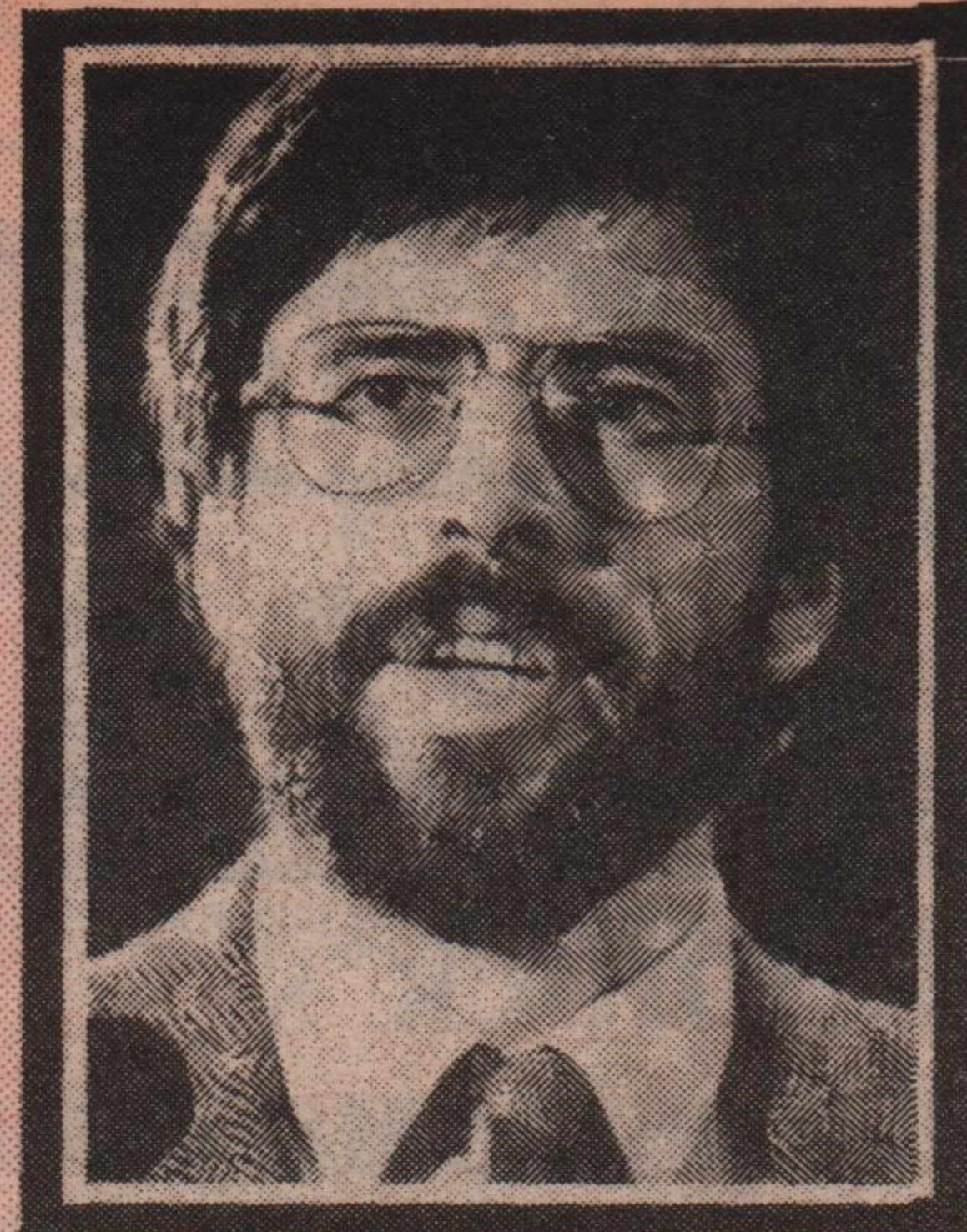


A Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

Gerry Adams
presidential
address



One year of the Anglo Irish Accord:
no solution

BRITAIN OUT OF IRELAND



THE fundamental problem for Ireland is the division brought about by the British. Until Britain withdraws there will never be peace in Ireland. One year on, we can clearly say that the Anglo-Irish Accord is a resounding failure. That is inevitable. Such a solution cannot work because the border division is founded on a sectarian head-count in the north aimed at creating a false majority in favour of union with Britain. The Accord was designed to show that the government in the south recognised the 6 counties. It was an attempt to make the division of Ireland permanent — that is, to take a step backwards. I believe it was also designed, in the longer term, to bring Ireland into closer relations

with the United States and finally to make Ireland part of NATO.

By Joan Maynard

The Hillsborough agreement has brought about more violence, not less. Its supporters may have felt that the situation would be alleviated — in relation to the no-jury Diplock courts, strip searching, greater control over the RUC, and so on. But the whole gamut of oppression goes on as before. The changes were just cosmetic. In this context the recent decision of the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis

to change its policy of abstentionism in relation to the Dail, was, I believe, the right one.

It is essential that Sinn Féin wins support and brings about changes in the south. Irish unity is a fundamental question for the British labour movement. It is essential that the dialogue which is beginning between the British and Irish labour movement is continued and deepened. And it is essential that the British labour movement recognise the real nature of the Anglo-Irish Accord. It must recognise that no progress towards a solution can be made until Britain withdraws from Ireland — and demand that the Labour government commits itself to leaving Ireland.

THE 1986 Sinn Féin Ard Fheis (national conference) was historic. It voted, by 429 to 161, to end Sinn Féin's refusal to take seats to which it is elected in the southern Irish parliament. This decision has sent a shock wave through Irish and British politics. It means for the first time a party dedicated to British withdrawal from Ireland will be challenging the parties in the south of Ireland which have propped up British rule in the North. Because of the historic nature of this decision we are printing the major part of Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams' address to the Ard Fheis on abstentionism. We believe it is one of the most important speeches ever made by an Irish republican leader.

TO BEGIN with, I would like to express, on your behalf, from this Ard Fheis, our solidarity with political prisoners throughout the world and especially to Irish political prisoners in jails in Ireland, the USA, Europe and in Britain.

Much has happened since we assembled here last year. Sean MacManus, our party chairperson, dealt in detail with many of these developments in his address last night and I will make only passing reference to some of the most important ones here.

Despite all the best efforts of the British and Dublin governments, despite all the bluster of Fine Gael or their Northern representatives, the SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party), despite the bullies of the DUP (Democratic Unionist Party), Sinn Féin has not gone away.

The IRA is also still around. The Volunteer soldiers of Oglagh na hEireann (the Irish Republican Army), now 17 years in the field, have demonstrated, time and again in the past 12 months, that they are unbeaten and unbroken.

It is no accident that when Conor Cruise O'Brien was quite properly chased ignominiously out of South Africa by students they chanted: 'Victory to the ANC! Victory to the IRA!' We share their contempt for Dr O'Brien and we also share their solidarity in our common struggles. We extend that solidarity to national liberation armies throughout the world.

You will be asked to consider and support a motion from the Ard Chomhairle (leadership), and from cumann (branches) and comhairli ceantair (districts) throughout Ireland, calling for a change in our abstentionist attitude to Leinster House.

We are a political organisation and political organisations must, by their very nature, discuss and debate issues which they consider pertinent. We cannot do so properly unless all sides of the argument are articulated, unless all sides are accorded equal respect and consideration and unless all are bound by the democratic wishes of their comrades.

The Ard-Fheis is the supreme authority in Sinn Féin — not the Ard Chomhairle, not the Coiste Seasta, not the president. The assembled delegates of an Ard-Fheis are the authority. You are the leadership.

Many republicans have deep and justifiably strong feelings about abstentionism. I share and I understand those feelings. But none of us, regardless of the strength of our views, has the right to present the establishment and our opponents with the opportunity to project internationally the spectacle of yet another republican 'split'.

continued on page 2

Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

Sinn Fein breaks

Kinnock's disastrous course

THE month that has elapsed since Labour Party conference has shown just what a catastrophe for the labour movement that event was.

Some of those who stood and applauded Neil Kinnock's nationalistic outpourings in his speech, and voted for the policies that accompanied it, did so because they honestly, and wrongly, believed they were right. But many many others, particularly in the trade union delegations, did so exclusively and solely because they believed they would win the election. Kinnock's line might not be right but at least it was clever electorally. The ridiculous singing of 'Here we go' after Kinnock's speech — for the person who sought to wreck the miners strike — represented the desperate hope and will of delegates to win the next election.

But it is clear, only four weeks later, that this entire operation was for nothing. More than that it was a disaster. Labour took no step forward in the polls after its conference — on the contrary the Tories narrowed the gap on Labour to two percentage points. The Tories held their most confident and aggressive conference — not to mention the most right wing — for three years. Opinion polls show a sudden lurch of Alliance supporters towards favouring a coalition with the Tories rather than with Labour. In short Labour Party conference was an unmitigated disaster even at the elementary level of building party popularity.

It is the last results that show just why the party conference was a catastrophe. It is not that Labour is interested in a coalition with the SDP/Liberals — or at least it shouldn't be. It is that the sudden violent lurch of Alliance supporters from favouring a coalition with Labour to favouring a coalition with the Tories shows the huge swing to the right in the 'centre ground' of politics which Kinnock has allowed Thatcher to succeed in.

The explanation is simple. Kinnock declared the need for 'consensus' — which meant accepting most of the changes wrought in the Thatcher years of British politics. Thatcher replied at the Tory conference by simply shifting that consensus three paces to the right.

Owen has achieved essentially the same with the Liberals. He deliberately provoked a confrontation with the Liberal Party over Britain's absolute necessity to possess nuclear weapons. He was perfectly prepared to see a damaging decline in Alliance support, which is just what has occurred, rather than have any policy even mildly damaging to British capitalist interests accepted. The 'consensus' British capital will accept is so far to the right that even Kinnock, at present, cannot openly espouse it.

The result is now inevitable. Having praised Kinnock to the skies for his attacks on the miners, for launching the witch hunt against Militant, for isolating the Wapping struggle, the papers are launching a campaign to outflank Kinnock to his right. Thatcher is again being ruthlessly built up. The papers which have been praising Kinnock for the last three years are now going to turn very nasty indeed. Because, after all, if we are to have a right wing consensus then Thatcher is a much more reliable guardian of it than Labour.

The reality is the following — and its consequences have to be very carefully absorbed by the labour movement. A year ago the most likely result of an election would have been a hung parliament or a narrow Labour victory. At that time Thatcher was still reeling from the effect of the miners strike. But if present trends continue the most likely outcome of a general election could be another Thatcher government. Kinnock has completely and utterly wasted the entire advantage Labour gained from the tremendous battering the Tories took at the hands of the miners. Far from being clever Kinnock's road has been a complete catastrophe for the labour movement.

The game is not lost by any means. The Tories still face formidable economic problems — which could wreck them. It may still be possible to break through the obstacle to working class struggle which Kinnock represents. But if it is left to Kinnock then Thatcher is going to win the next election.

Undoubtedly the understanding of that is going to take some time to get through — and as far as most trade union leaderships are concerned nothing is going to happen before the general election. But when that understanding does get through there will have to be a reckoning. Both for the policies and for the individuals responsible.

Gerry Adam's presidential speech continued from p1:

I can understand that some comrades view a change of the abstentionist policy as a betrayal of republican principles. Some of you may feel that a republican organisation making such a change can no longer call itself 'republican'. If there are delegates here who feel like this I would remind you that the Army Authority of Oglagh na hEireann, assembled in a General Army Convention, has democratically made a judgement on this issue and that Oglagh na hEireann has remained united in its determination to pursue the armed struggle and is united in its confidence in us and our ability to pursue the political struggle.

The decisions of a General Army Convention are not binding on Sinn Fein Ard-Fheiseanna, but the logic if we change the abstentionist policy must be applied also to your attitude to the Army. And the logic which would dictate withdrawal of support from Sinn Fein if decisions go against you means that you have already decided to withdraw solidarity and support from the IRA and the armed struggle. I do not believe that any republican could take such a decision and attend this Ard-Fheis.

For my part, I can tell you that, although I am supporting the Ard Chomhairle motion, if the vote goes against us I will be as much a part of this struggle after that vote as I am today before that vote, and I will continue to work for this organisation with total commitment and single-minded determination.

The spectre of a 'split' is being raised to panic and intimidate us. It is aimed at unnerving people who want to remove abstentionism but who don't want the price for this to be a split. Talk or speculation about the split is aimed at making these people draw back.

This leadership is not going to be blackmailed by any such speculation. We have been elected by you to give leadership and we will not be found lacking in the task of leading and uniting this party. I consider the Ard Chomhairle motion to be a most important one because of the clear direction it gives in relation to future strategy but I consider it also as opening up, in a formal sense, the internal debate which commenced a few Ard-Fheiseanna ago.

Liberation

Our experience has taught us that our struggle — and this affects every aspect of the struggle for national liberation — cannot be built merely on the republican perception of things. We have had to consistently pitch our struggle at the level of people's understanding and we have had to develop it from this common denominator, taking into account, in an objective way, all the forces and factors involved.

