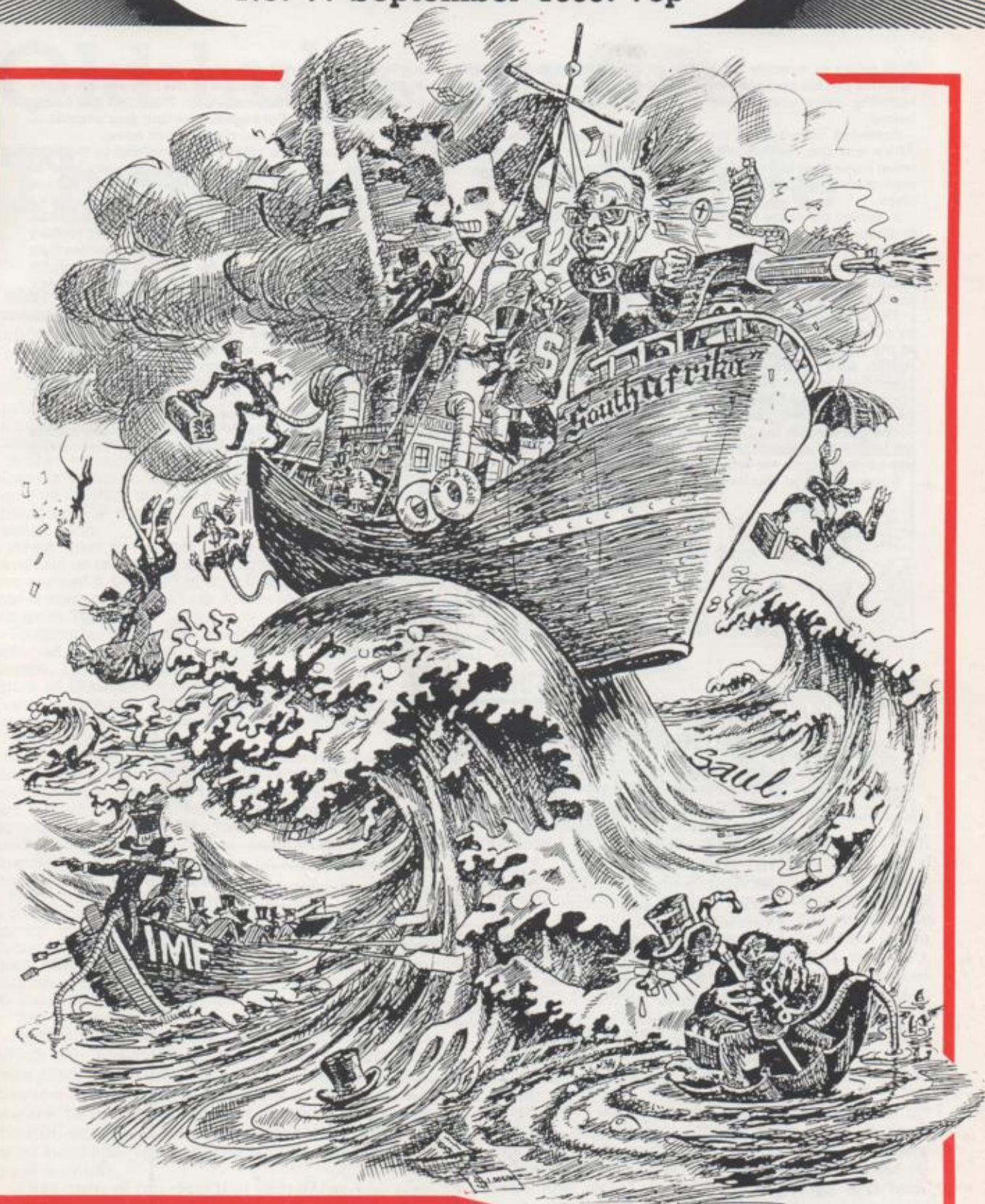


SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT

No. 7. September 1985. 70p



Bumper 36-page issue!

About Socialist Viewpoint

OUR return to monthly production of *Socialist Viewpoint* is heralded by this bumper 36-page Labour Conference issue, featuring more contributors and more topics than ever before.

Extended coverage of the developing struggle in South Africa and the various battles facing the labour and trade union movement at home is coupled with the start of an informative historical series on Ireland and the British working class.

In setting the scene for this year's Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth, we cast a critical eye over the evolving policies of the Kinnock leadership — with a detailed critique of the new "draft" policy for the motor industry which so clearly illustrates the leadership's long-term commitment to capitalism.

The developments within the peace movement are covered by a report on this year's END convention, and a closer look at the opposition to nuclear tests and dumping in the South Pacific. Also on the international level, we look at Reagan's war effort in Central America, and the looming debt crisis along with Fidel Castro's latest prescriptions for the Latin American capitalist class.

There is debate, too, with an article by Tony Greenstein of the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine arguing against any backsliding by the left in the struggle against Zionism.

Squeezed out of this issue by lack of space, but promised

for next month is a more detailed look at the developing struggles in Latin America; and a review of the new volume of the history of the British Communist Party. There will also be extended coverage of the fight against racism, plus analysis of the Labour Conference — and much, much more!

Socialist Viewpoint is a magazine committed to the fight for a principled, class struggle programme at every level of the workers' movement in Britain and internationally. We see the fight for Trotskyist politics taking shape not through introspective sectarian debates in small groups of would-be gurus, nor as simply trailing behind this or that "Left" talking trade union or Labour Party dignitary — but as a patient fight for the independent interests of the working class, and for demands and action which express those interests, in every arena of the class struggle.

With all too little clarity on offer from the various dogmatic left groupings in Britain, we believe that it is possible and necessary to combine debate with policy and programme. Our columns are open for discussion on the issues raised. We urge those with differing assessments to take part in an exchange of views.

For our part, obviously, we hope that the positions we put forward and discussion on them will persuade many readers to become *Socialist Viewpoint* supporters in the coming months.

No. 7. September 1985.

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Old hulks survive Thatcher's reshuffle

"BEST-seller for Maggie" roared the headlines greeting the appointment of millionaire trash-fiction author Jeffrey Archer as Vice-Chair of the Tory Party.

It seemed to make good sense: strengthening the millionaires' representation in the Tory leadership, upstaging the events at the TUC, and underlining the fact that Tory election success depends above all on cash, media connections and fiction.

Archer himself has a suitably murky past of failed business ventures, and a seedy reputation for making personal profits out of charity fund-raising, which should endear him to Thatcher's "rob the starving" cabinet gang.

Ringo Starr is reported in the *London Standard* to have said on one occasion that Archer could "bottle my pee and sell it for £5"; in the coming General Election that is more or less the task Archer must undertake for Margaret Thatcher.

Thatcher's "new look" cabinet is certainly no best seller: all the most unpopular old hulks are still there — Joseph, Lawson, Fowler, Heseltine — with the grisly figure of Norman Tebbit, his post-Brighton wires and rivets apparently working loose, elevated to even greater prominence in the aftermath of the outbreak of "Parkinson's disease".

It is unlikely that Archer's slender literary gifts will be able to build these all-too-unpleasant characters into anything more attractive than nonentities. He will not find it much easier with the newly appointed clean-cut go-getting "jobs boys", Kenneth "Slasher" Clarke and Lord Young, whose job as straight men for the unemployment statistics will be no laughing matter — least of all for young people.

Perhaps the grimmest news for the labour movement is that Leon "Orgreave" Brittan has been found insufficiently dynamic as a hang-'em flog-'em Home Secretary, and replaced by the freshly-blooded Douglas Hurd, hot-foot from the occupied six counties. This can only mean that Thatcher, seeing the writing on the wall for the economy, is preparing a major fall-back option of a "law and order" election.

Neither the cabinet reshuffle — after months in which the Tories have trailed embarrassingly in third place in the opinion polls, lost the Brecon by-election and staggered from one public relations blunder to the next (not least Brittan's gaffe over the BBC and Ireland) — nor the essential continuity of hard-line Thatcherism should come as any great surprise.

It has been all too clear that *something* new was needed to win the next election, whenever that may be: but that whatever else is changed, Thatcher's basic line will remain intact until she is



deposed from within, dies, or is ousted from office.

The willingness of the government to soldier through the storm of abuse over top people's pay rises, and publicly to propose the wholesale demolition of the welfare state as discussed in the Fowler review, should prove beyond anyone's doubt that Thatcher will make no retreats or concessions on policy: that is why now she is casting round for novellists to dress up her politics and a few reshuffled smoothies to put a new face to the old lies.

For the millions on the dole or facing cuts in state benefits and social security, for the thousands on housing lists, the 700,000 on hospital waiting lists, the parents without hope and the youth with no future; for working class women and for black communities under racist attack, the latest comings and goings and rearrangements of Thatcher's squalid gang of millionaires is little more than an irritating sideshow.



Revolutionary slogans at a mass funeral.

Black masses defy Botha's emergency

By HARRY SLOAN

PRESIDENT Botha's July 20 decision to impose a State of Emergency on 36 key cities and towns in South Africa was an unmistakable sign of weakness and defeat from the apartheid regime.

For nine months Botha had exercised a degree of relative restraint in the state repression of a rising tide of militant black struggle on the streets. Beatings, shootings and the routine intimidation meted out by the regime had only on one occasion lurched out of control into mass slaughter, on the March 21 anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre: and Botha had on that occasion felt obliged to go through the motions of a rigged "inquiry".

Events since the State of Emergency confirm that Botha's initial reluctance to escalate the conflict arose not from any moral scruple or liberal inclination, but from economic and political calculation.

- The Rand has since dropped to a historic low against the dollar, forcing the country's Reserve Bank governor, Gerhardus du Kock, into a futile cap-in-hand trek around Western banks in search of loans, a suspension of dealings in foreign exchange and the stockmarket, and now 3-month suspension of repayments on South Africa's payments on its £12m foreign debt.

- Four major business organisations and the giant Anglo American corporation have publicly called on Botha to negotiate with black leaders "including those in jail", sounding the alarm over the growing boycott by the black population of white-owned shops and businesses.

- Further evidence of the split between Botha and his former allies in the business community has come in the announcement that two big South African firms are to hold talks in Zambia with the banned African National Congress.

- Opposition white politicians

arguing for concessions to the blacks have highlighted the disastrous flight of capital from South Africa and the departure of increasing numbers of white families who see the writing on the wall.

- And, following the decision of the French government to halt all investment in South Africa, and the looming uncertainty over the profits to be made amid the riots and disturbances, the regime is finding itself more isolated than ever on the international stage. Botha is forced to rely on backing from Thatcher, Reagan and West Germany's Helmut Kohl. But that support is taking an ever lower profile as anti-apartheid campaigns exploit the daily newsreel coverage of brutal repression in the townships. Reagan must face a decision soon on whether to risk a veto on the latest Congress call for sanctions — and face the prospect that his veto might be overturned.

In exchange for all of these disadvantages from an openly crisis-torn



Armed police raid black township.

situation, Botha's State of Emergency has plainly failed, for all its brute savagery, to quell the militancy of the black masses. Thousands have been arrested, over a thousand still held without charge; clubs, whips, bird-shot, bullets and teargas have been used against crowds from 7-year olds upwards; police and troops have been given — and used — a blank cheque for any action, however barbaric; yet still the keynote emerging from the angry masses on the streets is the sound which heralds doom for Botha and his racist cronies: black, working class revolution.

When youth gather in their hundreds, hemmed in by the guns and armoured cars of the state, seriously discuss the odds of getting killed if they stage a march, and then decide to risk the odds and march: that represents a force that will not be crushed by any State of Emergency, any escalation of repression.

And when a regime is forced to jail and prosecute schoolkids as young as 7 years old in a desperate effort to break a solid school boycott, that spells out a complete breakdown of the authority of the state, however much the regime seeks to compensate by bravado and brute violence.

Another indication of the rebellious spirit that now stalks the townships is the public display on mass demonstrations of banners not only of the illegal African National Congress but now even of the South African Communist Party itself: workers and youth are prepared to risk jail sentences simply to display these (and banners with their own revolutionary slogans) — but also feel confident that they stand a good chance of doing so without arrest or punishment.



Boesak.

Such is the radicalisation of the masses on the streets that the existing black leaderships have found themselves under pressure, or in some cases exposed as allies of the regime.

Most nakedly exposed has been the reactionary politics of Zulu Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, who has consistently denounced the demonstrations by the United Democratic Front, attacked the ANC, and mobilised gangs of lumpen supporters against trade unionists.

It is no accident that Buthelezi, representing the aspiring black reactionary bourgeoisie angling for a place in the system, was singled out



Tutu.

recently for special attention by the Chair of Anglo American Mr Gavin Relly, as the type of black politician with whom the regime should swiftly move to negotiate.

While the escalation of struggle has flushed out Buthelezi, and largely wiped out the stooge black councillors in the townships through whom Botha hoped to enlist the collaboration of whole sections of the black middle class, it has also intensified the pressures on the clergy, with figures like Bishop Desmond Tutu and Dr Alan Boesak unable to offer any serious prospect of a "peaceful road" to black militants.

Indeed the restrictions imposed by

the State of Emergency have made it increasingly difficult for even skilful religious opponents of class politics to stay within the law while working to defuse mass action.

Boesak himself has been arrested; Tutu's son has been arrested, and Tutu himself repeatedly on the edge of arrest: they have struggled against these odds and against the logic of the situation to repeat their calls for a "dialogue" between the apartheid rulers and the black population. Not wanting to be left out, Roman Catholic bishops intervened to urge the Chamber of Mines to reopen talks with the NUM and avert the threatened strike.

Even when mobilising for the banned march on Pollsmoor prison demanding the release of Nelson Mandela, Boesak, in the face of clear threats of state violence, presented the demonstration as simply a moral protest:

"Restrain yourselves. Wait for that moment which will come and history will record and the world and the Government will know that all generations have come together in one expression of our determination to be free."

These clerics have no love of apartheid: but they are also opposed to the kind of social upheaval and ideological release that would be unleashed by a mass mobilisation which pulled down the edifice of apartheid and liberated the black masses from the repression and exploitation they are undergoing.

Clergymen — most notably Boesak — are also well represented in the leadership of the mass opposition current, the loose and ramshackle UDF. Of 16 black and Indian UDF leaders who went on trial on July 11 in what the regime intended as a major show-trial, all were middle class professionals: one a clergyman; one a professor; four union officials, a handful of lawyers, a teacher and a doctor.

The very structure of the UDF, which consists of over 650 organisations ranging from trade unions to sports clubs, militates against a democratic involvement of the unions — each of which would receive only the same voting rights as a local church or youth club.



UDF: has bent to militancy of youth and students.

Yet in a sense the formlessness of the UDF has enabled it to bend rather more flexibly to the militant demands of youth and students, though its own appeals for dialogue and a "national convention" are far from radical in anything other than a context of total repression.

Further adrift from the latest radicalisation has been the African National Congress. The ANC's concept of a prolonged guerrilla war which would eventually force the beleaguered white rulers into a dialogue and a democratisation of South Africa, led it to stand aloof from the unionisation of the black workers and many of the radical new community movements in the townships.

But the historical allegiance of many older black workers to the ANC — which was banned after the great frame-up trials of 1958-61 — and its ever-present symbol of defiance in the form of Nelson Mandela has ensured that, despite the bankruptcy of its policy and perspectives, the ANC remains a central factor in the South African struggle.

Its June Conference in Zambia saw the ANC display again the extent to which its notions run at a tangent to the needs of South Africa's black proletariat.

In the midst of mass street mobilisations and community struggles, the new ANC perspective is yet again the old scenario of more

guerilla struggle rather than a turn to cement links with the black unions and mobilise working class action against the apartheid rulers.

This avoidance of the most obvious connections, which should be made through the development of councils of action, appears well suited to the leaders of the black trade unions, who have in general stood back from involvement in the UDF, and separated their workplace organising work from the mass struggles on the streets.

The constant ups and downs of the NUM leadership in their preparation for the pay strike show a willingness to use rather than openly support the current mass struggle.

It is clear that many individuals and groups of black youth have developed a revolutionary commitment and a concept of revolution considerably more advanced than the official leaders of the black movement.

But in a climate of savage repression, in which Marxist literature is banned and political debate forced underground, the task of clarifying and developing a leadership independent of Stalinist influences and reformist conceptions, with a clear view of the need for the working class to lead the struggle for democratic rights and the socialist overthrow of apartheid, is far from easy.

Meanwhile there is little prospect that Botha can stem the tide of struggle. The businessmen who today call on him to discuss with black leaders will tomorrow bleat as loud as any if the apartheid system, which preserves their super-profits by consolidating black unemployment, black poverty and black exploitation, were fundamentally altered.

The very conditions of low wages and enforced divisions of the working class which helped make South Africa a favoured outpost for investment have now become a factor in the struggle. As the prospects for profits decline, and the political temperature rises, the likelihood is that the economy will plunge further into crisis, with growing unemployment adding further pressures towards revolutionary struggle.



SACTU calls for union action

By TERRY SMITH

AN urgent call for trade union action to isolate Botha's vicious apartheid regime in South Africa has been issued by the exiled South African Congress of Trade Unions.

In a surprisingly blunt statement dispatched on July 24, SACTU leaders cut through much of their usual banal rhetoric about government sanctions, and call on "the international trade union movement" to "take immediate action" by:

- Refusing to handle all maritime, air or land traffic to or from South Africa

- Refusing to handle any goods to or from South Africa

- Refusing to handle all postal and telegraphic traffic to or from South Africa

- Mounting massive demonstrations at all diplomatic missions representing the white minority regime abroad."

SACTU also predictably urges trade unionists to urge their governments to impose "immediate, comprehensive, mandatory sanctions against the Pretoria regime".

But the call to action is a welcome break from the general line of solidarity work so far.

The massive wave of popular support in Britain for the struggles of South Africa's black working class has not been matched by any adequate initiatives from the Anti Apartheid Movement.

Though regular picketing of the South African Embassy registers a moral point, the size of such activities and the fact that they are largely confined to London offers little as a major focus.

There is an urgent need for a national demonstration and for increased information building for trade union solidarity action.

Anti Apartheid, reflecting the traditional, Communist Party-influenced SACTU line has until now consistently underplayed the fight for trade union solidarity action in Britain and the significance of the newly emerging, politically independent black and non-racial union confederations in South Africa.

Until now, AAM campaigning initiatives have focussed upon "broad" initiatives, involving largely middle class support, aimed at moral and individual gestures such as shoppers' boycotts of South African goods. Another main strand has



been the "disinvestment" campaign aimed at Barclays Bank and other firms and institutions with major holdings in South Africa. At government level this takes the form of calls for "sanctions" against the apartheid regime — a campaign even less rewarding under Thatcher's government than under Labour.

It goes without saying that the arguments trotted out against "sanctions" by the open or covert supporters of apartheid are worthless.

The Reagan argument that "sanctions" would hurt "the very people [the blacks] we are supposed to be helping"; the Thatcher argument that trade enables "democratic" imperialists in London to "influence" the apartheid rulers; and the generalised, cynical argument that black people "do not support sanctions" have all been exposed by recent events.

The reality is that, irrespective of sanctions, big capital is already pulling out of South Africa, intensifying a growing economic crisis and mass unemployment, while Reagan shows no more interest in preserving South African jobs than he has in the USA.

The Thatcher line flows not from any attempt to influence Botha but from the massive scale of British investment in South Africa and the role these holdings play in the British economy.

