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SOLIDARITY CAN BEAT THE UNION BUSTERS

THE **Sun** THE **TIMES** NEWS OF THE **WORLD**

SUNDAY TIMES

AS WE go to press the SOGAT national executive is sitting in emergency session to decide how to respond to the High Court's sequestration of the union's £17 million assets.

The union's funds were seized after Rupert Murdoch took SOGAT to court for refusing to lift a boycott order on scab copies of the Times, Sunday Times, Sun and News of the World coming out of Fortress Wapping.

This attack represents a major escalation of the News International dispute. The stakes are now very high. As Brenda Dean said, "This is the most serious challenge to the union and its members in the national newspaper industry in its history".

NGA

By the end of this week the NGA is likely to face similar court action.

Murdoch's objective is to smash up the traditional print unions and the favourable wages and conditions they have won over centuries. In this fight he can count on the backing of the rest of the Fleet Street press bosses, as can be seen from the letter of congratulation sent to Murdoch by the boss of the Guardian and made public last week by the Morning Star.

Murdoch takes this fight very seriously. He planned it in minute detail. He set up a new printworks, fortified with high fences, barbed wire and security checks. He recruited and trained a special scab workforce. He consulted with lawyers to work out the cheapest and most legal-

ly watertight way of sacking the old workforce. He prepared a whole alternative distribution system.

Murdoch now relishes the idea of using the courts to put a firm of accountants, Ernst and Whinney, in control of a trade union.

An equally determined response from the print unions, and solidarity from other trade unionists, is needed to defeat Murdoch.

Tony Dubbins, general secretary of the NGA, has made this point very forcefully. Calling on the entire trade union movement to rally round the printers, he said:

"Give us all the force needed to defeat the Tory government's anti-union laws".

When the TUC general council meets on Wednesday 12th they must pledge their full support to SOGAT and the NGA in their defiance of the law. They must put themselves on the line by declaring that the boycott of Murdoch's scab papers is a TUC boycott and the picket at Wapping is a TUC picket.

We can afford no repeat of the TUC's cynical betrayal of the NGA during the Stockport Messenger dispute, when Len Murray seized on the sequestration of the NGA's assets and their resultant weakness to intervene and deny the embattled union TUC support.

That paved the way for the courts' assault on the NUM during the pit strike, and so traumatised the NGA leadership

Continued on p.2



Women SOGAT members march on Wapping. Stefano Cagnoni, IFL.

Jeremy Corbyn MP Tories in trouble

The crisis that the Tories are in is a crisis largely of their own making and not the result of pressure put on from outside.

The Tory MPs are quite clearly very divided between the monetarists who would quite happily see industry sold off to the United States and the chauvinists who wish it to be owned by British capitalists rather than somebody else.

On the Westland issue, the unfortunate lack of response to the future of Westlands by the Labour Party has been one of most glaring errors. For the most part the Labour front bench supported Heseltine rather than calling for the public ownership of the company.

As far as the motor industry is concerned, I think it was good that the government plans to sell-off BL were leaked otherwise the government might not have been forced to back down over the sale of Austin-Rover to Ford.

Merger

However the government clearly intend to pursue a joint enterprise with them and maybe a merger with them in the future and they are still persisting with the sale of Leyland bus and truck division and Land Rover to General Motors.

This may well lead to the loss of the research and possibly the manufacturing capability of that division.

In Parliament we have put down a number of motions condemning what Murdoch has done and a delegation of Campaign Group MPs has been on the picket line at Wapping.

The sequestration of the assets of SOGAT 82 shows that there is no easy negotiated path to a solution with people like Murdoch. He intends to run an anti-union enterprise and the only way of defeating that is by united trade union action.

The EETPU are quite clearly in the closest possible cahoots with Murdoch in everything that he does and they must be exposed in that and opposed.

Last year the Campaign Group published 'A Million Jobs a Year', and addressed a number of union and party regional conferences about it.

I think the Party's economic policy is an extremely weak one. And speeches in recent weeks by Hattersley do not even appear to adhere to Party policy.

Instead of talking about keeping down inflation as the priority, he should be talking about reducing the number of unemployed and increasing working class living standards.

He seems to be falling into all the traps that the last two Labour governments fell into in their economic strategy.

If we don't oppose that policy now, then a future Labour government will end up attacking working class living standards.



On the picket line last Saturday, 8th. Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report.

Sparks condemn Hammond

By an EETPU member

DESPITE Arctic conditions, a 50-strong protest picket was held on Thursday 5 February outside the EETPU area office in Southampton.

It was called to expose the role played by bureaucrats engaged in recruiting scabs for Wapping.

The picket started to build up from 8.30am, being made up of EETPU and NGA members plus a sprinkling of Labour Party and SWP activists.

National TV and local media were much in evidence, and police kept a low profile.

Full-time officials arriving for work were met by a flurry of snowballs and chants of 'scabs'. Not surprisingly, a initial attempt to lobby these officials personally failed, and, faced with a lock-out, a small group of angry pickets decided on another strategy in a bid to get inside the building and register a strong protest.

Entry

At about 10am this reporter, in the company of another electrician, managed a skilled entry under the pretext of legitimate union business in order to gain access to the union's unemployed register and get the details on the who, how, when and where of the scabbing operation.

We then opened the office doors and appealed to the rest of the pickets to help set up an occupation. A further five pickets joined us.

After a minute's hesitation, this reporter ran to the first floor with a brief to get into the office of Mick Scanlon, EESA lodge secretary and local organiser for the Wapping connection. (Scanlon has been accused of nepotism, and rightly so - all three sons are working at Murdoch's scab plant!)

The door was locked, and having to admit defeat, this reporter joined the handful of pickets on the ground floor. Here the cops were now on the premises and threatening to arrest just about anything that moved. A heated

exchange followed with EETPU branch secretary Bill Luffman in which one unemployed member was expelled on the spot from the union and forced to leave the premises or face arrest.

The rest of the pickets also left, but the cops remained in the building until the EETPU's own security personnel arrived. The situation was salvaged to a large extent by a number of TVS and Radio Solent interviews with expelled members and dissidents.

These events spilled over into the scheduled Southampton EETPU branch meeting that evening. The branch secretary, Bill Luffman, was challenged by the member whom he had expelled that day. The member was ordered to leave because he was not a member! He did so under protest so as not to give Luffman an excuse to cancel the branch meeting. That mem-

ber's fight for reinstatement will continue.

But the Confed no.5 Area Committee has voted 36 to 4 to remove EETPU chair Toby Croucher. And Esso Fawley EETPU shop stewards' committee has voted for the existing closed-shop site agreement to be enforced against the EETPU if the union is expelled from the TUC.

Southampton EETPU branch has passed a motion condemning the entire National Executive Committee and calling for its resignation.

Lists

And rumour has it that EESA lodge secretary Mick Scanlon has been sacked by Eric Hammond. If this is true, then clearly Eric Hammond and his executive committee are intent on finding scapegoats inside the Southampton office - despite the fact that one of the officials there has already admitted to this reporter that Southampton EETPU unemployed lists were sent on request to Murdoch on the instructions of Hammond himself.

Following Murdoch

MANAGEMENT at the Guardian plan to follow Murdoch.

In a letter to all Guardian workers in London, managing director Harry Roche has called for a binding arbitration agreement and 'direct input' (cutting out the typesetting job).

It is all wrapped up in unctuous phrases. Roche stresses that the Guardian wants to 'take the unions with it', and says that large-scale voluntary redundancies, a compulsory

3% maximum pay rise, and all the other measures are necessary because of the 'competitive pressure' from Murdoch.

Yet last week the Morning Star published a letter from the Guardian's chair to Murdoch warmly congratulating him. Obviously the Guardian management welcome this 'competitive pressure'.

It underlines the need for a united fightback now across the whole of Fleet Street by the print unions.

Solidarity

From front page

that they were both unable and unwilling to mount any kind of fight back against the employers' offensive in the printing industry in the run-up to Murdoch's showdown.

When it is all counted up, the NGA may have lost £2 million from the Stockport Messenger dispute. The same will happen again, and worse, if the print unions falter and the rest of the movement denies them the support they need. The print unions will go down - and if that happens, then other unions will be next in line.

That doesn't have to be the case. Back in 1972 a spreading wave of strikes succeeded in freeing five London dockers who had been jailed for picketing. Judges and great legal minds were forced to run round looking for a pretext for releasing the dockers.

It's more difficult now. But the TUC is still nearly 10 million strong. The Tory government is stumbling from crisis to crisis.

We can still make the courts stand firm and the rest of the movement rallies to their side.

In any case SOGAT has nothing more to lose. You can only have your funds sequestrated once. So there is no point in holding back from the kind of action needed to strangle Murdoch.

Not only distribution, but also all supplies to Murdoch's plant in Wapping must be stopped. The union must answer Murdoch by an escalation of its own.

SOGAT, NGA and AUEW, with the backing of the TUC, must pull out the whole of Fleet Street. It is not true that such action would play into Murdoch's hands, ridding him of competition. On the contrary, the other press barons would be screaming at him to settle, as would the distribution companies. The chances of rallying full working-class solidarity would be much better than with the present relatively timid action.

The alternative is to see SOGAT and the NGA destroyed as effective trade unions.

For speakers etc. contact SOGAT London Machine, 84 Blackfriars Road, London SE1. 01-928 5144.

A miner's pledge

Paul Whetton, Bevercotes NUM

If called upon, miners will respond immediately and with a great deal of sympathy for the printers. We received quite a lot of help from the print and we built up quite close ties with them.

I think the leadership are making some fundamental mistakes. I believe they should have made it as difficult as possible for the sequestrators to get their hands on SOGAT's money.

I think they should stand up and tell the courts that they are not on, and I think they should be making public appeals to the broad trade

union movement to respond to their needs and that need is to close Wapping down.

The softly softly response is a tactical error. They've got to raise the heat of the dispute as soon as possible and appeal to the broad mass of the rank and file in the trade union movement.

If they sell it into the hands of the TUC they'll go the same way as happened prior to the miners' strike.

If the leadership don't get things moving, the rank and file will, and the leadership will find themselves even more isolated.

NGA BROAD LEFT PETITION

The NGA Broad Left are circulating this petition. We ask all readers in the NGA or who have contact with NGA members to distribute it.

REQUISITION FOR A SPECIAL CONFERENCE

(In accordance with London Region Rule 25).

We the undersigned call upon the Regional Council to convene forthwith a Special Conference of the Region to discuss the following Motion:

"That this Special Conference is alarmed at the current onslaught upon the NGA by the Fleet Street employers, especially the situation at News International's Wapping plant.

This Conference believes:

a) That Rupert Murdoch's intention is to smash the influence of the NGA and SOGAT in Fleet Street, enabling him to slash the workforce, reduce the wages and conditions received by his future employees and increase his already massive profits.

b) That the mythical London Post was simply a ruse to discourage the NGA from taking industrial action by the threat of legal attacks based on the "secondary action" laws and that

the negotiations were therefore a sham designed to delay action by the NGA to protect members' jobs.

c) That the decision by News International to move to Wapping was the result of careful planning, carried out before and during negotiations took place with the NGA.

This Conference also believes this attack, if successful, will have major repercussions on the NGA nationally - that other employers and employers' organisations, both in Fleet Street and the General Trade, will seek to rid themselves of bona fide trade union organisation in their workplaces leading to deunionisation and a consequent reduction in the wages and conditions in the printing industry.

We therefore recognise that this is a fight for the future of the NGA as a union and is a matter for all members - for without the support of our members we cannot hope to win the vital support from other trade unionists."

The role of this Conference is therefore to ensure the members are fully informed and to assist the national leadership both by giving them an opportunity to explain in detail their strategy and to listen to the ideas and opinions of all members.

Mass pickets needed at Wapping ...

The great turn-out of 3,000 print workers and other trade unionists last Saturday night, 8th, at the mass picket of Rupert Murdoch's Fortress Wapping is a pointer to the way the dispute can be won.

Regular mass pickets at Wapping can act as a focus to keep the dispute in the news, and spell out loud and clear to Murdoch and his scab army behind the barbed wire and fortifications that the print unions are no walk-over.

Serious mass picketing — with News International printing every night there is no reason why it should be a weekly event — would give the fight against Murdoch an important boost. It can be used to draw all the sacked printers and the rest of Fleet Street's 30,000 trade unionists into activity around the strike.

Right now, there is a strong groundswell of opinion amongst the rank and file of the print unions for just such action to step up the dispute.

Promise

The Sun editorial assistants chapel has called on SOGAT to organise mass pickets at Wapping — so has the SOGAT federated chapel at the Telegraph, who have promised support to the News International strikers "any place and any time". A petition is also going round News International and Fleet Street calling for mass pickets at Wapping.

Mass picketing at Wapping will make it easier to win SOGAT's battle to halt the distribution of News International titles.

It is a different thing to unload scab papers that have been driven past a token picket and to do the same when that picket was several thousand strong.

If SOGAT members do start to implement the blacking orders in greater numbers than some of the TNT drivers will be forced to rethink their attitude. At the moment they are being asked to risk losing their jobs when members of the same union that is calling for support are unloading the scab newspapers.

So a drive to build mass pickets at Wapping combined with visits from the sacked printers to the distribution depots would be a way of cutting down on the number of papers distributed.