It would be much easier, of course, if all the Irish people, or a large section of them, were born with our perception and our view of things, but this is not the case. If it was, there would be little need for a republican struggle. But there is a need and if we want to win then there is a fundamental need to make it a people's struggle. Of course, if we have no concept of winning we can remain as we are — a party apart from the people,



Martin McGuinness and Danny Morrison: on the Ard Fheis platform last weekend.

proud of our past but with little involvement in the present and only dreams for the future.

In the 6 counties, in regards to Stormont or Westminster, a sizeable section of nationalists and republicans feel no affinity with those institutions. In the 26 Counties, it is different. It is a massive mistake to presume that our republican attitude to Leinster House is shared by any more than a small section of our people, especially the citizens of this state, who might otherwise be open to our policies on all other issues. It must also be clear that the reconquest of Ireland, much less a British withdrawal, cannot be completed without the support of more of these people.

Reality

Of course we have a duty to point out to these people the shortcomings and the history of the present system, and we have a duty to win them to our view, but we can only do so at their level of understanding and we can only proceed from the objective reality of their consciousness.

James Connolly dealt with this issue in 1897, in a criticism of abstentionism in the *Shan Van Vocht*. In an editorial, the *Shan Van Vocht* rejected Connolly's views because an oath of allegiance was involved, but they also called for the question to be debated and they recorded their agreement with Connolly's views on the labour and social questions. Earlier, the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood) had debated this issue and a section of them actually attempted to develop a ballot box and dynamite strategy. At this time, unlike 1916 or today, they failed to develop their phase of armed struggle.

I give these examples merely to show that the debate among revolutionaries about participation in parliaments predates partition. Partition has merely reinforced the problem and distorted it in much the same way as it has affected every other aspect of life on this island.

Dogma

Connolly's criticism of abstentionism in 1897 and his implicit approval of it in the 1916 Proclamation shows that republicans should not be dogmatic and inflexible on this question. Those who first articulated abstentionism could not foresee the political developments that were to take place, nor could they, or

did they, lay down a course of action with a stipulation that it could never be changed.

Their political responses were defined by the political conditions that confronted them or that they were able to create. As the political conditions change so must republican strategy change. Therefore present political conditions continue to be the dominant factor in producing a republican response to those conditions.

Participation

We should not reject participation out of hand, but we should always be aware that such rejection may become essential. It all depends on the objective reality and conditions of the time.

1918 was such a time. The strategy of 1918 was the correct one. It was a dual power situation. It was much more than merely refusing to attend any enemy parliament. It meant withholding our consent to be governed by the British when the people — not us, but the people — established an alternative to Dail Eireann. But even the republicans made a mistake. To a large degree many of those politicians who represented us in Dail Eireann were not republicans. They did not reflect the interests of the people doing the actual fighting. Thus a majority of them found it possible, if not easy, to accept the Treaty arrangement.

Ferocity

It was in their own class interests to do so. For this reason they implemented the Treaty with a terrible ferocity. And they defeated us. With animal savagery, great cruelty and brutality, they imposed the British partition of Ireland upon this nation and they established the Free State and, within a modernised neo-colonial arrangement, they continue to represent those interests which crucify the Irish people.

At that time, many republicans refused to co-operate in any way with the new Free State set-up. At that time, unlike today, abstentionism meant the withholding of all consent to be government by the new state. As in 1918, this meant much more than merely abstaining from taking their seats.

It meant refusing to co-operate in any way with the new state. It meant a refusal to recognise any aspect of the Free State, its courts (in both civil and political cases), its education system, its labour

and agricultural schemes, limited though they were, or even its postal system.

Free State

In 1924, Sinn Fein fought its last meaningful election on an abstentionist policy in the Free State. Given the destabilising effect that abstentionism had on a young Free State, plus the widespread though mistaken belief that partition would not last, and coupled with the support that we continued to enjoy despite the vicious cruelty of the Civil War counter-revolution, it can be argued that abstentionism was the correct approach at that time. If so, the emergence of Fianna Fail, and its subsequent electoral successes with republican support, marked the end of abstentionism as a viable policy in this state. The coercive policies of the Fianna Fail leadership in government are a matter of record.

This period is significant not just because of the emergence of Fianna Fail but also, and more significantly, because Fianna Fail received support from many of those who remained committed to republican objectives.

The IRA leadership and a depleted Sinn Fein organisation remained on the high ground of abstentionism but yet, at the same time, they were prepared to give at least passive support to another party which was not only prepared to attend Leinster House but was committed to becoming part of the partitionist system. They failed to present the people with any realistic political alternative.

Truth

Sometimes I ask myself if we will ever learn. The central issue is not abstentionism. It is merely a problematic, deeply-rooted and emotive symptom of the lack of republican politics and the failure of successive generations of republicans to grasp the centrality, the primacy and the fundamental need for republican politics. This truth must be grasped. It is a difficult one for many to accept given the conspiratorial and repressive nature of our past, our distrust for 'politics and politicians' and a belief that 'politics' is inherently corrupt. But once it is grasped then everything else follows logically, especially the need to develop our struggle at the level of people's understanding.

with abstentionism

Some republicans believe that politics is the property of the establishment, that so-called 'constitutionalism' and politics are the same thing and thus that politics are inherently corrupt and corrupting. The logic of this is that de Valera was okay until he went into Leinster House, or that the opportunism of the Clann na Poblachta leadership only occurred after their entry into the Free State parliament. If we still believe that, then we don't know our own history and we have little concept of the class nature of this struggle.

Even if our history only started yesterday, the right to the Republic exists today in the right of the Irish nation to sovereignty, independence and national self-determination. It is up to us to make that Republic a reality.

We must develop a 32-County-wide political struggle. This is the most important task facing us at present. While consolidating our base in the 6 Counties, we must develop a popular struggle here in the 26 Counties to complement the struggle in the 6-County area. Of necessity this means, in order to advance at the level of people's consciousness, the removal of abstentionism in regard to Leinster House. You may not do this tomorrow but one thing is certain: as Sinn Fein continues to develop its understanding of the needs of this struggle, you are going to do it, sooner rather than later and your leadership is going to be back here year after year until it has convinced you of this necessity.

The fundamental tenets of republicanism remain valid and are, of course, absolutely central to the resolution of our current national difficulties. But no generation of republicans could or should ever merely absorb the teachings of previous generations. Those who were successful in the past in advancing the republican cause, even by one inch, updated and modernised the teaching and experiences of their predecessors. This is what Lalor did, what Pearse did, what Connolly did — and it is what we have to do also.

We have to develop a coherent social and political philosophy which provides a rationale for consistent political as well as armed action. Such a process is one of continual reinterpretation and refinement in response to constantly changing social and political reality.

Leadership

The failure to do this in the last 60 years has prevented Sinn Fein from assuming a position of leadership in this state from which people could be organised and their political and national consciousness raised. This in turn has weakened the appeal and credibility of this struggle and limited our ability to think or act outside, and thus complimentary to, the armed struggle, and it has prevented us from mobilising the broad masses of our people, not least in regards to the armed struggle.

We have at all times been more committed to rebellion than to revolution. The cement which held us together was physical force and, until recent times, physical force was applied in isolation, unsupported by organised political sentiment in the country. I have spoken and written on this theme many times and I have preached the gospel of republican politics — the need for republican politics, that is the need for republican involvement with people — up and down this island.

Over the last few years I have,

like many of you, given serious consideration to the question of abstentionism and of what part it plays in our struggle. I have considered all the alternatives in great depth including a dual power situation which is neither feasible nor practical in this state at the present time. I have considered the strategy of taking seats only when we have a majority in Leinster House. This is advanced by some comrades and is, among other things, an admission by them that only mathematics and not principle is involved. But it is also as impractical as the dual power theory.

The only feasible way to break out of our isolation, to make political gains, to win support for our policies, to develop our organisation and our struggle is by approaching people at the level they understand. This is the sad and unfortunate reality of the dilemma facing us. It cannot be dodged by highly moral rhetoric. It is an issue which we must face up to. This means Sinn Fein getting among people in the basic ways which the people accept. This means new approaches and difficult — and perhaps risky — political positions have to be faced up to by us.

Succeed

It will mean the difference between another glorious defeat or the development of strategies which can succeed.

The removal of abstentionism will not provide a 'magic wand' solution to all our problems. Indeed, in this state it merely clears the decks and it makes the burden of struggle heavier upon all of us.

We have to cease being spectators of a struggle in the 6 Counties and become pioneers of republicanism in the 26 Counties, putting our policies before the people, confident of the logic of the alternative which Irish republicanism offers.

I say this means risky political positions. This should not be underestimated.

The removal of abstentionism allied to implementation of the other necessities I have touched on here, and detailed in other addresses, will initiate an increase in our party membership and could change the political complexion of this party. It is important therefore that those who wish to change abstentionism now recommit themselves to this struggle and that those who are opposed to change stay with us also.

We need to keep our republican gut. While developing the struggle in the 26 Counties we must never lose sight of our national objectives. We must change our strategies but must never let this change our objectives or our aims. We are a republican party committed to the overthrow of British rule in Ireland and to the end of partition and committed to bringing about the political and economic changes necessary for the well-being and security of this nation.

Revolutionary

What will make an organisation like ours revolutionary is not whether it is committed to any particular means of achieving revolution — such as street agitation, electoralism or physical force — but whether all the means it uses — political work, publicity, mass education, electoralism, and armed struggle (which should play no part in the struggle in this state) or projects of economic, social or cultural resistance — are conducive to achieving the revolutionary reconquest of Ireland.

The test of a real revolutionary is his or her consistent, determined and intelligent work for real national independence, whatever the area of struggle that might be in.

Struggle

Revolutionary work is work which advances the national independence struggle, and it is the art of politics and political judgement which should determine what work should have priority at any moment in time.

No one form of revolutionary work is inherently superior to any other. The judgement of what form of work is required must be made on the basis of what form is most conducive and necessary for the national independence struggle in the particular circumstances currently existing.

Vote

Republican TDs (members of the 26 County parliament) will act, in consultation with the grassroots, on the direction of the Ard Chomhairle. They will vote in the interests of their constituents, our struggle and this party. I am totally opposed to this party becoming involved in any coalition, at any time, with any of the establishment parties in Leinster House. If we, at times, agree on specifics or if we vote along similar lines, that is fair enough and is acceptable.

Some of you may think that I have dwelt at too much length on this issue of abstentionism. My intention is to place on the historical record now, in a clear and detailed way, the issues facing this party when we come to consider this contentious issue. We cannot enter into such a historical debate — the long term outcome of which could change the face of politics on this island and will certainly change republican politics — without leaving a clear and unambiguous record of why we considered such a step.

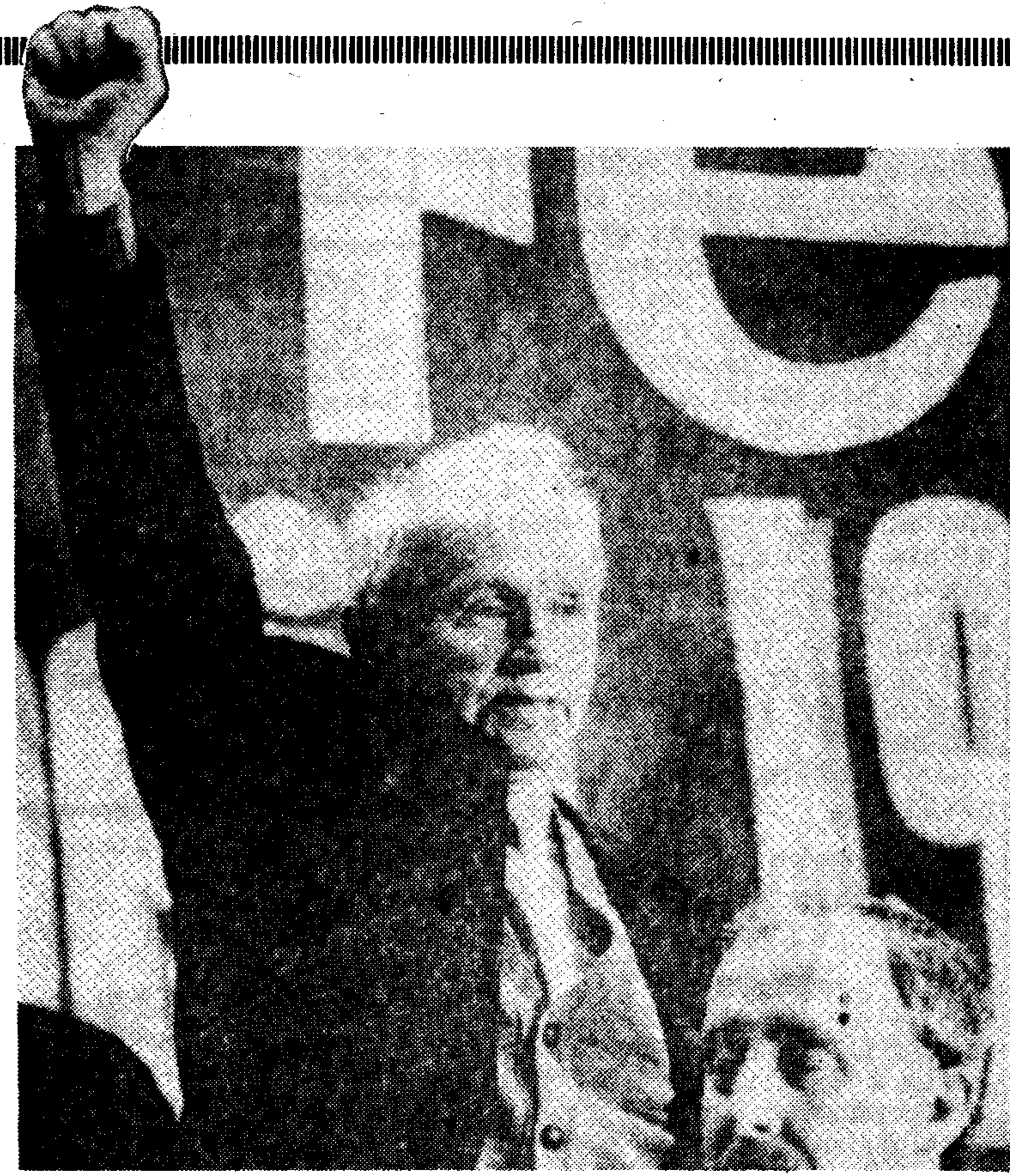
Change

It is a sentence, what I am saying is that it's time for change, not just for republicans but for all the people of this state.