And despite the fact that it is a *treasonable offence* for any South African to argue in favour of sanctions, a *Sunday Times* poll recently showed 77% of South African blacks *supported* such a policy as a

means of weakening their apartheid oppressors.

The problem with calls for "sanctions" is rather that it directs *away* from solidarity action in the workers' movement — the unions and Labour Party — towards capitalist institutions — multinationals, banks and governments — which have no interests in common with the South African workers. Insofar as they seek to pressurise Pretoria into cosmetic "reforms", they wish principally to preserve profitable exploitation of black workers.

In practice, when the crisis and mass struggle in South Africa began to hit their profits, these bodies — sanctions or no — will begin to withdraw their capital, and invest in other more "stable" arenas of brutal exploitation. The call for "sanctions", if divorced from *working class* methods of organising to enforce forms of *workers' control*, leaves their options wide open.

Of course it is correct and necessary to unmask the economic motives which bind Thatcher, Reagan and Kohl to the Botha regime: it is necessary to lift the lid on the links between British firms and the brutality of apartheid.

But the conclusion from such agitation must be the need for *working class*, trade union action by transport and distribution workers, by computer staffs, bank staff, insurance and finance unions, communications and other sectors to cut off the economic arteries of the apartheid system as now called for by SACTU.

The fight for this kind of practical, trade union action cements a real link between British and South African workers: it can be done, as backing of South African shipping in Southampton and San Francisco docks has shown.

In the meantime it is vital to step up the flow of information to the shopfloor membership of relevant trade unions, explaining the situation in South Africa and the need for solidarity.

Where possible, local Anti Apartheid groups — possibly working with Trades Councils and Labour Parties — should publicise the strikes and struggles involving South African workers employed by subsidiaries of British-based or multinational firms, arguing the case for direct links and messages of solidarity.

South Africa and imperialism

By HARRY SLOAN

SOUTH Africa has always been to a degree dependent upon Western imperialism; but it has never been simply a puppet regime.

With enormous mineral and raw material resources at its disposal Pretoria has far greater economic independence than its counterparts in Tel Aviv, who depend almost entirely upon US handouts to keep the ailing Israeli economy afloat.

This, coupled with the old colonial links with Britain has been one of the factors establishing a special relationship between the apartheid state and the Western banks, with the lion's share of business going to British bankers and brokers.

British capitalists hold 40% of the £12 billion foreign investment in South Africa. This represents 7% of total British overseas investment, and means Britain controls over 50% of all 2,000 foreign-owned firms. Two British banks, Barclays and Standard Chartered, control 66% of South Africa's domestic banking.

British capitalism sold "invisible" services valued at £1.3bn to South Africa last year alone, on top of £1.2bn in exports which left a trade surplus of £500m. British exports to South Africa are double those of any other nation, and concentrate on the most profitable manufactured goods.

In addition British companies have indirect investments (loans and shareholdings) totalling another £6 billion. Small wonder the Thatcher government have outpaced even Ronald "Rambo" Reagan as supporters of Botha and opponents of any economic sanctions.

But while these investments have in the past generated stupendous super-profits, there is every indication that British investors are becoming extremely wary of further involvement with a regime they see as a bad risk.

When Barclays in mid-August renounced control of its South African subsidiary, Barclays National Bank, claiming it was for purely "commercial" reasons, its shares in Britain went up in price.

All kinds of previously unthinkable calculations are increasingly being made. What banker wants to cut himself off from the chances of doing business with a future black majority government in South Africa – and with other African nations? Who wants to lend more money to a Botha regime which is already in dire straits? What government will risk alienating potential black African consumers for the sake of preserving their own marginal economic involvement with the Botha regime?

Hence the move by Mitterrand's French government – the most heavily involved nation yet to bar further in-

vestment in the apartheid regime – followed by gestures from Denmark, Sweden and Australia. For Reagan, however, and for West Germany's Kohl as well as Thatcher, the financial stakes involved in breaking the links with apartheid are much higher.

These same leaders are also more openly committed to the mission of militarily "containing communism" which Botha has always used as a key selling point for the apartheid state.

The South African regime is not only the Western world's key supplier of gold, platinum, diamonds and uranium (plundered from occupied Namibia): it is also a regional strong-arm force, striving to subvert the radical nationalist governments of Angola and Mozambique, and posing an active military threat to a circle of "front line" African states.

Reagan has dreamed of siting Cruise missiles in South Africa: Thatcher prior to the Malvinas war hoped to enlist Pretoria's support in a reactionary South Atlantic alliance involving Latin American dictatorships (even Argentina) to police the strategic shipping lanes for imperialism.

The regional role played by the "South African Defence Force" – and in particular the occupation of Namibia – brings its own price tag, however, with military spending taking 20% of the South African budget.

This cost can only increase with internal disorder forcing Botha to deploy increased firepower on the streets. And the morale of the white conscripts, faced with a long war while the economy runs downhill and families flee the country, cannot be sustained indefinitely.

As yet South Africa's army is of course a long way from the open dissent and disarray which helped force Israel out of Lebanon – and totally different in character from the Shah's army which dissolved so spectacularly in the face of mass demonstrations in Iran. Botha correctly emphasises that there are several more levels of brutality open to him yet, before the regime has used the force at its disposal.

However, the memories of that collapse in Iran and the vanishing hopes of the Smith regime in Zimbabwe; the recollection of the international isolation which preceded the abrupt departure of Batista from Cuba and Somoza from Nicaragua, will not be lost on South Africa's rulers.

If the white racists have new cause to be alarmed, the possibilities for black Africa reawakened by this new wave of struggle in South Africa are exciting in the extreme.

A socialist revolution in South Africa would unleash the resources of an advanced economy to aid the development of other economies across the continent. By cutting off the resources for



Photo: Andrea Campbell

the reactionary guerrillas in Angola and Mozambique, and pulling the rug out from the remnants of the old regime in Zimbabwe, a socialist South Africa could herald important steps towards a Socialist United States of Southern Africa.

South Africa's strong, militant and organised working class would offer a powerful counter-weight to the conservative nationalism of Mugabe, Kaunda and other leaders, and an example to workers throughout the ex-colonial countries.

This is the line of development for which socialists must struggle, fighting in every possible section of the labour movement for solidarity union action with the South African workers. In cutting the flow of profits to our "own" bankers and employers in Britain, the South African struggle also helps sharpen the struggle here.



Stop the rot: organise against Kinnock!

"KINNOCK takes on the left" was the headline of the London (Evening) Standard' on Wednesday September 4. Although this was particularly related to the vote at the TUC on the miners' motion, it sums up Kinnock's whole strategy.

The election defeat of 1983 meant that Labour was faced with choices — either go further from the '83 election manifesto and campaign for socialist policies, or retreat to "consensus" policies as the (supposedly) easy way to win electoral support. Kinnock himself has never pretended to anything else but "regaining the middle ground" — winning the "moral" argument while disavowing any direct struggle against the Tories. Of course consensus policies themselves are those acceptable to the bourgeoisie and the media: they are not plucked out of nowhere. It is a long hard task to make Labour respectable as an alternative party of government, but Kinnock has tackled it *manfully* — distancing himself from the miners' strike, silence on the railworkers' struggle, a refusal to repeal anti-union laws and reinstate cuts... he's done it all.

Previous Labour oppositions have made radical "left" noises in the safe knowledge that they were the only alternatives to the Tories. Kinnock, with the rise of the Liberal/SDP Alliance, would have had to put programmatic flesh on the rhetorical bone. Instead, and it was never going to be otherwise, he chose the option of dropping all semblance of left

By PETE FIRMIN

policies and challenging the Alliance for the hearts and minds of *Guardian* leader writers.

Manoeuvred into position by the "new realists" of the TUC it is hardly surprising that Kinnock shares their basic preconceptions; rejection of the class struggle in all but the "safest" of situations (GCHQ) and its logical conclusion: not the reform of capitalism but its overthrow. For labour movement bureaucrats, life is comfortable as they are, and the class struggle too dangerous. They might be pushed out of the way by a working class recognising them for what they are: one of the most important upholders of capitalist society.

From rejection of the class struggle, while maintaining a belief in some "social justice" and pseudo-equality, follows the central thrust of Kinnock's strategy. Throw out those policies and methods which threaten the basic "status quo" and intimidate those who oppose this into submission, and expulsion if they won't lie down.

In Parliament Kinnock and his front bench have only been willing to challenge the Tories on issues where they believe they have a clear moral and popular advantage, such as health and social security cuts, local democracy (though God forbid they should support any struggle against cuts) and where they see a fair chance of breaking the "Wets" from the "Thatcherites". The unpopular

issues (miners, Belgrano, etc.) are left to principled back-benchers to raise, often with the open disapproval of the leadership.

Kinnock's "new" programme, *A New Partnership, A New Britain*, resurrects all the traits of previous Labour governments. Whilst Socialism does not get a single mention, "Britain's problems", "partnership not confrontation", "a new sense of common purpose", "putting Britain back to work" and "benefitting all our people" are recurring themes. Four million unemployed, low wages, deteriorating health and social services, etc., are not seen as an intrinsic part of capitalism but as a result of ill-will on the part of the Tories. A refusal to recognise that the monetarists' programme is not fuelled by malice but by an understanding of the fundamental problems of British capitalism means that class itself, let alone class struggle, is denied and all that is needed is the good will of the reformists to reverse Britain's decline.

The drive to bring down wages, increase productivity, break the strength of the unions and reduce the amount spent on social services is essential to the restructuring of the economy in order to make it more profitable, with high unemployment a basic weapon in forcing them down the throat of the working class. Indeed, the Callaghan and Wilson governments recognised the same problems and were no way backward in trying to achieve the same. The difference between them (and Kinnock)

and Thatcher is not one of ends, but of means.

Where Thatcher sees confrontation as the only way to increase exploitation and profitability, Labour's right hope to achieve the same by co-operation and consensus. That sections of British capitalists agree doesn't prove the co-operators rights, it merely shows that if bosses believe they can achieve the same ends without conflict they prefer to do so.

The "programme" is vague in the extreme, but even so a few home truths occasionally slip in, such as:

"Despite the 30 years of slow progress, Britain was still — even before the present Government came to office — an unequal society."

Those without the selective amnesia of the new realists should recall that under the last Labour government inequality in society actually widened, and Thatcher's governments have not been the first to attempt to control wages, cut jobs and attack local government spending. Rash talk about "the persistence of inequality in Britain rests on fundamental differences in power and status at work and in society" may sound radical, but when the proposed answer is co-operation and "participation" then its emptiness is exposed. What capitalist is going to allow participation in decision-making unless it assists in suppressing and exploiting the workforce, which

is precisely what previous Labour governments have attempted to do.

But if tinkering with capitalism in a minor way is Kinnock's programme, many of those who would go much further are backing him. The wish to see the back of Thatcher and the return of a Labour government has seduced many into accepting the need for "Unity behind Kinnock". Yet that can only mean "Unity on Kinnock's terms" since every attempt to oppose his ditching of policies is met by the accusation of splitters and wreckers even when — as with his response to the TUC — it is clearly Kinnock who is doing the "wrecking".

We, as much as anybody, want to see the return of a Labour government, but we don't accept that this means burying all differences. The unity we will accept is the unity in struggle against the Tories and bosses, not the unity of the graveyard. Every time the left keeps quiet in the interests of "not rocking the boat" the right gain ground. They have never accepted unity with the left: they merely want the left to lie down in order that they and socialist policies can be walked on.

The defeat of the miners, the failure of ratercapping, and the ballot result against industrial action by NUR guards all increase the credibility of the new realists amongst large sections of the working class. The fact that these were largely due to the lack of programme and willingness to fight of these leaders does not detract from this. Whilst sections of those involved in these struggles recognise where the blame lies, others become demoralised and cynical. The line that all we can do now is make general propaganda about how nasty the Tories are and wait for a Labour government gains greater credence with every defeat.

Yet the acceptance of this by the left not only allows living standards to be driven down and unemployment up by the Tories now with little opposition, it makes the likely austerity programme of a Kinnock government (from the start, not after some years like Mitterrand in France) even more likely.

In fact if Labour poses no programme adequate to the crisis it becomes less likely that a Labour government will be elected. Why vote for a Labour Party trying to usurp the mantle of the middle road when there is a made-to-measure Alliance to hand? A hung parliament becomes more likely.

Kinnock may vow that he is against a coalition government but all the indications are otherwise. Naturally, he would prefer to be "king of the castle" without the encumbrance of another party (provided that his internal opposition, the left, have been defeated). But Kinnock's practice shows that he is quite happy to collaborate with Liberals and Tory Wets. Not only is this the focus of his attention in parliament, but he gave clear

The Witch-hunt goes on

SINCE the expulsion of the *Militant* Editorial Board there have been no nationally determined witch-hunts, leading many on the left to believe that it is no longer a major issue and that the few cases they hear of are isolated exceptions without wider significance.

However, the overall picture is very different. Not only are there many ongoing examples of constituencies expelling, suspending, refusing to accept new members or transfers because their politics do not fit, but important larger bodies have been swung behind the witch-hunt.

NUPE and the Welsh Labour Party Conferences both adopted resolutions that *Militant* should be expelled, and an elected *Militant* supporter was thrown off the South Wales E.C. Right-wing CLPs are grasping with glee the policy that *Militant* should not be sold at Party meetings to expel those who do, and even for selling it in shopping centres.

Such expulsions stand because the NEC sub-committee is dominated by witch-hunters who are only too keen to rubber stamp the expulsion of those they see as trouble-makers. In other cases attempts are being made to expel or "discipline" for a wide variety of reasons, but all of which have in common that those to be expelled have upset the vested interests of those who would not recognise a principle if it hit them in the well-fed gut.

In Sheffield Attercliffe CLP 5 *Militant* supporters have been suspended. One of them, Geoff Bright, is an elected member of the NUR delegation to '85 Party Conference. A whole branch in Bethnal Green & Stepney was suspended for publicly criticising their MP, Peter Shore, and Kinnock for their lack of support for the miners. The Youth Trade Union

Rights Campaign (YTURC) was thrown out of Labour Party HQ for having organised a successful one-day strike of school students against the prospect of a life on the dole. People have been disciplined for supporting the miners in various ways and challenging those who refused to do so. A *Socialist Viewpoint* supporter in Brent South CLP, Brian Prince, was threatened with expulsion because he exposed the fact that his branch Chairperson was collaborating with the victimisation of teachers for trade union activity. Examples abound, many of them not coming to the attention of the organised left.

The right feel strong enough to carry out such actions because of the lack of organised opposition to Kinnock. Kinnock himself is happy to see it happen as part of intimidating and isolating those who reject his programme. Compare this witch-hunt to the way Robert Maxwell is feted, regardless of his persistent use of anti-union laws and sacking of his workforce. Conference Agenda even has an advert for his newspapers!

The campaign against this witch-hunt has to be rebuilt as part of the challenge to the general rightward drift. Some on the left are becoming reluctant to defend *Militant* because they line up with the right against Black Sections, women's and lesbian and gay rights, troops out of Northern Ireland, etc. However, much as we disagree with (and often find obnoxious) their politics, we have to defend their right to be members of the Party, not least because the right certainly do not differentiate between what they see as the left and do not stop at attacking *Militant*. The whole of the left is under attack, and the whole of the left must be defended.



Appeals

Discussion on Lesbian and Gay Rights

Lesbians and gay men suffer systematic discrimination in society at large and also within the labour movement.

One aspect of this discrimination is highlighted by the fact that annual Party Conference has never discussed the issue, another is the fact that the Party has a policy which is discriminatory (i.e. different ages of consent for heterosexuals and gay men). This cannot go on any longer if we are to show to lesbians and gay men that the Party has anything to offer them.

We urge support for the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights campaign to have the issue debated at this year's annual conference.

Positive Action and Black People

It is time that our Party listened to the legitimate demands of women and Black people within the Party. Specifically the Party should allow Black people within the Party who so wish to establish Black Sections, as already exists with women's and youth sections. We also urge support for the demands endorsed by the last three year's women's conferences: that national women's conference elect the women's section of the NEC and the national women's committee, that national women's conference has the right to send five resolutions to Party Conference, that there be a rules conference for Labour women, and that there be at least one woman on every shortlist for reselection. We also welcome the further steps made by those constituencies which have had all-Black or all-women shortlists when selecting their parliamentary candidates. We believe that these points represent important steps towards positive action and autonomy for oppressed groups in society and in the Party.

Supported by:
 Campaign Group of MPs
 Campaign for Labour Party Democracy
 Target Labour Government
 Labour Party Black Sections
 Labour Committee on Ireland
 Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights
 Labour Briefing
 Socialist Action
 Socialist Viewpoint
 Socialist Organiser



indication after the County Council elections that he preferred Labour Groups to make pacts rather than go into opposition. Almost anything is better than class struggle: fêting the aristocrats of the Lords in an attempt to defeat abolition of the Metropolitan Councils and the GLC was immensely preferable to organising class action (something Ken Livingstone shared with Kinnock earlier than many of the Left realised).

If the next parliament is a hung one, Kinnock and the majority of the PLP will rush to form at least a pact, if not a coalition with part or all of the Alliance, which would be seen not only as lifting them into government, but taking the programme totally out of the control of that "nuisance" Party conference. The extremely weak opposition in the Party to the Lib-Lab Pact of 1978/9 is not a good precedent, but the left should use the example not only to show where such a road leads (to the "Winter of Discontent" and Thatcher's victory) but also to organise now against the possibility.

With Kinnock attempting to strengthen his position in the Party he has found himself in the position of the piper with a scurrying of feet behind him. The "regroupment of the left", better described as the "Great Moving Right Show", has drawn support from many seeking positions in his "kitchen" cabinet or, preferably, the real one.

The once-left Labour Coordinating Committee, Ken Livingstone, Tom Sawyer, Michael Meacher, and many others now see their main chance. Rather than stick out for any principle against the rightward-moving stream they have plunged in head first. Kinnock couldn't have wished for a greater realisation of his "dented shield" speech than Livingstone's sell-out of the ratecapping struggle at the GLC.

The talk from all these erstwhile

lefts of forming bridges with Kinnock to keep him out of the hands of the right is demonstrable nonsense. Not only does it ignore the fact that on most issues there is *no difference* between Kinnock and the "right" but that Kinnock *leads* the right, even if he occasionally puts up a "frontman" (like John Evans on reselection at 1984 Conference).

