment of private property is really an appropriation is in fact proved by the abstract negation of the entire world of culture and civilisation, the regression to the unannal simplicity of the poor and undemanding man who has not only failed to go beyond private property, but has not yet even reached it".

— Karl Marx, writing about the doctrinaires of early 19th century Europe who sought communism before and without a working-class movement, and thus arrived at a programme of 'barracks communism' imposed from above.

but Sihanouk, envisioning himself as an enlightened despot, set out to co-opt them. Hou Youn, Hu Nim and Khieu Samphan became ministers in Sihanouk governments; others of the Paris group got good and influential jobs in teaching and journalism.

Khieu Thirith described the situation in the 1950s like this: "Back at home we faced opposition from Sihanouk who was in power at that time...However, Sihanouk gave me official employment in a government high school..."

"He even asked me to become a member of the National Assembly. However, as our Party advised against it, I politely refused the offer. I knew Sihanouk very well, and both our families were in acquaintance with each other".

Kiernan comments: "Hardly a case that bears out her husband Ieng Sary's claim of 'life-and-death struggle'.

nan puts it — gained control of the "Workers' Party of Kampuchea".

Sihanouk gave them kicks as well as halfpence. And Kiernan argues: "the veterans [of Cambodian Stalinism — militants oriented to Vietnam], with their longer political experience, were...more able to cope with their rejection by the regime."

"The youthful militants were less able to withstand either the temptations offered by their relative proximity to power or the resultant disappointment with Sihanouk's refusal to allow them complete authority and to modernise the country as they saw fit."

"Thus their attitudes hardened, whereas the veterans tended to roll with the punches, as people of peasant origin often have to do".

In 1967 the revolutionaries finally abandoned the capital and started guerilla war against Sihanouk. The Chinese Cultural

Revolution seems to have played some role in inspiring them, though Kiernan argues that a detailed influence is hard to demonstrate.

A breakthrough for them came in March 1970, when Lon Nol ousted Sihanouk. Lon Nol turned out to be nothing but a corrupt tool of the US, but his regime attracted some who saw it as an instrument for modernisation free of Sihanouk's whims — Keng Vannsak, a former member of the Paris Marxist Circle, and Bunchhan Mul, an uncle of the Thiounn brothers.

Pol Pot's group quickly formed an alliance of convenience with Sihanouk under the auspices of the Chinese government. (Both Sihanouk and Pol Pot happened to be in Beijing at the time of the coup).

US invasion

In April 1970 the US invaded Cambodia, and more and more the Khmer Rouge were able to present themselves as the banner-bearers of the national cause. In 1977 they described their strategy retrospectively as follows:

"Concretely, we did not rely on the forces of the workers...In concrete fact there were only the peasants. Therefore we did not copy anyone".

Initially the Khmer Rouge social programme was moderate and well-supported: rice land over five hectares (a big holding by Cambodian standards) was redistributed to poor peasants. But in 1973, having won a strong military position, the Khmer Rouge launched what they called their 'Democratic Revolution'.

(Perhaps in order to stress their independence, the Pol Pot group never described their state, their party or their revolution as communist or socialist, but instead as 'democratic'. After April 1975 the USSR and East German embassies were forcibly shut down and communications were cut with China).

Traditional multi-coloured clothing was banned and people were forced to wear black uniforms. "Land was to be collectivised...and the produce of the peasants' labour was to be confiscated by the authorities. In some cases, regulations concerning the destruction of religion and family life and enforced communal eating were also implemented..."

"Kratie [a town] was evacuated. There was to be 'no more trading, mortgaging, labour-exchanging or buying on credit'. A 'state' monopoly was decreed over rice, salt, fuel, cloth and petrol. Without petrol, private owners of trucks, boats, tractors and...motorcycles 'disappeared'; the state took over their equipment..."

"Private ownership of land and of the means of production was also abolished."

Hanoi-aligned revolutionaries were also killed, to eliminate political opposition.

The collapse of the Lon Nol regime in April 1975 led to the extension of this programme to the whole country. Kiernan cites a Khmer Rouge commissar's summary of their programme:

"1. Evacuate people from all towns.