Distribution

Such a turn in the situation is desperately needed because at the moment it looks like Murdoch's distribution really is improving.

Action of this order to halt distribution would make solidarity from other trade unionists more likely. Back in late January Telecom engineers in the NCV were very unhappy about setting up Murdoch's phone network and if there had been a picket line at Wapping they would not have crossed it.

Similarly, the Post Office workers would be much more likely to stand by their union executive's call to refuse to deliver Sun bingo cards in the face of legal threats, if they saw the print unions taking just such a determined stand.

And mass picketing would help to firm up the rest of the Fleet Street printers for resisting the attacks on pay, conditions and staffing levels that are on the way in every national newspaper.

The present 'low profile' strategy of the SOGAT and NGA leaderships is not likely to achieve the level of mobilisation needed to win this fight. For a start SOGAT and NGA need to



Striking printers welcome women's march on Wapping. Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)

pull out everyone at News International, the people setting adverts and printing the colour supplements — if they are going to get the kind of solidarity action needed to win.

Some people in the print unions are arguing that there is no point trying to shut Wapping down with mass picketing. As the SOGAT London Post has argued:

"Our national unions could bring Wapping to a stop. Not by sending hundreds of pickets down there to be kicked to pieces by the police. But by using the fact that between our unions we can block virtually all of the necessary supplies and materials that he would need."

This argument is flawed. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever to counterpose mass picketing and a boycott of

supplies. The two are complementary.

Further, the underlying political analysis that backs up the anti-mass picketing case comes from a misunderstanding of what happened in the miners' strike. The argument goes something like this: 'The miners' strike proved that mass picketing could not possibly succeed and that the police will always be victorious'.

But what the miners' strike proved is that — no matter how brave and heroic individual pickets may be — mass picketing that is not organised and disciplined cannot defeat highly organised and drilled police force. The solution is not no mass pickets, but more and better mass pickets, better organised, drilled, stewarded and trained.

...and in Glasgow

"What's the point of a mass picket? You'd only get a sore throat with all the shouting", one member of the SOGAT West of Scotland branch committee was heard to comment last week outside of Rupert Murdoch's Kinning Park (Glasgow) plant.

His comment was in line with the pledge given by SOGAT Scottish graphical secretary Alan Watson at the close of January: that there would be "no violence, no intimidation, and no mass picketing" at the Kinning park plant.

The same theme was taken up by SOGAT Scottish full-timer Bob Gillespie at the February meeting of Glasgow Trades Council. Asked from the floor of the meeting when he wanted other trade unionists to turn up to support the picket, his reply was that he didn't: SOGAT had learnt the lessons of the miners' strike; mass picketing did not work; picketing was restricted to SOGAT members; only "responsible elements" were wanted on the picket lines.

Of course, not all SOGAT members and office-bearers share this attitude. Provided they behave sensibly, non-SOGAT members have general-

ly been accepted on the picket lines. But such comments clearly demonstrate "the line" coming from the top of SOGAT in Scotland.

Such a tactic of minimal picketing is self-defeating. It is also illogical: unlike at Wapping, no-one has been sacked from Kinning Park, so any picketing of the plant is illegal, as it is not being carried out by trade unionists directly in dispute with Murdoch. If illegal picketing is to be organised, then it should be at least effective illegal picketing rather than a token presence.

Undermine

Attempts to undermine the transportation of the Kinning Park papers by TNT have also been unsuccessful. Police have prevented SOGAT members from following TNT lorries, in order to track down the distribution network, whilst ignoring TNT drivers driving without lights, with their rear number plate missing, or signalling right when turning left in order to throw off SOGAT members following them.

All TNT drivers now ignore the SOGAT pickets. And there

have been reliable reports of some Glasgow taxi-drivers throwing in taxi-driving to get a job with TNT — and then being given a TGWU membership card. Such actions by the TGWU make a mockery of the accusations raised against the EETPU.

The five journalists employed by the Sun in Scotland have, however, put out a statement saying that they will never be prepared to work from Kinning Park. Although it must come as a surprise to learn that the Sun employs journalists, this statement is not as valiant as it might appear at first sight.

Kinning Park is a facsimile plant. It prints papers from the originals prepared in Wapping and then beamed up by satellite. In other words, no journalist would ever be required to work from the plant.

Although it is clear that Murdoch is not having things all his own way — the daily print run of Kinning Park and Wapping plants is well below what, from management's point of view, it should be — SOGAT in Scotland needs a change of tactics if it is to avoid defeat.

*SOGAT should appeal for active support from other trade unionists. There is a lack of

urgency, a lack of understanding of the significance of the dispute in the broader labour movement. Appeals for support from SOGAT could awaken the movement to the danger which Murdoch's offensive poses for the labour movement as a whole.

*Picketing should be escalated immediately, and regular leafletting be carried out to try to win over the Kinning Park employees; mass picketing should be organised if no inroads are made into the workforce.

Menzies

*SOGAT members in Menzies should defy the injunction to end blacking of Murdoch's papers, with full support from SOGAT and the trade union movement as a whole.

*TGWU officials should be campaigning more effectively to stop TNT drivers crossing picket lines and withhold union membership from those drivers who fail to respect the pickets.

*The STUC should also launch a series of initiatives in support of SOGAT's struggle, including demonstrations, picketing and support for defiance of the anti-union laws.



An arrest at Wapping on Saturday. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)



No strikes?

"Built in a factory where no-one has ever been made redundant, by workers who have never been on strike"?

A current battle at Nissan's Kawaguchi plant shows that the Japanese car industry is not quite as tranquil as it is made out.

Nissan is closing the factory. True, no-one is being declared redundant. But the workers have the choice of an additional four hours' travel each day to a job in a different Nissan factory, moving house [in a country with an acute housing shortage], or going to live in the barracks-like company dormitories.

Nissan reckons to cut 1500 jobs.

True, there is no strike. The union supports the company's plan. But it is a company union, imposed on the workers after militant trade unionism was smashed in the early 1950s, and maintained by a compulsory closed shop.

A tenacious minority of militant trade unionists in Nissan have maintained a small organisation, and are now appealing to British trade unions to support their battle against the closure.

The Nissan militants are described in a report in the Guardian [6 February] as 'Trotskyists'. They have escaped the sack so far only by appealing to an official labour tribunal.

Twice as high

Despite the Fair Employment Agency and official anti-discrimination policies, Catholic unemployment in Northern Ireland [now 39%] is still twice as high as Protestant [19%].

On the face of it this is surprising. The traditional bastions of sectarian job discrimination, in heavy industry, have declined drastically — Northern Ireland's manufacturing jobs declined 40% between 1970 and 1984.

Most jobs now are in the public services; and many of those are controlled directly from London. Northern Ireland's Protestant-dominated local councils have had their powers severely restricted.

So what's happening? A recent analysis in the Belfast magazine *Fortnight* suggests that the growth of the security forces is a major factor. One Protestant employee in ten now works for the security forces. The UDR is almost 100% Protestant, and the RUC also has a very small proportion of Catholics.

Split again



Hansen: slandered

The WRP has split again. The Banda-Slaughter group, who took the majority of the old political activists if not of the members when they spectacularly parted ways with Gerry Healy last October, have now fallen out with their international associates and especially with the group led by David North in the United States.

A group in Britain supports North. According to the *Banda-Slaughter* paper, *Workers Press*, it is led by Dave Hyland, Colleen Smith and Julie Hyland, and mainly based in Yorkshire.

The political issues in the split, as reported by the *Bandaites*, are twofold. North condemns the Libyan regime as bourgeois and reactionary. Banda rejects this. North still believes Gerry Healy's charge that the veteran US Trotskyist Joseph Hansen, who died in 1979, was an agent of the FBI and KGB. Banda doesn't.

The issue of *Workers Press* announcing the split also carries a long article by Banda rubbishing almost everything the Healy group (and Banda himself!) ever did, right back to the 1940s — and rubbishing a lot that Trotskyists did before then, too.



Dr. Miriam Stoppard kisses AIDS victim to prove it's safe.

Can't catch at work

Press hysteria about AIDS has caused great suffering to many lesbian and gay workers who have been shunned by workmates.

In fact the AIDS virus cannot be transmitted by ordinary workplace contact, eating together, sharing toilets, etc., — but generally only through blood. The newspaper headlines about the 'gay plague', however, gave a smokescreen for all sorts of anti-gay bigotry and prejudice.

According to the magazine *Labour Research* (February 1986), trade unions have begun to tackle this issue.

NUPE and NALGO have produced special leaflets or booklets, articles in their union journals, and circulars to their branches. The TGWU, UCW, USDAW, SCPS, NUR, NUM, FBU, EETPU, CoHSE, Bakers Union and AUT have also put out circulars, and many have done booklets or articles in their union journals.

One item particularly in this catalogue of denunciations shows that Banda is far from having shed what Healy taught him.

Arriving at 1948 in his scorched-earth traverse over his political heritage, Banda condemns the World Congress of the Fourth International held in that year for not opposing the creation of Israel firmly enough.

What exactly he means is not clear: probably what bothers him is that the Trotskyists, while unequivocally opposing the Zionist forces which drove out the Palestinians, also opposed the invading Arab armies, calling instead for Arab-Jewish workers' unity.

But the significant thing is that Banda attributes the Fourth International's supposed weakness to "Mandel's Zionist proclivities".

Law

Some people can take industrial action without secret ballots and don't have to fear the law.

Barristers voted last Saturday, 8th, to refuse criminal prosecution briefs unless they get paid more for them. And the decision was taken by a show of hands at a mass meeting.

Lump

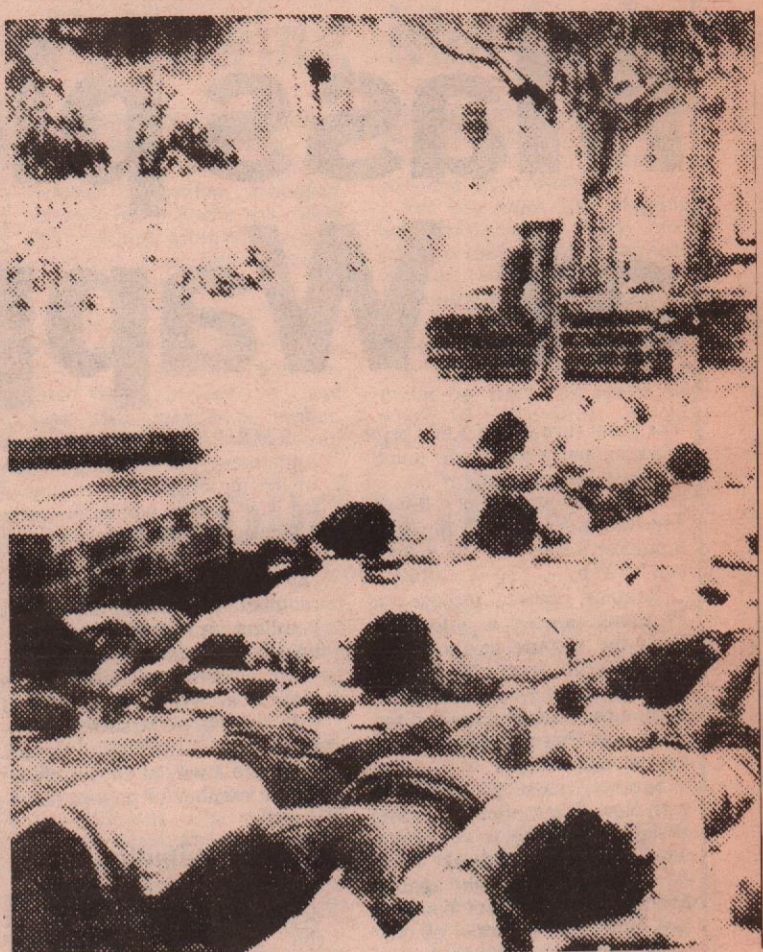
Between 1978 and 1984 the self-employed proportion of the workforce in Britain rose from 7% to 9%. The number of self-employed went up 34%.

One major area of expansion is the construction industry. Between 1979 and 1983 employment in the industry fell by 200,000, but self-employment rose by 70,000 — masses of workers have been forced onto the 'lump'.

Labour Research, Feb. 1986



Militant judges leave mass meeting



Government forces attack students in San Salvador

WHAT I

As part of the time spent in El Salvador, three of us flew in a six-seater plane to the province of Morazan in the North, the centre of the war zone.

The army outnumbered the Farabundi Marti Liberation Front (FMLN) by about 15 to 1, and their tactics in the war zone consist of using information gleaned from high-flying American spy planes on the location of guerilla units, then sending in helicopter gunships that can fire over 6,000 rounds of ammunition per minute to strafe the position where the FMLN liberation forces are situated.

This is then followed up by aerial bombardment and ground mortar attacks, and the final act of appalling destruction is to burn every tree, bush and blade of grass in the vicinity of the supposed location of the guerillas.

The effect of this is to create burnt ground all over Morazan, and when the rains come, as they inevitably will in April, May and June, the run-off from the hills will be so enormous that desert areas will be created in what is now a lush and fertile country.

The army's tactics force all civilians to leave the villages where they have lived for years and move desperately into refugee camps in the main towns.

San Francisco Gotera, the provincial capital of Morazan, normally has a population of 5,000. This has now increased by the presence of 14,000 refugees living in the most appalling conditions, and the presence of nearly 20,000 troops.