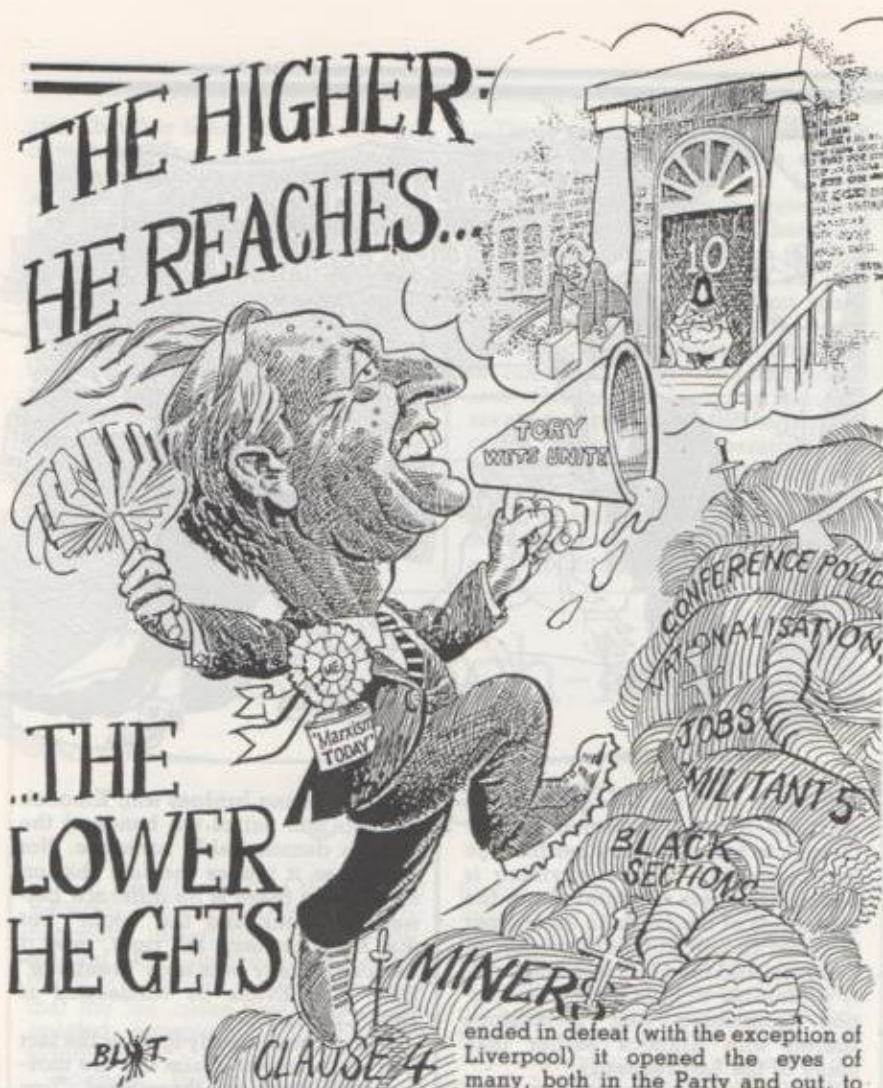
It also conveniently ignores the fact that all those who claim this are moving with the right themselves. Tom Sawyer moved the resolution in support of the expulsion of Militant at NUPE Conference and Livingstone, in his platform for Party Treasurer (before his local party mandated him not to stand) described Kinnock and Whitty as "a new partnership that will form an effective leadership".

The claim by sections of these born-again realists still to oppose witch-hunts and support the demands of women, lesbians and gays and black sections become increasingly less credible. Livingstone's witch-hunt against John McDonnell for exposing his manoeuvrings at the GLC, and insistence that he had a right to a safe parliamentary seat in direct contradiction to his own avowed policy of preference for women and black candidates defies any left-over rhetoric. The number of witch-hunts in which the LCC are involved increases rapidly, and anyway, how can you square being an avid supporter of Kinnock, the arch opponent of democratisation and democracy for women, blacks, lesbians and gays and unpopular left wingers?

If the alignment of Livingstone with the right on fundamental issues was not clear, then his support for one member one vote on reselection certainly pins him down. If Kinnock is to succeed in his programme of class collaboration then he needs to ensure that "his" MPs can carry it out without fear of being brought to account for their actions. One member one vote

THE HIGHER
HE REACHES...

...THE
LOWER
HE GETS



means not only that trade unionists paying the political levy have no say in selection, but also that an MP is accountable to one meeting every five years, with General Committees impotent in the meantime: in effect accountable to no one.

The loss of this major democratic right of reselection (regardless of the small effect it has had so far) would be likely to be followed by an attempt to reverse the election of Leader by the electoral college, although the right see no need to attack on this yet, given the marked reluctance of any left MP to challenge Kinnock. He has already spelt out how he sees Labour's election programme being drawn up: it should only contain what he wishes.

However, the Left is still strong but divided. The support given to the miners, the struggle against ratecapping and the ongoing battle for the rights of women, blacks, lesbians and gays all indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the left. Where miners have joined the Labour Party they have been involved in attempting to replace those who failed to give them full support; women, blacks, lesbians and gays have no interest in supporting those who insist on treating them as second class members; and while the Left still has to prove itself in backing their struggles consistently and seriously, many are realising that they are natural allies.

Although the ratecapping fight has

ended in defeat (with the exception of Liverpool) it opened the eyes of many, both in the Party and out, to the emptiness of the rhetoric of many "left" figures, and the limitations of a strategy based totally on the willingness of councillors to vote time and again to defer a rate. While the defeat has led to demoralisation in some areas, it has made many even more determined to win next time.

Those who sold out could not have done so more openly and blatantly and have made themselves a clear target for deselection. Furthermore, the situation opens massive opportunities for the Left to put forward a serious strategy for the struggle taking it out of the Council chambers and putting the working class, organised through unions and community groups, at the centre, and drawing those willing to fight into the labour movement.

With the regroupment of the right gathering pace earlier this year, particularly with the defection of Livingstone, tendencies on the left began to recognise a need to work together on practical issues if they were to maintain and extend their influence against his tide. *Labour Herald* first publicly raised the issue, but solely in terms of *Labour Herald* being the "vehicle" for such regroupment, which would mean other tendencies and campaigns defying their independence and without ever proposing any organisational steps. A case of wanting to appear to say the right things without actually meaning it. In response to this, *Labour Briefing* put out its own call, and invited

nearly all tendencies and campaigns to an initial meeting. Of the tendencies only *Labour Herald* and *Militant* have ignored this, reflecting their sectarian view that they have no intention of building a strong left apart from building their own tendency. Out of this first meeting has developed the Labour Left Co-ordination and agreed appeals on various central issues (see elsewhere in *Socialist Viewpoint*) and a fringe meeting and a bulletin — probably daily — at Labour Party Conference.

Progress has been slow and sometimes fraught, but these have been important small steps. If the majority of the hard left are seen to be working closely together at Conference it will have the effect of both worrying the right, who rely on the divisions of the left, and impress and encourage those on the left who feel isolated.

However, if the LLC is to be seen as a serious force, then it has to go beyond this minimal existence with a few representatives meeting regularly. It needs to begin to organise the left in a real sense of building a working organisation which intervenes, where agreement exists, in the struggles both against the bosses and their government and within the labour movement against those who sell out. No one tendency on the Left is at present strong enough to claim dominance or command the respect of the Left in general. Yet working together, without burying important differences, the Left could begin to draw in those on the Left who turn away in despair at the myriad of different tendencies, and mount a serious challenge to the present rightward drift. Although it would be premature to attempt it yet, our model has to be the National Left Wing Movement of the 1920s which managed a significant minority of the Party.

If the left can work seriously together now, it gives us the opportunity to build a large opposition to the social democratic policies of the leadership, both in terms of fighting them now and if Kinnock organises a re-run of the Wilson/Callaghan governments. It is not enough to start organising against such a sell-out when it happens; such opposition will not readily spring out of nowhere, it has to be built for now, pointing out the preparations Kinnock is making.

Through working together at Conference this year, the Left can begin to organise its major task for '86, mounting a challenge for the leadership election. Kinnock (and Hattersely) cannot be separated from their policies, and a campaign must be organised firstly to put pressure on one of the reluctant MPs to challenge Kinnock, and to take that challenge into every union and Labour Party body possible. The left working together could make that a serious challenge; if unlikely to win, then at the very least organising those forces willing to fight back.



A stockpile of BL Maestros.

Hard Labour for BL?

THIS pamphlet ought to be subtitled "Planning the Unplannable". It presents the problem as simply lack of sales by the motor industry in Britain, and tries to offer solutions which make no real changes.

This should be no surprise, considering the pamphlet is written by Patrick Gray, a right wing academic from Oxford Labour Party, who had a brief sojourn in manual work at British Leyland's Cowley Body Plant. It is warmly welcomed by Neil Kinnock, and undoubtedly reflects the thinking of Labour's current leadership.

Gray outlines the well-known decline of the industry. In the early 1970s motor manufacturing represented 11% of industrial output in Britain; today it accounts for only 4%. But the whole thinking of the document begins from an acceptance of the current situation and trying to make minor adjustments.

Ford and other multinationals, he points out, are importing many more cars: yet he is also at pains to praise these firms — in case they might imagine a Labour government would be hostile to them!

Gray predictably sees the answer as imposing some kind of "control" on the market while leaving these multinationals and the capitalist system intact. The most obvious line is for import controls.

An obvious difficulty here is that the very nature of the world's motor industry is that the big firms need to

"Labour and the Motor Industry"

(Jobs and Industry Campaign consultative document).

Published by the Labour Party, £1.75.

Reviewed by an Austin Rover Shop Steward

export in order to get the benefit of large scale production. If this does not occur, the industry will die. There is so much overproduction of motor vehicles (in market terms) in Europe that any firm which does not export on a massive scale must go to the wall.

Gray cannot confront this contradiction. So his document calls *both* for import controls in Britain, *and* for an increase in exports of "British" cars! As if other capitalist countries are going to accept this in order to allow the British (capitalist) car industry to survive at the expense of that in West Germany, France, Italy or elsewhere!

This is clearly no solution, even in capitalist terms: so the pamphlet hedges its bets and retreats even from a pledge of import controls, speculating on what might happen "If temporary controls on motor industry imports do become necessary."

So right wing is this pamphlet that it even complains about South African "unfair trading" as providing an "unjustified obstacle to the expan-

sion of Britain's exports" (though the South African police gave been some of the most loyal consumers of BL land-rovers and other vehicles).

In fact there can be no solution within the capitalist framework for the crisis of overproduction, other than an attempt to salvage one capitalist company by driving others to the wall.

Import controls are a nationalist solution. They mean siding with your "own" capitalist class against the "foreign" capitalists of Japan, France or Italy. They mean demanding that workers in another country be put out of work.

This is not an abstract question. It has to be drawn out to its logical conclusion, because it cannot "save" the workers who embrace the policy. In fact the only real way to drive your "foreign" competitors out of business is by cheapening the commodity you produce. Behind the nationalistic, flag-waving facade of import controls lie the vicious speed-up, job loss and wage cutting of management rationalisation.

Gray's pamphlet makes the point that a good quality family saloon car sells for only £3,000 in Japan. This highlights the *real* "trade barrier": the level of exploitation of Japanese car workers.

Yet the document draws the logical conclusion, that "we" too need the Japanese "highly efficient production systems".

"It is a matter of fully utilising human skills in management, in supervision, and on the shop floor."

Of course all actual production takes place "on the shop floor". It is a neat political trick — not unlike admiring the "productivity" of the slaves who built the pyramids — to describe the incredible workload shouldered by Japanese workers as "utilising human skills".

The reason is that Patrick Gray and the Labour leaders have fully accepted what has already happened in the British motor industry. There has been a greater use of Japanese methods of organisation of production, and a closer approach to Japanese levels of exploitation. But Patrick Gray no longer has to work in a car factory, so it doesn't bother him that the agreements which gave workers paid time to prepare for work and wash-up afterwards have been scrapped. He does not care that they now have to come to work earlier and go home later; that they get fewer relief breaks; and that as breakdowns become less frequent and more efficiently covered the whole workforce is driven harder and longer each day.

Alongside this speed-up and greater exploitation have come attacks on union organisation. Capitalist companies cannot allow interruptions in production if they are going to compete. This is why BL has seen a series of victimisations from Derek Robinson and the Longbridge

8, through to Alan Thornett and now Bob Cullen at Cowley.

Gray gets around the question of industrial relations by saying they are "outside the scope" of the document: but his references to it make it clear he is proposing giving more information to unions but *not* control. He is certainly not looking at a full restoration of the union rights crushed in BL since 1978, which must include the reinstatement of the above-mentioned workers victimised under the Tory government.

This is not surprising. The pamphlet is a propaganda text, and not designed to deal with the real problems faced by car workers. Gray continuously praises the record of previous Labour governments. He ignores the fact that it was *Labour* who first unleashed Michael Edwardes and Ian MacGregor on the British workers' movement!

The super-exploitation of BL workers and the weakness of their trade unions dates from then. Will we see more such appointments under a Kinnock government?

Gray's pamphlet is so right wing — and so much angled towards a businessman's audience — that it doesn't make a single even vaguely radical proposal. At most it guarantees to give BL some more money for investment.

It says that BL has been weakened by hiving-off Jaguar: but it makes no call to renationalise Jags. Instead it proposes to keep the "Golden Share" in order to maintain influence: yet even the Tories are not proposing to get rid of this!

Is this the future Labour envisages for all the companies privatised by the Tories? Are they all to remain in private hands?

No matter how many glib words are uttered about "planning", only a radical policy of *nationalisation* of the whole motor industry, its suppliers and distributors, would offer any real chance to plan its operation. This would also imply a nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions, to whom vast interest payments are still being made.

Control of the nationalised industries must be in the hands of the workers, as part of a planned socialist economy: on the basis of this kind of example alliances and links can be made with car workers and their struggles in other countries. Instead of a nationalistic alliance with "British" employers, cutting the throats of more workers at home and abroad, there must be working class action against every section of the capitalist class — beginning with our "own" exploiters at home.

That means rejecting the Labour leadership's approach as spelled out in Gray's pamphlet, and adopting instead *socialist* policies for the car industry and every sector of industry in Britain.

Unfairly sacked: but Tribunal "no" to reinstatement

By BILL PETERS

BOB Cullen, who was sacked from the Austin Rover Group Cowley Assembly Plant in November last year, had been "unfairly dismissed". That was the decision following a five day hearing at the Reading Industrial Tribunal. By a unanimous decision, however, the Tribunal refused to give an order for reinstatement or even a recommendation to that effect. They made this decision on the basis that they regarded Bob Cullen 35% responsible for his own dismissal on the grounds that, although innocent of all allegations against him, he had failed to identify to management who the guilty party actually was.

This must rank as one of the most outrageous decisions taken by a Tribunal since the system was set up. It is outrageous even within the terms of Tribunals, which are so heavily loaded in favour of the employer that only 5% find in favour of the complainants.

Bob Cullen's innocence had never been difficult to prove. He had been accused of damaging the windscreen wiper arm on a car driven by a foreman who was entering the plant through a picket line on Sunday October 28, 1984. Nothing was said to him at the time, but four weeks later he was taken in front of management without warning and sacked for "gross industrial misconduct".

Even the management side of the case vindicated Bob Cullen. It emerged that the foreman concerned had not known Bob Cullen at the time and was not at first able to identify him. He later made the identification after the name had been suggested to him by a manager on the basis of his description.

He had told the manager that the person involved was balding with a beard. The manager said "That must be Bob Cullen." After that management clung to that identification, since Bob Cullen was in any case

targetted by them as a militant shop steward, who had led a number of strikes over recent years.

The whole thing descended into farce as it emerged that Bob Cullen was in fact on a different gate of the plant that morning — gate 10 — and had not at any time been on gate 16 where the incident occurred; that it was early morning and therefore dark; that it was raining at the time; that the foreman concerned had only one eye and that the person that did touch the wiper arm also had a balding head and a beard.

It also emerged that there had been a serious abuse of the procedure agreement. After doing nothing for a month the whole procedure was forced through in three days. The trade union side had no time to prepare a case before the sacking took place. All decisions were predetermined from above and no witnesses in Bob Cullen's favour were allowed.

After the conclusion of the management case against Bob Cullen, the Chair of the Tribunal called the two sides together and presented them with what he called "an interim judgement". He said that on evidence already submitted he would find that Bob Cullen had in fact been unfairly dismissed and would recommend reinstatement, but would not at this stage make a reinstatement order. On the basis of this he asked the two sides to try to reach an out of court settlement.

ARG offered £8,000 but would not consider reinstatement. Bob Cullen rejected it, since he wanted reinstatement and not a cash settlement and the only chance of this was a reinstatement order issued by the Tribunal.

When the Tribunal reopened for the Trade Union side to put their case it became even more clear that Bob Cullen was simply being framed by management. Witnesses were brought to show that Bob Cullen had



Bob Cullen (with placard) on the picket line at Cowley.

never been on Gate 16 that morning. This even included the works security guard who was on gate 16 at the time of the incident and made a categorical statement that Bob Cullen was not there.

Two witnesses went to the stand to say that they had witnessed the incident and that the person concerned was Peter Williams, another TGWU shop steward.

Ivor Braggins, the TGWU senior shop steward, went on to the witness stand to say that he had in fact told management who the guilty party was during the domestic discipline procedure and that management had

chosen to ignore it. He said that he had told Mr Farrants, the Industrial Relations Manager, that the person who had interfered with the wiper arm was Pete Williams.

Pete Williams himself then went on to the witness stand to confirm that he in fact was the one who had interfered with the arm, although he had not broken it as was claimed.

Farrants was then called back to the witness box and asked if he had in fact been given the name of Peter Williams during the domestic procedure. He confirmed that he had been given the name but claimed that he had chosen not to pass it onto higher management.

In the summing up the council for ARG conceded the whole case. He said that management now recognised that they had sacked the wrong man. They felt, however, that Mr Cullen had contributed to his own sacking by not himself naming Mr Williams during the procedure. On this basis they were urging the Tribunal — in the event of a finding of unfair dismissal — to look towards a cash settlement and not a reinstatement order.

Although the Chair had been in a position half way through the case to make an "interim judgement" he was not in a position at the end of the case to make a verdict. He announced that it would be a "deferred judgement".

Five weeks later the decision of the Tribunal was announced. In finding for unfair dismissal they heavily criticised management. The decision said that a part of the disciplinary procedure had been a "farce" and that top managers had acted as "judge and jury".

But the finding itself was exactly along the lines of that appealed for by ARG in their summing up. Bob Cullen, they declared, was partly responsible (they chose to call it 35%) for his own sacking for failing to name the guilty party, and therefore they had decided to make it a financial settlement and not a reinstatement order.

Bob Cullen is now taking legal advice on the possibility of an appeal against the finding.

NALGO strike against racism and Council complicity

OVER the past year the London Borough of Islington has shown itself to be anything but a model employer, despite its "socialist" rhetoric. Last year it was involved against its staff in a 16 week strike in Children's Day Centres.

This year the Council leadership deftly manoeuvred itself out of the fight against ratecapping.

Nevertheless it could have been reasonably believed that when it came to confronting racist practices amongst its own workforce, something that would not have even cost money, the Council would have lived up to its manifesto commitments*, or at least supported its own staff when they stood up to racism. Unfortunately this has not been the case, and NALGO members in Islington are now starting the fourth week of strike action for the most basic principles.

There had been a long standing problem of racial harassment of black staff by white workers in the Rent Ac-

By MICK WOODS

counts Section of the Housing Department. When the council finally got around to taking disciplinary action, three of those accused were found guilty. Vi Howell was cautioned, and Steve Henney and Rene Pledger cautioned and reprimanded. After this half-hearted response the racists went on the offensive and a number of union officials and witnesses involved in the case suffered harassment outside work.

In May a NALGO meeting in the Housing Department agreed to write to the leader of the Council and the Chair of Personnel protesting at the Council's failure to maintain its Equal Opportunities Employment Policy and demanding that the racists on that section be split up and not employed dealing with the public.

In the case of Vi Howells, a supervisor, who in the opinion of the union had merely colluded with, rather

than had been involved in, the harassment, NALGO merely called for her to recognise that she had acted in contravention of the Equal Opportunity Employment Policy and undertake not to repeat this. This she refused to do.