2. Abolish all markets.

3. Abolish Lon Nol currency, and withhold the revolutionary currency that has been printed.

4. Defrock all Buddhist monks and put them to work growing rice.

5. Execute all leaders of the Lon Nol regime.

6. Establish high-level cooperatives throughout the country, with communal eating.

7. Expel the entire Vietnamese minority population.

8. Dispatch troops to the borders, particularly the Vietnamese border".

Hou Yuon, Hu Nim and Touch Phoeun were executed for opposing this programme, and within days the people of Cambodia were engulfed in a nightmare.

Ben Kiernan, 'How Pol Pot Came to Power', Verso £9.95.

Contempt breeds familiarity

No-one ever denounced bureaucrats more sharply than Joseph Stalin. No-one ever had more contempt for 'trade' than the upper classes of mid-19th century England, the bustling 'workshop of the world'.

No-one has ever had more strident things to say against imperialism and for the freedom of subject nations than the ruling class of the United States.

The success of 'Yes, Minister', and now its sequel, 'Yes Prime Minister', has something of the same flavour about it.

What the TV series says — humorously, but nonetheless unmistakably — is that parliamentary democracy is in large part a sham. The will of the people, refracted through elected politicians, is a very weak thing compared to the inertia of the unelected civil service chiefs.

The first 'Yes, Prime Minister' programme, last week, showed the new premier deciding to scrap Trident in favour of non-nuclear defence — and being cajoled, bullied and manoeuvred into dropping his decision. Finally the prime minister trades off indefinite postponement of a debate on Trident in return for the civil servants providing a cook to do his lunch.

The style is comic, and very well done too. But

Colin Foster reviews 'Yes, Prime Minister'

surely it's black comedy? And grim black comedy, too, for those who tell us that the Westminster system is the highest form of democracy imaginable?

Yet the advertisements for 'Yes, Prime Minister' can have Margaret Thatcher saying how much she enjoys the programme. And in India, where civil service inertia is even less of a light-hearted matter than it is in Britain, 'Yes, Minister' has apparently been a huge success. Its viewers are mainly the elite who own TVs — many of them civil servants themselves.

The answer to the riddle, I think, is this: what 'Yes, Minister' tells us is that some politicians are vain, bumbling fools, and some top civil servants are blinkered obscurantists. But — so the hidden message runs — *these* politicians and *these* civil servants are so bumbling and blinkered that really we know that in any serious matter more sensible people would prevail.

For Margaret Thatcher, no doubt, the programme is so enjoyable because it tells her that *she* is not like the stereotype politician: *she* does not allow herself to be pushed around by civil servants.

Criticism is disarmed by being exaggerated into caricature. Contempt breeds familiarity.

Neal Ascherson in the Observer recently developed a similar theory about the appeal of the Mirror and the Sun. These papers are so mindless that they practically caricature themselves — and thus make themselves safe to read, even reassuring, for people who might otherwise fear being manipulated by the media.

There is something of the same business — alongside other, often more important, elements, to be sure — in history's more serious examples of apparent self-denunciation by ruling elites.

Victorian contempt for brummagem industrialism, for example, could both console capitalists who felt superior to the caricature vulgar money-maker, and reassure gullible workers that the traditional aristocracy would keep the new profiteers in line.

The message is this: 'Yes, we know our system is bad. But we're realistic people. We know all systems are bad. Ours isn't as bad as all that. In fact it's the least bad of them'.

Such is the message of the more cynical and devious defenders both of capitalism and of Stalinism.



Paul Eddington (centre) as Jim Hacker

Braudel and "history from below"



Philip II of Spain

By Martin Thomas

Fernand Braudel, the greatest historian of recent decades, died late last year aged 83.

His masterpiece, 'The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II', portrayed the development of a capitalist international economy in the 16th century.

On the face of it the subject matter of the book is conventional enough: the events surrounding the naval battle of Lepanto in 1571 when Spain established itself as the major power in the Mediterranean by defeating Turkey. And indeed the final part of the second volume of 'The Mediterranean' chronicles the diplomacy and the personalities, the politicking and the war manoeuvres.