Refugees

The refugees, often living eight or ten to a room, share their beaten earth huts with pigs, chickens and goats, and what little work can be obtained in the area is usually for disgraceful starvation wages. Refugees making hammocks can earn as little as 1 colon per day; even at the black market exchange rate the colon is unlikely to fetch more than 12 pence.

We met women workers in a subsidiary of a multi-national clothing company manufactur-

ing "Calvin Klein" jeans for two dollars a day; we met people doing very heavy work in a factory making sacks for holding coffee or rice, getting no more than three dollars per day. Outside San Salvador we met migrant coffee workers who were doing terrifying eight-hour stretches picking coffee in very hot weather for less than two dollars a day.

In these circumstances the only hope for workers is the development and encouragement of trade unions throughout the country.

The history of trade unionism is one of the most heroic sacrifice by trade union leaders and organisers and the most terrifying retribution by the employers and the government. In every union office that we went to we were given lists of people who were dead or missing and we were given the names of people who had been shot at their workplaces by the death squads over the past years.

They all look to overseas trade unionists to provide help and support for them in these terrifying times.

We marched through San Salvador with 3,000 trade unionists to protest against the introduction of the government's economic reforms which are designed to introduce a war tax, to cut social spending (already at an abysmally low level), and to increase the prices of basic commodities.

The people on the march were marching against the economic package, but they were also calling for peace and dialogue with the forces of the FMLN. The war has so distorted the economy and created such appalling levels of unemployment that thousands realise that the only way the economic problems can be resolved is by an end to the

Jeremy Corbyn MP



SAW IN EL SALVADOR

war. Duarte was elected on a programme of removing the death squads and the fear they bring to society, and of dialogue with the FMLN to bring an end to the war. After two much-publicised meetings with the FMLN he has refused to meet them again, and the war goes on.

In reality one must question whether Duarte is running the government of El Salvador, or if the real government offices in San Salvador are in fact the American Embassy.

Just outside San Salvador there are two prisons, Irapango for women and Marionna for men. Both these prisons are full to bursting point with people who are there for allegedly "political" offences; most are held in prison under the dreaded Decree Law 50, under which anyone can be imprisoned for the suspicion of being a supporter, collaborator with or member of the FMLN. In this way thousands are imprisoned for no reason whatsoever, and because there are insufficient lawyers and insufficient money to pay lawyers and go to court, they are unable to gain release.

A very brave group of women who have lost husbands and sons at the hands of the death squads have formed the Committee of the Mothers of the Disappeared. From them we heard first hand accounts of how trucks would arrive at their houses late at night, take their husbands out and drag them away, and days, weeks and months of often fruitless searching only brought more heartache. Since 1979 the death squads, acting in the interests of the military and the oligarchic "fourteen families" who effectively run El Salvador, have murdered over 50,000 people. Last year President Reagan claimed that the human rights position in El Salvador was "improving" because the death rate had dropped to merley

2,000 a year.

The methods of killing and the treatment of people as they are taken away are as appalling as the fact itself. One tearful old woman told us that she spent three weeks searching for her beloved husband, and was eventually shown into a mortuary which contained 50 bodies wrapped in plastic sacks.

The official of the mortuary told her that her husband's body was somewhere among those 50 and that she would have to look for it.

She was then forced to open each plastic sack and look at the mutilated remains of some poor person until she found the dreadfully distorted and mutilated body of her husband.

This experience made her all the more determined to see an end to the death squad activity and to campaign for peace and human rights in El Salvador. These kinds of stories happen every day.

Romero

Some years ago Archbishop Oscar Romero spoke out against the activities of the death squads. He called for human rights in El Salvador, and in his final sermon preached that since the army was now such a corrupt force and the government such a repressive force against its own people, then he would support any soldier who refused to obey orders to kill fellow citizens of El Salvador. A very short time later Archbishop Romero was shot dead on the steps of his own cathedral in San Salvador.

Since then the government of President Napoleon Duarte, and the very right wing Arena Party of Roberto D'Aubuisson have sought to make peace a dirty word and to attack all forms of religion that preach peace or campaign for an end to the human rights abuses in El Salvador.

Our delegation of trade union-

ists from Britain had long discussions with trade unionists working for multi-national enterprises, the local coffee oligarchy or small businesses. We also met the Human Rights Commissions, the Committee of the Mothers of the Disappeared and many other people fighting for real political change in El Salvador.

El Salvador is in fact part of Ronald Reagan's attempt to make Central America "safe for democracy".

The British government sent observers to the El Salvador elections, which were universally thought to be fraudulent, and refused to send observers to the elections in Nicaragua. The British government has given £100,000 this year in aid to Duarte's government and offered to train El Salvador army officers in Britain. They have reduced aid to virtually nil to Nicaragua, and increased aid to the government of Honduras.

Our delegation was impressed by the way that trade unions are organising in San Salvador, we were impressed by the work of the Committee of the Mothers of the Disappeared, we were impressed by the work of the human rights committees, and we were astounded at the bravery and heroism of so many rural activists fighting for decent living conditions for themselves.

We came away with the indelible impression of a government obsessed with military expenditure and a refusal to discuss peace, and an overall impression that the whole region was being run for the benefit of American foreign policy.

We are therefore working as hard as possible to support the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign and other solidarity campaigns to bring peace to Central America and self-determination for the people of that region. Those aims are incompatible with American foreign policy or the slavish support of Britain for it.

HAITI: A FAMILY BUSINESS CLOSES DOWN

By Clive Bradley

Power corrupts, the saying goes, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

But when Jean-Claude 'Baby Doc' Duvalier became President for life of Haiti in 1971, at the tender age of 19, no one needed to worry: he and his family were already absolutely corrupt.

From 1957, the Duvaliers — Papa and Baby Doc — presided over one of the most brutal tyrannies in the world. Now, at last, the Duvaliers have been kicked out.

Haiti, sharing an island with the Dominican Republic, a hundred miles across the sea from Cuba, is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, and one of the poorest 25 in the world.

90 per cent of the population live in appalling social conditions. In the countryside, where people are on the edge of starvation, total income was a mere \$50 per head in 1983. Most of the population do not even earn the minimum wage of \$3 a day.

40,000 children die each year. An estimated 80% of children under six have malaria. In 1974, out of 129 underdeveloped countries, Haiti came 127th in calorie intake, and bottom in protein consumption.

Yet in the capital of Port-au-Prince live a reported 200 millionaires. Out of a population of six million, only 24,000 people get 44% of the national income.

The total GDP in 1982 was \$865 million. The personal fortune of Baby Doc is said to be \$400 million.

In 1981, the IMF discovered that President Duvalier had obtained \$20 million from government sources for his own use in December; and that his wife was receiving, from the central bank, a salary of \$100,000 a month.

The whole history of Haiti is one of terrible tragedy and suffering for its people. It was where Columbus landed in the New World in 1492. In fifty years the Taino indian population was reduced from half a million to less than 500, decimated by torture, murder and European disease. They were replaced by slaves imported from Africa. Between 1792 and 1804 the slaves rose up, inspired by the French Revolution, defeated imperialist forces, and established their own republic (a story told by CLR James in his famous book 'The Black Jacobins'). But the Black Jacobins' republic degenerated like the French one, and worse.

'Papa Doc' Francois Duvalier was elected President in 1957. He presented himself as the candidate of the poor black against the traditional mulatto elite. In 1964 he declared himself president for life and founded his dynasty. Under the banner of black nationalism he crushed all opposition. The trade unions were dissolved in 1963; Haiti's university was shut down and replaced by a new Duvalier-controlled college.

The centrepiece to the Duvalierist repressive machine was the so-called *Volontaires de la Securite Nationale* (VSN), or *Tontons Macoutes*, a civil militia named after a figure in Haitian



Keeping it in the family: Papa and Baby Doc.

folklore who carries away naughty children.

Estimates put the number of deaths at their hands under Papa Doc at 50,000. All opposition, including within Duvalier's own family, was crushed, the people of Haiti terrorised.

Amnesty International have documented arbitrary arrests, beatings and killings by the *Tonton Macoutes*. Opposition politicians, including from the liberal Haitian Christian Democrat Party, have been arrested and tortured.

The *Tontons Macoutes* ran protection rackets throughout the country, extorting, beating, murdering anyone who got in their way.

Prayer

All power resided in the hands of a few people around the President-for-life.

In 1964, Papa Doc issued a so-called 'Catechism of the Revolution' which gives a clear indication of the megalomania of this brutal dictator. It includes a prayer which begins: 'Our Doc, who art in the National Palace for life, hallowed by Thy name by present and future generations. Thy will be done at Port-au-Prince and in the provinces. Give us this day our new Haiti and never forgive the trespasses of the anti-patriots who spit every day on our country...'

The 'Duvalierist extreme unction' is 'a sacrament instituted by the people's army, the civil militia and the Haitian people...to crush with grenades, mortars, mausers, bazookas, flame throwers and other weapons' the enemies of the state.

Baby Doc inherited this power

in 1971, giving some of it to his wife Michele Bennet whom he married in 1980. Her family runs major import-export businesses.

Their regime was unspeakably corrupt. In 1982 they sacked finance minister Marc Bazin after five months for taking too seriously an anti-corruption campaign.

State finances were treated as personal property. There were widespread allegations that foreign aid was embezzled by the ruling clique. And the lot of the average Haitian continued to deteriorate. The US propped up the dictatorship — because it was a barrier against 'communism'.

Eventually, the Haitian people could take no more, and Duvalier has been forced to flee the country.

The *Macoutes* — many of whom have been murdered or disappeared in a torrent of public revenge — have been officially disbanded. Papers are being printed apparently free of government interference.

But a hard line Duvalierist, Major Georges Valcin, has been appointed Deputy Information Officer. And the army have imposed a curfew under which demonstrators have already been killed.

There is little real organised opposition in Haiti — certainly little of a left-wing bent — to give direction to new-found popular anger, relief and confidence. But after 29 years of horror, it will be hard to put a lid on the Haitian people's demand for freedom.

(Information from Rod Prince's book 'Haiti: Family Business'; £3.50 from Latin American Bureau, 1 Amwell St., London EC1R 1UL.)

The White Terror

Ian Swindale continues his series on the history of the Greek wartime resistance and the civil war which followed liberation.

We are fortunate that the period with which we are now concerned — from the December 1945 armistice and the disarming of ELAS at Varkiza through to the elections of March 1946 and the steady drift to civil war — is the subject of a remarkable new book, "British Intervention in Greece from Varkiza to Civil War" by Heinz Richter.*

Richter spent three years researching and writing this book and made a thorough study of the primary sources, especially British government papers in the Public Records Office. Consequently he has been able to trace the day-to-day intervention of the British Foreign Office, the British Embassy and the various British missions established in Greece, into practically every aspect of Greek politics throughout the period.

While I do not necessarily agree with all his political conclusions — some of which will be discussed below, the subject matter of the book is so fascinating and the scholarship so impressive (though his findings are not at all dry and 'academic' in their presentation) that anyone wishing to delve further into the history of this period would find Richter's book both indispensable and compulsive reading. Needless to say I have drawn extensively on the book for this article.

The armistice between ELAS and the British came into effect on 15 December 1945. On 2 February, at Varkiza, 25 miles south of Athens, the peace conference began. Repression against the Left was increasing, fuelled by fraudulent accusations of atrocities supposedly carried out by ELAS during the December fighting.

Government policy at Varkiza was formulated by Harold Macmillan and imposed on the Plastiras government which had preferred the military destruction of ELAS, something the British army was not in a position to achieve.

Macmillan's terms were: release of all hostages held by ELAS; disbanding of all party and private armies; a new conscript army to be created; the police and gendarmerie to be purged of the worst elements from the Metaxa period; repeal of Metaxist repressive legislation; freedom of assembly and association after the ending of martial law; no prosecutions on the basis of political beliefs; partial amnesty for December combatants; trial of wartime collaborators; plebiscite on the future of the monarchy and elections to a Constituent Assembly.

KKE general secretary Siantos called for "a thorough purge of army officers, police, gendarmerie and civil service to rid the state apparatus of the extreme right; a general amnesty; and a government of all the parties including EAM, followed by a plebiscite and elections.

With the government determined to take a hard line it was Siantos who gave all the ground. In the end he accepted the disbanding of ELAS; an amnesty for political offences between 3 December 1944 and the signing of the

agreement into law (which protected the KKE leadership but left the rank and file exposed to the Right); the continued suspension of civil rights outside Athens during the disarming of ELAS by the British army (which enabled the Right to arrest large numbers of ELAS fighters and hold them indefinitely without trial); and the exclusion of EAM from the government.

The disarming of ELAS began immediately. Not all their arms were handed over. Ancient weapons went first and modern arms were buried in case they were needed in future. Nevertheless ELAS handed over a greater quantity of arms than was stipulated in the Varkiza Agreement.

The psychological effect of Varkiza on the rank and file was devastating. The vast majority obeyed the order to hand over their guns and return to their villages. However, anyone who saw the recently screened Channel 4 documentary, "Greece: The Hidden War" will doubtless have been moved at the archive film of bearded ELAS guerrilla fighters, drawn up in ranks, wiping tears from their eyes as they handed over their weapons.

"The KKE had never gone the whole way with ELAS, but it had succeeded in forcing ELAS to share its defeat" writes one historian of the Greek civil war. But was there an alternative to signing the Varkiza Agreement?