After 3 months of negotiations with the Council, a meeting representing all the neighbourhood office workers voted on August 1 by a massive majority not to open the new decentralised neighbourhood housing offices for so long as any of the proven racists were in jobs giving them contact with the public. Subsequent to this management withdrew their threat to take disciplinary action against workers refusing to work with those proven racists and agreed to isolate Henney and Pledger but still refused to do this in the case of Vi Howell.

Under these circumstances NALGO had no option but to call strike action and, on August 5, of the 469 called out 450, many of them new starters, came out and have held

solid.

Still the Council have refused to give ground on this basic issue despite the support given to NALGO by Islington North and South CLPs, and a group of left wing councillors who are demanding a recall Council meeting to reverse this policy.

Indeed the only allies Islington seems to have are the Communist Party of Great Britain: one Stalinist hard-liner and ex-NALGO secretary Bob Ford drew up a document attacking the strike and advised members to cross picket lines. Another, Seamus Mulready, an estate officer at Cally Neighbourhood office, is scabbing.

MATSA (the GMBATU white collar section) is playing a scandalous role, having publicly attacked the NALGO action and defended Vi Howell who is one of their members. (MATSA is the right wing union in

Islington Council).

On August 19 the Women's, Police and Race Relations Units joined the strike, feeling that they had to strike to retain any credibility while the Council was busy rubbishing its anti-racist manifesto.

So where now? NAGLO is balloting its members for a borough-wide strike, the results of which will be known at the end of next week. If all NALGO members respond with the courage and determination of their comrades in Housing, etc., Islington will be in the same position as the shortlived SDP Council was in 1982.

In May 1982 Labour swept 51 of the 52 seats in Islington after the SDP had confronted the unions. In London Labour Briefing this victory was hailed as "Fortress Islington". Now the "lefts" who took power are acting in

the same fashion as their predecessors; and ex-revolutionaries such as Alan Clinton (now acting leader) are defending racists, and attacking the strike as SWP-inspired (which is nonsense).

This is the most significant strike yet against racism and it has won wide support. The strikers require moral and financial support: contact Islington NALGO on 01-226-8230; 135 Upper Street, London N1.

*In 1982 the Council's manifesto on Race Relations stated that:

"Labour would treat very seriously any grievance against a Council employee connected with racial discrimination. Racism will be considered 'gross misconduct' which could lead to dismissal. In implementing these proposals, the Trade Unions would be fully consulted as to the exact procedure to be followed."

Teachers press on with class warfare

By JANE AISBITT

THE beginning of a new school year marks the renewal of action by NUT members in pursuit of their 1985 pay claim of 12% flat-rated.

Action by NUT members first began in January. The NUM strike was still going on and for the second time in that 12 month struggle teachers too were in dispute.

NUT action continued with selective strikes, an end to lunchtime supervision and refusal to cover for absent colleagues after the first day of absence.

Teachers became increasingly angry at the responses made by the employers and the government. The promise of "jam tomorrow" was seen as inadequate. Keith Joseph's offer of £1.25 billion in return for a contract agreement, with the additional threat of the availability of this money being conditional on acceptance by October, was rejected.

It is important for all public sector workers to note that the intransigence by teachers has proved that the first offer made by the employers is not the final offer.

The relaunch of NUT action this month promises to some extent the escalation called for by Easter Conference. Since then a number of weaknesses in the NUT's strategy have become apparent even to the leadership. The "sweet-heart" deals that the NUT entered into with Local Education Authorities who were prepared to say they supported the claim have been acknowledged as failing to have any effect in negotiations on the Burnham Committee. These deals meant that NUT members in some areas were forced into a

reduction of action after the Conference call for escalation.

Refusal to cover for absent colleagues has had a variable effect partly due to the number of exceptions laid down by the NUT, partly due to the lack of support by other teacher unions who have continued to cover and partly due to the role of the Heads and Deputy Heads in NAHT (National Association of Head Teachers) and SHA (Senior Heads



Keith Joseph: offer with strings.

Association) who have consistently undermined action by themselves taking classes refused by NUT members.

The NUT is now calling upon its members to do nothing but teach; all extra-curricular activities are to stop. High schools are being balloted at the beginning of term on "no day, no cover", which means that classes will not be covered even on the first day of absence. There are to be no exceptions to this rule except for absences due to union business. (Considering the lack of action by certain teacher organisations the definition of union is NUT or NAS/UWT). Also all members in the country are to be balloted for ½ day strikes to take place on an area basis but which will include all members in England and Wales. This will be the first time that all members have been involved in strike action since the campaign began. Strikes will once again affect all Local Education Authorities.

The employers are beginning to get worried by this further increased disruption in schools. They have responded with an "improved offer" (not yet revealed at the time of writing) which includes career structure and separate lunchtime supervision arrangements.

Nicky Harrison, leader of the employers, stated at the time of announcing this latest development that they "need to end the dispute". With continued action the employers will be forced into further concessions. This can only give hope to all public sector workers and strengthen teachers' resolve to carry out this dispute to a successful conclusion.

NUR ballot defeat signals new dangers

By ALAN THORNETT

By JEFF SLEE

THE result of the ballot of guards over industrial action against driver-only operation (DOO) was a massive and completely unexpected setback for railworkers and for the whole fight for jobs. The guards have traditionally been one of the more militant sections of the NUR.

The immediate issue in the ballot was the British Rail Board's (BRB) plans to introduce DOO on trains with the eventual abolition of the grade of guard and the loss of all 11,500 guards' jobs. But the BRB said clearly that they saw the dispute as being not just over DOO, but as a means to smash the NUR's policy of general opposition to the BRB's plans for railworkers.

These include:

- "Flexible rostering" — having shifts of varying lengths instead of the set 8-hour shifts — was introduced in 1982 after the defeat of the two-week ASLEF strike against it. So far, drivers' and guards' shifts vary only between 7 and 9 hours, but the BRB want to increase flexibility of shifts to between 4 and 12 hours, and to introduce "split shifts" (4 hours on, 4 hours off, 4 hours on) which would make working hours even more unsocial.

- "Open Stations" — getting rid of all platform and ticket barrier staff at smaller stations.

- 1,000 redundancies proposed out of 8,000 jobs of S&T staff (those responsible for maintenance of signalling equipment).

- Further closure of workshops — the proposed closure of Swindon workshops next March, the rundown of Glasgow workshops and reductions in other works would mean around 5,000 redundancies over the next two years on top of the 14,000 workshop jobs lost in the last 5 years. These closures arise from the contracting out of building and maintenance of locomotives, coaches and wagons, which was previously all done by BR workshops.

In the longer term, the main threats are:

- Privatisation of particular lines which can be hived off from the rest of the rail network, e.g. the Southend lines out of London Fenchurch St and the London Victoria to Gatwick express.

- Privatisation of major

maintenance work and other peripheral parts of the rail industry.

- Driverless trains — the trains on the Victoria line of the London Underground and on the Tyne & Wear Metro could already be run without drivers, and the BRB are investigating this.

Since 1983 the NUR's positions — to which the leadership has kept — has been "no talks with the BRB over productivity". Following the ballot result this policy is ruined, and the recall conference is likely to reverse it.

Two factors at work within the railways undoubtedly contributed to the defeat.

Firstly, the high level of turnover of railworkers — even now — and the large number of railworkers nearing retiring age means that even large job losses on the "traffic" side (drivers, guards and platform staff) do not necessarily mean redundancies. The BRB, in all the leaflets and personal letters from managers that were put out, made a lot of the argument that early retirement could account for all the jobs lost; although they may now use their victory to try to get rid of militants and those with bad disciplinary records.



Jimmy Knapp with Scots NUM's Eric Clarke; if NUR had fought harder alongside miners, their own fight would have been easier.

As readers will know, the traditional steps taken by bosses cutting jobs are "natural wastage" first, followed by early retirements, voluntary redundancies, and finally compulsory redundancies. It is difficult to fight natural wastage and early retirements, and if those are conceded it becomes more difficult to fight redundancies. The railways are peculiar in that the wages, hours and conditions are so dreadful that until very recently many have given up jobs on the railways for any other jobs they could find; consequently there are still many new people being taken on despite thousands of jobs lost overall.

The offer of early retirements might also have persuaded older guards to vote "no" for fear of losing pension rights, etc., and in the hope of getting generous pay-offs to retire.

Secondly, many guards — even those who voted "yes" — saw DOO as unstoppable. The threat of DOO has been hanging over us for at least nine years. DOO has already been introduced on some lines of the London Underground, on the Tyne and Wear Metro, and in 1983 on the Bedford to St Pancras ("Bedpan") line. In addition, management have for the last 20 years used modernisation — such as new signalling methods, and automatic sliding-door trains — to reduce the responsibilities of guards. To all this the NUR have acquiesced, the result being widespread fatalism about DOO. Some guards — who presumably voted "no" — were arguing that the union should just negotiate the best terms of defeat possible. And many who voted "yes" did so out of loyalty to the union and hostility to management rather than out of any real conviction that a strike would stop DOO.

A further problem was the attitude of many drivers. On the positive side was the wonderful solidarity shown by drivers "put on the spot" by management. Drivers refused to work freight trains converted to DOO at Margam and Llanwern in South Wales and at Immingham in South Humberside, and drivers at King's Cross refused to attend DOO training schools; all being sent home with loss of pay for doing so. And the co-operation of NUR and ASLEF at leadership level through the Rail Union Federation is in marked contrast to the rivalry and hostility that has traditionally existed between the two unions.

But on the negative side, there is still considerable hostility at local level — largely a result of the 1982 ASLEF strike against flexible rostering, when the NUR conceded flexible rostering, and failed to support the drivers. Sid Weighell — then General Secretary of the NUR — openly opposed the ASLEF strike. For many drivers — including some of the most militant of ASLEF members — the bitter reaction to overtures from guards was "you were all quite happy to report for work and

ASLEF leader Roy Buckton: improved links of leadership level are marred by memories of NUR scabbing in 1982.



get paid for doing nothing in the 1982 strike — why should we respect your picket lines now?" To add to this, drivers have been offered a bribe of £7.32 per shift by the BRB for accepting DOO.

The course of events during this summer, and in particular the sacking of over 200 guards on strike, showed how wrong was the decision of this year's NUR Annual Conference to accept the Tory laws on balloting before strikes. This decision was pushed through by Knapp using the justification of the bungled London tube strike earlier this year.

A ballot of guards was called (initially for August 29 but then brought forward by a week). When guards started taking strike action against the attempts to impose DOO on selected freight trains — starting with guards at Margam depot in South Wales on July 15 — it became clear that the ballot was a hindrance to spreading strike action from depot to depot and region to region.

After these guards at Margam, and others at Llanwern and Glasgow, were sacked there was immediate 1-day unofficial strike action on parts of the Southern Region, and occasional 1-day strikes elsewhere.

But many guards depots were waiting for the ballot rather than trying to get unofficial strike action off the ground.

Without the ballot, it might have been possible for unofficial action to become widespread after the sackings, and for the union to call official national strike action on that basis. As it was, the effect of the sackings and the lack of response to them served to intimidate many guards into voting "no".

The BRB had used the "get back to work or you're sacked" threat successfully to end the 1982 ASLEF strike, and had now carried out the same threat against striking guards. They were undoubtedly going to use the same threat in the event of a national guards' strike.

Further intimidation by the BRB was the threat of a lock out: sending

home without pay all railworkers in the event of a guards' strike. The BRB were obviously willing to sit out a long strike, and the government — through mobilising private lorry and coach firms — to outflank a strike.

The general fear of unemployment and of being sacked that now extends through most of the working class, and the failure of the union movement — with the exception of the miners — to fight for jobs affected the ballot. In this atmosphere, management's intimidation was probably the crucial factor.

This intimidation could have been answered if rapid and widespread or national action had been taken in defence of those guards sacked. But the union leadership, having tied their hands by the ballot, refused to organise official action and did little to encourage unofficial action.

Given that, a crucial failure of the NUR leadership was that no strategy for a strike was advanced. Indeed, the proposals for an overtime ban, a work to rule, and selective strike action that the union leadership was going to call if the ballot had been won, showed their own lack of confidence in all-out strike action. What was needed was a serious drive to link up our dispute with driver-only operation on the London Underground and the threat of removal of conductors from buses in order to try to extend strike action to other areas of public transport.

Despite the defeat in the ballot, we can't give up and let management do as they like. The sacked guards still have to be fought for. We will have to fight over the details of implementing DOO, for the best conditions and job protection for guards affected and guards transferred to other jobs. A key task of militants now is to maintain the strength of trades unionism in their depots and to build regular links between depots, so as to be able to take effective industrial action when necessary.

If the ballots of workshop workers and S&T (signals and telegraph) workers vote for action, they will need the support of all railworkers.

TUC backs miners' call: Scargill gets it right!

By ALAN THORNETT

ARTHUR Scargill got it right this year. His decision to reject pre-TUC overtures and present a principled resolution to the TU Congress over the plight of the NUM and the sacked and imprisoned miners resulted in a major victory for the left.

Although the resolution didn't call for amnesty for the imprisoned miners it was a comprehensive list of demands:

- A complete review of all cases of miners jailed as a result of the dispute.

- The reinstatement of miners sacked as a result of the dispute.

- The reimbursement of the NUM and all other unions with all monies confiscated as a result of fines, sequestration and receivership.

- The ending of all pit closures other than by exhaustion.

The adoption of the resolution overturned the recommendation of the General Council — reached by a 16-24 majority — that it should be rejected.

It creates a dramatically new situation in the campaign to defend the sacked and victimised miners and demonstrates once again the impact the strike had on the trade union and labour movement. It shows the authority the NUM still carries as a result of it 6 months after the end of the strike.

The influence of the NUM resulted in conflict within many of the delegations, where the right wing were opposing the resolution. Scargill's speech evoked memories of the strike, which are still strong in the working class. The ASTMS delegation, for example, forced a last-minute switch in favour of the resolution, despite the opposition of Clive Jenkins.

The way this resolution was carried shows again that last year's decision by the NUM leaders to compromise on their demands with the TUC General Council at the height of the strike was a serious mistake. Much more could have been won if the NUM had gone in and fought it out.

Arthur Scargill's attitude this year is what it should have been then: "we will either win or see clearly where everyone stands!" He put it this way in the *Morning Star* on the first day of Congress:

"When the TUC makes its decision,

the world will be watching, the wider labour movement will be watching, the public at large will be watching, and, perhaps most importantly of all, 632 men and their wives and children will be watching to see whether the labour movement stands by the modern day equals of the Tolpuddle martyrs."

The TUC decision, which was reached on a card vote of 4,649,000 to 4,585,000, a majority of 64,000 in favour, focuses all attention on the Labour Party Conference next month.

Despite the fact that Neil Kinnock has said he would not carry out such a decision, a victory for the same resolution there would be a further major boost to the campaign. The campaign to force Kinnock to put it in the manifesto and to carry it out would come later. As we go to press it seems likely that the NUM can win such a motion at Bournemouth.

The TUC decision puts major new responsibilities onto the miners themselves, the support movement and the labour movement as a whole.

The campaign must be stepped up by the NUM. A weakness of the TUC intervention was that it was not accompanied by an adequate campaign on the resolution prior to the Congress, and there was no lobby of the TUC outside the doors of the Congress while the issue was being debated. A massive lobby of miners and supporters would have increased support for the resolution and advanced the campaign.

Nothing should be left to chance with the Labour Conference. There must be a massive lobby organised nationally by the NUM.

This is another very good reason why the support groups and the women's support groups must be kept going and revitalised where they have been wound down.

The recent Sheffield conference of Women Against Pit Closures, for all its problems of establishing a functioning democratic structure, showed that the movement is still there and can be mobilised on the issues facing the movement.

The response to the Conference of support groups called by a number of groups for October 12 also shows that the support groups are still there if they can establish a means of co-ordinating the campaign.

Arthur Scargill spelled out the



TION

importance of the Support Groups very well in the *Morning Star* when talking about the campaigning to defend the victimised miners.

"The organisations to carry that message forward are already in place; the support groups around the country (and abroad) and the women's organisations."

If the TUC decision is to boost the campaign for the victimised and imprisoned miners this must mean a new attitude to the two cases which are by far the most important in this — Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland. They were convicted of murder following the death of a taxi driver in South Wales and are now serving life sentences.

No date has been published yet for the special conference of the NUM called to discuss the campaign to defend the victimised miners. It is understood to be early October. That Conference has a responsibility to build on the TUC decisions, and begin to take some direct action on the issue.

There should be a one day NUM strike on that day. And there must be a full scale official mobilisation by the NUM and support groups for a mass picket of the court on the day of the appeals by Shankland and Hancock.

Women Against Pit Closures: Fighting for our futures

By JENNY FISHER

QUESTION: If you had to decide the structure of a working class women's movement, which would you see as the more democratic body to make the decisions: 468 women from around the country, or 17 women from specific areas?

That was the question which was discussed for most of the morning session of the Women Against Pit Closures national conference in Sheffield on August 17. The answer? The 17-women National Committee said 17: many of the 468 women said 468: in practice, 17 won the day.

Coming as delegates to the first national Conference of Women Against Pit Closures to be called since the return to work, many women expected to have a say in how the organisation was to be structured from now on. Some had received written proposals from the National Committee, had discussed and submitted amendments, and expected to be part of a vote on the issues.

But the National Committee had different ideas. Have a say: yes; but no voting. The meeting was to be kept to a Consultative Conference: delegates could speak, but then they would have to rely on the National Committee to take account of the views they'd heard expressed and formulate the proposals. The proposals would be put to a further national gathering for a vote: but no guarantees on what kind of national meeting that would be.

The National Committee argued that any woman from the Women's Support Groups who wanted to come had been able to attend as a delegate, i.e. with speaking rights. Some areas were underrepresented: if delegates voted as well as spoke, it wouldn't be fair.

It was true that some areas were underrepresented: Scotland, for example, had only been able to bring 22 women, with the cost of travel a big factor. But for many women, this was the first national Women Against Pit Closures meeting they'd heard about and been invited to come to. If they didn't have their say now, it might be their last chance.

Back and forth the debate went all morning, with the Chair seeming unwilling to clear it all up by attempting to discover the majority wish of the meeting and stick to it.

The situation was resolved only by the arrival of the three fraternal speakers from the NUM: Mick McGahey, Peter Heathfield and Arthur Scargill. Their speeches took the Conference up to the lunchbreak. The National Committee used the respite of the lunchbreak to agree on how to deal with the situation (with a show of hands being spotted by those observing the huddle!).

After two guest speakers had started the afternoon session, the platform announced that as the Conference was so concerned to hear everyone's opinions, there would be one speaker from each area.

Despite the anger felt by many delegates, much came out to show that the gains women made in the strike — in terms of seeing themselves as political — have become deeply ingrained and lasting. It would be difficult to judge which issue women felt strongest about, but issues taken up were:

● The sacked and imprisoned miners

Women share the outrage of the whole labour movement at the way in which miners have been selectively sacked by the Coal Board and imprisoned by the state for taking part, with their union, in industrial action. But, as they did during the strike, women are bearing the brunt of the effects.

Women at the Conference saw support for the sacked and imprisoned miners and their families as a very major issue: and from the reports given it was clear that women are leading the collecting and campaigning to help this hardship. Liz French from Kent, whose husband is in jail summed up the feelings by saying, "It's not 'justice' we want: it's total amnesty for every sacked and jailed miner."