But the heart of the book is elsewhere. Braudel spells it out in his more recent book 'Civilisation and Capitalism 15th-18th Centuries':

"I navigated mentally through these 50 years [around 1571]... Then I moved on to the history of the Mediterranean in the 17th and 18th centuries, thinking that I would feel lost...

"But I quickly discovered that I was on familiar territory... even in 1750. The basic distances, routes, delays, production, merchandise and stopping places — everything or almost

everything had remained the same...

"The olive oil of Apulia was, by the 18th century, being exported to northern Europe through Trieste, Ancona, Naples and Ferrara, and much less was going to Venice: this was a significant change, but did it matter very much to the peasants in their olive groves?"

Braudel, in contrast to most earlier historians, was centrally concerned with "the peasants in their olive groves".

Thus 'The Mediterranean' starts not with the projects of the King of Spain but with the mass of the people — how numerous they were, where they lived, how they lived, what work they did, what they ate...

It moves on to the "distances, routes, delays, production, merchandise and stopping places". It charts the trade routes of the 16th century Mediterranean, and the comings and goings of its busiest centre, Venice. It goes on to build up a picture of the economic paths connecting Spain's new empire in South America — founded in the early years of the 16th century — to metropolitan Spain and thence to the most advanced centres of capitalism, like Antwerp.

It was these economic patterns of the 16th century that generated the basic division of metropolitan centres and Third World still acute today.

In 'Civilisation and Capital-

ism' Braudel spells out his approach with a theory of three 'levels'.

There is 'material civilisation' — 'The Structures of Everyday Life', as the title to volume 1 of 'Civilisation and Capitalism' puts it: the chapter headings are Daily Bread, Food and Drink, Houses, Clothes and Fashion, Sources of Energy, The Spread of Technology, Money, Towns and Cities.

Then there is 'the market economy'. And rising above that there is 'capitalism'.

For Braudel 'capitalism' has two distinctive features — centrality and fluidity. It is the multinationals of today, or the merchants of the great trade centres of the late Middle Ages like Venice or Amsterdam.

"The chief privilege of capitalism, today as in the past, remains the ability to choose..." — to choose because it is at the centre (the capital) and because it is large-scale liquid wealth.

By no means all market economy is capitalism, in Braudel's view — for many traders have no large central accumulation of wealth. And "capitalism has been potentially visible since the dawn of history..." wherever there is large-scale trading and the use of money.

Braudel's concept of capitalism is thus a bit different from the usual Marxist one, though perhaps not quite as different as it would seem. Braudel also goes

on a different tack from Marxists in his emphasis on "structures of long duration" — like the olive groves of the Mediterranean.

One of Braudel's main ideas is that different levels of history have different tempos, and his choice is to focus on the slow-changing levels rather than the day-to-day turbulence of high politics.

Yet to see Braudel as an alternative theorist of history is largely to miss the point. His books are like pictures made up of thousands of dots of colour, rather than working blueprints, drawn in stark, clear lines.

'The Mediterranean' was written when Braudel was a prisoner of war in Germany and published in 1949. I find it better than 'Civilisation and Capitalism', written when Braudel was already famous and rather overloaded with passages where the celebrated professor muses, digresses, or scatters subtle allusions and cryptic speculations.

Yet both are eye-openers for anyone taught at school that history is lists of kings and queens and battles and treaties. Both are now available as Fontana paperbacks: 'The Mediterranean' in two volumes at £5.95 each, and 'Civilisation and Capitalism' in three volumes at £9.95 each.

NCB seeks revenge

Ian MacGregor insists that miners will lose employers' pension contributions for the period of the strike action.

This is another example of his vindictiveness.

It hasn't become such an issue in our area, although we have been trying to explain to people in our area that it doesn't just apply to the last strike. If it becomes standard practice it will apply to all future strikes.