Richter dismisses the view that because ELAS still controlled most of Greece they could have fought on to victory. He argues that ELAS members were not psychologically prepared to fight yesterday's allies — the British — and that the creation of a national Greek army would have driven ELAS out of the plains and isolated them in the mountains where they would have been defeated.

The problem for me with Richter's view is that he assumes that the ELAS forces of January 1945 were doomed to defeat like the Democratic Army in 1949. But are the two situations comparable?

By the time the Civil War eventually broke out, ELAS no longer existed. The Left which had controlled most of Greece was not disarmed and for 18 months had suffered increasing persecution at the hands of the Right. The KKE had succeeded in destroying the mass movement represented by EAM by turning it into a KKE front organisation and at the same time reversed the enormous growth of the KKE itself (from 2,000 to 200,000 in the course of the war) by transferring all the peasants (60% of its membership) into a separate party in order to restore the "working class character" of the KKE.

All this had inevitably led to a demobilisation and demoralisation of the Left. Richter's argument also begs the question: was the defeat of the Democratic Army in 1949 itself inevitable? Was that defeat not due in large

part to gross political and military errors by the KKE leadership?

Richter accuses the critics of Varkiza of using arguments based on a hindsight which was not available to the EAM delegation at the time. But it seems to me that he uses the same hindsight when citing the subsequent defeat in the civil war as the most likely scenario had ELAS continued fighting in 1945.

Richter is certainly right to say that from where Siantos was standing in January 1945 — at the end of a series of disastrous errors — he could see little alternative but to sign. The partisans could only have secured a change of policy by rebelling against the KKE leadership's line.

But many of the guerrilla leaders were themselves KKE members. They had been trained in a party which did not allow even discussion of the party line let alone democratic decision making. Unable to bring themselves to rebel, they meekly accepted the terms of Varkiza and paid the price for years to come.

Only Aris Velouchiotis refused to accept Varkiza and when the former general secretary of KKE, Nicholas Zachariadis, was found alive and remarkably well in Dachau, Aris and many of the ELAS rank and file looked to him as the last hope for overturning the KKE's policy. Instead, Zachariadis chose to sacrifice Aris on the altar of Varkiza.

Denounced

He publicly denounced Aris in the KKE press for "helping the forces of reaction to formulate anti-KKE arguments, providing them with a pretext to claim that the Varkiza agreements are being broken and to invoke the crimes (!) Aris has committed against the democratic world..." When Aris heard of this he committed suicide.

So the KKE was prepared to sacrifice their most respected and popular guerrilla fighter in order to ensure that EAM/ELAS adhered strictly to the Varkiza agreements. But successive governments and the extraparliamentary right systematically violated practically every single article of the agreement.

Richter describes the process by which a White Terror was established throughout Greece:

"During the period when the National Guard had sole responsibility for law and order (until July 1945) it staged a counter-revolution... (In every town)... the advanced British troops... were received by a more or less welcoming EAM demonstration... The British commanding officer installed the government-appointed mayor whilst the British unit collected the arms handed in by ELAS.

"Hardly had the British moved on and the Athens National Guard taken over control than suppression of the left began. In Sparta, the new prefect

forbade left-wing activity and released 300 Security Battalionists.

"Then the National Guard began the search for concealed weapons which extended even to torture. The greater part (of these weapons) found their way into the hands of local right-wingers.

"Directly the left was disarmed, followers of the right denounced local left wingers to the National Guard. Since no courts were functioning those arrested remained in detention over the next months. The prisons were often in a terrible condition and were soon impossibly overcrowded. In addition there were personal acts of revenge by the Right against the Left.

"One of the next measures taken by the National Guard was the destruction of the local EAM press and the ransacking of EAM offices.

"Soon nationalist organisations made their appearance in the towns and villages, of which the most important was Col. Grivas' 'X' which claimed 200,000 members.

These organisations had links with the National Guard and later with right wing organisations within the police and army at all levels up to the General Staff.

A 'state within a state' — what the Greeks call parakratos — was being created which increasingly came to control the state itself. By the time the National Guard was replaced this parakratos was firmly in place.

It was by now no longer a case of hunting down ELAS members who had fought in the December battles. It was a crime in the eyes of the Right to have participated in the Resistance at all, and they intended to inflict the severest penalties.

People who had killed collaborators were charged with murder. Sometimes more than a hundred people would be charged with the murder or, if they had been members of a People's Court with "moral responsibility" for the murder of a single collaborator. Gendarmes who had gone over to ELAS from the collaborationist Gendarmerie were charged with desertion and those who had collected taxes for EAM's provisional government were charged with robbery and looting.

The jails filled with thousands of prisoners and 200,000 former resistance fighters were forced to flee their villages and go into hiding for fear of arrest or assassination. Thousands more went into self-imposed exile.

The British government, in the meantime, was well satisfied with the outcome of the Varkiza conference. Now they resolved to take a hand in solving the country's military, administrative and economic problems. But the day to day interference by the British Embassy in the affairs of the Greek government soon brought to the fore a clash of views on how to proceed.

All were agreed on the aim — to return Greece to semi-colonial dependence on Britain. They clashed over how to do it and which forces within Greece to rely on.

The traditional British attitude, still adhered to by Churchill is summarised by Richter thus: "Greece should be

kept on the right line by British influence on the King (or Regent); whilst at the same time close contact was maintained with the pro-British section of the Greek oligarchy; should there be deviations, intervention at the highest level would be sufficient to bring Greece back into line.

"...Macmillan realised that this... policy... was no longer practicable since these groups... were... no longer in full control of the Greek state. He wanted to penetrate the Greek state at all levels and bring it under British control".

At the political level Macmillan wanted to support the middle ground against the extremes of left (KKE, EAM) and right (the Populists).

Once the old power structure had been restored the traditional sys-

By the time the... actually broke... longer existed... had controlled... was now disar... 18 months ha... creasing perse... hands of the... had succeeded... the mass mov... ented by EAM

tem of control could again be used. Churchill's rejection of this policy allowed the extreme right to penetrate the state instead, thus making the traditional policy a dead letter for ever.

The growth of the extreme right wing state within a state undercut the ground from the governments of the middle ground. They did not have the power to carry out their policies, and this was nowhere more clearly apparent than in the crucial question of the economy.

Richter argues that "the basic problem of Greek reconstruction was the prevailing apathy and the waiting for help from abroad", an apathy created by British intervention in Greece which had destroyed the desire of the Greek people to make something of their country — a desire which had flourished as they mobilised to resist the German occupation.

"Since the pre-war regime was restored by force of arms the people's dynamic enthusiasm for reconstruction withered, first into frustration and then into hatred."

For the first six months of 1945 there was no economic policy. Economic power within the country remained in the hands of the old oligarchy. The industrialists and financiers had made huge profits under the Occupation

Despite a 51% state holding, the Bank of Greece was effectively controlled by members of this oligarchy, so they were able to manipulate the Greek economy to their advantage.

After the war entrepreneurs in many countries started reopening factories but the Greek capitalists kept theirs closed since there was a much more lucrative source of profits: they 'participated in the distribution' of UNRRA relief supplies. They were further discouraged from restarting production by exchange rate problems. The drachma was so worthless that it ceased to be used and the British gold sovereign became a second currency. In this situation those with wealth hoarded gold or goods and refused to invest. Those workers who *did* have jobs saw their wage packets destroyed by massive inflation.

The capitalists themselves hoped that if they sat tight long enough the industrial reconstruction would be financed either by war reparations from Germany or aid and loans from Britain and America, something Britain was unable and America unwilling to offer.

Despite continuous pressure from the British government whose experts devised economic policies for successive Greek governments and even went so far as to demand the Greek government renounce its sovereignty over the economy, the liberal/centre-right politicians who made up the various governments prior to the 1946 elections lacked the political will to confront the Greek capitalist class and the economy continued to deteriorate at a dramatic rate.

Amid scenes reminiscent of Germany in the 1930s, inflation rocketed while the value of the drachma plummeted. By December 1945 the budget deficit was 664 billion drachmas, the sovereign exchanged for 180,000 drachmas and the cost of living index stood at 13,374.

Plastiras, who had served his purpose with the signing of the Varkiza Agreement was replaced by Admiral Voulgaris in April 1945. By the summer it was apparent that he, too, was incapable of controlling the extreme right which was now so powerfully entrenched that it had become a

leading up to the elections of 31 March 1946, before finally falling apart a few days before polling day.

But what of the Left? What was it saying and doing?

Zachariadis, as we have seen, returned from Dachau and resumed the leadership of KKE. His analysis began at the international level with the two-pole theory: "Greece is situated at a sensitive and crucial spot in the British Empire's vital communication network. As long as there is a British Empire this artery will exist and Britain will do everything in its power to preserve it. A consistent Greek policy should function between poles: that of the European Balkans with its centre in Soviet Russia, and that of the Mediterranean, with Great Britain as its centre."

In practice the KKE continued to vacillate between its futile attempts to pursue integration into a parliamentary system that was not prepared to allow the KKE to participate and looking in the direction of Moscow for a signal that it could embark on the struggle for power. The occasional sabre-rattling talk of a new civil war was intended to pressure the government to curb the excesses of the Right, and no more. This did not stop the Right from continually denouncing the KKE for wanting to start the 'Third Round'.

While the KKE-inspired ERGAS won control of the trade unions in Athens and Piraeus (union elections in the rest of the country were halted by the right after these victories), it was unable to respond to the new situation it found itself in — a mass party of 200,000 with a heterogeneous membership acting as the fulcrum for a 1½ million strong organisation — EAM.

Liquidation

The KKE's bureaucratic liquidation of the revolution; its attempts to impose its line without discussion and without investigation and criticism of what were widely felt to be serious errors; the transfer of its peasant base to a separate peasant party which was unable to organise and integrate them, all served to destroy much of what had been achieved, substituting in place of a mass movement a highly-centralised, bureaucratically-controlled Stalinist party.

As the White Terror increased it began to challenge the authority of the state itself. In January 1946 a 1000-strong 'X' Brigade took over Kalamata in the Peloponnese, freed 32 'X' members and combed the town for left wingers, taking 80 hostages and killing 14 of them.

The KKE rank and file, who unlike their leadership were not protected by the partial amnesty, prepared to fight. In order to head off an armed conflict with the right, the KKE leadership sanctioned a policy of mass unarmed self-defence in the form of demonstrations and strikes.

EAM demanded participation in the government, a purge of the state apparatus, general amnesty for resistance fighters, the prosecution of collaborators and the cleaning up of the electoral register to ensure fair elections.

As the elections approached and the White Terror went into top gear, EAM made its participation in the elections conditional on these demands being implemented by the government. Sections of the KKE leadership opposed a boycott of the elections but Zachariadis ensured that the Politbureau made the final decision — in favour of a boycott.

By all accounts he thought the time for an insurrection was approaching, but not one based on the guerillas who were already digging up their guns and reactivating ELAS in order to defend themselves from the Terror, but an urban insurrection — a putsch, as Markos Vafidiadis (future leader of the Democratic Army) described it.

Zachariadis's fantasies led to the tragic blunder of a KKE election boycott.

The British had never wanted an election victory for the far Right. In the present climate of terror they well understood the consequences. And while the absence of the KKE from the new Parliament as a result of their boycott was an attractive proposition, there were those who felt that it was better to have the KKE in parliament "where you could see them".

But the political will to try and avert the approaching calamity was gone. Churchill had unwittingly opened the



Looking at election posters, 1946

way to the far right by refusing to accept Macmillan's policy of British penetration and control of the Greek state apparatus. Ernest Bevin, who had become Foreign Minister after the Labour victory in the July 1945 elections had continued Churchill's Greek policy largely unaltered. The elections had been postponed several times already. Now, it was felt they must run their course, come what may.

On 31 March Greece went to the polls. The evidence suggests that there was a mass abstention by the supporters of EAM. The Populists and their satellites won 206 seats; the Venizelos/Papandreou right wing 'liberals' won 68; Sofoulis's Liberals 48; Zervas 20; and the others 10.

Tsaldaris became Prime Minister and brushed aside Bevin's demands for a broad-based coalition government and acceptance of the postponement of the plebiscite until 1948.

Instead there was a rapid escalation of violence against the left in which the government for the first time itself used the parakratos as an instrument of repression.

Three Labour MPs toured Greece at the end of April and reported that: "Greece is rapidly becoming a fascist state. Under the facade of democracy there exists a unilateral civil war, the war of the extreme right against all democratic elements who dare disagree with the government".

Repressive laws from the Metaxas dictatorship were revived and new laws

were hurriedly introduced suspending habeas corpus, establishing summary courts and introducing the death penalty for various offences. The left wing leadership of the Greek Confederation of Labour, elected in a TUC-supervised ballot, was removed and replaced by former collaborators. A number of former ELAS officers were deported to the islands.

Executions

On 15 July the executions began. On the 27th, seven former resistance fighters were executed including Eirini Gini — the first woman in Greece to die before a firing squad. Further executions followed on an almost daily basis.

The right wing bands stepped up their activities and a wave of 'X' terror swept through the Peloponnese.

Zachariadis, who had been out of the country for the elections, returned on 15 April and a conference of KKE cadres began in Athens. The watchwords were reconciliation (!) and unarmed self-defence by the masses. There was to be no armed self-defence.