● The scab union

This issue came up in two ways. First, there was the question of whether "scab wives" should be allowed to participate in Women Against Pit Closures. It would have been easy to disown them, but there was also the point that women shouldn't be judged by their husbands' actions. Various possibilities were suggested, including exploring the differences between "scab" and "superscab" wives; and leaving it up to local groups to decide whether to work with scab wives.

The platform was not so keen on this issue being discussed at all, feeling that it was potentially divisive. But one delegate pointed out that she'd had to make up her mind. Her husband was the only striking miner in the whole of their village: now the question of a scab union was being discussed, and she was working with "scab wives" on this issue because where others supported the national NUM, it was important that they should all campaign together.

Notts. women appealed to other women to come down to Notts. and work with them; stressing how important it was to win the battle for one national NUM.

● "Other" issues

"Your fight is our fight" was commonly seen on placards during the strike. Women at the Conference were keen to turn the slogan round now, as well. "Your fight is our fight" was the sentiment behind the strong support expressed for the railworkers, who were then heading for confrontation with the Tories. If the miners hadn't stopped the Tories (yet), any possible continuation of that struggle by other workers was going to be fully supported.

The banner on the platform reminded us of women's struggles to save jobs and services, and women also spoke about the ways in which the Tories affect our lives: cuts in social security, education and hospitals, and the need to fight them.

● International Solidarity

Tanya Abramsce brought greetings from the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), and spoke about the black struggle. She was given a standing ovation. The struggle over there was clearly not so far away: we were all part of one and the same fight.

● Associate Membership of the NUM

The Conference was united in feeling put down by the NUM's rejection of Women Against Pit Closures' request for associate membership of the union. Had we been forgotten so soon? Well, we weren't going to go away, we'd be back next year. Women won't be forgotten.

The campaign for affiliation was given a boost by Mick McGahey, who said that as the Scottish Area had voted for associate membership, the Scottish Area would have it: national policy or not, and let anyone take him up on this if they wanted to. This move — once we see it happening — will provide a basis to argue for other supportive Areas to start associate membership on an Area basis: and the campaign can use this to gather momentum towards 1986 NUM Conference.

So there was much that was positive in the Conference: proof that women are still organising, still campaigning, despite the return to work of the NUM. But the task of organising a democratic Women Against Pit Closures, open and accessible to all its members, remains.

Union leaders obstruct fight for NHS

WEST Lambeth District Health Authority, which in July looked as though it might have made an isolated defiant stand against Government imposed cuts crumbled under the threat (not the reality — only the threat) of Tory-appointed commissioners coming in to run the service.

Two hundred local people listened while members made rhetorical speeches and then voted through a cuts budget which will reverse the community care initiatives and will freeze most vacancies in the District.

Sadly the COHSE branches in the District must take some responsibility for the cuts. One member said he was swayed by a letter from COHSE stewards saying they would rather have District Health Authority members make cuts than have commissioners in again (six years ago the Lambeth Area Health Authority was disbanded by the Minister for refusing to pass a cuts budget).

This is the argument which had been put forward by the full-time COHSE official who obviously prefers to negotiate on jobs and services rather than back the members in a fight.

The fact that Lambeth actually held out for so long is unique. The attitude however of the full time officer is not, and is being repeated in many areas of the country when a fight looks inevitable.

The NHS has now been under direct attack since 1979. Every year gets worse. Two years ago we were only fighting cuts — now it is cuts and privatisation. The combination is devastating.

Private companies are gaining more ground daily in the NHS. Out of 177 domestic contracts awarded by the end of June, 107 have gone to private companies. Many of the in-house contracts have included massive job losses or lost bonus payments.

Sadly, many union officials consider the winning of in-house contracts as a "victory" against privatisation. Not only do they ignore the immediate effects on jobs and pay but they refuse to see the consequences in three years time when many of the contracts will come up for renewal.

There is still, however, a determination to fight back against

By JANE GOSS

privatisation amongst workers in many areas.

Despite a sordid attempt by NUPE to sell out the Barking strike, the women are still out on the picket line fighting for their jobs back. In Cambridge Addenbrookes Hospital workers have joined the Barking women in a long and isolated battle — they have been out now for almost a year.

In Sunderland, domestics took action against the privatising of the community clinics and health centres. They have now been joined by catering staff and cleaners at the hospitals.

This kind of action shows that it is possible to spread strike action. The members will come out and increasingly they will come out in support of other sections. One reason is because privatisation is now so widespread that most workers are realising that the inevitable will happen to them if they don't fight to defend the existing jobs.

There are of course some areas where members do not and will not fight. But there have always been districts like that and it is not an argument for refusing to link up the battles against privatisation.

At COHSE conference in June we



NUPE's Bickerstaffe

watched while the delegate from Newcastle (representing the striking cleaners at Royal Victoria Hospital) agreed to accept a remit on a resolution calling for a national day of action in support of the strike. She was in tears. She had been put under intense pressure by the General Secretary to accept the remit or have the NEC oppose the resolution.

She described in detail how difficult it had been to get the union to give any practical support to the strike; how the members came out expecting an immediate response from COHSE and had to fight even to get enough placards for the picket line.

In Chesterfield, the workers have been on strike for four months now and are still isolated. They have made links with Barking and Addenbrookes, but no thanks to NUPE.

As well as the longer strikes the list of one-day actions in all parts of the country is impressive — it shows determination to oppose privatisation. But there is no will on the part of the union leaderships to take up the battle and to link all the struggles together.

Instead, we have the manoeuvres of people like NUPE's Bickerstaffe and COHSE's Williams, desperately trying to damp down the membership who see their jobs rapidly disappearing.

NUPE's move to the right since this year's conference has been swift and



WILLIAMS
COHSE's Williams

PRIVATISATION Kills 99% of all known NHS standards!

EMERGENCY
ACTION
COMMITTEE
NHS

rock bottom level are now diverting money from capital building projects. This often means that repairs, badly needed in many of the old hospital buildings are not being done.

Tory policies will mean literally that buildings will be falling down. Even the most inexperienced planner will see that this is a ridiculous policy which in the long run is much more expensive to remedy.

There is a desperate need for more people to get involved in the fightback against the health cuts. In many areas when there is a local point — for example a whole hospital closing or a strike — then trade unionists and local people get involved.

But every day there are insidious cuts happening both in services and jobs and they must be opposed. Every trades council should set up a health subcommittee actively to help the health workers in the area.

Every Labour Council should also have a health subcommittee making resources and money available to health campaigns. In areas where Health Emergency campaigns are operating, they should turn more towards the defence of the services, and link up with health workers who are very often left to fight both management and their own bureaucracy on their own.

The Barking strike committee have taken the initiative to break some of the isolation by calling together a meeting of other strike committees and interested health and local government workers.

The National Action Committee is still in its early stages and can help give people the confidence to fight; but any opposition which will succeed must be built with strong local support.

Bickerstaffe and Williams are not leaders. They are careerist bureaucrats. They are prepared to make deals, to sell jobs, to watch services disappear. But they can and must be pushed to defend their members.

Health Emergencies, the National Action Committee, and local campaigns can motivate and support activists who will fight; but they do not claim to be a replacement for trade union structures.

All socialists must take on the fight to defend and extend the NHS. It is not a fight we can afford to lose.

moves by NUPPE, is not on its own. Throughout London it is getting increasingly more difficult to get NUPPE to back any action at all.

In Croydon they have disgusted local NALGO members by unilateral pulling out of a joint anti-closure campaign. Their official spent twenty minutes with workers in an old people's home scheduled to close, and told them to accept redeployment!

The joint union campaign which had been meeting for 18 months was not even consulted, and effective joint work around keeping the old people's home open has been wrecked at a crucial stage.

In Kingston, Sue Shipman, a NUPPE official and leading member of the SDP, actually gave evidence on behalf of management, opposing unions who wanted to keep the housekeeping staff in the health district in with the domestic staff for purposes of specifications for private contractors. She then negotiated a disastrous in-house tender which meant a 37% cut.

In Harrow, where the local Health Emergency campaign has been actively working with NUPPE stewards to help them oppose privatisation, the NUPPE official Mark Irvine has now forbidden them to talk to stewards. In Brent the same official has actively attempted to undermine branch decisions to fight a local hospital closure.

NUPPE officials have never been revolutionaries, and have always been involved in sell outs; but the present climate is even worse than usual. NUPPE, once seen as the most rapidly developing a reputation as the union that will not fight or back its members who do.

At the very time when NUPPE and COHSE should be fighting to oppose the cuts and privatisation and should be backing their members, they are pulling out and consciously working to defuse action. And it is going to be even more serious in the face of the cuts to come. Reeling from increased stringent cash limits, all health authorities have now been told that they must find extra money to fund the nurses' pay award which the Government is refusing to fund in full. This means additional cuts have to be made.

The average cut per district is reckoned to be £250,000. This amount will have to be found before April. In some areas the figure is much higher and means that whole wards have to close and as many as 300 staff will be lost.

In Brent the DHA have recommended the closure of a whole hospital just to meet the extra costs of the pay award.

These cuts will never be reversed unless the Labour Party starts to make some firm policies on health spending, they will not be reversed even if Labour do come to power. Some Districts in a desperate bid not to cut any more from services already at

sharp. It is perhaps most obvious in London and the South East, where well known Stalinist hacks and right wingers have been imported to witch-hunt the left and to support Bickerstaffe and Sawyer at Head Office. Their biggest gaffe so far has been the outrageous position they took at Barking.

The local NUPPE official ignored the strike committee which has been running the strike since the beginning, and decided to convene a meeting of the NUPPE members. The meeting was boycotted by most of the women because of the way in which it was called.

Les Perkins, the official, sent a letter to all the NUPPE members following the meeting saying that the decision had been taken to stop the picketing from July 9, although strike pay would continue to be paid. What enraged the women was the way Perkins used Pritchard's style tactics to deliver the letter, sending it around by private courier to each woman's home. Meanwhile the GMBATU decided to continue to back their strikers if they wanted to continue to picket.

On July 13 there was a "final" picket at Barking. The strike committee had already issued a statement saying that they would not cease picketing on July 9 but would end the picketing on July 13 because the union would no longer back them.

If, as Les Perkins tried to make out, it was an honourable end to the dispute which the women had agreed to, why didn't he turn up for the final mass picket? In fact on July 13 there was not one NUPPE official at Barking hospital. Bickerstaffe, who had described the strike as "NUPPE's Coronwood", obviously wished it would just disappear.

There were NUPPE members from the Midlands and from Addenbrookes at the picket. All were disgusted at NUPPE's position. Three NUPPE sponsored MPs turned up and promised to raise the issue with the union. But the most glaring attempt to discredit the women of Barking came from Chris Humphreys the Assistant Divisional Officer, who gave a statement to the local radio station saying that it was not NUPPE backing out, but that the women had themselves made the decision and that many of them were tired of getting up at 5 am to do their picket duties!

This enraged the women, who gave the full facts to the local reporter. NUPPE were then so embarrassed by this plus other unfavourable press reports that they sent Les Perkins around to tell the women that they could after all continue to picket and that the letter had been a "mistake".

The Barking women had little faith left in their union before the July incident: but nearly all of them now see that the role of trade union bureaucrats is inevitably to sell the membership down the drain.

Barking, although the best known dispute and the most botched of the



Demonstration on the Falls Road.

Photo: Andrea Campbell

"Troops Out" delegation to Ireland Even the dole office looks like a prison

"I HAVE become more and more convinced — and the only question is to drive this conviction home to the English working class — that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland most definitely from the policy of the ruling class, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish but actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801."

Karl Marx wrote these words over a hundred years ago and while much has happened since, the sentiment and analysis remain as pertinent today as ever.

We were part of the Troops Out Movement '85 Delegation to Belfast, a city divided by British imperialism.

We "see" the war in Ireland continuously on news programmes and on TV documentaries but we see it from a perspective which is defined by the very imperialism which has created the trouble and we see it from the comfort of our British living rooms. Being there made it real, experiencing even for a short time the repression and the State violence which is part of the day to day life of the Republican community.

By JANE GOSS
and STEVE CLARE

Talking to the men and women of West Belfast, trade unionists, Sinn Fein activists, ex POWs, the families of people murdered by plastic bullets, women from Armagh Prison — the reality is a nightmare but it is a nightmare which has created tremendous strength and solidarity and a movement that will not and cannot be broken.

Belfast is a city at war. When we arrived our coach driver refused to take us to the Falls Road, so we had to walk from the City centre. Within 5 minutes a patrol drove by, two RUC landrovers, thick metal grills over the windows and vivid paint splashes marking previous encounters with the local youth. Sandwiched between the landrovers was a British Army armoured personnel carrier, the head and shoulders of two soldiers protruding from the top. Both were wearing helmets with visors and holding rifles at the ready. Back they came, the RUC stopping at the rear and front of the delegation while the military swung across the road and disgorged a squad of soldiers who took up position in doorways and behind garden walls. Meanwhile the

RUC politely asked us what we were doing, reinforcing their request by pointing sub-machine guns at us. One woman took a photograph and immediately had her camera taken from her and the film exposed.

This ever present military force was striking. It was common to walk round the corner and find soldiers in position, rifles raised, while the RUC questioned somebody. Many of them carried short, wide-barelled riot control guns slung over their shoulders. The armoured patrols would pass by every few minutes.

This was normality in West Belfast; the outward display of the British State desperately trying to intimidate the Republican minority. Yet what we were seeing was the policy of "Ulsterisation" or "normalisation" as the authorities like to call it. The use of the term would be farcical if it was not in such a serious setting. The policy indicates the replacement of British troops by the RUC as the main agents of internal security in an attempt to hide British responsibility and reduce British casualties.

However, trying to give the RUC a "beat bobby" image is not easy. They still need army protection, and the guns remain the same. For the people of West Belfast nothing has changed. They know who the enemy is and continue to fight. Every symbol of British

occupation is a target.

The RUC forts are massive concrete structures surrounded by corrugated iron fences and barbed wire with sophisticated video and listening equipment covering every approach. Occasionally they come under mortar bomb attack!

Even the dole office looked like a prison with large chain link fences, double gates and video surveillance. These buildings and heavily armoured patrol vehicles are a constant reminder that the 6 Counties are subject to an occupation by foreign forces. On every available space in West Belfast, Republican murals and IRA and Sinn Fein slogans proclaim defiance and reinforce the knowledge that the British State will never win.

Back in the Ardoyne where we were staying we had a chance to see what the war meant to the families who live in this environment. The night before we arrived there had been a riot a couple of hundred yards from where we were billeted. The street was full of bricks and the smouldering remains of a bonfire.

At ten to one in the morning a six year old had knocked at the door of Joe and Maria, our hosts, to ask if their children were coming out to join in the attack on the Brits.

Joe had been in Long Kesh for four years and was only released 4 months ago. A nightly ritual was to jam a heavy iron bar up against the front door to delay the RUC if they chose to try one of their periodic raids. The clubs we drank in all had IRA posters up and held collections every night for Green Cross, the prisoners' aid fund.

The Ardoyne, like most Republican areas, is a community under siege, living with constant insecurity, but this is reflected not in withdrawal but in a warmth and friendliness that was almost tangible.

Part of the visit included a series of workshops with Sinn Fein on various issues including women, plastic bullets, POWs and trade unions. The session on plastic bullets was introduced by the relatives of some of the victims of the RUC and the British Army and included a video giving background information and case studies.

A plastic bullet weighs about 4 ounces, the same as a cricket ball, and is fired with a muzzle velocity of about 160 miles per hour. They can be lethal. Fifteen people have now died, seven of them children, many of them innocent of any "misbehaviour". Nora McCabe, for example, died in 1981 during the Hunger Strike. She was on her way to the local shop when an RUC jeep approached and a policeman fired at her head from a range of about six feet.

In May of that year a staggering 16,656 rounds were fired, causing a number of horrific injuries including blindness and brain damage. In August 1981 an International Commission of Enquiry travelled to Belfast

to investigate the use of plastic bullets. One of its members was Senior British Research Scientist Dr Tim Shallice, who wrote in the New Statesman, 'the conclusion seemed inescapable to members of the Commission: the Northern Ireland authorities were knowingly allowing widespread, indiscriminate and illegal use of a weapon whose lethal potential was well known.' Plastic bullets are still in use and a number of Police Forces in Britain have stockpiles for use in this country.

The RUC have received full support from the trade unions in the 6 counties and this gives some idea of the politics of the Northern Ireland Committee (NICTU) of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). Historically the unions have been Protestant, although this is less true today with the expansion of the public sector.

Nevertheless, the autonomy of operation granted to NICTU constitutes a de-facto recognition of partition which was the price paid by the ICTU in order that they in turn would be granted recognition by the Stormont Government in the early 1970s.

Even their economic strategy for recovery, "The Trade Union Alternative", is entirely a programme for the British Government to produce more jobs and improve Northern living standards. At no point does it consider fostering links with the South, for fear of being tainted with the Republican brush.

Like the Workers' Party and the Communist Party, their role has been one of collaboration. But perhaps the biggest problem for people in Britain to recognise is that trade unions in the North are not very important. They have very little political impact at all and are regarded by much of the Republican community as largely irrelevant. After all, you need to have a job to be a trade unionist, and in areas like Ballymurphy, Turf Lodge and the Ardoyne, male unemployment approaches 80%.

A former Plessey steward said "It's important to realise that because the Northern Ireland Committee organises workers from both Catholic and Protestant traditions, that doesn't mean that they are immune from sectarianism. Quite the opposite. They don't try to challenge sectarianism, let alone its roots which lie in the structures of the state, and ultimately with the British control of the state."

However, it is women who particularly bear the brunt of the war. Being a mother is never easy. Being a mother in the war-torn 6 Counties is a constant heartache and worry.

Listening to Maria describing the arrest of her husband, the hassle with the RUC, the pushing within Sinn Fein for support, the trekking to the prison, was amazing. She wasn't complaining but rather relating the everyday occurrences for Republican women in the North. She is a remarkable woman and there are thousands more like her.

She talked about the constant

worry of the kids (aged 4, 6 and 10) being out, "But you can't keep them in. I always tell them to come home if there is trouble. I worry all the time. They know the Army and RUC shoot plastic bullets but they never think it will be them that get hit."

She talked about the fight she had at her son's school while her husband was still in prison and the teachers said her oldest son was slow (he had seen his father arrested when he was only 6). She said that she argued and fought with them:

"Slow! Last week he was watching TV and I turned over to watch some rubbish. He shouted at me: 'Mammy!' he said, 'I'm watching a programme about South Africa.' He told me about Apartheid and that it was wrong. It was white people picking on other people because they were black. And now the black people were fighting back... he's slow? He had to go to see the school psychologist who asked him lots of questions. One of the questions was 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' He answered that he wanted to be a policeman. When we came out I asked why he said that. He replied, 'Well, I thought it would confuse them.'"

Women with older sons and daughters watched the anguish and desolation of their children's lives being wasted in British run jails, often put there by evidence provided by the new breed of Supergrasses — paid perjurers — and sentenced by a Judge with no Jury.

The strength of the women is the strength of the whole community. Maria said that she always knew that what was going on in the country was wrong. But she left it up to her husband to fight. Then he got arrested and was facing imprisonment under the evidence of Supergrass Christopher Black who was from Ardoyne and used to drink in the local club.