There are three categories of men in the Notts pits — those who never lost a shift so it doesn't affect them because they didn't pay it; those who stayed out from beginning to end and any stick you wave at them is not really a stick; and then there are those who stayed out for various lengths of time and then went back and it is that last category who are most affected.

Before the Christmas holidays we were recruiting quite well. Everytime the UDM did something or didn't do something, it made people think about signing over to the NUM. It was nothing big but a steady turnover.

Since Christmas the situation has gone cold and we have got to start again and the pensions issue is one of the ways we intend to do that.

I gather that the South Wales NUM are offering help to the Notts NUM in the fight against the UDM. Without wishing to offend anyone offering help, I think it is really a local issue that is best resolved by discussions in the welfares, the clubs and underground.

What I would like to see is the NEC having a serious discussion on how they are going to counter the threat of the UDM.

I know that one view held is that any publicity just plays into their hands so it is best to play down the whole issue.

To come back to my old hobbyhorse, I think the NUM has to make it clear that they will not indefinitely continue to sit down to talks with the Coal Board when the Board does not recognise the whole of the union.

Getting recognition from the Coal Board in Notts is

one of the biggest boosts we can get, which is why we are keen for the NUM to push for it and why, of course, the Coal Board are adamant that they will not recognise us.

The thing about the Heseltine affair is that the media are concentrating completely on the Tories and taking sides and so on and it has driven Kinnock completely out of the limelight.

I think the whole thing is a smokescreen. We've heard about the American option and the European option but nothing about the third option which is that the British government could take it over.

If it is such an important company and it is so important to save jobs and industry then it should be taken over by this country. But of course it is really about making money on the money markets.

I would have thought that Kinnock would have been making a big deal out of this — that the Tories don't care about people or jobs. They are only concerned with who can make how much out of

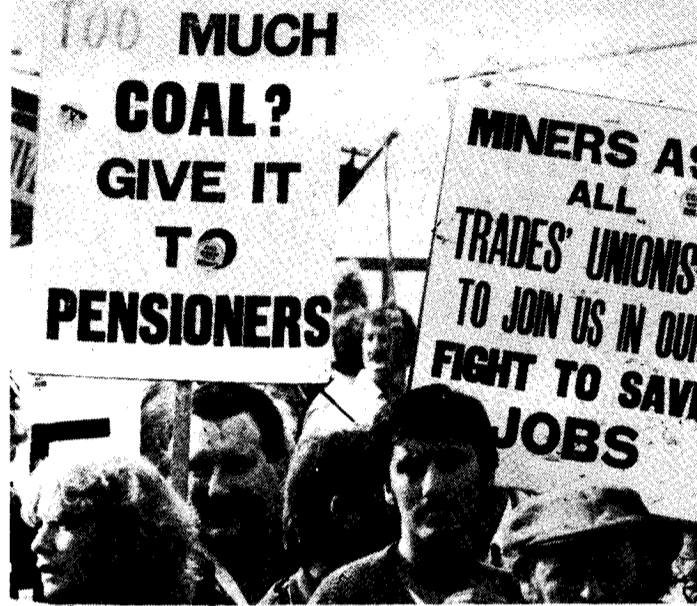
which deal. But he's out of the media and doesn't seem to have any answer.

So I think the Labour leadership should be far more vociferous over this issue, especially those aspects which aren't coming across in the media.

We should be getting

away from the argument over whether the Americans or the Europeans should hold the strings, when the obvious answer is that the British people should hold the strings.

Paul Whetton is a member of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.



Andrew Wiard, Report

GLC jobs

Ken Livingstone has left the GLC behind him. Apart from organising a fireworks party to mark the end of the council on 1 April, he has turned his attention to a parliamentary career.

But for the GLC's workers, left in the lurch by full-scale Labour collaboration with abolition, things are not so good. Anything up to 6,500 of the 9,000 white collar workers will lose their jobs. Meanwhile, London rate-payers who were told by the Tories that abolishing the GLC would save money are getting a nasty shock.

Because of the vast cost of the changeover they will be paying an extra 9p on average, on the rates — and up to 15p in some areas, like Croydon.

Brunei bribes?