The KKE fired off protests to the UN, the British, the Americans, all over the world, against the repression and stepped up their campaign for 'reconciliation'. Under pressure for the rank and file a limited armed self-defence was permitted but the KKE was in no shape to prepare for, never

mind launch the civil war that followed.

Bevin acquiesced in the policies of the Greek government, setting more store by the existence of a strong anti-communist Cold War ally in the Balkans than in the civil rights of the vast majority of the Greek people. As Richter points out: "But for Britain's financial problems, (Bevin) would probably have continued his protectorate even during the Civil War but, as things were in early 1947 he was obliged to hand his responsibilities over to the United States."

"More than 100 years of British tutelage over Greece had come to an end. Fortunately for the British government the eager Americans were all too ready to take over. From now on Greece was to be *their* headache."

Next week: The Civil War.

*Translated by Marion Sarafis, published by Merlin Press, 573pp, £22.50. (If you can't afford it, order it through your library). Merlin have also published a polemic by leading Yugoslav Stalinist Vukmanovic, "How and Why the People's Liberation Struggle of Greece Met With Defeat", 144pp, £6.50, defending his party against claims by the KKE that Tito was responsible for their defeat in the Civil War.

Apart from his telling criticisms of KKE policy from 1943-9, Vukmanovic's book also sheds some light on why some sections of the 4th International were prepared to accommodate to the Yugoslav variant of Stalinism in the late 1940s.

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major threat to the peaceful transition of Greece into a stable bourgeois democracy.

The British were already aware that an early plebiscite on the return of the King could only result in a renewal of the civil war. They therefore arranged for the elections to take place first and the plebiscite to be postponed. But the Royalists became more and more strident in their demands for a plebiscite as the elections approached so the elections themselves became as tense as the postponed plebiscite.

In the intervening period British attempts to strengthen the centre-left at the expense of the KKE/EAM and the Populists (Royalists) foundered on rocks of the parakratos. Voulgaris was replaced by the liberal republican Kanellopoulos who carried out business as usual. Amid rising alarm in British circles at the growing economic crisis he introduced a set of measures which slowed rather than stemmed the crisis.

When the rate of economic collapse began to accelerate again a last-ditch attempt was made to form a government of all the parties except the KKE. This failed because the Populists would not participate. The Sofoulis government of non-EAM republicans presided over Greece for the few months

Fingering is not on

It was with some amazement — and not a little shock — that we opened our copy of Socialist Organiser dated 5 December to find an article by Bas Hardy, "Liverpool: The Truth", which under a pretence of support in effect aided and abetted the witch-hunt against the Liverpool Council whipped up by the capitalist press and now under prosecution by Kinnock and his officials.

A careful examination of the language shows, in effect, that this is the case. When you ask yourself why the national and local trade union leaders were able to undermine Liverpool Council's support among the manual trades, you have nowhere shown how a crucial role in this has been played by the Communist Party and its fellow travellers, who in addition provided the structure for the fake "Labour Left" that was organised to attack them in the Labour Party.

The accusations of 'semi-gangsterism politics', and the further references to 'cosa nostras' and 'much of the wrongs of the Braddock era' show that this language is not accidental.

The picture does not improve when we turn to your 'agenda', when you call for the removal of two of the main targets of the capitalist media — Derek Hatton and Sam Bond. Nor can the responsibility for the use of this language rest with your contributor alone. The Editorial repeats accusations that Militant 'runs Liverpool as though the tendency were a criminal brotherhood and Liverpool 1920s Chicago'.

Whatever the results of Kinnock's enquiry, it is plain that these comrades have already been tried and found guilty in your eyes. At a time when the capitalist press — the sole foundation for these accusations — is whipping up an atmosphere of witch-hunt to near hysteria, these remarks can only add up to gross irresponsibility on your part, as well as a sectarian animosity that well oversteps the mark of legitimate polemic.

Your similar behaviour at the time of the adoption of Mildred Gordon as parliamentary candidate for Ian Mikardo's old constituency shows that this sort of thing is fast becoming a habit. Fingering your political opponents whilst they are under attack in the yellow press is not, we submit, a becoming activity for socialists and we urge you to

draw back from it before it produces consequences for which we feel sure that you would be ashamed.

As one of the writers of this letter was defamed in a book plugging the Braddocks, we feel that we have a right to write to you in this way.

Fraternally,
AL RICHARDSON,
SAM BORNSTEIN
London

Reply

What is the truth of the matter? Has Militant's policy in Liverpool been scandalously bureaucratic or hasn't it?

Comrades Richardson and Bornstein do not address this question. Yet it cannot be washed away by floods of rhetoric about the villainy of Neil Kinnock or of the Communist Party.

Socialist Organiser has argued consistently that the appointment of Sam Bond was a clumsy piece of arrogance, that Derek Hatton's Flash Harry performance is at the very least counterproductive, and that Militant's 'machine politics' in the Liverpool campaign seriously undermined mass mobilisation.

Either we were wrong or we were right.

The truth cannot be made the first casualty of a war against the witch-hunt. In fact, telling lies about how good Militant's record is in Liverpool is counter-productive even in terms of fighting the witch-hunt. It won't convince anyone.

Either we expressed ourselves badly, or the comrades have not read the paper very attentively, but for sure their quote from our editorial misrepresents its drift.

The editorial started by stating 'the case for the prosecution' in order then to show where it falls down. It's a common method of argument — and a better one than the method of ex-cathedra declamations, used by some left groups apparently more to impress themselves with their own r-r-revolutionary fervour than to convince anyone.

We're not even sure what the comrades are talking about in relation to Mildred Gordon. We welcomed Mildred Gordon's selection; we've made no criticisms of her like those we have made of Militant; and in any case she is not being witch-hunted.

Solidarnosc and economic policy

Solidarnosc's underground leadership now calls for a market economy. Martin Thomas comments.

'Pro-imperialist, Catholic, right wing — they want to restore capitalism'. That was how many left-wingers in the West saw the Polish workers' movement Solidarnosc when it flowered in 1980-1.

A new economic programme issued by Solidarnosc's underground leadership (the TKK) seems to prove them right. The programme, issued in September 1985 and translated in the bulletin 'Voice of Solidarity', calls for central planning to be abolished and market mechanisms to be made supreme.

In 1980-1, when Solidarnosc was in the ascendant, its central theme was workers' control; but now, battered, repressed and hunted, Solidarnosc's underground leaders have turned to market economics as a 'realistic' (their term) alternative to bureaucratic mismanagement.

It is not clear how representative the TKK document is of thinking in the ranks of Solidarnosc. With the movement forced underground, obviously there is little chance of open discussion.

Certainly some left-wingers in Solidarnosc are clearly opposed to the market-economy policy. In a document which we published in Socialist Organiser of 9 January, the Workers' Opposition stated that "The aim of the revolutionary workers' movement... is not the reprivatisation of state property or giving it autonomy but to genuinely socialise it".

But the TKK must represent some large body of opinion in Solidarnosc. And that is not surprising.

Many workers in the West, rebelling against the chaos and cruelty of the market economy, take the Stalinist states of the East as a model for a new society. For workers in Poland, 'nationalised property' and 'planning' mean bullying and byzantine mismanagement by the bureaucracy. So the grass looks greener on the other side. They see a Western model as a 'realistic' alternative.

There were always people in Solidarnosc favouring a market economy. Their influence is specially strong now, when repression has crushed workers' confidence in their ability to win their own alternative of workers' control.

So maybe Solidarnosc, or a central section of it, is now advocating the restoration of a capitalist market economy in Poland. Does that mean that the Western left should support Jaruzelski?

No. No more than we should support a bourgeois-democratic government in the West which suppresses a Stalinist-minded workers' movement.

Nationalised property is important as a potential instrument for working class self-liberation, not as a fetish to be used against the living workers' movement.

We think votes are important; yet we don't support the Tories' attempts to enforce votes by law on the trade unions in Britain. We defend even undemocratic unions when the forms of 'democracy' are used by the ruling



Stalinist police in Poland

class against the workers' movement. Likewise in Poland we should defend Solidarnosc even under pro-Western leadership.

To do otherwise would be to cut the ground from under the feet of Solidarnosc left-wingers. For what conclusions are Polish workers likely to come to if they see socialists in the West (even those who say they oppose Stalinism) siding with Jaruzelski in the name of 'nationalised property', while apparently their most vocal support is from Reagan and Thatcher?

From a socialist point of view the Solidarnosc leaders' new economic programme is utterly contradictory. They advocate that competition should rule; but that would also mean competition between workers, and the break-up of the class solidarity which is the name and banner of their movement.

They advocate that unprofitable enterprises should go bust and profitable ones should keep their gains. They must know that this would create mass unemployment. Would Solidarnosc really hail long dole queues as a victory for economic efficiency?

In relation to wages they contradict their own general approach, arguing:

"Family income should not be allowed to fall below a socially acceptable minimum. We demand the discontinuation of the deliberate policy of depriving the real value of social benefits."

We demand the introduction of indexation and payment of cost-of-living allowances. In this

The old policy Some 1980 demands

*Workers' self-management in the factories: managers to be subject to recall by elected workers' councils.

*Opening the books' of the bureaucrats' economic planning.

*A reform that will abolish the privileges of the bureaucracy.

*Wages and social benefits to be protected against inflation by escalator clauses.

*Trade union inspection of health and safety at work.

*The right to work for all.

way, a socially acceptable minimum wage, linked to the rate of inflation, would be introduced. We do not agree to the present system of leaving pay compensation to be bargained out industry by industry, a system which favours the strong."

The general rule of letting the market decide would dictate no minimum wage, and bargaining not only industry by industry but job by job. But on this issue, so immediate for workers, the Solidarnosc leaders step back and favour the principle of solidarity rather than the law of the market.

They seem to envisage most enterprises being run as worker cooperatives.

"The effectiveness of any enterprise depends largely on having an enterprising management who bear responsibility for the enterprise's activity and exercise control over profits. At present in the state sector of the economy, this role could be played only by Employees Councils."

Market principles would then mean each group of workers competing ruthlessly against every other. Here again the Solidarnosc leaders recoil.

"In order to strengthen their bargaining position vis-a-vis the central bureaucracy, Employees Councils should be able to form inter-factory consultative structures."

A good demand within an economic programme based on solidarity: but what sense can this make if the market is to rule? The only use that Employees Councils would have for the

'consultative structures' under that system would be to cheat and gouge each other and to form cartels.

Unequivocal and unconditional support by Western workers for the rights of Solidarnosc is the best way to help the Polish workers sort out these contradictions and find their way back to a programme based on solidarity and workers' control.

The new proposals

Excerpts from 'Voice of Solidarity', November 1985.

Trade union pluralism and the right of Solidarnosc to conduct legal activity, should be reinstated.

Control of the Communist Party over all the appointments in key positions in the economy should be abandoned.

Managers should be appointed by councils of employees.

The centrally controlled distribution system would be abolished.

Mandatory operational programmes, compulsory agreements on state deliveries, as well as compulsory foreign trade transactions should also be abolished.

The reform must be market orientated and should encourage economic activity based on healthy competition.

Consumer preferences expressed through the market mechanism should become the decisive factor.

Setting up prices by the central authorities should, with few exceptions, be abolished. Prices must be allowed to be shaped by the market.

There should be a stock market enabling anyone to buy stocks and bonds, to become one of the sources of capital for the development of enterprises.

In cases of unprofitable enterprises, the principle of bankruptcy and insolvency should be rigorously adhered to. This, in turn, requires the abolition of so-called automatic credit which at present covers all losses and wastages. The present practice of the state taking over profits earned by more efficient enterprises should also be abolished.

Banks should act as independent enterprises and earn profits by lending on interest. These banks could then provide credits for enterprises.

Alongside state ownership in the national economy, there should be room for a wide range of private ownership which should include industry. There should also be co-operative and communal ownership.

Fair competition should decide which kind of ownership will predominate in the various fields of the national economy.

The majority of state agricultural farms should be parcelled out to private farmers.

Private foreign capital should have legally guaranteed conditions for safe investment in Poland.

Investment should be guided by criteria of effectiveness defined by the market.

The policy of favouring production of capital goods at the cost of consumer goods should be abandoned.

We demand the abolition of so-called steered sales in work-places and special allocations of generally unobtainable goods.



Hatton: defamed

"Every workers' struggle takes on a political content"

With President Botha's public slapping down of his 'reformist' foreign minister, and the resignation of parliamentary opposition leader Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, white South African politics is in crisis. These two excerpts from 'Worker Tenant', a bulletin produced by a group in the Cape Action League, discuss (top) the situation of the black working class and (bottom) the currents in white politics.

The full brunt of the capitalist crisis has been felt chiefly by the black proletariat which has been barbarised to an unprecedented extent. High prices, rent hikes, low wages and critical unemployment, are the daily lot of the working class. In response to the threat of starvation, the working class has time and time again taken up the cudgels to stave off ruin and state violence.

Witness the Vaal Triangle stay-away, the growth of NUM and the strikes on the mines, the stay-away in the Eastern Cape, and the bread strike in Durban.

But readiness to do battle is not a static thing. We cannot plan and act as if time is on our side. The social crisis allows no interruptions and does its work thoroughly. A fruit ripens rapidly and if not picked timeously it becomes rotten.