For too long the political pygmies of Leinster House have had things too easy. For too long they have been allowed a monopoly upon what passes for politics in this part of Ireland and for too long a very sizeable section of Irish citizens have been denied the opportunity to shape and build a relevant, radical and principled alternative to partitionist rule.

The failure to build a republican base in this state has meant that the anti-people policies of successive Dublin governments are implemented with almost no opposition and that the lowering of national spirit and the pretence that this state is a nation goes on unabated. Partition is virtually a fact of life here for many people who feel powerless to remove it.

Sinn Fein is the only party in this country which is totally committed to securing a complete British withdrawal from Ireland. It is only a matter of time until we assist the British government in taking this inevitable course of action which will be hastened by the actions of Oglagh na hEireann, the spearhead of republican resistance in Ireland. It is only a matter of time until the British are forced to get out of our country. And when they do, then, and only then, will the basis for peace, unity, prosperity and democracy be established in our country.



John Joe McGill

Sinn Fein in conference

OVER 1,000 people, including 700 delegates, crammed Dublin's Mansion House for the 1986 Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (national conference) last weekend. The Ard Fheis discussed a wide range of questions — prisoners, youth, social and economic policy, foreign policy, the party's press, abortion, culture. We will be reporting on these in our next issue. But the conference was dominated by the decision to overturn Sinn Fein's abstentionist position as regards taking seats in Dublin's Dail, or parliament.

The motion from Sinn Fein's leadership to change the position on abstentionism, and take the seats in the Dail, was passed by 429 votes to 161 — thus securing the necessary 2/3 majority to change Sinn Fein's constitution.

By Jon Silberman in Dublin

For 65 years, Sinn Fein has refused to enter either the British parliament or any 'partitionist' assembly in Ireland — whether in the 26 county state in the South or in the North. The party has stood candidates in elections but they have refused to take their seats if victorious. As most people in the South will not vote for candidates on that basis this has left politics in the 26 counties free for those parties which in practice prop up British rule in the North — Fine Fail, Fian-na Gael, the Labour Party, and the Workers Party.

Sinn Fein's decision to take seats to which it is elected in the Southern Parliament is therefore a direct challenge to the pro-partition parties. Brian MacDonal, head of Sinn Fein's publicity department stressed that the need to develop an all-Ireland political alternative was at the heart of the discussion on abstention.

Party veterans Joe Cahill and John Joe McGill also spoke in defence of the change. McGill received a standing ovation as he

told delegates that 'the important thing is to win', not to hand the struggle down to future generations.

Delegate McGovern from Galway, associated with the republican movement for 40 years, underscored this point. 'This is a revolution of the whole country, north and south'.

Sinn Fein vice-president, Martin McGuinness also came to the rostrum to put the case against abstention. McGuinness refuted the suggestion that what was involved was ending the armed struggle in the north. We must accept, he said, that 'after 65 years of republican struggle, republican agitation, republican sacrifice and republican rhetoric, we have signally failed to convince a majority of people in the 26 Counties that the republican movement has any relevance to them. By ignoring reality we remain alone and isolated on the high altar of abstentionism, divorced from the people of the 26 Counties and easily dealt with by those who wish to defeat us. Such a situation cannot be allowed to continue'.

Countering the suggestion that reversal of abstentionism would be applauded by the British government, McGuinness said to loud applause 'they fear this movement, they fear this leadership. They have every right to fear us because in or out of Leinster House we head the most dangerous and committed revolutionary force in Ireland for 65 years'.

Immediately following the Ard Fheis, the Dublin prime minister, Garret Fitzgerald issued a prepared statement. He urged all 'democratic political parties' to join together in a campaign to ensure that no Sinn Fein representative was elected. Every major British paper carried material reporting and analysing Sinn Fein's decision. The Southern Irish press, and government, have turned to attempting to build up the tiny splinter — 'Republican Sinn Fein' — launched by Ruairi O'Bradaigh. This had no support in the IRA, and was supported by only around 30 of the delegates to the Ard Fheis.

Youth in action

Youth — no help from Kinnock

'CYNICAL beyond belief' was the absolutely accurate response of the charity Youthaid to the Kinnock leadership's latest slap in the face for young people. The grim reality behind Sawyer's promises of a 'vibrant youth move-

By Anne Kane

ment' Red Wedge and designer socialism, was revealed when Labour said it could not pledge even to restore the £100 million Thatcher is cutting from the unemployment benefit of people under 25.

Labour's response put the party to the right of the Liberals on this issue. These cuts — to be fully in force by 1 April 1988 — will mean a flat deduction of £6.60 weekly from young people claiming supplementary benefit. They are part of the provisions of the Social Security Bill passed earlier this year and vigorously denounced by Labour in debate.

On Tuesday, only two days prior to this statement by Labour, Gordon Brown, Labour Party regional affairs spokesperson, denounced the new 'available for work' tests already being sneaked into the DHSS. Aiming at cutting the dole figures by 200,000 in less than a year without creating a single job, new questionnaires will use trick questions to ensure the highest number of unemployed people possible are deemed undeserving of supplementary benefit.

Conditions which mean benefits can be denied to newly unemployed people — who come under these new provisions — include being unwilling to travel long distances just to look for work, 'restricting' the type of work you want, having dependants such as children, and being unable to make immediate alternative arrangements, or not wanting to work unsociable hours. The result in a pilot study was that 361 people were denied claims, compared to 32 in offices not using these questions. Without doubt these conditions will hit those in the weakest financial position hardest — women with children who will be ruled 'unavailable' for work, or young people with little training or higher expectations than Thatcher thinks reasonable who will be 'restricting' their choices.

Both of these savage attacks on the unemployed, especially youth, handed Labour the task of taking the offensive against the Tories by mounting a campaign against benefit cuts and for full employment, training or higher education provisions for young people. Labour had yet another opportunity to identify itself with the interests of millions of young people against the Tory government and to win the support of those 6.2 million voters who will be under 25 in 1987. Instead Labour lined up with the Tory attacks by refusing to back its House of Commons bluster with any commitment to action.

If Labour refuses even to pledge to restore benefits no wonder youth who demand training and full employment have been called 'impossibilist' by Kinnock — during his 'Labour Listens to Youth' tour no less! The Labour leadership's refusal to campaign for the jobs and training young people want, Kinnock's insult of 'impossibilism', Red Wedge-ism, and the clamp down on an independent youth section are part of a consistent policy. It's one of never mind the politics, turn up the music and bring in the bright lights and we'll get the youth vote. It is a policy which will have disastrous policies for Labour. Youth will draw exactly the same conclusion as Youthaid, that Labour 'want their votes, but they are not prepared to offer anything in return'.

The first step in reversing this course is for all sections of the Labour Party to oppose the attacks on the LPYS that were voted at this year's Labour Party conference and allow youth their own independent campaigning voice in the party.

Youth and Ireland day school



Birmingham University
8 November at 11am

Speakers include:
Sinn Fein, NOLS, NUR, Union of Students in Ireland, Labour Party Black Section, Women Against Pit Closures, LCI and LWI.

Support Brent's anti-racist policies

BRENT COUNCIL is under attack from all sides. Its crimes? Wanting to examine seriously allegations of racism against headmistress Maureen McGoldrick; preferring a black teacher to a white one in the case of Mrs Braithwaite; and employing 170 teachers committed to creating race equality in schools. BOB BUCHAN of Brent South Labour Party explains the issues.

BRENT has the largest proportion of black people of any council in Britain. Its Labour authority includes the highest-ever number of black councillors anywhere. It is no accident that Brent has been singled out by Tories and the media in an offensive designed to stir up anti-black prejudice and undermine Labour's electoral support.

The 1981 census put Brent in eighth worst position in England in terms of social and economic disadvantage. Of course it is black people that suffer most from this. That puts a special responsibility on Brent council not only to implement its 'expansionist' manifesto, but also to fight racism in areas such as education.

With only 200 black teachers out of 3000, and well-documented evidence of black underachievement in education, Brent is 100 per cent correct to take positive action in favour of

black teachers and to ensure that allegations of racism are thoroughly investigated. It is despicable that the NUT, Labour's education spokesperson Giles Radice, and the *Morning Star* should actively collaborate with this Tory witch hunt.

The *Morning Star* claimed that Brent council's action will open the door to a racist counter-offensive and inflict a serious setback on the movement. It is the *Morning Star's* response — a rotten capitulation to racism within the NUT — which is a 'serious setback' for the labour movement.

After last May's local government elections *Tribune* turned racism on its head by implying that it was black Labour candidates who lost seats in areas such as Wandsworth, instead of pointing out that racism within the local parties and Labour's resultant failure to campaign was responsible for poor results.



Brent council's positive action policy in schools is 100 per cent necessary.

The reality of course is that the attacks on Brent council are part of an offensive opened up by the Tories, made plain at their recent conference. They will play the 'race card' for all it's worth in the run-up to the next general election.

Such attacks go hand in hand with the recent imposition of the racist visa controls. They are part and parcel of the attacks on Britain's black communities and are aimed at rolling back the gains witnessed by the composition and

policies of Labour councils such as Brent.

The task of Brent council and the Brent parties is to explain and mobilise support for their anti-racist policies. And the task of the whole labour movement is to support them.

Further defeats for Black and Asian Advisory Committee

RUMOURS ABOUND that the Labour leadership is planning an extensive 'revamping' of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee. This comes about in response to the huge pressure generated by Labour Party Black Section against the leadership's tame alternative to accepting the right of black members to self-organisation and constitutional recognition. It follows wide resignations from the committee by many black appointees.

Plans for a 'new' committee include dropping advisory from its title and allowing it to discuss policy issues. This would remove it from the ambit of the organisation sub-committee of the NEC which is its current status.

Despite earlier assurances to the contrary, Linda Douglas, the new LPYS representative on the NEC, has already accepted membership of BAAC. She has now told Black Section that she intends to 'give it a go'.

Douglas's name is widely bandied about as BAAC's next chair. In view of the previous NEC youth representative Frances Curran's eagerness to summarise on behalf of the right wing in the conference debate on Black Section in Blackpool last month, this latest rumour has gained wide credibility amongst the party's rank and file.

One measure of the contempt with which the Labour leadership regards BAAC came to light recently when Black Section exposed the existence of Alf Dubbs' 'top secret' think-tank on race. Further indication is given by

the fact that deputy party leader Roy Hattersley has

By Annie Brady

not attended a single meeting of BAAC so far.

Black Section chair Marc Wadsworth told Socialist Action: 'The whole purpose of Dubbs' secret committee, of advising the parliamentary party on non-racist immigration legislation, is a

strategy to disarm a Labour government. The only way to sort out such questions is democratically: by consulting the authentic voice of black people within the party — and that means Black Section.

'BAAC is deeply undemocratic, with its system of neo-colonial appointees. The so-called revamping of BAAC means the boycott campaign organised by Black Section has been spectacularly successful.

'This pathetic regrouping of BAAC is doomed to failure. It doesn't address the undemocratic nature of this bantustan committee and its lack of accountability.'

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Labour MPs, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Cheques should be made payable to 'Campaign Group News'.

Black Section round-up

South Africa House picket

Labour Party Black Section supporters were prominent among the 100-strong picket at South Africa House on Tuesday 28 October to protest the death of Mozambican president Samora Machel.

The picket was organised by a new umbrella organisation, Black Action for the Liberation of South Africa (BALSA). Participating organisations include Labour Party Black Section, PAC, and Black Consciousness Movement among others.