According to spectacular allegations made in the Observer on January 12, the prime minister's son, Mark Thatcher, was bribed by the Sultan of Brunei in return for government assistance to an associate of the Sultan in taking over Harrods.

The Observer also suggests that transfers of oil-rich Brunei's assets from the US to Britain were arranged to help prop up the pound.

The Observer — whose boss, Tiny Rowland, himself wanted to buy Harrods — says that Rowland's bid was blocked by the government while an Egyptian businessman, Mohammed Fayed, bought the shop with the Sultan's money. The newspaper gives details of a visit to Brunei by Mark Thatcher in October 1984.

Thatcher, says the Observer, was introduced to the Sultan of Brunei by the finance minister of Oman — where the Cementation company, which then employed Mark Thatcher, had won a big contract after an official visit by the prime minister.

Students to lose £1000

By Richard Bayley

The government plans to remove students completely from the unemployment and supplementary benefits system, and to substantially reduce Housing Benefit.

Since 1979, students have suffered a 20% cut in the real value of their grants; the National Union of Students now estimates that London students will lose £1,100 a year and those outside London £850 by being removed from the social security system.

Students face the immediate threat in the next academic year of losing all rights to claim supplementary benefit and unemployment benefit in the short holidays, having their housing benefit "simplified" (i.e. cut) by a substantial amount and losing all rights to claim housing benefit in halls of residence during term time. From this summer, students will also be denied the chance to claim absentee housing benefit.

In return for all this, Sir Keith will give us £36 extra in the grant — subject to parental means test, of course. The Tories have reserved their plans to deprive all students of supplementary benefit and unem-

ployment benefit during the summer holiday until after the next election.

The last point, in particular, shows the need for students to become involved in a broad campaign to kick out the Tories and to organise the left to keep fighting — whoever gets elected. However, it is clear that the Kinnockite leadership of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) which controls the National Union of Students, are completely bent on "subverting" NUS into a parliamentarianist youth group in the run-up to the next general election.

The NUS leadership is toying with supporting direct action, but is not seriously interested in using it only to get students involved in a "Vote Labour" campaign (but without mentioning the Labour Party...!).

The traditional NUS method of looking to a Tory backbench revolt to save their bacon is not going to work, either.

Realising that the Bishop of Durham can't pay everybody's supplementary benefit, members of Socialist Students in NOLS will be trying to link up with the labour movement and the unemployed. NOLS activists in the colleges should try to establish contact with the CPUSA where the rank and file are spoiling for a fight over the government proposals.

The campaign should be linked to a policy of non-compliance with education cuts by college administrations, local education authorities and councils, along the lines of the SSIN proposals passed at last NUS conference.

It remains to be seen whether

the NUS leadership have the nous or stomach for the fight.

NUS actions:
Local Days of Action, 24 January.
Mass Lobby of Parliament, 12 February.
Mass demonstration in London, 26 February.

Gay rights

By Matthew Davies

Over 50 Lesbians and gay men joined NALGO members in a lobby of Stockport Council on Tuesday 7 January. The lobby was in support of a resolution being put by the Labour Group on council which called for the inclusion of a 'sexual orientation' clause in the council's in equal-opportunity policy.

The council's present policy states that it will not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race or colour when employing council workers but it says nothing about discrimination by sexual orientation.

It was quite clear from the meeting that the Tories had little idea of the nature of discrimination felt by Lesbians and gay men at work and in applying for work. To some Tories gay men are nancy boys or ballet dancers and Lesbians are screaming witches.

The lobby was the culmination of months of discussion with the Liberal Group on council, and they supported the resolution, although this was not enough to secure victory — the vote was 29-29 and therefore the resolution fell.

The lobby was marred by intensive policing which resulted in violence at the end of the meeting when certain officers got carried away while evicting people from the public gallery. Numerous complaints are being lodged with the police authorities.

The participants in the lobby felt that a national demonstration should now be called in Stockport to try to bring pressure to bear on the rest of the council. Such a demonstration was called in Rugby in 1984 over a similar issue; it attracted over 1000 people and achieved its aims.