So too the working class. Also, the working class is not a homogeneous entity (like a fruit): it consists of a number of layers that will inevitably come to a political class consciousness at different rhythms and in different ways. All these aspects have to be carefully considered.

The prolonged social crisis has produced a dangerous line of division between the employed and the unemployed.

This is not some inevitable process that will leave the working class hopelessly split into two antagonistic parts. Rather it is a contradictory process that can result in a positive outcome but only if a bold strategy is

carried out by a decisive leadership.

The South African working class, however, presently lacks both such a strategy and a leadership. The elements are all there but only a mighty, conscious effort on the part of all true working class fighters can put them together into a purposeful whole.

Record

The ranks of the unemployed have grown to record levels in the last two years. For example over 60% of the working class in the Eastern Cape is without work. It is no coincidence that the Eastern Cape has lived through two years of sustained unrest in the form of stonings, arson attacks and clashes with the security forces.

Both here and throughout the rest of the country boycotting students, unemployed workers and lumpen proletarians have merged into an angry mass of protesters. It is probably true to say that even before there was any talk of 'ungovernability' the townships had already been rendered ungovernable.

The militancy and impatience of the unemployed workers is understandable. They have been driven to desperation by the continuing prospect of no work, no food and if their actions bring no relief they will believe there is no hope.

Herein lies the danger. If sporadic anarchic actions, interspersed with its endless stream



South African workers are taking on board political issues of speeches, singing and chanting, remain the sole form of resistance, then energies will simply be dissipated, and the gulf between the employed and the unemployed will widen. There can be no substitute for the carefully prepared, purposeful and coordinated organisation of workers.

The militancy and impatience of the unemployed has increasingly seen its obverse side in the caution and hesitancy of the employed.

Here too we are not speaking about some rigid social law. It is a tendency produced spontaneously by the social crisis but that can be transformed by the decisive intervention of a leadership with the correct ideas.

The terrible prospect of joblessness haunts all employed workers and many unionised workers will begin to doubt the ability of their unions to protect their jobs and their living standards in general. In other words the crisis poses a huge challenge

to the progressive trade union movement.

The rise of trade unions in South Africa in the era of crisis capitalism has conflated two stages in the history of workers' struggles. While struggling for trade union rights, won by workers in the hey-day of capitalism, black workers meet up with state repression and the ruthlessness of bosses against even the smallest improvement in workers' lives which immediately poses the question of control.

Political

And so every workers' struggle in South Africa takes on an immediate political content. To this end the Trade Union Federation throws up tremendous possibilities. The achievements of the 'Independent' trade union movement cannot be detracted from. But the growth of these unions with very few exceptions, have begun to taper off as the crisis has bitten

harder.

It is true that NUM has proved to be a recent exception to the number of workers involved in strikes concerned. But statistics should not mislead us.

The truth is that there has been a fall off in the number of strikes since 1984. The meteoric rise of the National Union of Mineworkers is the real reason for the record number of strikers.

This is not to suggest that workers have not repeatedly shown their readiness to challenge the bosses' control of the factory (and in the Durban bread strike to occupy the factory). In fact this enthusiasm has often been held in check by a union leadership bedevilled by the problems of organising under crisis conditions.

At the level of appearances they have a strong case. With so many bosses quite prepared to fire hundreds (often thousands) of workers, strikes or other forms of action have proved to be quite risky.

But the economic perspective of a large section of the progressive trade union movement, together with the growing passivity of workers fearful of losing their jobs, cannot be used as a convincing argument for avoiding the real life-or-death threat to the working class as a whole. This is why worker leaders can no longer speak of 'surviving the crisis' or of 'waiting for the next economic upturn'. To continue with such a perspective will have disastrous consequences for the working class.

All this means that in the townships and on the factory floor the working class must be independently organised as the leading political force against the attacks of the bosses and the state.

Factory floor organisation can no longer be regarded as an alternative to workers' involvement in the political struggle. This is the first conclusion that the new Trade Union Federation must come to.

Valuable time has already been lost as a result of the limited and economic policies adopted by many in the trade union movement. On the other hand the strong shopfloor organisation that has been built up

can, and must, provide the means for a longer and ultimately successful struggle. We must be clear in our minds that the ultimate organisation of the working class is a class.

The leading elements of these same class conscious structures must be actively involved in setting up workers' action committees in the townships to begin to respond to all the manifestations of workers' oppression. Nothing must be spared to transform the 'ungovernable' townships into bastions of workers' democracy.

The impatience of the unemployed and the caution of the employed are opposite sides of the same coin. Both are expressions of the deeply felt yearning for unity in the face of growing misery and disintegration. Both express the need for the working class to feel a sense of confidence in its ability to act as a class.

Impatience

On the other hand a real danger exists that impatience will turn to demoralisation and caution will turn to indifference and resignation. This demands that worker leaders respond promptly and decisively.

The call for a Workers' United Front is not based on some abstract political scheme — on the contrary its necessity lies in the real living conditions of its present existence. Sectarian political interests cannot stand in the way of preparation for united action. The basis of such actions must be strictly objective, which means that all workers' organisations and action committees must commit themselves to complete unity in action.

There must be no obligation for participants to share the same stages, pamphlets or banners. Complete independence of propaganda must be guaranteed. This is the meaning of the United Front motto: March separately and strike together.

Such a defensive class battle will pave the way for the complete democratisation of a South African society, free at last from all forms of political and economic oppression.

Anatomy of the Botha clique

The Botha regime is the new model of the capitalist state. The Botha clique is the South African version of Bonapartism called up by finance capital to respond to the present crisis in South Africa.

Malan

And its terms of reference are to provide strong government (and here we should note the rise of Magnus Malan as part of the Botha clique), to transform South Africa from Old Style Apartheid, in which the white middle class and the white working class were main allies of the ruling class, to the New Apartheid in which a section of the black middle class is to be found to assist in the oppression of the black working class.

The problem is that events have overtaken the P.W. Botha regime. The economic crisis and the resultant deepening of class conflict has made it impossible for their original purpose of the

New Deal scheme to be successfully pursued.

The empty coffers of the State have made it almost impossible to "buy off" a sufficiently large section of the black petit-bourgeoisie so as to ensure at least some credibility for the tricameral parliament. Equally damning has been the complete rejection by the vast majority of blacks of the puppet leaders — community councillors, Bantustan leaders and members of the tricameral parliament.

Money

Botha is left tied up in all kinds of contradictions, unable to please any section of the population. To put it simply he has run out of time and money. PW's plans of a smooth programme of reform are in complete disarray.

The great early victories of our Bonaparte — the alliance with big business, the overwhelming yes vote in the refer-

endum, imperialist support (constructive engagement, the 1984 visit to Europe), the Nkomati Accord — have all been undone.

Blunders

Big business now obviously has its own ideas; many sections of the white electorate have shifted their support from the Nationalist Party, either to the right or the left. An even larger group is probably quite uncertain about its allegiances, suffering increasingly from the restlessness and insecurity that social crisis precipitates. The lack of confidence in the Botha clique can only increase as it blunders its way deeper into an impasse.

The declaration of the State of Emergency was a hopeless attempt to gain some time; time to effect the equally hopeless task of finding acceptable black leaders who would agree to the implementation of reform apar-

theid and thereby the preservation of exploitation in South Africa. The failure to quell the rising tide of black youth and workers is PW's greatest headache.

Many collaborators have lost their lives in the popular campaign while others have resigned their political posts. Furthermore, for as long as the volatile situation continues in the townships, PW cannot even think of negotiating with any of the more popular black organisations.

Fascism

If conditions continue to degenerate and the National Convention option becomes too risky for PW, then the next ace up the sleeve of the ruling class is the fascism of Terre-Blanche and the AWB. The murder of Goniwe and his comrades, and the arson attacks on the offices of workers and populist organisations, are growing signs in this direction.

Hitting the fan

By Les Hearn

In attempts to protect the Strategic Defence Initiative (Star Wars) budget from Congress cuts, the Raygun government has been putting on some showy demonstrations of Star Wars weapons. However, according to some US defence experts, these amount to very little.

One test involved a chemical laser, called MIRACL. As I wrote some weeks back, laser space weapons require an enormous power source (in this case, a vigorous chemical reaction) and large perfect focussing mirrors in order that a beam of heat, light or x-rays hit and damage its target which may be thousands of kilometres away.

In MIRACL's test, which was televised, part of an obsolete Titan missile was destroyed.

However, MIRACL used large water-cooled, delicately positioned and immobile mirrors. These could never be put in space.

Furthermore, MIRACL was only a kilometre from its target.

Finally, the target was destroyed not by the beam but by a sort of springloaded gadget triggered by the beam.

Not very impressive!

The much-vaunted X-ray laser was also supposed to have been successfully tested in an underground nuclear explosion. However, *Science* reported that the monitoring instruments had been wrongly calibrated (i.e. they made inaccurate measurements of the laser's power) and that much of the evidence had been destroyed in the blast.

Closer to Earth, yet another cruise missile (the fifteenth!) has malfunctioned during a test.

In action, cruise missiles would be required to fly thousands of kilometres, their computers navigating by identifying landmarks which quite likely would be obscured by snow.

This missile was therefore being tested in the far north of Canada (which looks quite similar to Russia).

It was programme to fly 1600 kilometres from its launch over the Beaufort Sea in the Arctic and to land by parachute at the Cold Lake Weapons Range.

It was off course and too low when spotted by the inhabitants



Science

of Wandering Valley, Alberta, but reached the weapons range.

Here, it was supposed to do two wide loops to burn excess fuel before parachuting down. Instead, it plunged to ground in an almost inaccessible area. Two planes practising missile interception failed to even see it.

Four members of Greenpeace who protested at the entrance to Cold Lake Weapons Range were arrested for obstruction (in the middle of nowhere!).

Along similar lines, the failure of an expensive defence project lies behind the suspension of NASA head James Beggs (Borrowers and Steals) in December.

He is charged with a massive fraud of the US government while working on the Sgy. York anti-aircraft gun. Throughout its ten years, \$1.8 billion development, the Sgt. York remained incapable of hitting a helicopter, although in one notable near-success it homed in on a fan in a portable toilet. At least it had the right idea!

I don't know if it managed to hit the fan but everything else seems to have!

It was five years ago this month that the SO science column sprang into existence. Incredibly, SO is still the only left newspaper to carry a regular science column, covering health and environmental issues as well. I think that deserves some sort of reward, so gifts of whatever size to your SO seller or to SO Science Column Happy Birthday Fund, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Socialism on Sunday

Jim Denham reports on Neil Kinnock's and Brian Walden's effort to keep Sunday special

"LABOUR'S electoral prospects are brighter than for many months", Brian Walden former Labour MP for Birmingham All Saints, sagely informed viewers of last Sunday's Weekend World.

The government has recently suffered a series of body blows - the Westland fiasco, the BL U-turn, and the sharp rise in unemployment have all set the government reeling (or 'wheeling' even). But Labour is not home and dry.

Is the Party still committed to 'traditional socialism', or can it improve its image to appeal to the new middle class who, as we all know, now hold the key to electoral success?

One man above all others should know the answers to all these questions. Guess who he is.

Well, there is a familiar-looking figure sitting facing the Bauhaus chair at the other end of the studio. Yes folks, no-one is better placed to provide the answers than Neil Kinnock!

Just think, some people are foolish enough not to watch television at 12 noon on Sundays. They do other things, like stay in bed or head off to the pub.

However, they'd learn a lot from watching Weekend World. Already I've learned that the government has been having a rough time lately, Labour doesn't know where it's going, white collar workers are important, and Neil Kinnock is leader of the Labour Party.

During the commercial break, Neil had presumably pulled his chair up to where Brian was sitting and the show got down to business, eyeball to eyeball. Brian said he wasn't going to ask Neil about issues like Militant, Wapping, Westland, or details of Labour policy.

No. Weekend World viewers are interested in much more profound questions. What sort of government does Neil want to form? What sort of society does he want to create? What is his vision of the future?

Neil had recently made a speech to the Fabian Society and had astonished Brian by talking favourably about individual liberties. Didn't this mean Labour was giving up on its traditional commitment to equality, which must as we all know mean limiting individual freedom on occasion?

Neil answered no. To be precise, he said: "Equality of opportunity must inform all our policies. This does not mean that everyone can be made equal

or an arithmetic parity can be imposed.

"Equality of opportunity does not necessarily mean equality of outcome. These ideas - ideas of fairness, efficiency and decency - need not contradict the principle of individual freedom.

"In fact they enhance that principle and can make it a reality for many people who do not presently enjoy real individual freedom".

Brian obviously liked what he heard. "You're vevy, vevy clear on that: you didn't list equality of outcome. Your society would still allow a great deal of diversity".

Neil answered yes.

Just in case anyone should think Brian was giving Neil an easy ride so far, he suddenly demonstrated that the cosy chatter until now had just been a ruse to lull our Leader into a false sense of security.

Without warning Brian launched into a bold and altogether unexpected line of attack. "So, Neil, you no longer stand by that old communist slogan: For each according to his, er..."

Neil came to Brian's rescue. "You mean 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'? Actually, that's not a bad rough guide and there are people in the Conservative Party who'd agree with that. It just means fairness".

Brian was by now ecstatic. "We're getting on swimmingly. We've cleared up lots of doubts viewers have!"

But here the discussion really got down to the nitty gritty and covered all sorts of previously uncharted terrain.