Black Section has also held a series of public meetings on South Africa. The national committee over the weekend of 25-26 October decided to step up solidarity with South Africa.

Hackney Black Section off the ground

OVER 70 people, nearly all of them black, attended a very successful public meeting called by the newly-founded Hackney Labour Party Black Section on 24 October.

Addressing the question of the way forward for black people in Hackney, and the

struggle for freedom in South Africa, the meeting heard national leaders of Black Section, local black activists and speakers from South and East Africa.

The lively debate which followed indicates that Hackney can expect a large and active black section which will be fighting on all issues affecting black people and to get more of Hackney's large black community into the Labour Party.

Anti-visa campaign

A RECENT national committee of Labour Party Black Section decided to appoint a new post of immigration coordinator.

This job will mean liaising with deportation and immigration campaigns, especially within the black community. It has not yet been decided which Black Section national committee member will fill the post, but as an immigration worker and the Black Section comrade who prepared a recent paper for the national committee on the question, Sanjiv Vedi is a likely occupant.

Black Section will not take up specific cases, but aims for close coordination with existing campaigns to ensure that the issues of deportation and racist immigration laws is kept at the front of every Labour Party member's concerns.

WAC launches campaign on Labour women's conference

THE LABOUR Women's Action Committee (WAC) executive meeting on Saturday 31 October decided to launch a major public campaign for the election of the women's places on the Labour Party National Executive Committee (NEC) by the Labour women's conference. This follows from the decisions of this year's Labour Party conference to launch a comprehensive review of women's organisation within the party.

Writing in last week's issue of *Tribune* WAC executive member Ann Pettifor wrote: 'The 1986 Labour Party conference could go down in history as a turning point in the party's attitude to the empowering of women. For, at this year's conference, men both in the constituency party and the trade union delegations finally acknowledged ... that women's interests cannot be advanced by forums as powerless as Labour's women's organisation ...'

'However the consultative process that is about to be initiated by the National Executive Committee in conjunction with the National Labour Women's Committee must have as its underlying assumption, one simple but crucial principle: that women should control their own organisations and that therefore women should elect their own representatives ...'

WAC has pointed out that any reforms of the women's conference which leave the election of the women's places on the NEC in the hands of men will not bring about a real change in the situation of women within the party. WAC welcomes moves to increase the power and authority of the women's conference, and won a significant victory at party conference with the vote for the mandatory inclusion of a woman on every shortlist for parliamentary selection. But it is the election of the women's places on the NEC which is the real measure of whether women are to have real, or purely token, power within the party. A situation where women's con-

ference has women NEC members imposed by a majority of men at party conference is a situation of pure tokenism.

WAC is drawing up proposals for the restructuring of the women's conference, and for the precise form of the election of the women's places on the NEC. WAC however has made it clear that it is prepared to consider meaningful alternative positions on these issues if the basic principle of the right of women to elect their own representatives is accepted.

The WAC executive is therefore circulating an appeal in the party which it is asking for support for. This appeal states: 'The 1986 Labour Party women's conference instructed the NEC and the National Labour Women's Committee to develop jointly proposals to make the National Conference of Labour Women more representative and thus to increase its weight and authority. To be in line with the party's declared aim to make the interests of women a major priority, we consider it essential that these proposals must include the provision for the five women's places on the NEC to be elected by the National Conference of Labour Women.'

WAC is asking for signatories for this appeal and it will then undertake a major campaign around it leading to the discussions which will take place on the NEC and in preparing next year's Labour Party conference. Within this framework WAC will consult with women in the party, and those who support its demands, concerning the best detailed proposals for securing these aims.



Tribune MPs ditch women - again!

FOR THE last two years there has been much controversy between the Campaign and Tribune Groups in parliament over the issue of recorded votes in the shadow cabinet elections. Again this year Tribune refused to record the votes of their members, while the Campaign Group has both recorded and published these votes.

Then we suggested that Tribune record an equal number of votes to Campaign Group, that is 34, without revealing names. Tribune refused this too. No wonder.

A glance at the results of the three women candidates, Margaret Beckett, Jo Richardson and Clare Short, is most revealing. And it comes only weeks after conference voted for a minister for women with cabinet status, against the recommendation of the right

wing leadership. Jo Richardson, on both the Campaign Group

By Dennis Skinner

and Tribune slates, received 59 votes. This was 12 down on last year. Just over 30 Campaign Group members voted, and they solidly supported the three women candidates. That means that a derisory number of Tribune MPs supported Jo.

Likewise Margaret's 42 votes and Clare's 38 show

that only a minuscule proportion of Tribune Group supported either of these two. Yet there are twice as many Tribune Group MPs as there are Campaign Group MPs.

Lots of Labour Party members pay lip-service to the important role of women at all levels in the party. It is time that the movement understood what is really happening. Yet again, when it comes to turning words into actions, Tribune MPs have shown where they stand.

Comrades should ask themselves why Tribune deserted women. The only conclusion is that the shadow cabinet vote is yet another indication of the so-called soft left's real position.

Deptford: another Knowsley North?

THE LONG struggle by Deptford Labour Party, to select a representative and accountable parliamentary replacement for sitting MP John Silkin who has announced his intention not to seek reselection, looks like reaching its end. But not without another bizarre twist.

The local *Mercury* recently ran a five-page 'exclusive' under the offensive headline 'The rape of Deptford Labour Party', claiming to have uncovered a 13-year plot by 'infiltrators' to take control of the party and oust Silkin.

Much of the material is lifted straight from the 15-month long membership enquiry by the national executive. But the extensive quotes from Silkin himself demonstrate the level of collusion.

Party members had come to believe that the way was clear at last for the selection process to go ahead. The membership investigation Silkin demanded had failed to stop it. The NEC had found only minor administrative errors on the part of voluntary officers in chasing up applications

passed on by Walworth Road or Silkin himself.

By Nick Long, Deptford Labour Party

During this summer Silkin again attempted to reopen an investigation by claiming meetings held under the instruction of the regional organiser to confirm GC delegations were questionable. This was seen as yet another wrecking tactic.

But in early October a timetable for the selection procedure was agreed with the NEC. Nominations will close on 5 December, and the selection conference is due to take place on 14 December. However this is still dependent on regional organisers checking the branch GC delegate confirmation meetings.

LEWISHAM & CATFORD
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THE RAPE
of Deptford
Labour Party

THIS WEEK sees the opening of an alarming new chapter in the story of John Silkin, MP, and his battle with Deptford Labour Party.

When Silkin announced in July last year that he did not want to stand again as Deptford's Labour candidate the left in the area was overjoyed. For this time he had not only been

Many party members in Deptford view these latest developments as part of a wider attempt by the right and 'soft left' to circumvent Deptford's right to a candidate of our own choosing. It is a further attempt to influence the outcome by frightening the party into selecting a candidate acceptable to the leadership.

It is obvious that Silkin, through the local media, is

attempting to lay further seeds of doubt. The implication is that Silkin will resign, forcing a by-election, if nominations are not to the right wing's liking.

This would allow the NEC to do a Knowsley North. Such concerns were also fuelled when our national conference delegation reported rumours circulating at Blackpool that the NEC wanted to impose

In Brief

Lesbians and gays rock Notts

'EQUAL rights for all' was the slogan and 'no divide and rule' was the message of the October 25 demonstration in Nottingham against the county councils's refusal to honour its manifesto commitment to equal opportunities for lesbians and gay men.

By Peter Purton

Nearly 1000 people braved the rain and the gale to march behind the banner of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights. The protesters were mobilised by LCLGR groups from across the country and locally, by NALGO, ASTMS and the local Labour Parties.

The breadth of support for the campaign was indicated by the speakers at the rally. These included Sharon Atkin, Keith Vaz, and Ken Fleet, prospective parliamentary candidates, Anne Matthews, leader of Southwark council, and local labour movement representatives, including one of the minority on the county council's Labour group.

The demonstration made it clear that no longer will lesbians and gay men allow any Labour authority to trample on our rights and to fly in the face of national conference policy. It made it clear that the Labour movement can be united around such issues.

The fight against the ignorance, bigotry and prejudice of Labour authorities like Nottinghamshire must be carried on. The commitment of the Labour Party to socialist policies on issues such as lesbian and gay rights is tested by such campaigns.

In Nottinghamshire at least, the whole movement now understands that there can be no socialism without lesbian and gay rights.

Black Section to chair LLL

THE LABOUR Party Black Section has decided to take up the position of joint chair of Labour Left Liaison.

The LLL chairs therefore are Marc Wadsworth, chair of the Labour Party Black Section, and Ann Pettifor, of the Labour Women's Committee national executive.

By Redmond O'Neill

In an important step to widening its network of support, Labour Left Liaison has decided to invite local Campaign groups and individuals to affiliate to the LLL. This will enable local groups to be kept abreast of developments nationally, to be linked up with the party's national campaigns and to coordinate activity with similar groups outside their local area. The LLL will also be able to help with speakers for local meetings.

Following the successful work of the LLL at party conference in October, plans are now in hand for coordinated work with the Campaign Group, through Campaign Forum, around regional party conferences. Campaign Forum fringe meetings with speakers from the LLL, the Campaign Group, the Black Section and the Labour Women's Action Committee are planned for every regional party conference.

LLL will also be stepping up its work against the witch hunt and in defence of party democracy following the disgraceful extension of the witch hunt with the imposition of a candidate on Knowsley North CLP by the Labour Party NEC.

Affiliate to Labour Left Liaison

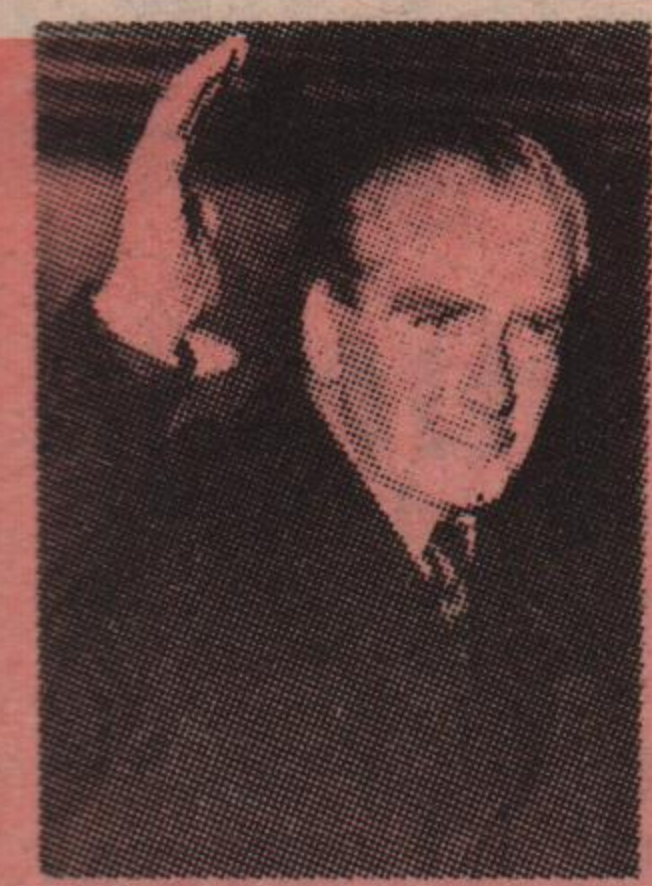
Local Campaign groups: £10
Individuals: £7.50 (waged) and £3 (unwaged)
Affiliates will receive the regular mailings of the LLL.
Affiliated Campaign groups are invited to attend LLL national meetings as observers.

Name
Address
Phone

Affiliation fee enclosed

Return to:
Labour Left Liaison, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH.

Suez - the day the empire died



Eden

THE INVASION of Suez, the thirtieth anniversary of which the press are commenting on this week, was the greatest crisis in British post-war history. On 5 November 1956 British and French troops landed in Egypt to overthrow the government of Nasser. Yet 24 hours later they were forced to declare a ceasefire. By the end of the year they were out of Egypt. It was one of the most humiliating and far reaching defeats in British history. JOHN ROSS outlines the events which have shaped British history ever since.

1. The road to invasion

SUEZ MARKS a watershed in British history which is so complete that it is almost impossible to remember what the world looked like before it. Pre-1956 was an epoch when the British Empire was still very much a reality. True, Britain had been forced to leave India immediately after World War II. It had left Palestine in 1947. But apart from that the British Empire was still marked in red on much of the world's map.

Half of Africa was ruled from London. Britain had colonies in Aden and Cyprus. It had client Arab states in Jordan and Iraq. Over 100,000 members of the British armed forces were in the Middle or Far East. British prime ministers Churchill and Attlee met with Roosevelt, Truman, and Stalin at Yalta and Potsdam to organise the post-war world. Britain was the only state in the world, together with the United States and the USSR, to possess nuclear weapons. British governments claimed, again with the US and Soviet Union, to be part

of the 'big three' of world politics. In 1948 Churchill even claimed a specially privileged role for Britain in world politics due to its position in the 'three overlapping conferences' of the Commonwealth, the Atlantic Alliance with the United States, and Europe.