Maria was so outraged at what had happened that she started to fight and now there is no stopping her. She is active in the Women's Section of Sinn Fein and is challenging them on their attitudes to women organising and fighting back.

The lives of the women in the North of Ireland are taken up with the same fight as are the men's, but the women also have the traditional burden of dealing with the emotions involved, of holding the family together, of being strong and coping. They don't talk about it much and they don't complain about it. They do it daily, relentlessly.

Many women are also in prison. There is now particular emphasis on the degradation of the Strip Searches going on in Armagh Jail and there is an active campaign against them. One woman in Armagh has been strip-searched 200 times. Only remand prisoners are strip-searched. On remand, you go to Court once a week — strip searched on the way out and on the way in despite the fact that the Court appearance may only be

ten minutes and the prisoner is never out of sight of the guard.

During trials women are often searched twice a day. One woman who was recently released from Armagh talked about how degrading it is and how angry the women feel. Strip-searches are just the latest tactic of the British to continue to harass and intimidate those who fight against the system.

Sitting in the Women's Workshop, listening to the humiliation described by a young woman released after 9 years (only 17 when she went in) made everyone aware of the immediate need for more people to realise what is happening in Armagh and for more interest in the "Stop the Strip-Searches Campaign" over here.

Irish women, like the Miners' wives, do not stand behind the men silently supporting them. They stand beside them, with them and sometimes in front of them. They give their lives, their children's lives, their health, their sanity — they give their all for the struggle for a United Ireland.

One last memory is the August 11 March through Belfast commemorating the ending of internment. It was unlike any other demonstration that we had ever been on. It is ordered, it is disciplined, it is serious. It is done in active defiance of the British who attempt to control Ireland with guns, bullets and repressive legislation.

The March was led and punctuated by marching bands of mainly youth, in paramilitary style band uniforms. It was watched not only by the thousands of supporters lining the route but also by hordes of British soldiers and RUC, heavily armed and glowering with hostility.

At the rally at the end an army helicopter hovered harassingly overhead effectively drowning out the speeches. Danny Morrison, however, had the last "word", when at the end of his speech he held up a poster proclaiming "Victory to the IRA". The applause of the crowd left no doubt that they mean to have their victory.

The message from the delegation was of solidarity with the fight for a United Socialist Ireland. The march, the picket of the forts, the work-shops and the talks with the local people all increased our knowledge of the reality of the oppression in Ireland. As James Connolly once said, "the cause of labour is the cause of Ireland, the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour."

Those of us who were there have a responsibility to ensure that the struggle for Irish independence is raised much more in the labour movement here, that the battle against imperialism which is at our doorstep is not swept under the carpet.

One of the slogans on the march was "British out of Ireland. Prisoners out of Jail. TROOPS OUT NOW!" — **THAT MESSAGE MUST BE HEARD.**



Photo: Andrea Campbell





Grappling with Latin America's debt crisis

FIDEL Castro has been taking time out from the preparations to reschedule Cuba's \$850m debt to the Western banks — by opening a campaign to persuade Latin America's big borrowers to refuse to pay their collective debts of over \$360 billion.

At two special conferences in Havana, Castro set out the case from all angles — including the argument that the Western economies would actually benefit from writing off these colossal debts, since the Latin American countries would have that much extra money to spend, and thus stimulate flagging export industries. Nobody would lose — apart from the bankers! Anyway, Castro argues, the debts are unpayable because of high Western interest rates.

This latest campaign by Castro is certainly hypocritical: he has not tried to adopt such a line in Cuba's own dealings with the Western banks, still less with Cuba's estimated \$10bn debt to the Soviet Union; and he knows full well that Soviet economic backing on anything like the Cuban scale would never be available for other Latin American countries.

It is also a classless policy, aimed not at mobilising the masses of Latin

America against their bourgeois governments and their various wage-cutting "austerity" plans; but at persuading bourgeois economic experts and finance ministers that collective repudiation of foreign loans would be the best policy. It amounts to a bizarre attempt at a continental cross-class front against the imperialist bankers.

In this respect, Castro's line is not new, but a revised version of his May Day 1980 appeal to the reactionary governments and feudal rulers of the OPEC oil states for a united front with Iran against the USA:

"This is the time for OPEC to show what it is made of, to show that it wasn't created just to raise prices and amass huge fortunes. This is the trial of fire for OPEC, the nonaligned countries and the countries of the Third World."

Predictably, they all failed the test! In place of Castro's cross-class utopia of a "debtors' cartel" as a means to fight imperialist exploitation, the essential starting point must be the unity and political independence of the working class in Latin America.



Cock-eyed optimist? Bolivia's new President Paz Estenssoro prepares to confront workers.

• Brazil's government, struggling with an ever-increasing \$103bn debt, has won a 3-month stay of execution from the IMF, but scorned the routine IMF remedies as a long-term solution.

The Finance Minister and central bank president have both resigned, leaving less orthodox figures in president Jose Sarney's government to try their policies. Real wages have already been cut by 50% over the past 3 years, while inflation is running at 200% and the economy has slumped back into recession. Even at the height of the recent "export boom", the whole of Brazil's \$12 billion trade surplus was barely enough to meet interest payments on the foreign debt.

Now the country's Planning Minister, Joao Sayad, is adamant in rejecting the monetary restraint and cuts in government spending customarily demanded by the IMF. One of his aides declared:

"I'm not going to entertain dismissing a quarter of the workforce just for the sake of macroeconomic stability."

President Sarney himself is echoing the same defiant note:

"We cannot pay the debt with democracy... Brazil's economy must grow by at least 5 per cent every year, and this must be the starting point of any readjustment programme."

Elsewhere he has insisted that he would not allow the "dogmatic intransigence" of the IMF and others to impose recession on Brazil.

It remains to be seen whether this stubborn stance will remain firm in the face of growing pressure from the bankers. Brazilian workers, who in either case face further speed-up and attacks on their living standards from multinational employers' Sarney's capitalist cabinet, will need to establish their own line of struggle rather than wait for the outcome.

• Bolivian workers are again out on strike as we go to press, this time against the brutal austerity measures of the newly-elected right wing government of President Paz Estenssoro. Under conditions of 14,000% inflation, the peso has been devalued by 95% from 75,000 to the dollar to 1.5 million.

But wages have been frozen until December, while petrol prices are raised by 900%. There is to be a major shakeup for state-owned industries, where miners in particular have waged repeated struggles for workers' control.

• The new populist government headed by social democratic President Alan Garcia has cocked a snook at the world's bankers, declaring that Peru will limit interest payments to 10% of its export revenue.

Rejecting IMF monetarism, Garcia has argued that Peru will pay its \$14 billion debts — but in its own time and not at the expense of further recession. A classic example of bourgeois "anti-imperialism", Garcia's stance is another indication of the acute economic and social pressures on the newly-elected regimes of Latin America, attempting to balance between their natural allies and masters in the Western banks on the one hand, and the mass electorate (and vulnerable domestic capitalist class) at home on the other.

He has matched his radical line on the debt question with populist moves against the perks and privileges of government and state industry employees.

But he is already at loggerheads with striking bank workers demanding a 20% wage increase — to match the current rate of inflation.

Reagan boosts war effort

By HARRY SLOAN



THE highly publicised problems with Ronald "Rambo" Reagan's nose has not prevented him poking it even further into affairs in Nicaragua.

Even as the official flow of funds to the "contra" murder squads was being resumed, the White House admitted that a top US military man, Colonel Oliver North, had been constantly advising and liaising between the contra gangs and the President himself.

There is no doubt that clandestine CIA funding of the contras — bolstered by lavish private donations from wealthy reactionaries in the USA — has continued and even increased despite the official ban imposed by Congress.

And while the \$27m now released is supposed to carry strings which prevent it being used for purchases of arms or ammunition, it is clear that any material supplies to the ruthless army (consisting of allegedly as many as 18,000 ex-Somozistas and mercenaries) will free the other contra funds for arms.

Reagan now makes no effort to conceal his ambition for the Contras to oust the elected Sandinista government — making a nonsense of the flimsy initial pretext that contra operations were designed to block alleged arms flows from Nicaragua to the Salvador freedom fighters. As Secretary of State George Schultz crudely summed it up:

"We consider the problem of Central America basically to be Nicaragua, as supported by Cuba and the Soviet Union."

Now the White House hopes to persuade the endlessly gullible and chauvinist anti-communists in Congress to stump up even more money next year to enable an increase of the contra forces to 35,000 strong.

There is no doubt that Reagan can muster money, men and machinery to his reactionary course on the borders of Nicaragua: but so far over \$80m million in CIA aid to the contras has produced only an embarrassing succession of squalid rape, looting, brutality and murder, with scarcely a military victory of any scope or duration. Even the active involvement of CIA equipment and agency men has failed to give the contras anything to write home to Washington about.

Instead the Sandinistas have been

able to rally the forces to drive out the contra armies to the South, and have inflicted major defeats on the laughably titled "Nicaraguan Democratic Force" to the North.

The grisly activities of the contras and the antics of the Reagan administration have antagonised even more capitalist governments in Latin America.

The original group of four "Contadora" countries seeking a negotiated peace in Central America in order to head off any spread of revolution (Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela) has been reinforced by a "support group" of Peru, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay — each of which has in recent years disposed of US-backed military regimes.

Their obscurely-worded communiqué from Colombia at the end of August was interpreted by one of the foreign ministers involved as a call on the USA not to invade Nicaragua, and a plea for a negotiated settlement.

Reagan, indifferent to the sensibilities of any but the most thick skulled US redneck, is however firmly set on his trade embargo against Nicaragua, which by paralysing the supply of even trivial spare parts for US-supplied equipment is having a serious impact on the weak economy. In the medical school at Leon, for instance, a single \$100 component for an ITT telephone switchboard has not been replaced — causing havoc in day-to-day work.

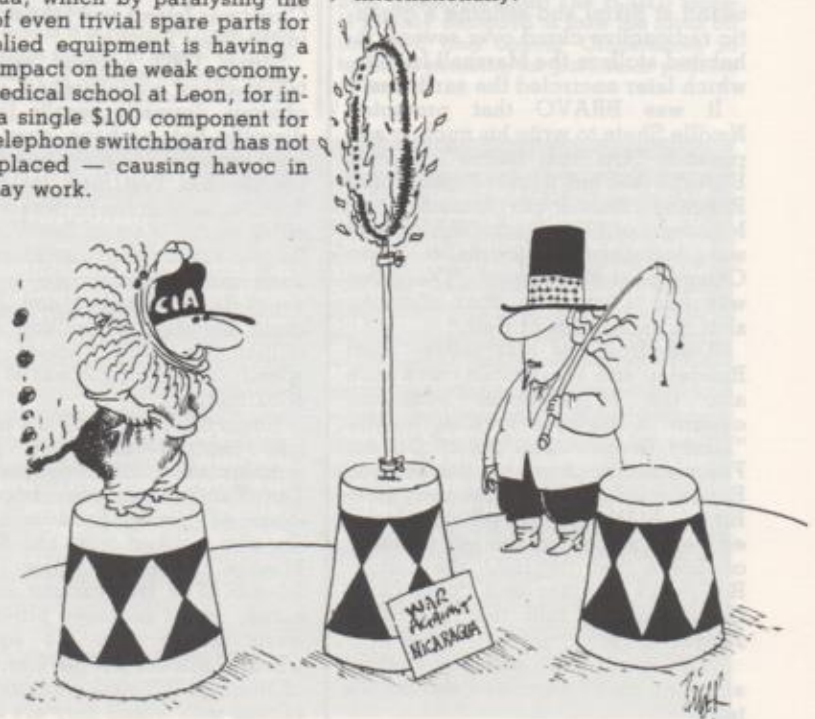
On a broader scale the Sandinistas have found new buyers in Latin America, the Arab countries and in Europe for Nicaraguan sugar, coffee and bananas: but with prices low and vital goods in short supply, life remains difficult.

Ironically it will be Nicaragua's private businesses which will be hardest hit by the embargo on US spares and equipment — and they may even be forced to replace US machinery with alternatives from elsewhere.

The present conditions of blockade and black market are certainly not the type of "mixed economy" advocated by the Sandinistas, and are a far cry from socialist planning.

But every atrocity by the contras reminds Nicaragua's small population of the recent horrors of life under the Somoza dictatorship and serves to strengthen the mass determination not to retreat.

The struggle to carry forward the Nicaraguan struggle for socialism must begin with the defence of the gains achieved so far and the defeat of the imperialist offensive. Central to this must be solidarity action from the labour movement in the USA and internationally.



No nuclear dumping in the Pacific

"If it is safe, dump it in Tokyo, test it in Paris, store it in Washington but keep my Pacific nuclear free."

(poster of Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific Movement)

"There are only 90,000 people out there; who gives a damn?"

Henry Kissinger (1069) commenting on Micronesia, W. Pacific.

THERE have been nearly 1,500 nuclear test explosions since the first one in July 1945. This amounts to an average of one nuclear explosion per week being conducted somewhere in the world. Despite past attempts to negotiate a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the USA and the USSR have continued nuclear testing at a terrifying rate. At the same time other states have joined the race with others on the way.

The most notorious nuclear test took place on March 1 1954 when the US exploded a 15 megaton H Bomb (code named BRAVO) 1,200 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb, completely wiping out an island at Bikini and sending a gigantic radioactive cloud over several inhabited atolls in the Marshall Islands, which later encircled the earth itself.

It was BRAVO that prompted Neville Shute to write his nuclear age parable "On the Beach". It was BRAVO that led Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell to launch their Manifesto of 1955. It was BRAVO that was described by journalist James Cameron at the scene: "The noise was like a gigantic door clanging shut in the bowels of Hell."

Aside from the Marshallese of of Rongelap and Vtirik atolls there were also the 23 Japanese fishermen caught in the area in their trawler "Lucky Dragon" and the 28 US Air Force weather personnel stationed on Rongerick Atoll 130 miles away from Bikini. At the time US officials blamed "wind shifts" for the lethal fallout of Bravo but in 1982 the former Rongerick weather unit commander Gene Curbow told the *New York Times*:

"The winds were heading straight at us for days before and during the tests."

When asked why he had never mentioned this before, he replied "a mixture of patriotism and ignorance." More recently Karl Z. Morgan, an eminent American health physicist, testified before the US Congress that USA Government data had underestimated radiation risk in the Marshall Islands by a factor of between 10 and 100 and that the full extent of radiation damage to the people and the ecology of the Pacific had been covered up.

The Reagan administration is at present using legal loopholes to avoid any responsibility for the health and well being of the Marshallese people or for that matter of any American people affected by radiation from nuclear testing. The \$5 billion in lawsuits now pending in US federal courts would thus become null and void.

In 1963 the Partial Test Ban Treaty was signed and put an end to atmospheric nuclear testing. In a rush to get in as many before the Treaty as possible, the US conducted in 1962 a series of 40 nuclear blasts as part of "Operation Dominic" over Christmas Island and Johnston Island in the West Pacific.

Since 1963 nuclear testing has taken place underground with less obvious dramatic results to people directly but perhaps even greater long term risks to the whole world. In the Nevada Test Site, for example, 1,350 square miles of desert some 65 miles North West of Las Vegas, two large drills dig holes for the underground tests; one is at work every day, 24 hours a day. Each test costs between \$6 million and \$60 million. In 1984 nuclear test site spending in the USA was at a record \$852 million.

Since the 1963 PTBT the arms race has centred more on accurate missiles rather than larger bombs. The Pacific has now become the target of missiles fired from California and tracked from the Kwajalein Missile Range in the Marshall Islands. The tremendous amount of money spent on these projects contrasts starkly with the squalor in which the local people live, the ruin of their health and ecology and the racism with which they are treated.



Greenpeace and French nuclear testing.

THE first French nuclear testing was in the Sahara desert but this was stopped in 1962 when Algeria became independent. General de Gaulle then turned the Foreign Legion troops to Tahiti and Polynesia in the South Pacific and commandeered 100,000 square miles of international waters for atmospheric tests, contrary to the 1963 PTBT.

It was in 1972 that Greenpeace first set sail from New Zealand in the 38 foot yacht Vega to Mururoa Atoll. On July 1 the yacht was rammed by French warships and taken to Mururoa. By 1973 more peace boats set sail and the Tahitan people also protested strongly about the nuclear testing.

Intense international pressure followed, including demonstrations in Paris, and the French government declared that in future they would test underground at Mururoa. In total 41 French nuclear bombs had been "tested in the South Pacific".

In 1975 the first Conference of the Nuclear Free Pacific movement took place on Fiji and was originally named the ATOM Conference (Against Testing on Mururoa) but it became more and more obvious that the problems were much broader and greater than just Mururoa.

There have been recurring reports of ill-health, poisoned fish, gross radioactive contamination of the ecology around Polynesia — and

CP Executive develops purge



Greenpeace have kept up the pressure for an independent enquiry. In 1981 and in 1982 the Greenpeace yacht sailed within 12 miles of Mururoa and was seized.

In 1983 an "independent" enquiry reported. However they were not allowed near certain areas of the atoll or to take samples of the lagoon sediment. The "best case" scenarios of perhaps 500 to 1,000 years without leakage of radioactivity from the site was publicised. The worst scenario that "if fracturing of volcanoes accompanied a test and followed a vertical release of radioactivity to the limestone, specific contaminants would enter the biosphere within five years" was not publicised! The French government have since announced that they are to continue their tests in the South Pacific for another 15 years.

It is in this context that the attack on the Greenpeace ship "Rainbow Warrior" and the killing of one of its crew must be seen. To complicate the issue, however, it is entirely possible that the US and British governments are worried about French nuclear testing independently in the South Pacific — creating political instability. As reported in *SV3* the people of the Pacific are becoming more aware of the nuclear threat and the way in which they are being used as pawns by American imperialism. In particular there is growing support for the national liberation movements in the Philippines and in New Caledonia.

As Barak Sope, leader of the Republic of Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides) told the latest Nuclear Free Pacific Conference: "It has always been my stern belief that nuclearism cannot be separated from colonialism, especially in the Pacific. As long as Tahiti, New Caledonia, Wallis et Futuna, East Timor and West Papua are still colonised, the Pacific cannot become a nuclear free and independent zone."

THE Communist Party Executive are continuing to tighten their grip on the CP by expelling *Morning Star* supporters.

More than 40 people have so far been expelled, including the editor and deputy editor of the *Morning Star* and such trade union figures as Ken Gill and Derek Robinson.

Added to those expelled are those who have been more subtly removed from membership through the device of "re-registering" a branch or borough. In Hackney, for example, 90 members were removed in this manner.

This latter manoeuvre has been used mainly in London, while the main people expelled have been those on the *Morning Star* editorial board or key to its distribution. Action against these people is now taking place all over the country. Last week, as we go to press, three — Andrew Clarke, John Foster and Gordon Massie — were expelled in Scotland, with another, Frank Watters, suspended in Yorkshire.

The "Eurocommunist" CP Executive is in the process of breaking altogether from the *Morning Star*, and is to launch a weekly party paper in the autumn, whose name is yet to be decided.

The response from *Morning Star* supporters has been to form the "Communist Campaign Group" of expelled members, which will hold a series of public meetings in the autumn. They are telling their supporters to stay in the CP, but not to adopt a "heads down policy or compliance with the rules as interpreted by the Eurocommunist Executive Committee".