Contradiction

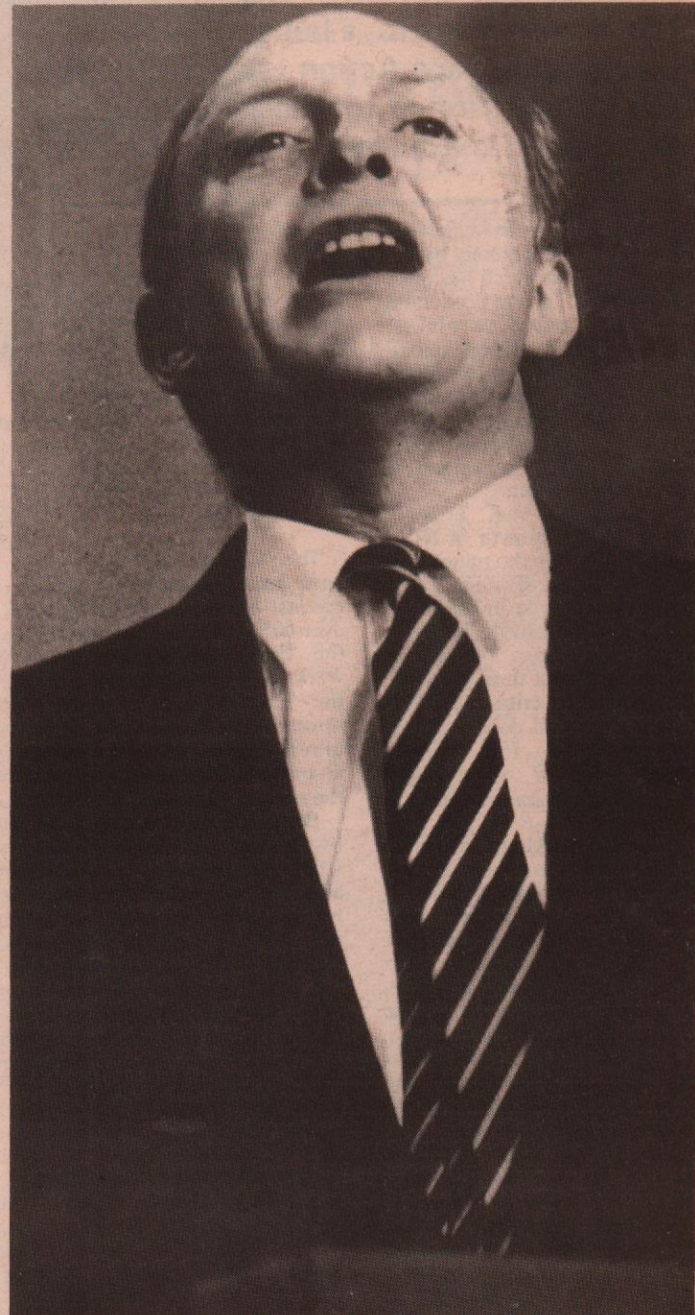
Brian asked Neil if there was a contradiction between an emphasis on production and 'old-fashioned socialist values' which emphasise redistribution.

Neil insisted that there need be no contradiction. Labour favoured improved technology and more investment. It could even learn a thing or two from the Japanese. We must rebuild our productive base and redistribution of wealth can play a supportive role in this.

"Followed by income tax"? asked Brian, with just a hint of deep personal concern.

Neil assured him that only the top 5% income bracket had anything to fear on this score. And they are all so rich that they won't notice a bit of extra taxation anyway. Certainly people like Brian would be OK.

Brian had one last remaining worry. "Some people might say: We know Kinnock. He's a left-wing socialist. This is all vevy weasonable, but once he's in power he'll change his tune. What we'll get is wed ware socialism".



Kinnock: 'Equality? No, just a fair chance in the market place'.

"Then they'd be daft", replied Neil. "They should take more water with it".

Brian seemed satisfied with this. And I was certainly convinced.

Brian showed he knows a bit about history by talking about certain similarities between Neil and Franklin Roosevelt. Our Leader looked well pleased with the comparison. "But Franklin D was no socialist", objected Brian.

"Yes, but the basic common sense of what he said and his basic values would be shared by socialists. Agreeing to a New Deal is only part of it. What makes democratic socialism distinctive is..."

Wegwetable

"Wegwettably, Mr Kinnock, I must stop you there", said Brian, and he looked as though he did regret it. The two of them could have chatted away all afternoon quite happily. Brian might even have been persuaded to re-join the Labour Party and play a real part in implementing Neil's New Deal.

great thinkers of our time discussing such profound issues. Thank God they didn't discuss Militant, Wapping, or even Westland. And they didn't get bogged down in too much detail about how unemployment would be dealt with, or whether or not privatised services would be renationalised, or whether a deal would be done with the Alliance, or what socialism is.

Our old Leon might have said, 'Between the minimum and the maximum programme no bridge existed. And indeed social democracy has no need of such a bridge since the word socialism is only used for holiday speechifying'.

I think next Sunday I'll stay in bed, or go down the pub. Happily Weekend World finishes at 1pm, so there was still time to get there and ponder the significance of what I had just heard.

How I pitied the poor ignorant rabble who had not bothered to stay in and listen to Brian and Neil.

20p Where we stand

Just reprinted: Socialist Organiser's 'Where We Stand'. 20p plus postage from 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

WORKERS' LIBERTY

Under whose flag?

Trotskyists today: working-class socialism or Third World nationalism?

60p

'Under Whose Flag?': class politics or bloc politics? 60p plus postage from 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY

Terror tactics will rebound

There is not a lot to report on from my pit - except to say that another warning letter has been sent to a rank and file miner for daring to offer a leaflet for recruiting members to the NUM.

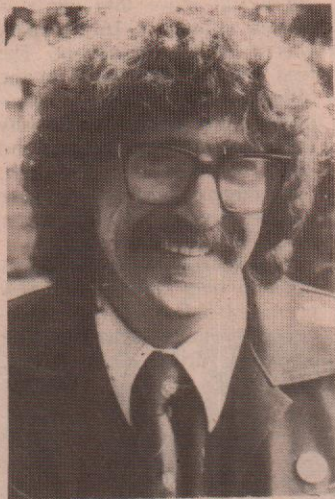
They put a call through to him to get out of the pit as quickly as possible and go and see the administration officer. When someone gets a call like that down the pit the first thing they think of is that something has happened to the wife or the kids. So that guy was really sweating.

Threats

When he did get to see the administration officer it was a warning letter with a threat of dismissal.

It seems to me that management is now resorting to terror tactics, trying to put the frighteners on men, but it is going to rebound on them.

Every time management try and do something like that they do it all wrong and they go in-feet first and it is



Paul Whetton is the secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

another indication that they are running scared about the success we are having at the pit.

I hear now that the UDM may take the NCB to court because it is only paying the

5.9% pay offer they negotiated to UDM members in Notts and not to UDM members in other counties where the NUM is in the majority.

We in Notts NUM got a pay rise we didn't want.

Choices

But it seems to me that the UDM, which is not a trade union but a bosses' union, has only two choices. It can either go along with what the NCB wants, or, because it can't go to its members, it can go to the law.

The UDM doesn't make any decisions. What happens is that lawyers who sit in with them make the decisions and the UDM responds to what the lawyers say. That is not the way for any organisation should operate, particularly one that purports to be a trade union.

I think that the number of COSA members they are claiming is a gross exaggeration

and in the long term I don't think they will much success amongst that section of the union.

Now they see that they are not going to make the headway that they thought they could they are starting to panic.

I think the Labour Party leadership's poor showing in opinion polls when compared with individuals like David Owen shows that they are in something of a vacuum. They are certainly out of touch with the rank and file.

Neil Kinnock's handling of the Westlands debate in the Commons obviously reflected very badly on him. But I think he is letting the middle ground be taken away from Labour.

The Labour leadership should be standing up and giving firm commitments. They will still have difficulty convincing people who they have let down so many times in the past. They'll have to do something like Liverpool.

After all, like Militant or hate them, they did say they were going to do something and when they were elected to office they were seen to be doing it. That attracted support. That's the way the Labour leaders should proceed.

If the Labour Party were to fight on socialist policies and when in power show themselves determined to carry out what they promised then the Tories would become an irrelevance, and it would be a fight between Labour and the SDP.

Mistake

The Tories would go the way of the dinosaur and the dodo.

But the Labour leaders aren't doing that. They seem to be more concerned with opinion polls and popularity than a commitment to a Labour government pledged to socialist policies. And I think that is a fundamental mistake they are making.

supporters have refused to endorse the record of Liverpool Council leadership, in particular over the redundancy notices. Here is their method of achieving socialism in microcosm: its lessons, the dangers of top-down socialism, must be argued out.

In general the size of conferences has been similar to last year, the mood dull; there is an increase in the handful of LCC-type branches.

With the departure of 'International' from Socialist Action, the YS opposition has seen a realignment: an alliance of Socialist Organiser youth, a number of independent YS members and 'International' in 'Youth Fightback', while Socialist Action youth produce 'Youth Action'.

Unfettered by International's 'orthodoxy', Youth Action are leaving reality and the working class behind. Some are looking into the applicability of the 'workers' and farmers' government' as a slogan in Britain! A turn to the British peasantry?!

Divisions

There are divisions among the Youth Action comrades. Some believe it is not the business of revolutionaries to give workers a lead in economic struggles...It was pointed out their paper contained the slogan 'Picket Wapping'. 'Well, personally I think that's wrong...'

Divisions are strong on South Africa: Even the Militant slogan of a 'mass ANC with socialist policies' seems preferable to abject tailing of the ANC and dressing up Stalinist programme in Trotskyist, to the exclusion of others fighting apartheid. Some Youth Action comrades even justify the expulsion of Militant supporters from the ANC. The degeneration continues.

Youth Fightback held a number of meetings on South Africa, building the YS, and with Kingsley Abrams, Black Sections Candidate for the NEC position.

Strike to stop lump

130 bricklayers and labourers are on strike at Laings London Bridge City site, which includes office blocks, luxury flats and a private hospital.

The strikers, members of both the TGWU and UCATT, are demanding that the contract of 95 workers who have been laid off be extended into the next phase of work at the site, lasting up to six years.

They also want an end to subcontracting and the lump.

There is a lot at stake in this dispute - London Bridge City is the only major Laings site in the country that is unionised and management are desperate to halt the spread of union organisation throughout the company.

So maximum physical support is needed for the picket and financial support for the strikers.

BL-GM workers' link-up needed

The government's plans to sell off Austin Rover and Ford were hastily withdrawn by an embarrassed Industry Secretary Paul Channon in the Commons last Thursday.

But plans to hive off Leyland Trucks and Land Rover to General Motors are still going ahead, as are talks with Metro Cammell Laird over the bus division.

Labour front bench Industry spokesman John Smith, dissident Tories like Edward Heath and the opportunist Beaumont-Dark, and senior union officials have all denounced the government's plans in identical terms: the government is unpatriotic, British jobs will go first, profits will be creamed off by the Americans, and Britain will be left without its own vehicle manufacturing industry.

Such arguments might make some sense to patriotic Tories but workers should have nothing to do with them.

Under the patriotic British management of Michael Edwardes and his henchmen, tens of thousands of BL jobs have been lost, massive speed-up imposed, trade union organisation decimated, dozens of union activists victimised, and wage levels slashed.

BL workers need to oppose the sell-off but on a quite different basis from the Little Englanders.

Given that there is a 40% over-capacity in truck manufacturing capacity worldwide, workers at GM Bedford plants are just as much at risk as Leyland workers - more so even, because GM has run down its British truck operation to the point where it is considerably smaller and less viable than BL's.

Links should be immediately established between the unions in BL and GM to sort out a strategy to defend all

motor industry jobs. Workers must be prepared to occupy any* threatened plant and Labour must give a pledge to re-nationalise BL, take over Ford UK and Vauxhall /Bedford to form an integrated national motor corporation under workers' control.

S African unionist to tour

Dear Brother/Sister,

As the struggle in South Africa continues, our branch executives have been discussing how to raise solidarity and support among trade unionists in this country.

The recent formation of the 500,000-strong Congress of South African Trade Unionists (COSATU) demonstrates the strength and importance of the black trade union movement in South Africa in this struggle.

Last December the branch executive of Camden NALGO and the CPSA (Inner London DHSS) organised a successful nationwide speaking tour for Maxwell Xulu, a Metal and Allied Workers Union shop steward, who is now treasurer of COSATU. We felt that one of the most effective ways of raising solidarity was for a black South African trade unionist to address British workers directly.

During his tour Maxwell spoke to over 50 trade union branches and over £6000 was raised.

We have decided to try to organise another speaking tour (this time in conjunction with the Guardian SOGAT 82 clerical chapel) and have approached MAWU

At the time of the last tour, MAWU members were involved in a bitter recognition dispute with BTR.

This battle with the subsidiary of a major British multinational is continuing, and MAWU is now also involved in a dispute with a majority of the engineering employers in the Transvaal, many of them owned by British companies.

An executive meeting of MAWU has responded positively to our request for a speaker for such a tour, but at present are unable to confirm the exact dates. However, we expect the four week tour to occur sometime in February/March. We will be arranging for the MAWU speaker to visit major sectors in this period. There is no itinerary as yet. If you have a meeting of your branch, JSSC, trades council, etc., to which you would like to invite the MAWU speaker, or wish to arrange a meeting during this period, we will do our best to fit it in. We are also asking you to sponsor the tour to cover the cost of air fares and other expenses.