British military might, and its foreign bases, were not simply for show. British troops were actively engaged in fighting national liberation movements in Malaya, Cyprus and Kenya. In 1953 Britain had established the Central African Federation to try to maintain white rule in southern Africa. British governments had retained conscription after World War II. Britain had not only joined NATO in 1949 but was also a member of SEATO (the South East Asia Treaty Organisation) and CENTO (the Central Treaty Organisation — involving Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan). Britain fully participated, alongside the United States, in the Korean war when that broke out in 1950.

In this system of British international interests the Middle East occupied a privileged place. It had been an area into which Britain had expanded after World War I. British based oil companies were the only ones in the world to compete with the giant oil corporations of the United States. During World War II Britain had

specifically concentrated on the fighting in Egypt, North Africa, and the Mediterranean.

At the beginning of the 1950s Britain still had 80,000 troops in Egypt, as well as bases in Libya and military advisers in Iraq. Britain supplied the military commander of Jordan — 'Glubb' Pasha. A further 60,000 British troops passed through the Suez canal annually. A third of the ships passing through the canal were British.

But World War II had rocked European rule in the Arab East to its foundations. In July 1943 nationalist parties won an overwhelming majority in Syria — at that time a colony of France. After Syrian fighting with French troops in 1945, France was forced to abandon both Syria and Lebanon. The British, having colluded with the Zionist settlers and the United States to establish the state of Israel, abandoned Palestine in 1948. In 1951, just to the east of the Arab world, the regime of Mossadegh had attempted to nationalise the Iranian oilfields. The key event in the Middle East however came in 1952 when a coup led by Nasser overthrew the Egyptian monarchy. Egypt contained a third of all the inhabitants of the Arab world. It also contained the Suez canal.

Britain, which had occupied Egypt since 1882, had kept the country in a state of subjugation and medieval backwardness. Less than half of one per cent of landowners owned over one third of all cultivable land. For the poor, 72 per cent of peasants owned only 13 per cent of the land. The British had made and broken supposedly independent Egyptian governments at their will. So hated were the British that during World War II crowds had openly chanted the name of Rommel on the streets of Cairo.

Following the overthrow of the monarchy the new Egyptian regime progressively radicalised. Its first demand was the withdrawal of British forces from Egypt. This was conceded in July 1954 — although not without a Tory revolt in parliament against it led by Julian Amery.

Following this first success the Egyptian government began to seek ways to pursue a foreign policy independent from Britain. The first major step in that came in April 1955 when Nasser met with Nehru of India, Tito of Yugoslavia, Chou En-Lai of China, and Sukarno of Indonesia at Bandung to launch the non-aligned movement. Nasser refused to join the Baghdad Pact launched by Britain to tie together its alliances in the Middle East. Cairo radio began openly to support the rebellion against British rule in Kenya.

Israel feared the rise of a modernised Arab state to its west and commenced a policy of open provocation against Egypt. First Israel attempted to organise sabotage against the British forces in Egypt, blaming it on Egyptian nationalists, to provoke the British into staying. This policy collapsed when it was openly exposed at the beginning of 1955 — a scandal which led to David Ben Gurion resuming the Israeli prime ministership in February 1955.

The Israelis then began a policy of armed attacks on Egypt. Egypt in return began to support guerilla raids on Israel and demanded to buy arms from the west to protect itself from Israeli attacks. When Britain, the United States, and France refused to supply arms Egypt bought them from Czechoslovakia — an attempt at pursuing an independent foreign policy which horrified the British government. In May 1956 Egypt opened

diplomatic relations with China — at that time the US was refusing to recognise even the existence of the Communist regime in China.

At this point the United States and Britain clearly decided to attempt to bring Nasser, to heel. A key to Egypt's economic development was the construction of the great dam across the Nile at Aswan. In February 1956 the World Bank had agreed to loan \$200 million to Egypt towards its construction. But this was on condition the US and Britain supplied \$70 million towards its foreign currency costs. On 19 July US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles announced that the United States was withdrawing its funding. The aim was to attempt to make Nasser's regime more pliable. The British and US confidently expected Egypt to capitulate.

On 26 July 1956, the fourth anniversary of the overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy, Nasser gave his answer. In a radio broadcast to the entire Arab East he announced that Egypt would nationalise the British controlled Suez canal. Its profits would be used to finance the Aswan dam — Egypt was limited to seven per cent of the profits of the canal by the agreement imposed by the British in 1949. It was an act of open defiance of British control.

2. Britain invades

THE BRITISH response to the nationalisation of the canal was immediate and violent. The British prime minister Eden was meeting with his Iraqi puppet King Feisal and his prime minister Nuri es-Said in London on the evening of 26 July 1956 when the news came. Eden immediately summoned a meeting of cabinet ministers, the chiefs of the armed forces, the French ambassador, and the US charge d'affaires. Eden's comment to the meeting was the remark that: 'The Egyptian has his thumb on our wind-pipe.' Before his departure Nure es-Said was reported by Eden to have told him: 'Hit him, hit him hard, and hit him now.'

The next day a special Egypt committee was formed in the cabinet. Its decision was to launch a military attack on Egypt. It recognised that this would be a major war and that careful preparations must be made.

The reaction in Britain, contrary to what is now claimed, was almost total support for Eden. Successive editorials in *The Times* were entitled 'Time for decision', 'What is at stake', 'A hinge of history', and 'Resisting the aggressor'. Only the *Guardian* and *Observer* came out against military action.

Most significant, however, was the reaction of the Labour leadership. Suez is now claimed as a high point of Labour internationalism. But the truth is that the initial reaction of the Labour Party leadership, in all its wings, was disgraceful chauvinist filth reminiscent of the Falklands. It was not until the United States stepped in and made clear, for its own reasons, that it opposed the forthcoming invasion of Egypt, that the Labour leadership began to come out strongly against Eden.

The morning following the nationalisation of the Suez canal Gaitskell, then Labour Party leader, declared in parliament: 'We deeply deplore this high handed and totally unjustifiable step by the Egyptian government.' In the debate in the House of Commons on 2 August Gaitskell declared of Nasser: 'It is all very familiar. It is exactly the same as that we encountered from Mussolini and Hitler in those years before the war.' The headline of the *Daily Herald*, at that time controlled by the TUC, on Nasser was 'No more Hitlers'.

But if the reaction of Gaitskell was to be expected then perhaps most disgraceful of all from a socialist point of view was the initial role played by

Aneurin Bevan. At the time of the first debate in the House of Commons, Bevan approached Julian Amery, leader of the group of Tory MPs who opposed British withdrawal from Egypt in 1954, and told him: 'This proves you were right.' Bevan refused to accept Egypt's right to own the waterway which ran through its own territory and declared: 'If the sending of one's police and soldiers into the darkness of the night to seize somebody else's property is nationalisation, then Ali Baba used the wrong terminology.'

Even in December 1956, when Britain had been forced out of Egypt after its invasion, Bevan still stated: 'We have never taken the position that in the exercise of sovereign rights Egypt has the right to inflict a mortal wound upon the commerce of the world.' The seeds of Bevan's capitulation a year later, when he came out in favour of British nuclear weapons with the notorious remark that British unilateral nuclear disarmament would send a 'foreign secretary naked into the conference chamber', was already present in his reaction to Suez. *Tribune*, to its credit, made it clear it was completely against a military attack on Egypt.

Gaitskell however differed from Eden on one decisive point. He made it clear that he was prepared to use force against Egypt but only if it were sanctioned by the United Nations. And the United Nations, in the world of the 1950s, was controlled by the United States. Gaitskell, in short, made it clear that he was prepared to back a military invasion of Egypt only if the United States agreed to it.

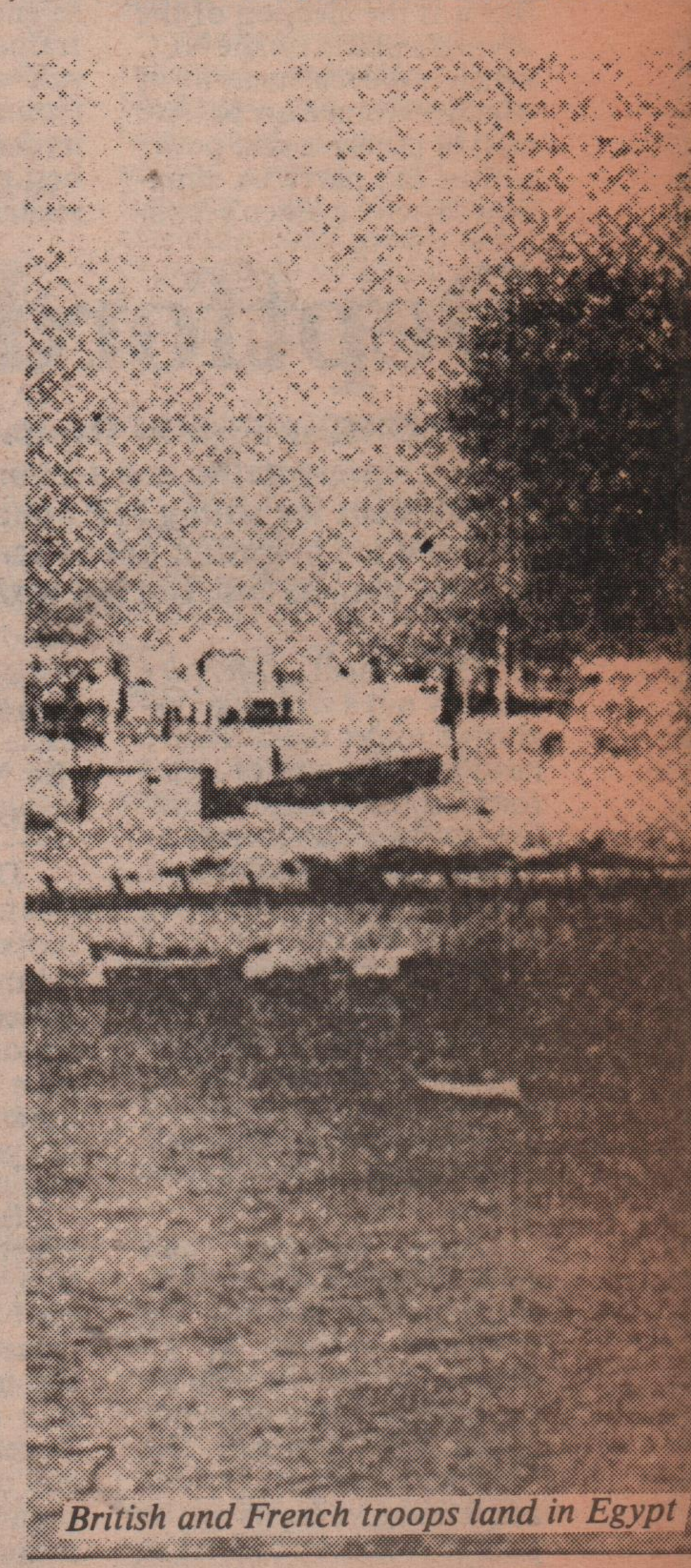
The US however, for its own reasons made clear from the beginning that while it was concerned by Nasser's activity it was against an invasion of Egypt. The US both feared that such an action would lead to widespread disorder throughout the Middle East, threatening its interests, and also aimed to displace British influence in the area.

The American secretary of state John Foster Dulles proposed an international company to run the canal as an alternative to Egyptian nationalisation of it — and got Eden's support for this plan. But when Nasser rejected this proposal the US did nothing. Dulles, when accused in private by Eden of selling Britain out over the plan cynically replied: 'There is talk of teeth being pulled out of the plan, but I know of no teeth: there were no teeth in it.'

It was at this point that Eden took

The Road to Suez

1948	State of Israel proclaimed
1951	Nationalisation of Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
1952	Egyptian monarchy overthrown in coup led by Nasser
1954	Beginning of Algerian war of independence from France. Britain agrees to withdraw its military bases from Egypt
1955	Egypt signs arms deal with Czechoslovakia
1956 13 June	Last British troops leave Egypt under 1954 agreement
1956 20 July	Britain and US announce they will not help Egypt finance the Aswan dam
1956 26 July	Egypt announces nationalisation of the Suez canal
1956 27 July	British government establishes cabinet committee to plan war on Egypt
1956 2 August	Britain announces call-up of army reservists
1956 5 August	British and French governments planning for joint invasion of Egypt
1956 2 September	US warns British government against use of force to regain the Suez canal
1956 16 October	British prime minister Eden and French prime minister Mollet decide on joint British-French approach to Israel for an invasion of Egypt
1956 22-25 October	In a secret conference at Sevres, near Paris, the British, French and Israeli governments agree plans for the invasion of Egypt
1956 29 October	Israeli troops enter Egyptian territory
1956 30 October	Britain announces ultimatum, prearranged with Israel, ordering Israeli and Egyptian troops to retire from an area 10 miles either side of the Suez canal
1956 31 October	Britain and France begin bombing of Egyptian air bases
1956 5 November	British and French troops invade Egypt
1956 6 November	US president Eisenhower states that British loans from the International Monetary Fund will be blocked by the United States unless a ceasefire is declared. US organises a run on the pound, and Britain loses a sixth of its gold and dollar reserves in a single day. Britain and France declare ceasefire at midnight on same day
1956 22 November	Last British and French troops leave Egypt
1957 10 January	Eden resigns
1957 March	Israeli forces leave Egypt
1958 July	Iraqi monarchy overthrown



British and French troops land in Egypt

fateful decision which led to the debacle at Suez. If the United States had not backed Britain, then Britain could not have acted without it as a 'great power'. The British embassy in Washington was without an ambassador for a month. Britain stepped up its coordination with other allies for the attack on Egypt.