In other words it is better to force your expulsion than simply to leave. In addition, a number of London borough committees such as Westminster and Tower Hamlets have refused to accept re-

registration.

Clearly events are coming to the point where piecemeal actions of the Executive must culminate in an all-out expulsion or split.

Meanwhile, the politics of each side remains equally as rotten as before. The Euro majority continue with their pro-ballot "public opinion" campaigns such as over Gartcosh Steelworks in Scotland. In the NUM they continue to pressurise miners towards impotent cross-class talking shops such as the "Welsh Congress" as an alternative to any class struggle perspective.

On the other hand the *Star* continues its uncritical articles on Eastern Europe, while slavishly endorsing "left" trade union bureaucrats in this country. It made no criticism of the NUR's "guerilla" strategy, and did not even challenge the Scottish TUC's Gartcosh campaign. Meanwhile as the Bickerstaffe-Sawyer leadership of NUPE — with support from *Star* supporters — mounts a growing witch-hunt against the left and attempts to crush the Barking Hospital strike and any kind of industrial action, the *Star* chooses to highlight an article from Bickerstaffe to kick off its TUC-week coverage.

The politics of the *Star* are also illustrated by its refusal to report the Kent NUM call for a lobby of the TUC in support of the victimised miners. Yet it carries a regular column reporting which union leaders are backing the Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions' lobby of the Tory Conference over unemployment! The LCDTU lobby is plainly designed to take the focus off the TUC and Labour Conferences in terms of pressing for particular policies or action.

Japan and Nuclear Waste Dumping

THIS month sees the meeting in London of an International Convention on Dumping. In February 1980 at the last Convention, 50 nations agreed to ban dumping radioactive waste at sea after strong representations by two Pacific Island nations: Kiribatu and Nauru. This agreement will now be reviewed this month. Japanese PM Nakasone has already stated his intention to go ahead unilaterally and ignore any agreement.

Japan's 24 nuclear power plants have so far produced 500,000

53-gallon drums of nuclear waste and this is predicted to rise to 1.8 million barrels by the year 2,000. They plan to dump between 5,000 and 10,000 of these barrels in the Pacific Ocean southwest of Japan but only 650 miles north east of the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI). A CNMI protest delegation to Tokyo last February came away very disappointed. Their spokesperson Vincent Sablan said:

"I'm afraid the USA will decide this all for us, since they control our foreign affairs. Japan is only the front runner. Once they start dumping nuclear waste in our Ocean, it will be open to other countries."

Non-Zionist Zionism and the new left Zionists

THE greatest enemy of socialism is nationalism, and the chauvinism that asserts an identity of interest between the oppressed and oppressor classes.

When whole nations are oppressed, with the greatest burden falling on the working class, this is in itself a form of class oppression; but on the other hand there is also the temptation to bury the class and social aspects of the struggle in order to concentrate on national objectives.

Some socialists, unable to distinguish between different forms of nationalism, counterpose "socialism" in the abstract to giving concrete support to national liberation movements.

This is especially true when it comes to Ireland, and to Palestine/Zionism. In each case the presence of a settler working class is seen as a stumbling block to the scenario of working class revolution and the achievement of socialism. For groups like Militant, the solution is to put the National Question to one side, and instead propagandise for the "unity" of the settler (Loyalist/Israeli Jewish) and nationally oppressed (Nationalist/Palestinian) working classes. In the case of Israel, they ignore the very real material privileges that underpin the political support that Israeli Jewish workers give to the Zionist state.

The Second World War proved pivotal to the Zionist cause on the Left. Tribune, which previously had not been particularly sympathetic to Zionism, became the most ardent of the Zionists' cheerleaders under the stewardship of Foot and Mikardo. Indeed up till the 1967 War of Expansion, the British Left other than a few small Trotskyist groups, was virtually unanimous in its support for Zionism.

The Holocaust of European Jewry was seen as validating the claims for a Jewish state, and was used by the Zionists, not as a warning against the dangers of racism and fascism re-occurring, but as the justification for the dispossession and oppression of another people — the Palestinians.

For 20 years the Zionists' re-writing of history went unchallenged (for example the myth that nearly 1 million Palestinians uprooted themselves in 1948 and became refugees as a result of broadcasts by Arab radio stations,

TONY GREENSTEIN, a member of the Steering Committee of the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine, argues against a retreat by the left.

The work of Erskine Childers debunked this particular myth in an article in the *Spectator* in 1961, which used transcripts of BBC monitoring to demonstrate that there were no such broadcasts).

The Labour Left, oblivious to the integration of Israel into the US economy, and western geo-political strategy, saw in the Kibbutzim — those collective examples of racial exclusivism and exploitation of others (collectively of course!) — ideal examples of practical socialism. Only the occupation of the West Bank/Gaza started to produce a change, and even then it was the Labour Right in the form of the Labour Middle East Council (LMEC) that made the running.

The election of a Likud government under Begin in 1977 and the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 broke the logjam on the left. Slowly it became apparent that Zionism was inherently racist. But although many on the left paid lip-service to the Palestinians, few bothered to develop a coherent analysis.

The traditional Zionist rallying cry of "anti-Semitism" lost its effect (except that is in the Women's Movement where the Zionist Feminists used the language of "personal politics" and their "oppression" quite effectively to deflect support for the Palestinians). But as the memory of the Lebanon invasion fades, and with a coalition Labour government in Israel at the moment, it is hardly surprising that some on the far left are reassessing their position.

Among these are the current around *Socialist Organiser* who have begun moving towards a "2 states" position as well as abandoning support for the concept of a democratic, secular state in Palestine. They claim that anti-Semitism, the legacy of the Holocaust, and the existence supposedly of an Israeli Jewish nation,

justify the existence of the Israeli state, sanitised and normalised within pre-67 borders.

This move to a non-Zionist position has been welcomed by Young Poale Zion (youth wing of the Israeli Labour Alignment's overseas section, an affiliate of the Labour Party) in the *Jewish Chronicle* (5.7.85), and encouraged by the Jewish Socialists Group, a motley collection of leftist Jewish academics, who during the Lebanon invasion performed a balancing act between condemning the invasion and supporting the Israeli state's right to exist.

In a recent booklet by JSG member Steve Cohen (*That's Funny, You Don't Look Anti-Semitic*), warmly reviewed in *Socialist Organiser*, the myth of "left" anti-Semitism is used in order to deflect support from anti-Zionism and the struggle of the Palestinians. "Left" anti-Semitism was the creation of the Jewish establishment which, faced with the growth of the National Front in the '70s, sought to redefine anti-Semitism and so present the Jews' enemy as coming not from the far Right but from the Left. This conveniently excused their own inactivity against the fascists.

Using "personal politics" borrowed from sections of feminism, the subjective actions and feelings of individuals are counterposed to the objective role of different movements. Zionism, they say, cannot be inherently racist because not all Zionists, individually, are racist and because they themselves are or were the victims of racism. This forgets that racism isn't something inherited, and that any group of people given the right set of circumstances can become racists.

Two States

It is ironic that a current like *Socialist Organiser* which helped form the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine and which played a major part in achieving the 1982 Labour Conference resolution calling for the establishment of a democratic, secular state of Palestine, should now be retreating from this.

This is especially relevant given the drift to the Right inside the PLO and the de-facto abandonment by Fatah of the democratic, secular state formula. The adoption of this slogan had represented a major advance for



Palestinians are oppressed as a nationality in the Zionist State.

the Palestinians, signifying as it did a rejection of the chauvinism and bigotry of the landowning and feudal classes who mirrored the Zionists' racism.

It is a slogan which LMEC, chaired by Don Concannon MP, has also fought against, representing as it does a challenge to the legitimacy of the Israeli state.

Now *Socialist Organiser* argues that the democratic, secular state

slogan is a long term, maximalist demand, not achievable without revolution in the Arab East too; and that such a state would have to be a socialist state.

This is true, but it is inconceivable that Zionism can be overthrown without major convulsions in at least the surrounding states. The question is whether a Palestinian state on the West Bank/Gaza would be a step in the right direction.

John O'Mahony at the "Debating Socialism" weekend school described the call for 2 states as being part of a "democratic programme" and agreed that such a demand would have been part of just such a programme in 1921 when Ireland was partitioned.

Yet as Connolly remarked concerning Ireland, partition would mean a "Carnival of Reaction" both sides of the border. There is no reason to presume any differently with Palestine. Socialists who call for such a state are in reality calling for an imperialist solution to the Palestinian question, a solution which would mean a bloodbath of the Left and the Trade Unions and a state dependent on both Israel and the Gulf economically.

Working Class Unity

It was Lenin who argued for making a clear distinction between the nationalism of the oppressed and oppressor instead of conflating the two. It is often forgotten that the Palestinian working class are not oppressed merely because they are workers but because they are Palestinian, paid less, without any union protection if they live in the occupied territories, and as such migrant labour without any of the political rights that Israeli Jewish workers enjoy.

History shows that when a settler working class does break from simple economic militancy, it is all too often to pursue thoroughly *reactionary* political objectives, e.g. the Ulster Loyalist strike in 1974. A strike such as the British Miners' strike would be inconceivable in Israel, because it would challenge the very state itself. Zionism, like Loyalism, represents an inter-class alliance.

With the increase in unemployment in Israel, there are increasing demands to sack Arab workers in order to reduce Jewish unemployment. The Israeli workers see the Palestinian workers as their main enemy, not their bosses.

The Labour Zionists consciously *created* a Jewish working class in order to dispense with the Palestinians, which is why the call by the right wing extremist Kahane for the sacking of Arabs and their expulsion finds a ready audience — after all he is merely echoing the 1920s and 1930s demands of the Histadrut — Israel's major employer and also its Trade Union Federation — for "Jewish Labour and Produce".

Zionism and Anti-Semitism

On this subject the Zionists have been most sensitive and susceptible. Accustomed to labelling their opponents as anti-Semitic they have found the charge that it was the Zionist movement which collaborated with anti-Semites and Nazis particularly galling.

Of course this isn't to say that every individual Zionist collaborated or was even aware of what was happening. But we shouldn't be reticent about saying that Zionism undermines the

fight against anti-Semitism, believing as it does that anti-Semitism is inherent in Gentile (non-Jewish) society.

According to Jeremy Green (G. Ben Noah) of JSG writing in *Socialist Organiser*, and Steve Cohen, there is no difference between those who accuse Zionism of collaborating with Nazism and the revisionist historians of the fascist right who pretend that the Holocaust never occurred.

The JSG (and apparently SO) forget that Zionism was a small political current in pre-war European Jewry, reviled not least by the workers precisely because it played in to the hands of the anti-Semites, and was quoted by them.

Ironically Steve Cohen's own book cites in its bibliography Lucy Dawidowicz's *War Against the Jews*. Although it seeks to justify the Nazi appointed Judenrat (Jewish Councils) which ran the ghettos, if one turns to p. 118, we find that the paper of the SS, *Der Angriff*, and the Nazi leader Heydrich, make very clear distinctions between the Zionists (who adhered to the ideas of "race" and "nation") and what are termed the "assimilationists"; this is why the only Jewish political organisations allowed to operate in Nazi occupied areas were Zionist ones! Only those who confuse being Jewish with being a Zionist can really believe that those of us who point out the extent of Zionist-Nazi collaboration — economic deals between Zionist Palestine and Nazi Germany in defiance of an anti-Nazi boycott; the hunting down of resistance leaders in the ghettos; and the rounding up of Jews for the cattle trucks that would take them to Auschwitz — are the same as those who deny there was a Holocaust.

It is precisely because we reject drawing an equation between being Jewish and being Zionist that this is not saying that the Jews were responsible for their own extermination. No one is suggesting that the Zionists were responsible: they were merely a quisling, collaborationist movement. And socialists distinguish between a movement and the individuals who comprise that movement.

Although many genuine anti-fascist Zionists were shocked by the Kastner revelations in Israel in the early '50s, when a major court case revealed the extent of the collaboration, amongst the leadership of the Zionist Organisation there was a clear understanding that the priority was achieving a Jewish state and everything else, including saving Europe's Jews, was secondary.

In Israel today there is a widespread feeling that anti-Semitism in Europe does no harm, as it will "encourage" Jews to come to Israel (see *The Red Lights are Flashing*, by Rabbi Yehuda Amital, in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 15.4.83).

For all the bluster by the Zionists and JSG there has been no serious attempt to disprove the evidence col-

lected in the book by Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*.

Anti-Semitism

For some, the question of anti-Semitism is also proving problematic. Jews in Britain are apparently oppressed because of anti-Semitism. And because the vast majority of Jews support the Israeli state, to call for its destruction, and to ban Zionist societies (as happened at Sunderland Poly) is itself "anti-Semitic". It is unfortunately evidence that some sections of the Left talk about oppression without analysing the nature of that oppression.

Jewish people in Britain are not discriminated against economically or politically; do not suffer from state racism, and are not subject to immigration controls, police harassment, etc., because Jews are "white" in this society.

Discrimination against Black people is very real and directly related to class. What there is is a legacy of anti-Semitism ideologically, which manifests itself in a form of personal oppression — feeling different and sometimes social exclusion. That some Jews define themselves as oppressed does not necessarily make them so, especially when it is used — as was the case in the Women's Movement, in order to try and justify the oppression of another group.

This isn't to say that personal racism isn't important or that anti-Semitism won't reoccur or that it isn't part of the ideological make-up of

fascist ideology; but that yesterday's victims of racism can become today's oppressors too.

Finally when socialists claim to have a blueprint for Palestine in which Israel can exist behind redrawn borders, they forget the Zionist nature of the Israeli state. That Zionism from the beginning was expansionist; that its state depends solely on the support for the West and United States whose interests it protects. Zionism without expansion is like capitalism without exploitation.

Little wonder that John O'Mahony stated that he doubted that Zionism existed any more, and that Israel is just another state. And while some pursue dreams of a non-Zionist, normalised Israeli state, the reactionary Kach and Tehiya forces grow by leaps and bounds. Polls suggest that the fascist right could control 19 out of 120 seats in the next Israeli Knesset, a position held in 1949 by Mapam — the "Marxist" Zionist party which will now be lucky to control 3 seats next time around.

Combine that with the accession of General Ariel Sharon to the leadership of Likud, and it should be obvious that there isn't going to be even a bantustan on the West Bank, still less a Palestinian state.

It is abstract Marxism that ignores the concrete and specific features of a society, and drops a principled opposition to Zionism and embraces instead an illusory "solution" to the Palestinian problem.



Some leading Zionists collaborated with Hitler's forces; but this does not make every Zionist a fascist.



January 1649: the revolutionary English bourgeoisie executes King Charles I: four months later they crushed the radical Levellers at Burford.

British workers and Ireland: Part I

By DAVID MOSS

THROUGHOUT history the most aware and resolute elements of the British labour movement — particularly of its revolutionary wing — have always rallied to the cause of the Irish people. A sure litmus test of British working class consciousness and ideological independence from its ruling class has always been and remains its attitude to Ireland.

Those workers who clearly identified their own exploiter did not slander or assault the Irish immigrant. Those who understood the nature of their own political and military overlords did not condemn the Irish rebel.

England's difficulty was not only Ireland's opportunity — it was also the chance for the British working class to seek liberty in alliance with the Irish people against a common enemy. Conversely, if the British state tightened its grip in Ireland then it would be strengthened at home.

This historical survey hopes to be a reminder that this is still the case today.

England's Bourgeois Revolution and Ireland.

Rebellion in Ireland acted as one of the catalysts of the English Revolution of the 17th Century. Initially,

however, it was not sympathy with the insurgents but popular fear that the King intended unleashing a Catholic "Papist army" to massacre his opponents — as the Protestant colonists had been massacred in Ireland the previous year — which compelled many of parliament's supporters to take up arms in 1642.

Then, with the final defeat of the royalist armies in Britain, the triumphant bourgeoisie, led by Cromwell and his generals, were free to root out the remaining nests of royalists in Ireland and at the same time to complete the subjugation of the province.

The perversion of the revolution to this end became the immediate cause of the rift between the army Grandees and the rank and file soldiery — drawn from the small traders, artisans and farmers. Their economic

grievances over conditions of service only aggravated deep dissatisfaction with the increasing authoritarianism of the generals and the failure to attain many of the democratic objectives of the Revolution. Preparations for the Irish expedition in 1649 provided the spark for mutiny and the first declaration of support for Ireland by English radicals, under the leadership of the Levellers, the most committed republicans in the Parliamentary forces.

A Leveller pamphlet, *The English Soliders Standard...*, produced for circulation in the army, related the conquest of Ireland to the suppression of democratic liberties at home. "For consider, as things now stand," it asked the soldiers:

"to what end you should hazard your lives against the Irish. Will you go on still to kill, slay and murder in order to make [your officers] as absolute lords and masters over Ireland as you have made them over England? Or is it your ambition to reduce the Irish to the happiness of tithes... excise, customs and monopolies in trades? Or to fill their prisons with poor disabled persons, to fill their land with swarms of beggars.... to take down monarchical tyranny and set up aristocratic tyranny... before you go... see those evils reformed here, that when occasion shall justly invite you thither, you may carry a good platform in your hands, such a one as possibly they will never fight against."

Another pamphlet justified the Irish rebellion of 1641, posing the question:

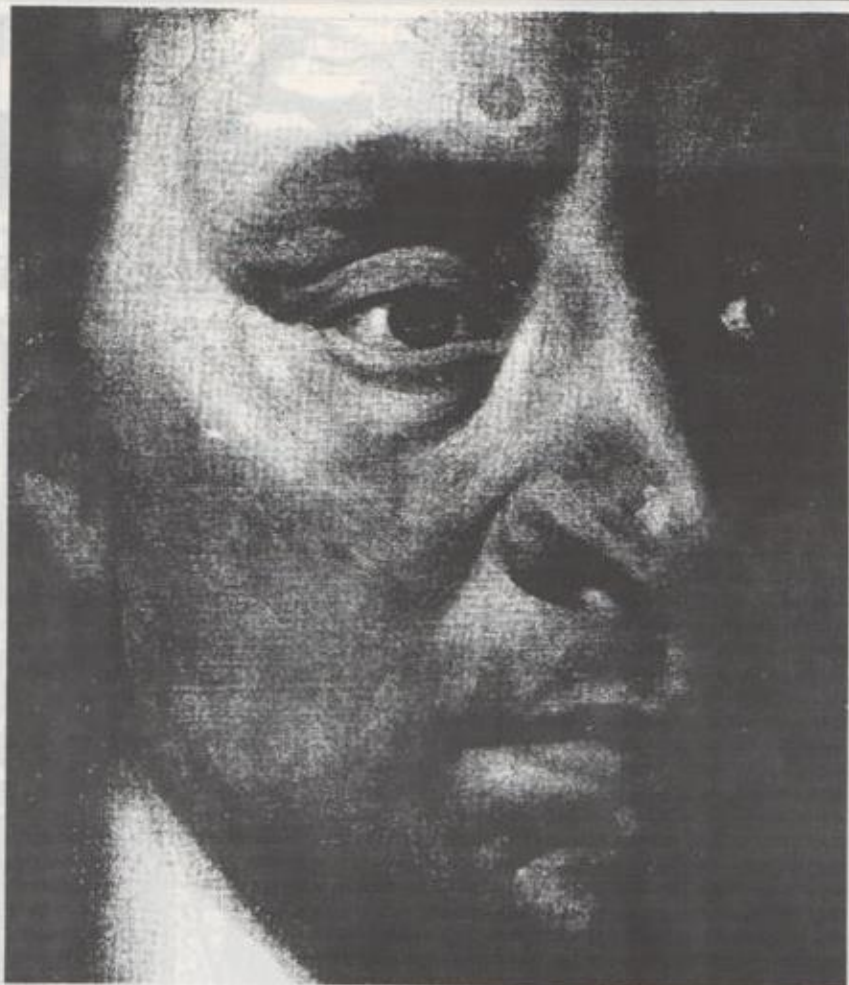
"Whether the English would not do as the Irish have if the Irish should dispossess and tyrannise over them? Whether it be not England's duty to repent of the oppressions and usurptions over the Irish nation by their Kings and forefathers?"