We hope to make this tour as successful as the last. Our trade union bodies have already sponsored the tour. Please raise the issue in your branch/stewards' committee as soon as possible.

If your branch is able to sponsor this initiative, please send letters of sponsorship to Steve Garner, International Relations Officer, Camden NALGO, donations made out to SATU Solidarity Fund, and to book the MAWU speaker for a meeting of your trade union body, please phone Julian Bild, (Camden NALGO, 01-278 4444 x2281 (work) or 01-387 4337 (home).

Victory over minibuses

Bus workers returned to work this week in York, Malton, and Harrogate, claiming victory after a five-day strike over the introduction of mini-bus services.

The dispute stemmed from the West Yorkshire Road Car Company's decision to employ mini-bus drivers on new routes at 30% lower rates of pay than regular drivers, and with considerably worse working conditions regarding hours and overtime rates.

The TGWU demanded that all new employees should be employed on existing rates and conditions. When management tried starting to train

the new drivers at the York depot without further consultation, the bus workers went on strike throughout the region.

After five days with the strike 100% solid, management conceded the issue of consultation, and the strikers returned to work.

It is unclear whether management are offering anything new, as it is extremely likely that the bus workers, even if they win this dispute, will have to fight again against the effects of the Transport Act which is bringing in bus deregulation.

Strikers at the York depot were unanimous in seeing this attempt to break up negotiated wages and conditions as a softening up exercise, in preparation for the introduction of the Transport Act.

Left realigns in Labour youth

The annual series of LPYS Regional Conferences got under way recently with London Region, a conference enlivened by the appearance of the Socialist Workers' Party.

They were confused by the apparent need for Militant supporters to discuss politics prior to leaving Labour. To add insult to injury they were refused admittance by Regional Youth Committee members - the very Militant supporters whom they were proposing unity to.

We encouraged them anyway, with cries of 'Go on, recruit them!'

Aside from the sideshows, the conferences' politics have been mostly dull - the Militant programme only changes with inflation. But some relatively new issues arouse interest: the print; the latest round of the witch-hunt; Liverpool; South Africa, and in the Southern Region, the Channel Tunnel.

Various Regional Youth Committees have introduced emergency statements on the print. We have argued the current inadvisability of the expulsion of

the EETPU and, predictably, have been voted down.

Socialist Action and International supporters have voted a number of ways on the issue in colourful displays of uncertainty.

High on our priority list must be the beginning of serious discussions on tactics to fight Kinnock's purge. Militant, learning nothing from the bungled right-wing job of 1983, are in buoyant mood: "we'll grow, and if they witch-hunt us the publicity means we'll grow faster". They will use the courts rather than serious labour movement organisation to resist expulsions and disbandments.

The impression is they have no feel for the danger in front of them, not a care in the world.

In Brighton a motion from the right wing opposing the Channel because of threats to 'national security' was met by Militant with the line 'Channel Tunnel? Only under socialism'. 'International' won't have a tunnel either. Perhaps they would like to ban the telephone, too, or the wheel?

The level of Militant's sectarianism can be measured by London Region conference's inability to acknowledge the existence of Lambeth council in any of the motions on Liverpool and local government. So far Militant have had an easy ride on the record of 'Municipal Marxism'. There are two reasons: the numerical weakness of opposition and the unwillingness of most to take Militant on over anything other than the rights of specially oppressed groups to autonomy. In many YS branches Militant

Get organised

Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance - groups are established in most large towns. We ask £5 a month minimum (£1 unwaged) contribution from supporters.

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Socialist Organiser

As the oil bosses fall out WILL OPEC SPLIT?

By Clive
Bradley

Is the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on its last legs? Maybe. The days of huge oil price increases, in 1973-4 and again in 1979, are past. The price of oil is plummeting, and OPEC is falling apart in the scramble to keep up profits.

At its height, the 'spot' price of oil reached nearly \$40 a barrel but it has now fallen below \$20 and looks likely to fall below \$15.

Western capitalism is less happy with the prospect of cheap oil than might be expected from its unhappiness at the four-fold increase in the price of oil in 1973-4 — when Arab oil producers unilaterally raised their prices to put pressure on Western governments during and shortly after the Arab-Israeli war.

Then the Arabs and OPEC were given the blame for the economic recession and inflation that followed. But collapsing oil prices can disrupt capitalism as much as soaring ones.

Since 1974 there has been a huge expansion in money-lending by private banks to Third World governments. Oil producers losing revenue from falling oil prices are less able to pay back their debts.

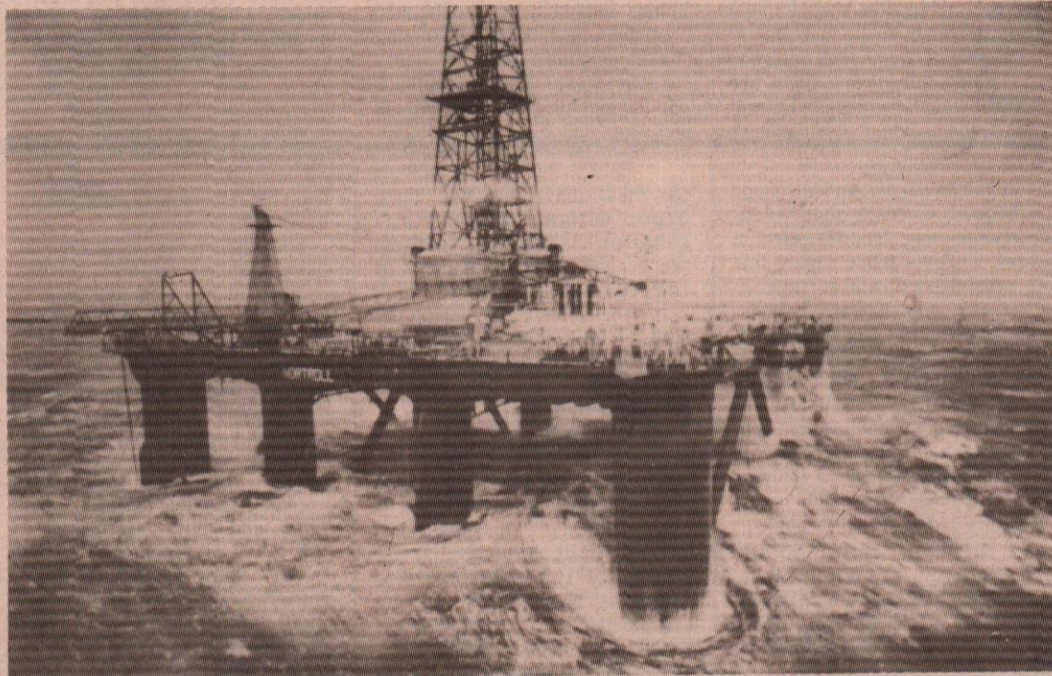
Mexico, for example (a non-OPEC country, but a major oil producer), owes \$93 billion mainly to US banks. With cheaper oil, Mexico becomes unable to service its debt.

Some other major debtors, like Brazil (the Third World's largest, owing over \$100 billion) are oil importers, and so benefit from lower oil prices. But an easing of Brazil's debt will not improve Mexico's creditworthiness. Experts calculate that overall Third World debt will continue to increase.

Further, although the price of oil is falling in dollar terms, in European currencies prices are 35% higher than in 1980. So it is not 'cheaper oil' in real terms for much of the advanced capitalist world.

This offsets the decline in purchasing power for oil-based economies. OPEC has increased trade with most of its trading partners.

But crisis for the oil producers like Saudi Arabia that are not in hock to the banks is not good news for Western capitalist economies anyway. The imperialist powers need stable allies — in the Gulf region for



Britain's North Sea oil. Whose bonanza?

example. And they have ploughed investments into those economies that they don't want to see sink.

In the '70s OPEC was watched — nervously in the industrial capitalist centres, and enthusiastically in many less developed countries — as the wave of the future. Other raw material producers hoped they could copy its success as a 'producer cartel'.

OPEC was formed in 1960 by oil-dependent states anxious to improve their bargaining position with the huge oil multinationals. The 'seven sisters' — Exxon, Shell, BP, Standard Oil Californian, Mobil, Gulf and Texaco — had been milking huge profits out of their Third World oil fields, and the local ruling classes wanted a bigger slice of the cake.

Slice

It was not until 1973/74 that OPEC was in a strong enough position to cut itself a bigger slice. Around that time, the oil industry underwent a significant structural change.

Nationalisation — complete or partial — accompanied price rises, so that the OPEC countries creamed off a big part of the financial surpluses for themselves. Oil states rapidly accumulated huge revenues from highly-priced oil production.

The monopolies transferred much of their own profit-making 'downstream' — into refining and marketing — and diversified into other areas of energy production to keep profits high.

Even as the 'seven sisters' suffered a big decline in control of production outside of the industrial capitalist West, their

profits rose.

In 1983, six of the seven were among the top US firms in terms of assets.

The five US majors accounted for one seventh of all profits by the 'Fortune 500' US firms in 1982 — after a bad year for profits. It was about the same percentage as in 1972.

The big companies still have rights to buy and market oil even from countries where production has been nationalised.

Massive

Within oil producing countries, the effects of the oil boom were significant — in some cases massive.

Economies with huge oil surpluses, like Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, expanded enormously. Although much of the new investment was in services or even in wasteful prestige projects, big economic changes undoubtedly took place.

There were improvements in the material life of millions of people: life expectancy in Saudi Arabia rose from 45 in 1975 to 55 in 1981.

Booms in construction absorbed millions of new workers; urbanisation increased; and so did the size of the working class. These economic changes spilled over into neighbouring countries like Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt.

Of course, the chief beneficiaries were the vastly enriched capitalist class. A commercial bourgeoisie with great personal fortunes flourished alongside a semi-feudal, 'bourgeoisified' ruling class. Poorer Third World economies became subordinate to their 'nouveau riche' neighbours.

Thus the oil bonanza proved

partly responsible for big social upheavals in the late 1970s in the Middle East. Existing social and economic tensions were magnified. But conflict was diverted into non-class-based ideological channels, most dramatically in Iran. The Iranian revolution itself led to more price increases in 1979.

OPEC did not cause the recession of the 1970s: the tendencies towards crisis were well developed before the price rises. And now OPEC is itself suffering from the recession.

Shrinking economies need less oil. A huge glut of oil on the world market lies behind the collapse of oil prices now.

Only in relatively favourable circumstances was the OPEC cartel able to control the whole huge world market in oil. Capitalists have used many means to undercut that control — energy saving, shifts to alternative fuels, development of non-OPEC oilfields. Between 1976 and 1986 OPEC's share of the capitalist world oil market fell from 67% to about 34%.

And so the OPEC members have fallen out. The unity of the 1970s has collapsed as member states are going in for cut-throat competition. OPEC may well simply cease to exist.

Underdog

Socialists should shed no tears. OPEC may have seemed to many radicals and Third World nationalists to have been the underdog a decade ago. It was not and is not.

It is a capitalist cartel whose doom may give some opening to workers' movements long since oppressed and exploited by the ruling classes that clubbed together to found it.

Fund

Raffle draw next week

Next week we announce the winners in our raffle. So send your ticket stubs in now!

The draw is on Tuesday 18 February. To take account of possible delays in the post, you should send stubs off by Saturday 15th, first class mail.

Our prediction last week that we would move into our new offices around 15-16 February was a bit too optimistic. The first stage of the work on the offices is well on the way to completion, but more realistically the move will be on the weekend 22-23 February or 1-2 March. That means Socialist Organiser will be skipping an issue either on 27 February or on 6 March.

Thanks this week for donations to help finance the new premises to: Durham (raffle tickets) £4; Glasgow readers £10; Sheffield drinks levy £3.14, readers £3.95; Ian Hollings-

worth £6 and £4 for raffle tickets; Stoke North (raffle tickets) £40; Jonny Nevill £2; York raffle tickets, 40p; East London readers 85p and raffle tickets £4.20; North London readers £6.26, raffle tickets £6; Mike Grayson £10; Pete Gilman £2; South London readers £13, Chris Bright £10, Mark Osborn £9.

That puts one other local group — South London — above 100% of its fund target; but otherwise a thin week! Send donations and raffle ticket stubs to SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Local group	Target	So far	Per cent
North London	1600	1030.59	64%
Nottingham	1000	898.53	90%
South London	800	807.15	101%
Manchester	1000	544.45	54%
East London	760	508.55	67%
Merseyside	500	475.50	95%
Cardiff	600	426.50	71%
Glasgow/Edinburgh	560	336.00	60%
Durham/North East	200	266.80	133%
West London	500	200.00	40%
York/Harrogate	300	196.30	65%
Sheffield	400	181.91	45%
Coventry	350	175.00	50%
Stoke North	200	172.75	86%
Basingstoke	560	123.47	22%
Stoke South	200	90.00	45%
Birmingham	100	64.00	64%
Colchester	100	47.80	48%
Aberdeen	20	46.00	230%
Canterbury	90	32.00	36%
Southampton	60	6.00	10%
Leeds	60		
Oxford	40		
Central/general	5000	1015.50	20%
Total	15000	7644.28	51%

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.