Britain collides with Nasser . . . and the United States

THE FRENCH government had been involved in British plans for an attack on Egypt from the beginning. In 1954 rebellion against French rule in Algeria had broken out. Nasser supported the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) in its war for Algerian independence. The French wanted Nasser brought down as part of their plans for winning the Algerian war. France had been supplying arms to the Israelis — who also wanted the weakening of Egypt.

British, French and Israeli agreement to attack Egypt was rapidly arrived at. In a secret treaty concluded at Paris, France, on 22 October it was agreed that Israel would invade Egypt at the end of October. Britain and France would then declare that the Suez Canal was endangered. This would be followed by an ultimatum to the Egyptian government to allow British and French troops to enter the country to 'safeguard' the canal.

On 29 October, in line with the plan, Israel invaded Egypt. On 30 October Edén, in a direct lie to the House of Commons, declared: 'Five days ago news was received that the Israel government were taking certain measures of mobilisations. Her Majesty's government at once instructed my Majesty's ambassador at Tel Aviv to make enquiries of the Israeli minister for foreign affairs and to urge restraint.' Edén then stated:

"In the meantime, as a result of the

consultations held in London today, the United Kingdom and French governments have now addressed urgent communications to the governments of Egypt and Israel. In these we have called upon both sides to stop all warlike action by land, sea and air forthwith and to withdraw their military forces to a distance of 10 miles from the canal. Furthermore, in order to separate the belligerents and to guarantee freedom of transit through the canal by the ships of all nations, we have asked the Egyptian government to agree that Anglo-French forces should move temporarily . . . into key positions at Port Said, Ismailia and Suez.

'The governments of Egypt and Israel have been asked to answer this communication within twelve hours. It has been made clear to them that, if at the expiration of that time one or both have not undertaken to comply with these requirements, British and French forces will intervene in whatever strength may be necessary to secure compliance.'

On 31 October British and French planes began bombing Egypt. On 1 November the United Nations general assembly passed a United States motion demanding an immediate ceasefire by 64 votes to 5 with 6 abstentions. Britain refused to take the warning seriously and on 5 November British and French paratroopers began dropping on Port Said and Port Faud.

It was then that the harsh realities of Britain's power in the world were exposed. The US began applying economic sanctions against Britain — of a severity it has never even contemplated against South Africa. The US Federal Reserve Bank began selling pounds in large quantities. One sixth of British gold and dollar reserves disappeared in a single day as the British government attempted to defend the value of the pound. The US also began, illegally, to block British withdrawal of its funds from the International Monetary Fund to use to defend the pound.

Harold Macmillan, then chancellor of the exchequer, wrote: 'I would not have been unduly concerned had we been able to obtain either the money to which we are entitled from the International Monetary Fund or, better still, some aid by way of a temporary loan from the United States. The refusal of the second was understandable; the obstruction of the first is not easy to forgive.'



Edén at the 1956 Suez conference: a fraud to try and line up other European powers behind Britain

'We had a perfect right under the statutes to ask for the repayment of the British quota. I telephoned urgently to New York; the matter was referred to Washington . . . I received the reply that the American government would not agree to this technical procedure until we had agreed a ceasefire . . . It was a form of pressure altogether unworthy. It contrasted strangely with the weak attitude of the Americans towards Egyptian funds and "accounts" after the seizure of the canal.'

US Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey put it still more bluntly to Macmillan: 'You will not get a dime from the United States government . . . until you have gotten out of Suez.' The United States also refused to supply oil to Britain — forcing the British government to introduce petrol rationing.

Within 24 hours of the British troops landing they were forced to declare a ceasefire. By the end of December British and French forces were out of Egypt. The British government had been humiliated. On 7 January 1957, two months after the invasion of Suez, Edén resigned.

The international impact was staggering. Nasser, and the Arab nationalist movement, had won a

crushing victory against Britain. It had been demonstrated openly that Britain was incapable of taking any major international initiative independently of the United States. Suez announced publicly the end of Britain as a 'great power' which could be considered even in the same breath as the United States or the Soviet Union.

In terms of public relations the British government tried to avoid admitting anything had changed. Macmillan, in his first broadcast as prime minister in January 1957, declared: 'Every now and again since the war I have heard people say: "Isn't Britain only a second- or third-class power now? Isn't she on the way out?" What nonsense! This is a great country and do not let us be ashamed to say so . . . Twice in my lifetime I have heard the same old tale about our being a second rate power, and I have lived to see the answer . . . So do not let us have any more defeatist talk of second-rate powers and of dreadful things to come. Britain has been great, is great, and will stay great provided we close our ranks and get on with the job.'

Randolph Churchill, speaking the same year, could declare: 'Britain can knock down twelve cities in the region of Stalingrad and Moscow from bases

in Britain and another dozen in the Crimea from bases in Cyprus. We did not have that power at the time of Suez. We are a major power again.' In 1958 there were still over 100,000 members of the British armed forces in the Middle and Far East.

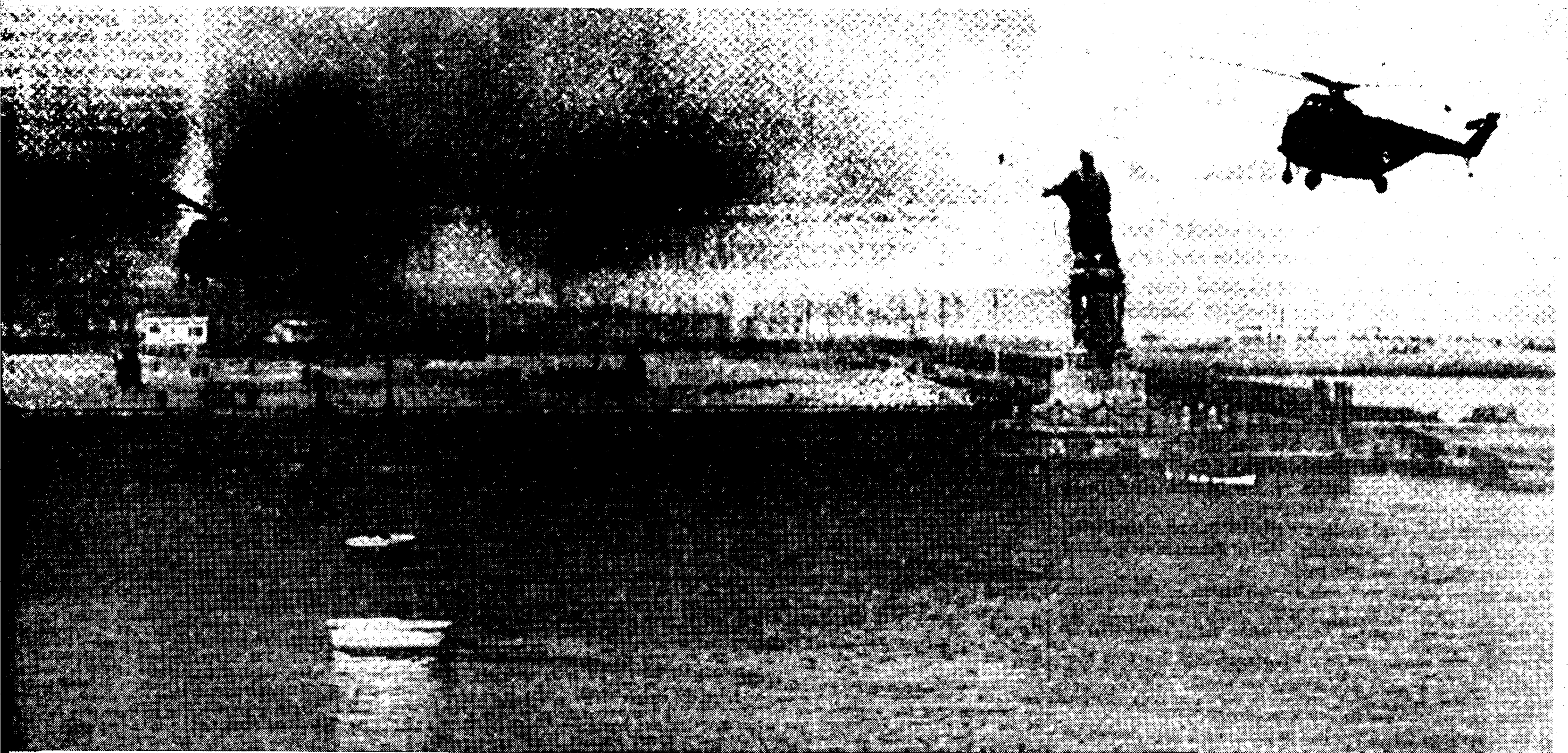
But behind the rhetoric the real consequences were devastating — and rapidly absorbed. In January 1957 the new defence secretary, Duncan Sandys, announced probably the most thorough going peace time military review this century. The ending of conscription was announced. The size of British armed forces were cut by half. British military spending fell from 7.6 per cent of the economy in 1956 to 6.4 per cent in 1962. In 1960 Macmillan made his famous 'winds of change' speech in Cape Town announcing the British intention of withdrawal from its African empire.

The remnants of the old British empire were then rapidly dismantled. In 1957 Ghana, Sudan and Malaya had gained independence. But in 12 years after Suez more than 20 states gained independence from Britain. By 1980 only Gibraltar, Hong Kong, the 'Falklands' and a few other imperial outposts remained. In the Middle East itself Suez was followed by the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958, a new revolution in Syria, and a destabilisation which has lasted until the present day.

The tidying up came later. In 1968 Denis Healey formally announced the end of all British military presence 'east of Suez.' In 1969 the same Healey announced: 'Britain's transformation from a world power to a European power.'

As Britain could no longer sustain its independent imperial role on the old basis it sought a new position in the world. In 1961 Macmillan took the fateful decision to apply for membership of the EEC — although it took a further eleven years before Britain was to gain admittance. But in one month in 1956 a British Empire which had already been dying was publicly slaughtered in front of the world.

Suez was the greatest event in British post war history. Nasser is one of the greatest heroes of the Arab world. For his role in killing off the remnants of the British Empire he also deserves a place in the list of heroes of the British socialist movement. The world we live in today is still shaped by these events of thirty years ago.



Thatcher's dirty game against Syria

THE BRITISH government accusing any country of 'terrorism' must be one of the sickest jokes of all time. After all the British ruling class spent three centuries conquering the world. It occupied many of the countries of the Middle East and carried out ruthless repression there. For Britain to be now offering homilies to Syria on the necessity to struggle against 'terrorism', and severing diplomatic relations with it, simply reflects British hypocrisy, nothing more.

What really lies behind the 'Hindawi affair' is Britain and the United States stepping up another notch their offensive in the Middle East. It is part of the process that started with the US bombing of Libya last year.

The United States, Britain and Israel have enjoyed significant successes in their Middle East policy in the last ten years. The signing of the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel, which took the most powerful Arab country out of the battle line with the Israeli state, allowed Israel to invade Lebanon. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) suffered a defeat because of the failure of the Arab regimes to come to its assistance in Lebanon — although Israel was driven out of Lebanon itself by the resistance of the Lebanese people to it. Syria then acted to split the PLO.

As a result of these moves only two major states, Libya and Syria — together with the PLO — continued to stand out against US and Israeli policy in the Middle East. Imperialism has therefore set about systematically trying to isolate and attack all of them.

The first object of attack chosen was the PLO — whose declared objectives are in practice rejected by every Arab government in the region. The United States, together with Jordan, attempted to force the PLO to officially recognise the state of Israel and its occupation of Palestine. This failed when Israel made it clear that it intended to offer the Palestinians nothing meaningful at all — and all it was interested in was total surrender by the PLO. This the latter refused to accept. The result was the breakdown of the Jordan-PLO discussion for a 'solution' to the Palestinian question.

The second attack was then launched on Libya. A frame up of the Libyan government for so called 'terrorist acts' was launched. At least one high US government official, Bernard Kalb the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, has resigned as a result of the direct lies told by the US government in building up its campaign against Syria. This campaign was then used as a 'justification' for the bombing of Tripoli and Bengazi. Britain was used as a base for that attack for primarily political, not military, reasons.

Syria, however, is the hardest target for the US and Britain to attack. It has a far bigger population than Libya. It is less isolated. Most importantly it has the heaviest direct military support of the Soviet Union of any country in the Middle East. Even Israel has thought carefully about deciding to have a direct military confrontation with Syria.