Condemning all imperialism, it advocated that Ireland be a "free state".

After the execution of a soldier for his part in the mutiny over arrears of pay, troops elected a council of "Agitators" to present their demands, and one regiment refused to march to the port of embarkation for Ireland. A pamphlet stating their grievances also expressed concern that they were degenerating into a professional and mercenary army.

"What have we to do in Ireland, to fight and murder a people and a nation. (for indeed [the Grandees] are set upon cruelty and murdering poor people which is all they glory in) which have done us no harm...?"

The defeat of the hard-core Leveller troops at Burford in May 1649 decided the fate of English Radicalism and Irish Nationalism for almost one and a half centuries. Not only was the mutiny ended, but also all Radical opposition to Cromwell's regime was eradicated with it, clearing the field for the rule of the



Cromwell: his bourgeois republic reconquered Ireland.

Generals, the ruthless reconquest of Ireland and the ultimate restoration of the monarchy. Political crises continued, culminating in the "Revolution" of 1688 which established a new King counterbalanced by a landowner-merchant oligarchy interested in developing capitalism at home and consolidating the Protestant supremacy in Ireland.

In order to survive, British mercantile and industrial capital had to protect its continually expanding markets against the growth of foreign capitalism. Backed by armed might, it had a host of Navigation Laws and Tariff barriers to give the English bourgeoisie the advantage over foreign rivals, including the trade and manufacturers of the colonies.

Resentful of these restrictions and of the raising of taxes for an administration over which they had no control, the manufacturing bourgeoisie, planters, farmers and artisans of the American colonies rose against the British government in 1775. Their rebellion and its philosophy as embodied in the Declaration of Independence were to have important repercussions on the political systems of both Britain and Ireland.

According to Walpole in 1776, "All Ireland was America mad". Led by the protestant bourgeoisie the bulk of the Irish people involved in trade and manufacture identified their cause with that of the American

revolutionaries. Invasion fears caused by the entry of the French into the war led in 1778 to the formation of a home guard, the Volunteers, predominantly bourgeois, overwhelmingly Protestant and increasingly nationalistic. While Britain's hands were still tied by the American revolt this armed force was organised behind demands for free trade and an independent Irish parliament, gaining by 1782 major concessions on both these points.

The rapid development of the capitalist mode of production had outgrown the constitutional settlement of 1688 and the majority of the bourgeoisie of both Britain and Ireland were excluded from government. Already galvanised by the American revolution, bourgeois parliamentary reformers received further encouragement from the successes of the Irish Volunteers, whom some of them wished to emulate:

"Was it love of Ireland that made Lord North anxious to hurry the Irish bills through Parliament?" asked the speaker at one Yorkshire meeting, "No! It was 64,000 bayonets planted at his breast."

But as the Gordon riots of 1780 and the widespread unrest and bread riots of 1783 showed, reform agitation if taken too far would unleash forces beyond the control of the bourgeoisie. It was for this reason

also that the French Revolution, greeted with enthusiasm by many Whig reformers in 1789, increasingly terrified them as it became apparent that its main driving force came from the plebeian radicals and republicans — the "Sans-culottes".

British Republicans and Ireland.

The ideals of the French Revolution, especially as articulated and elaborated by Tom Paine in his "Rights of Man" published in 1791, gained thousands of followers in both Britain and Ireland. To the horror of the ruling class, common labourers and artisans were organising politically under an internationalist banner of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which elevated Reason and the People above Church and King. Sedition in all its guises was summed up in one word — Jacobinism.

"Rights of Man" was banned in 1792 and Paine escaped to France from the threat of a capital conviction. A number of his disciples in England, Scotland and Ireland were arrested, some imprisoned and others transported, especially as the outbreak of war with France in 1793 had added suspicion that they were planning to assist an invasion.

Groups like the United Irishmen and the Corresponding Societies in Britain, who had sought reform of parliament and an extension of the franchise, were thus prevented from legal agitation and propaganda. The Right to resist Tyranny was one of the central themes of Jacobinism and the more determined Republican elements began to reorganise secretly.

Republicans, protestant merchants, professional men, tradesmen, farmers, artisans and labourers and their Catholic counterparts, integrated with the secret Catholic peasant societies, The Defenders, to build the United Irishmen into a military organisation by 1796. By the following year United Irishmen were also active in Britain.

After meetings with Father Quigley (later hung for treasonable negotiations with the French) members of the London Corresponding Society founded the United Englishmen (or Britons) on the model of the United Irishmen. Under the influence of immigrants like Robert Gray, a warehouseman from Monaghan and James Dixon, a Belfast weaver, the United Englishmen's organisation developed in Manchester and the adjacent manufacturing districts. Quigley talked about the intention to "revolutionise" England and Scotland.

But it was in the fleet that the Republicans had their most spectacular successes. In the ships at Nore and Spithead in 1797 festering grievances about conditions erupted into mutiny. On board some ships the leadership was assumed by members or sympathisers of the Corresponding Societies and the United Irishmen.



(top) Cartoon depicts destruction of feudalism in French Revolution:
(above) A hostile view of the 1798 rebellion.

There were about 15,000 Irishmen in the navy out of a total of 120,000 sailors and marines and there is evidence that United Irishmen had enlisted specifically to spread disaffection. Robert Lee from Dublin was hung for forming a conspiracy at Plymouth of soldiers and marines sworn to make England, "like France and America, a free country". Some of the mutineers referred to the fleet as "The Floating Republic" and discussed sailing to either France or Ireland.

However the Admiralty and the government were terrified by the mere fact that Republican literature was circulating in the fleet and that sailors and marines were aware that they had "Rights" and were practising democracy by the election of a committee of delegates to represent them and to direct the mutiny.

After two months of negotiations and mounting tension, with even the Thames being blockaded for a while, the mutiny collapsed in mid June. Twenty nine of the leaders were executed, as many imprisoned and a number brutally flogged. Although a

defeat, it marked the first time in history when British and Irish Republicans acted together.

Not only were United Irishmen agitating in the British fleet but also United Englishmen were agitating among the Irish soldiers. Henry Fellows, executed for his activities at Maidstone, wrote to a fellow republican:

"Citizen, I received your parcel with the regulations, etc., and am obliged to you for sending the Ulster address, as I think it will be productive to our cause, for they seem to meet the approbation of the citizens here, particularly the Irish soldiers..."

He also requested 50 copies of Paine's "Agrarian Justice" which advocated land reform. The seeds of social, not only political, revolution were being sown.

An "Address from the United Britons to United Irishmen" in January 1798 expressed the common interests of the two peoples:

"Though labouring under the yoke of the same oppression, the sister countries have been dif-



The execution of Robert Emmet.

ferently treated. Ireland has always been the object of direct and open violence. England of fraud... One good effect has however resulted from the mutual sufferings and mutual commiseration; the prejudice of nations is done away and the English burn with the desire to hail the Irish as freemen and bretheren."

Another address to the "Brave and Suffering Nation", from the London Corresponding Society, condemned the harsh repression which had begun particularly against the Irish peasantry. "... there are few in Britain who do not suffer with horror at a recital of the sufferings of the Irish people..."

It included an appeal which echoed the Leveller pamphlets of the English civil war:

"Soldiers, we have with the deepest concern learned, that you have, on some occasions, been induced to violate that humanity which has heretofore characterised British soldiers... If you massacre the Irish, will not the Irish in some measure be justified in retaliating upon the British... behave with the manly firmness of British soliders, not the desperate fury of freebooters and assassins; such conduct will endear you to your relatives and friends by convincing them that their happiness is dear to you; it will restore peace and liberty to Ireland, and consequently to Great Britain."

Faced with arms searches, the torturing of suspects, threats of massacre from the Orange Lodges and treachery in high places the United Irishmen broke out into a premature and ill co-ordinated insur-

rection. The uprising encapsulated all the contradictory elements of Irish society. An urban-based, Protestant-inspired organisation prepared a struggle which resulted in a devout Catholic peasantry rising under the banner of a deistical republic!

The social nature of the rebellion terrified many of the bourgeois republicans but Antrim rose under the United Irish leader Henry McCracken, a wealthy Presbyterian cotton manufacturer, followed by Down, under another Protestant, the Lisburn draper Henry Munroe. But as in the rest of Ireland, partially mobilised and inadequately equipped, the rebels in Ulster were bloodily defeated.

Before the rising several leaders of the United Englishmen were arrested and the expected support from the English republicans did not materialise. A French force did arrive in Ireland, but too late. Despite these serious defeats and growing disillusionment with the course of the French Revolution under Buonaparte, the Republic spirit lived on.

Surviving cells of both the United Englishmen and United Irishmen began to reorganise and delegates continued to pass between the two countries and France.

The United Englishmen clearly thought in terms of a common struggle stating their objectives as "The independence of Great Britain and Ireland An equalisation of civil political and religious rights." Its manifesto called on Englishmen to be united and reminded them of the example of Ireland:

"...see her fertile plains ravaged
— her hospitable villages

plundered and burned — and her Brave and Generous Sons butchered and exiled for no other crime than the inflexible Love of Liberty."

One of the leaders of the United Englishmen, arrested in 1798 but released by 1800, was Marcus Despard, a former army Colonel and the son of an Irish landowner. He was in contact with United Irish emissaries in London and there is evidence that via them a co-ordinated uprising was planned — possibly to coincide with a French invasion.

In 1801 he visited Ireland and in November of the following year he was arrested at a meeting in a Lambeth pub along with soldiers and labourers, some of them Irish, who were accused of plotting a coup to seize the Tower of London and other strategic points. As in the 1778 rebellion the signal for the United Englishmen to rise throughout the country was to have been the stopping of the mail coaches.

Despard and six comrade soldiers were executed and the United organisation collapsed. Undeterred, preparations continued for another insurrection by the United Irishmen under Robert Emmett, but this dissolved in a premature attempt which only attracted the support of a few Dublin workers. Emmett followed Despard to the gallows. Thus ended the first round of Ireland's struggle for an independent Republic and the beginning of a common cause between the Irish and English people through a decade of rapid and profound social and political change.

Republicanism, working class radicalism, and the Act of Union.

Riots and disturbances were commonplace in eighteenth century Britain: against high food prices, wage cuts, conscription and unpopular laws and governments. In Ireland agrarian warfare and secret peasant paramilitary societies were endemic.

But with the French Revolution the threat to the ruling class from such violence became potentially lethal. For the first time since the Revolution of the 1640s, there was a coherent ideology and set of objectives to weld all the diverse forms of discontent together and target them against the state and ruling class.

There was also a new factor — the emergent working class concentrated in the industrial towns of Britain and the small master craftsmen in the manufacturing areas who were already feeling the impact of industrial capitalism.

These classes also existed in Ireland where they provided the backbone of a republican movement of which the bourgeoisie formed much of the initial brains and the peasantry the muscle. Thus from its beginning the overriding character of Irish and English republicanism was plebeian — a fact which must not be obscured by the origins of some of its leaders like Tone or Despard.

Faced with the fourfold spectre of Jacobinism, social war, French invasion and the loss of their prime colony, it is not surprising that the reaction of the British ruling class was merciless. Apart from the ruthless repression of the '98 rebellion, Parliament enacted a whole battery of laws which served it, or set a precedent for future action, against the popular movements in Britain and Ireland for the next century.

There were two other consequences of the reaction to the Republican movement which were to affect the whole course of the future struggle: the rise of the Orange Order, and the passing of the Act of Union.

The Orange Order originated in 1795 among Protestant linen weavers in North Armagh who sought forcibly to expel Catholics from the trade. Powerful patronage was soon forthcoming from gentry in the community who saw the Orangemen as a potential military auxiliary against the United Irishmen and Defenders and as an ideological counterweight to republican ideas amongst the Protestants.

Orange lodges were formed and incorporated into the local militias which played a part in the suppression of the rising. But it was not only in Ireland that the Orange Lodges combated sedition. In 1812 Lancashire magistrates recruited their agents and special constables from fellow members in their campaign against the Luddites. Henceforth

Orangeism was to spearhead loyalist reaction amongst the working class in both countries.

There was little support for the Act of Union of 1801. Orange Lodges either abstained or objected to it because of the strong opposition to Union from some powerful Protestant interests. It was only conceded by the Irish parliament after the majority of MPs were convinced that participation in the British parliament would be more lucrative.

The attitude of the majority of people in Dublin was described by the British minister Castlereagh:

"The lower orders are naturally indifferent to the question but will easily be set in motion should their co-operation become necessary to the leading opposers of the measure."

Once passed, the Union was bound to become the pivot of all political

agitation in Ireland, whilst for Britain it ensured that Ireland was no longer merely a colonial and military problem like any other province in the empire, but a factor central to the whole inter-party parliamentary arena.

For British working class radicals, it meant that the people of both countries had a common interest in reforming the same parliament, controlled by the same corrupt landed oligarchy, the "boroughmongers", who were responsible for economic misery and social repression in Britain and Ireland.

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Report from 4th END Convention

By DAVE SPENCER

THE historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership. Without this being solved, a catastrophe threatens our whole culture. So stated the Transitional Programme in 1938. How much more so does that catastrophe face us nearly 50 years later with the invention of the Atom Bomb and the insanity of the nuclear arms race, which in itself feeds on the continuous oppression of the workers and peasants of the world.

Those who argue for multilateral nuclear disarmament can see this month in Geneva the Non-Proliferation Treaty signed by 126 countries in 1970 now in tatters at its review, with the USA, USSR and others just ignoring the agreements. The run-up to the 19-20 November "superpowers" summit meeting sees both sides flexing their muscles and consolidating their positions rather than showing signs of any peace agreement.

In this context, the END Annual Convention has become very important as the International Peace Conference. The same description applies to it as Trotsky applied to the pre-1940 Anti-War Movement — only more so:

"It bears witness to the fact that the class struggle has overflowed the limits of the traditional organisations of the proletariat."

The fact is that the mass parties of the working class and the Trade Unions, despite occasionally paying lip service to unilateral nuclear disarmament, have stood by and allowed the arms race to continue at tremendous cost to the world's resources. In general, Peace activists in Amsterdam listened politely but with some bewilderment and silence to speakers from

the Official Peace Movements of Rumania, Yugoslavia and China and to Social Democrats from the FRG and Holland. They did not seem to hit a relevant or sincere note.

At the same time there is a developing consensus at END Conventions on certain basic political principles which are quite distinct from conventional Stalinist or Social Democratic politics. For example:

● Solidarity with national liberation struggles.

It was clear from the contributions of Darlene Keju-Johnson from the Marshall Islands and Roland Simbulan from the Philippines that nuclear weapons and US Imperialism and racism went very much hand in hand. To get rid of one evil meant to get rid of the other. Spokespersons from Nicaragua and South Africa were also enthusiastically welcomed by the Convention, where Peace and the fight against oppression were linked.

● Support for human rights struggles in Eastern Europe.

There has been a tremendous increase in contact and dialogue over the last year with the Independent Peace Movements in Eastern Europe, all of whom insist forcefully upon the link between the struggle for World Peace and the struggle for democratic rights in Eastern Europe.

Most of the members were physically prevented from attending the Convention but sent messages by one route or another. A letter of greeting to the Convention from Lech Walesa was read out; a copy of the discussion between Jacek Kuron and Uient Jan Faber (Secretary of the Dutch IKV) was given to all delegates, as was an interesting booklet "The Anatomy of a Reticence" by the Czech playwright and Charter 77 spokesperson Vaclav Havel.

Smuggled videos were shown of discussion by Charter 77 spokespersons, including Jiri Hajek, Foreign Minister under the Dubcek regime, deposed by the Russians in 1968, and of members of the Moscow Trust group who still hold weekly seminars and monthly demonstrations, in spite of constant harassment and imprisonment. The Convention itself gave lengthy ovations to Ferencz Misziwetz, a young researcher from Budapest University who spoke on behalf of the Hungarian Dialog group and Vitaly Barbash of the Moscow Trust Group who was recently expelled from the USSR.

● Learning from the women's movement.

At the first END Convention in Brussels, Greenham Common women and their supporters stormed the stage demanding a voice. This year women had their autonomous meetings and workshops but also led mixed workshops and participated very fully in the whole Convention on the platform and in discussion. There was almost an equal number of women and men delegates. The male organisers and most male participants seem to have taken the point that there is a link between the fight against male dominance and the fight for Peace.

Broadening the Peace Movement.

The mass West European Peace Movements developed to oppose the deployment of Cruise missiles. In those countries, like West Germany, Britain and Italy, where Cruise has already arrived, there has been a certain demoralisation in the Movement.

This pessimism was expressed strangely enough in the opening speech by the Dutch IKV Secretary Uient Jan Faber — which if nothing else was at least refreshingly honest.

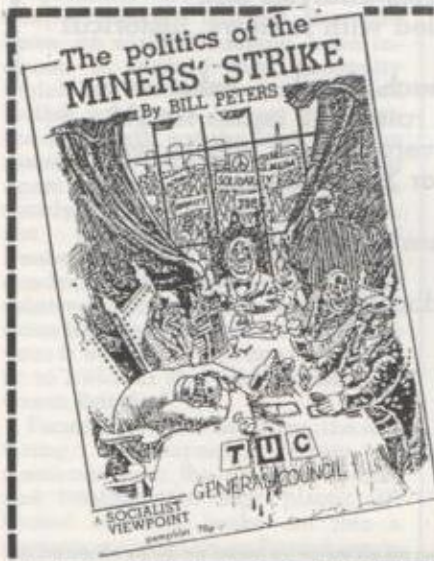
In Holland, the government has postponed its decision on Cruise until November 1 this year. In a way this shows the success of the Peace Movement, on the other hand the postponement has taken away the protest momentum since everybody believes the government will give in to NATO in the end. The Dutch IKV are concentrating on a national door to door petition before November 1.

The Spanish movement has grown enormously, putting over 1 million people on the streets of Madrid to protest against Reagan's visit to Spain. They believe they will win the national referendum against Spain joining NATO.

The French Movement CODENE at one time was very small because both the Communist Party and the Socialist Party support French independent nuclear policies. However it has grown considerably over the last year campaigning against EUREKA and against nuclear testing in the Pacific.

The West German movement is clearly in a state of confusion after the deployment of Cruise and the entry of the Greens into local and national government.

These national fluctuations are of course only to be expected without any authoritative political leadership. Nevertheless the discussion and dialogue help each group to benefit from the experiences of others, be they defeats or successes. From these Conventions as I said earlier, an encouraging broad consensus is developing. A mass mobilisation in one country would gain an immediate response all over Europe. For example, numerous delegates expressed their admiration for the British miners' strike and had spontaneously started collections in their own areas.



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