Akhtar Abdullah

Akhtar Abdullah is threatened with deportation because the Home Office believes that he may have married Walait Begum Khan (Bano), a British born UK citizen in order to stay in this country. The couple have been living happily together for over two years and recently had a child. Deporting Akhtar will break the family.

A picket of the appeal hearing will take place on 22 January 1986 at 9.30 a.m. at Aldine House, New Bailey St., Manchester.

Powell Bill revived

Tory MP Kenneth Hargreaves is resurrecting the Unborn Children (Protection) Bill proposed by Enoch Powell last year, which aimed to criminalise research on embryos and even the possession of an embryo for any purpose other than implantation into a woman.

The Bill threatened abortion, contraception, in vitro fertilisation and research into congenital diseases and represented a major threat to women's legal right to control their own fertility.

Hargreaves drew number nine in the private members' ballot. He has not revealed the exact contents of his Bill, but it is widely believed that it will be a replica of Powell's Bill.

This would stop much research into congenital diseases, infertility, and contraception. In vitro fertilisation would be severely restricted and abortion and certain forms of contraception (inter-uterine device, morning after pill) would be under attack through giving the embryo legal status and protection.

Hargreaves' Bill is due to

receive its Second Reading on Friday 24 January after the debate on Winston Churchill's Bill on obscenity in films, books and television. The Powell Bill was defeated by the Parliamentary experience of MPs such as Jo Richardson, Ian Mikardo and Dennis Skinner and it will depend on these people to throw out the Hargreaves Bill.

However, extra-parliamentary activity is important, especially since the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child has already begun writing to MPs.

The National Abortion Campaign is urging people to write to their MPs and is calling a demonstration outside the House of Commons on Friday 24 January.

Further details about the Bill and the demo from NAC on 01-405 4801.



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Socialist Organiser

Teacher's dispute

The way to

win

By Cheung Siu Ming

Both major teachers' unions in England and Wales, the NUT and the NAS/UWT are calling special delegate conferences this coming weekend, 18-19 January.

Last year, Sir Keith Joseph used his powers as Secretary of State to enforce a change in the composition of the teachers' side of the pay negotiation body, the Burnham Committee — Joseph removed the NUT's previous absolute majority, in favour of the no-strike, non-TUC scab outfit, the Professional Association of Teachers, and the head teachers' unions.

The NUT can now be outvoted if the other TUC-affiliated union, the NAS/UWT sides with the non-TUC members. This happened just before Christmas, when the teachers' side voted to negotiate for a 6.9% settlement with 9% end loading, despite the NUT's opposition.

However, the management cannot or will not agree to settle even on these terms, and ACAS has stepped in once again. Refusal by the Tory government to help local authorities pay the wage rise remains the central obstacle.

Stakes

The Tories are looking to raise the stakes; Downing Street press office notably did not qualify Thatcher's statement that teachers who go on 20 minutes strike should be locked out. The dispute is beginning to be a real irritant, since the teachers have demonstrated that they have the determination and ability to keep up this fight indefinitely.

A front page article attacking the NUT appeared in the Daily Express on 11 January written by Thatcherite hack Nick Woods. The same day there was a witch-hunting article in the Daily Mail. These articles appeared the day after a three-page attack on London teachers in...the Times Educational Supplement.

The Times Education Supplement article was apparently inspired by SDP ILEA member Ann Sofer, who has an eye on the ILEA elections in May. Although the SDP and Liberals have so far confined themselves to criticising the Tories' intransigence, the increasing militancy of teachers and the pressures exerted on Labour authorities not to discipline them is being used by the Alliance for electoral purposes.

The NUT National Executive has tabled a motion for discus-



Photo: Stefano Cagnoni

sion, putting a position which is quite strong for this traditionally timid leadership. This reflects the pressure of the membership who have gained in confidence and militancy throughout this long dispute, and who have increasingly focused their anger on the Tories.

Nevertheless, the motion has dropped the specific claim of £1200 for all teachers, and does not argue for sufficient escalation of the action to win the claim. Members suspect that the NEC is prepared to let the claim be settled and conveniently blame the NAS/UWT for selling out.