The United States and Britain have therefore set about whipping up a campaign against Syria and attempting to isolate it. This is why various bombings previously 'blamed' on Libya — such as those in Berlin earlier this year — have instead now been 'reconsidered' and responsibility assigned to Syria instead. Whether or not Syria was involved in the Hindawi bombing, and on that we trust the British government not one inch, it was simply used as a pretext for Thatcher's campaign against Syria.

If an act of terrorism had been carried out by a government with whom Britain was friendly — as was seen with the French bombing of the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior in New Zealand — then the entire affair would have been hushed up. Britain instead broke off diplomatic relations to attempt to force its EEC partners behind its, and the US, new drive against Syria. It was the same tactics as over the bombing of Libya.

When the United States bombed Libya from Britain there was a storm of condemnation in Britain. There should be equal opposition to the breaking of diplomatic relations with Syria — and support for the Syrian retaliatory measures.

Thatcher was directly complicit in the US bombing of Libya — including the killing of children and civilians that involved. This was the greatest act of terrorism in the Middle East in recent times. For the same Thatcher now to be handing out lessons to anyone on 'terrorism' has the typical smell of British philistine hypocrisy about it. It is to be totally condemned, and diplomatic relations with Syria resumed.

Letters

Sinn Fein councillor visits Coventry

Councillor Lily Fitzsimmons (Lower Falls, Belfast), was invited to Coventry and Leamington Spa by the Labour Committee on Ireland to speak about the oppression of the community which elected her. In her ward, there is 82 per cent unemployment and a constant British Army presence. Her own son was interned without charge or trial at the age of 16.

Her visit was sponsored by 12 local councillors, the Coventry Trades Council and nine other local organisations including the Irish in Britain Representation Group, the Troops Out Movement, and local branch Labour Parties and women's sections.

The response of the local Tory establishment was immediate. Tory leader of Warwick district council, Ken Rawnsley, called for a boycott of the meetings she was to address. The Labour Committee on Ireland responded by inviting him on to the platform at Leamington's Spa Centre to discuss the issues with Lily Fitzsimmons. He refused and renewed his boycott call.

But it was not only the Tories who called for a boycott. There were hostile statements from Labour councillors on Coventry city council and Warwick district council, who attacked Sinn Fein and the LCI but made no mention of Britain's oppression of nationalists in Ireland. In this climate, a group claiming to be the Midlands Unit of the Loyalist Action Force/Loyal Sons of Ulster rang the Regional Central TV and the local Mercia Sound radio to issue death threats against Lily and the local councillors sponsoring her trip. These were broadcast, and Central TV told its viewers that police were taking the threats to 'eliminate' all who 'even indirectly' supported Irish Republicanism very seriously.

Both Lily and the



local LCI decided to press ahead with the meetings. When it thus became clear that the organisers were not deterred, the Loyalist telephone callers issued death threats against the Spa Centre manager and his staff, saying they would be legitimate targets if they cooperated by making the hall available. The head of the council's amenities department then called off the meeting, closing the doors. Lily arrived on time to speak to the crowd who had assembled outside, before about 50 departed to a private flat for continued discussion.

The following day Lily addressed 150 students at Warwick University who were adamant in refusing to evacuate the meeting room in the students union when a caller rang to say that a bomb had been placed in it. They evacuated only when an alternative room was found and the meeting resumed for an hour and a quarter.

Following the Loyalist death threats, local MP Sir Dudley Smith took to the air on Mercia Sound to condemn violence. He condemned the invitation to Sinn Fein and Republicanism — but made no mention of the Loyalist death threats which had denied free speech to an elected councillor. The people of his constituency, however, have had a

lesson in Irish politics, and may just have learnt that violence is not the product of the Republican movement.

Tony Wheeler

Again on Zionism

As a Jew, and just as importantly, as a socialist, I was angered by Tony Greenstein's letter in Socialist Action (issue no 147), and would like to make a few points in response. I do, however, feel that there is a need for more serious discussion.

For Greenstein to imply that Zionists were in part responsible for the Nazi holocaust, Czarist Russia, etc, is not only factually incorrect, it is also deeply insulting to the millions of Jews, Zionists and non-Zionists, who suffered immeasurably under these regimes. It was after all the refusal of any other country to take Jewish refugees that led to Hitler's 'final solution'. In addition, holocaust survivors were denied entry to every country in the world. It is scarcely surprising therefore that many entered Palestine illegally as their last refuge. Greenstein constantly tries to paint Zionism as some sort of evil ideology. Surely, the desire of Jewish people for a homeland is no more

inherently racist than any other national liberation struggle?

Remarks made by Dave King at NUS conference were clearly and undisputedly anti-semitic. It is only sad that some anti-racists who heard these remarks are seemingly not aware of the nature or manifestations of anti-semitism. King's apparent subscription to the 'World Jewish Conspiracy Theory' caused great concern to many comrades. After hearing a transcript of his speech, Leeds University Labour Club, which comprises many shades of political thought (including supporters of Socialist Action), unanimously passed a resolution condemning Dave King for his anti-semitic remarks and asking for his selection as a parliamentary candidate to be reconsidered. This was not a sinister plot masterminded by the Union of Jewish Students as inferred by Greenstein but a stand taken by socialists against anti-semitism in the labour movement.

Just as Palestinians have a right to live free from persecution, and to be able to express their religious and cultural identity, these rights have been denied to Jews for centuries in many parts of the world and are denied to them at present in the Soviet Union in a most vicious manner. To fight for the liberation of Soviet Jewry is not 'reactionary' as Greenstein states, but

should be a natural task for a non-racist socialist movement.

Sophie Nicol

SSiN clams up

It is unfortunate that Socialist Action will not give us a space we need to reply to Polly Vittorini's attack on SSiN (Socialist Action no 151, 24 October), and we consider this particularly ironic given Socialist Action's cries of foul when they claim that *Socialist Organiser* refused to give Dave King from Lancs Poly the right to reply — even though *Socialist Organiser* say they never received an article from King. Polly abuses us throughout her 488 words and we are not able to adequately reply in the 400 words we have been told is our maximum.

It is not possible to even start to reply here, save to say, we can test all the allegations Polly makes and are more than willing to debate her about the article about labour students and NUS at any time in any college, and to say that the next SSiN bulletin and the SSiN column in *Socialist Organiser* will be carrying both Polly Vittorini's article and our reply.

Jane Ashworth

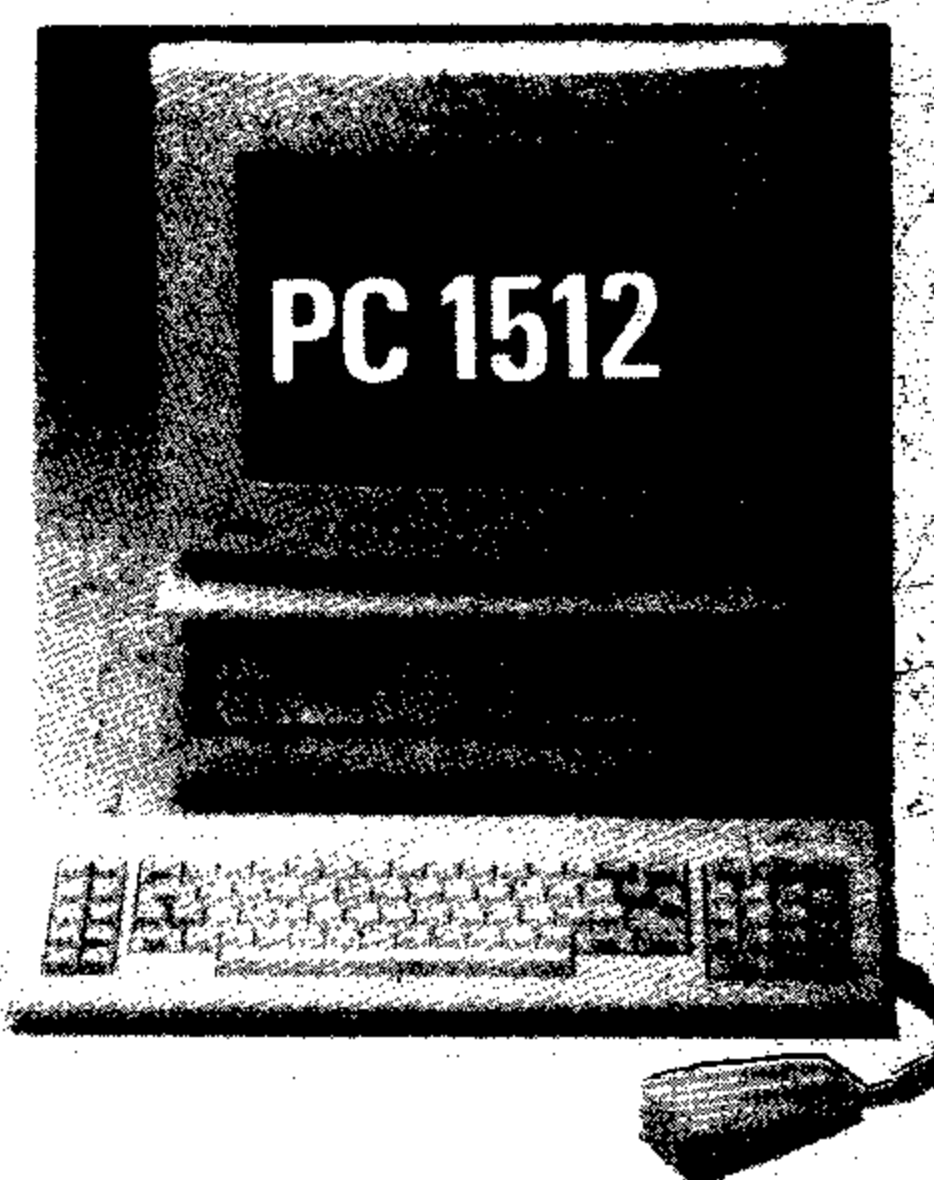
★ Socialist Action offered SSiN space to reply to the article by Polly Vittorini in our last issue — Ed.

Help Socialist Action, help yourself!

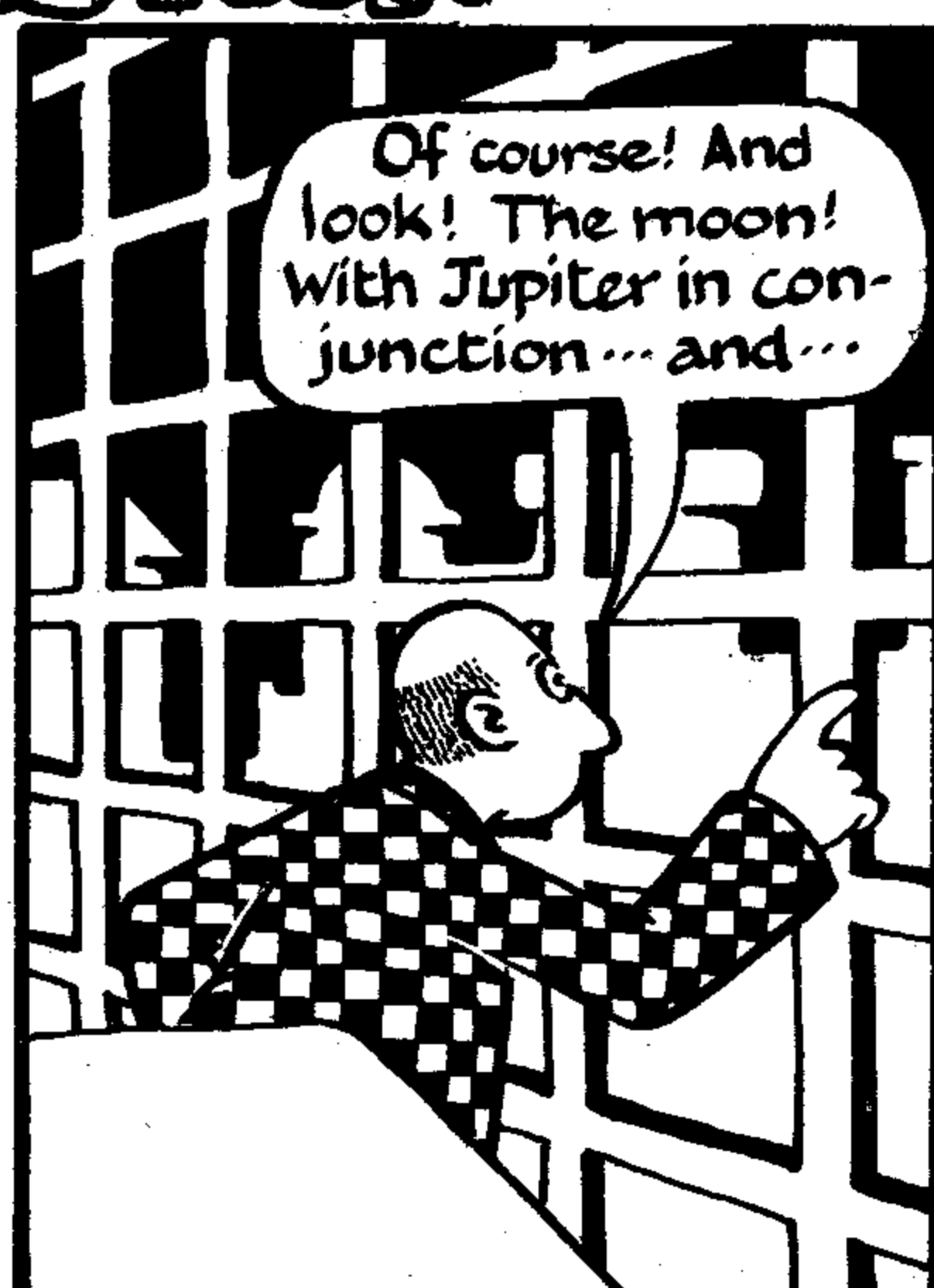
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What is permanent revolution?