Many NUT branches have de facto regained much of their previous autonomy in this dispute. The NEC has had to delegate the organisation of half-day strikes to local divisions and associations.

Notably, Bradford association called out their members for one day a week, without approval from the NEC, in the period before Christmas, even though this breaks the infamous Rule 8 of the union. Yet HQ has turned a blind eye (with one notable

exception — the one day strike against racist headteacher Ray Honeyford).

A strong coherent challenge to the NEC will be presented by the amendments from a caucus of local associations (NUT branches) who have met many times since the dispute began. These include:

- *A national one-day strike;
- *The escalation of the present ½-day strikes per month up to one day per week in localities where the membership vote in favour;

A boycott of examination invigilation;

- *Grass roots unity between NAT/UWT and NUT members to be reflected at national level, in the form of a united caucus of TUC-affiliated unions in the teachers' panel.

Exploited

The NEC is certain to oppose the exam boycott (a decision already taken by Scottish teachers in EIS). Our argument is that examination boards are private organisations who have long exploited teachers' good will to

invigilate exams with no payment.

The action does not stop examination preparation, coursework or the actual examinations themselves, but merely forces the examination boards to hire many more paid exam invigilators.

This and other demands were voted down last Easter, and the voting on them will be a useful barometer of militancy in the NUT. It will indicate whether we can successfully push the NUT leadership into a decisive escalation to win this dispute.

Our tasks if we win at conference will be to go to the labour movement and demand TUC and Labour Party support for our action, which is not just about pay, but about jobs, working conditions and the very survival of the education service itself.

As the general election looms teachers have to put pressure on Kinnoch as well, to make sure that the next Labour government is committed to building an education service which is anti-racist and anti-sexist and serves the needs of the working class.

This week Glasgow have sent in a further £22 from their "50 Club", together with the list of winners so far:

Susan Ashworth, 13 Decem-

ber; P. Longworth, 20 December; Ian Malcolm, 27 December; Stuart McCalman, 3 January; and Danny Rafferty, 10 January.

Members of the club pay in £1 each, and part of the proceeds is distributed in prizes to winning numbers drawn each week.

Cardiff has sent £60 from Martin Barclay's sponsored mountain walk over Christmas, with a note saying there's more to come. And Manchester sends another instalment of money from their Christmas cards.

Thanks also to: Basingstoke SO £100; Mary Williams £10.50;

Bob Fine £50; Phil Semp £30; North London readers £3.80; Pete Gilman £5; Linda Mouldale and Jon Gorvett £14; Mark Osborn £10; South London reader £8; Chris Bright £30.

We've also been asking for loans to help bridge the gap between heavy expenditure now and fund-raising spread over several months. Thanks to: Nik Barstow, Bruce Robinson, Peter Kenway, Bob Fine.

Please send donations or loans to: SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Local group	Target	So far	Per cent
North London	1600	897.66	56%
Nottingham	1000	684.72	68%
South London	800	661.15	83%
Merseyside	500	475.50	95%
Cardiff	600	404.50	67%
East London	760	356.84	47%
Manchester	1000	319.35	32%
Glasgow/Edinburgh	560	264.00	47%
West London	500	200.00	40%
York/Harrogate	300	150.00	50%
Stoke North	200	132.75	66%
Durham/North East	200	130.80	65%
Basingstoke	560	115.47	21%
Coventry	350	75.00	21%
Sheffield	400	74.10	19%
Stoke South	200	50.00	25%
Birmingham	100	42.00	42%
Colchester	100	23.80	24%
Aberdeen	20		
Canterbury	90		
Leeds	60		
Oxford	40		
Southampton	60		
Central/general	5000	506.50	10%
Total	15000	5562.14	37%

Socialist Organiser premises fund

★ RAFFLE ★

Prizes: 1 & 2. Radio/cassette recorder

3. Gestetner duplicator

4. £30 worth of books

Winning tickets will be drawn on Tuesday February 18th

For tickets (20p each) or books of 10 on sale or return, write to SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