THE THEORY of permanent revolution is one of the most fundamental bases of Marxism in the twentieth century. Already in the 19th century Marx had noted that the capitalist class was no longer prepared to fight for the demands of the bourgeois democratic revolution — the thorough going elimination of medieval backwardness, the creation of a unified nation, the democratic solution of the land question, the establishment of political liberty. Lenin had drawn the conclusion from this, at the beginning of the twentieth century, that the working class must lead the democratic revolution itself.

Trotsky developed Lenin's conclusion further to point out that only the seizure of state power by the working class, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, would enable the carrying through the completion of the tasks of the democratic revolution. Trotsky put this forward in the formula: 'The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution.'

The events of the twentieth century have thoroughly confirmed Trotsky's analysis. The only countries in which the tasks of the democratic revolution were carried through in a thorough go-

ing fashion where those — such as Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam — in which the working class came to power and established the dictatorship of the proletariat. Where, on the contrary, the working class failed to establish its dictatorship — as in India, Egypt, Algeria, Zimbabwe and many other countries — the tasks of the democratic revolution were not carried through and were aborted. National unity was not achieved, remnants of tribalism continued, the land question was not resolved, political liberty was not established, neo-colonial relations with the imperialist powers were maintained.

The following brief summary of the theory of permanent revolution was written by Trotsky himself in the book *Permanent Revolution*.



the proletariat and peasantry, as a regime that is distinguished from the dictatorship of the proletariat by its class content, might be realized only in a case where an independent revolutionary party could be constituted, expressing the interests of the peasants and in general of petty-bourgeois democracy — a party capable of conquering power with this or that degree of aid from the proletariat, and of determining its revolutionary programme.

As all modern history attests — especially the Russian experience of the last twenty-five years — an insurmountable obstacle on the road to the creation of a peasants' party is the petty-bourgeoisie's lack of economic and political independence and its deep internal differentiation. By reason of this the upper sections of the petty-bourgeoisie (of the peasantry) go along with the big bourgeoisie in all decisive cases, especially in war and in revolution; the lower sections go along with the proletariat; the intermediate section being thus compelled to choose between the two extreme poles.

Between Kerenskyism and the Bolshevik power, between the Kuomintang and the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is not and cannot be any intermediate stage, that is, no democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

7. The Comintern's endeavour to foist upon the Eastern countries the slogan of the democratic dictatorship

of the proletariat and peasantry, finally and long ago exhausted by history, can have only a reactionary effect. Insofar as this slogan is counterposed to the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it contributes politically to the dissolution of the proletariat in the petty-bourgeois masses and thus creates the most favourable conditions for the hegemony of the national bourgeoisie and consequently for the collapse of the democratic revolution.

The introduction of this slogan into the programme of the Comintern is a direct betrayal of marxism and of the October tradition of Bolshevism.

8. The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfilment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property.

The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a permanent revolution.

9. The conquest of power by the proletariat does not complete the revolution, but only opens it. Socialist construction is conceivable only on the foundation of the class struggle, on a national and international scale.

This struggle, under the conditions of an overwhelming predominance of capitalist relationships on the world arena, must inevitably lead to explosions, that is, internally to

civil wars and externally to revolutionary wars. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such, regardless of whether it is a backward country that is involved, which only yesterday accomplished its democratic revolution, or an old capitalist country which already has behind it a long epoch of democracy and parliamentarism.

10. The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable. One of the basic reasons for the crisis in bourgeois society is the fact that the productive forces created by it can no longer be reconciled with the framework of the national state. From this follow, on the one hand, imperialist wars, on the other, the utopia of a bourgeois United States of Europe.

The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet.

11. The above-outlined sketch of the development of the world revolution eliminates the question of countries that are 'mature' or 'immature' for socialism in the spirit of that pedantic, lifeless classification given by the present programme of the Comintern. Insofar as capitalism has created a world market, a world division of labour and world productive

forces, it has also prepared world economy as a whole for socialist transformation.

Different countries will go through this process at different tempos. Backward countries may, under certain conditions, arrive at the dictatorship of the proletariat sooner than advanced countries, but they will come later than the latter to socialism.

A backward colonial or semi-colonial country, the proletariat of which is insufficiently prepared to unite the peasantry and take power, is thereby incapable of bringing the democratic revolution to its conclusion.

Contrariwise, in a country where the proletariat has power in its hands as the result of the democratic revolution, the subsequent fate of the dictatorship and socialism depends in the last analysis not only and not so much upon the national productive forces as upon the development of the international socialist revolution.

12. The theory of socialism in one country, which rose on the yeast of the reaction against October, is the only theory that consistently and to the very end opposes the theory of the permanent revolution.

The attempt of the epigones, under the lash of our criticism, to confine the application of the theory of socialism in one country exclusively to Russia, because of its specific characteristics (its vastness and its natural resources), does not improve matters but only makes them worse. The break with the internationalist positions always and invariably leads to national messianism, that is, to attributing special superiorities and qualities to one's own country, which allegedly permit it to play a role to which other countries cannot attain.

The world division of labour, the dependence of Soviet industry upon foreign technology, the dependence of the productive forces of the advanced countries of Europe upon Asiatic raw materials, etc., etc., make the construction of an independent socialist society in any single country in the world impossible.

13. The theory of Stalin and Bukharin, running counter to the entire experience of the Russian revolution, not only sets up the democratic revolution mechanically in contrast to the socialist revolution, but also makes a breach between the national revolution and the international revolution.

The very seizure of power by the proletariat signifies, from the standpoint of the epigones theory, the completion of the revolution ('to the extent of nine-tenths', according to Stalin's formula) and the opening of the epoch of national reforms. The theory of the kulak growing into socialism and the theory of 'neutralization' of the world bourgeoisie are consequently inseparable from the theory of socialism in one country. They stand or fall together.

By the theory of national socialism, the Communist International is down-graded to an auxiliary weapon useful only for the struggle against military intervention. The present policy of the Comintern, its regime and the selection of its leading personnel correspond entirely to the demotion of the Communist International to the role of an auxiliary unit which is not destined to solve independent tasks.

14. The programme of the Comintern created by Bukharin is eclectic through and through. It makes the hopeless attempt to reconcile the theory of socialism in one country with Marxist internationalism, which is, however, inseparable from the permanent character of the world revolution.

The struggle of the Communist Left Opposition for a correct policy and a healthy régime in the Communist International is inseparably bound up with the struggle for the Marxist programme. The problem of the permanent revolution has long ago outgrown the episodic differences of opinion between Lenin and Trotsky, which were completely exhausted by history. The struggle is between the basic ideas of Marx and Lenin on the one side and the eclecticism of the centrists on the other.

1. THE theory of permanent revolution now demands the greatest attention from every Marxist, for the course of the class and ideological struggle has fully and finally raised this question from the realm of reminiscences over old differences of opinion among Russian Marxists, and converted it into a question of the character, the inner connections and methods of the international revolution in general.

2. With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.

3. Not only the agrarian, but also the national question assigns to the peasantry — the overwhelming majority of the population in backward countries — an exceptional place in the democratic revolution. Without an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry the tasks of the democratic revolution cannot be solved, nor even seriously posed. But the alliance of these two classes can be realised in no other way than through an irreconcilable struggle against the influence of the national-liberal bourgeoisie.

4. No matter what the first episodic stages of the revolution may be in the individual countries, the realisation of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletarian vanguard, organised in the Communist Party.

This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution.

5. Assessed historically, the old slogan of Bolshevism — 'the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' — expressed precisely the above-characterised relationship of the proletariat, the peasantry and the liberal bourgeoisie. This has been confirmed by the experience of October.

But Lenin's old formula did not settle in advance the problem of what the reciprocal relations would be between the proletariat and the peasantry within the revolutionary bloc. In other words, the formula deliberately retained a certain algebraic quality, which had to make way for more precise arithmetical quantities in the process of historical experience. However, the latter showed, and under circumstances that exclude any kind of misinterpretation, that no matter how great the revolutionary role of the peasantry may be, it nevertheless cannot be an independent role and even less a leading one.

The peasant follows either the worker or the bourgeois. This means that the 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' is only conceivable as a dictatorship of the proletariat that leads the peasant masses behind it.

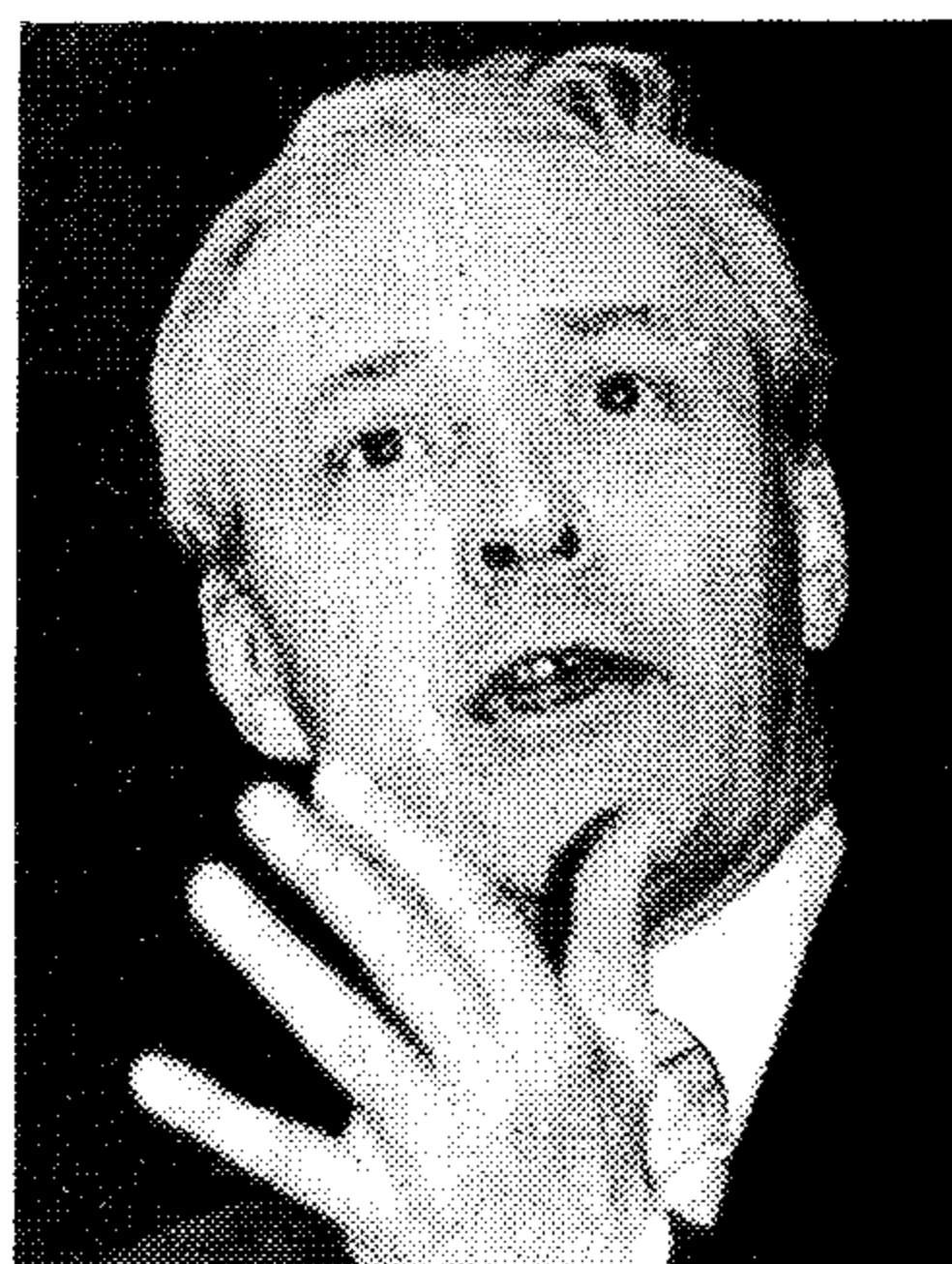
6. A democratic dictatorship of

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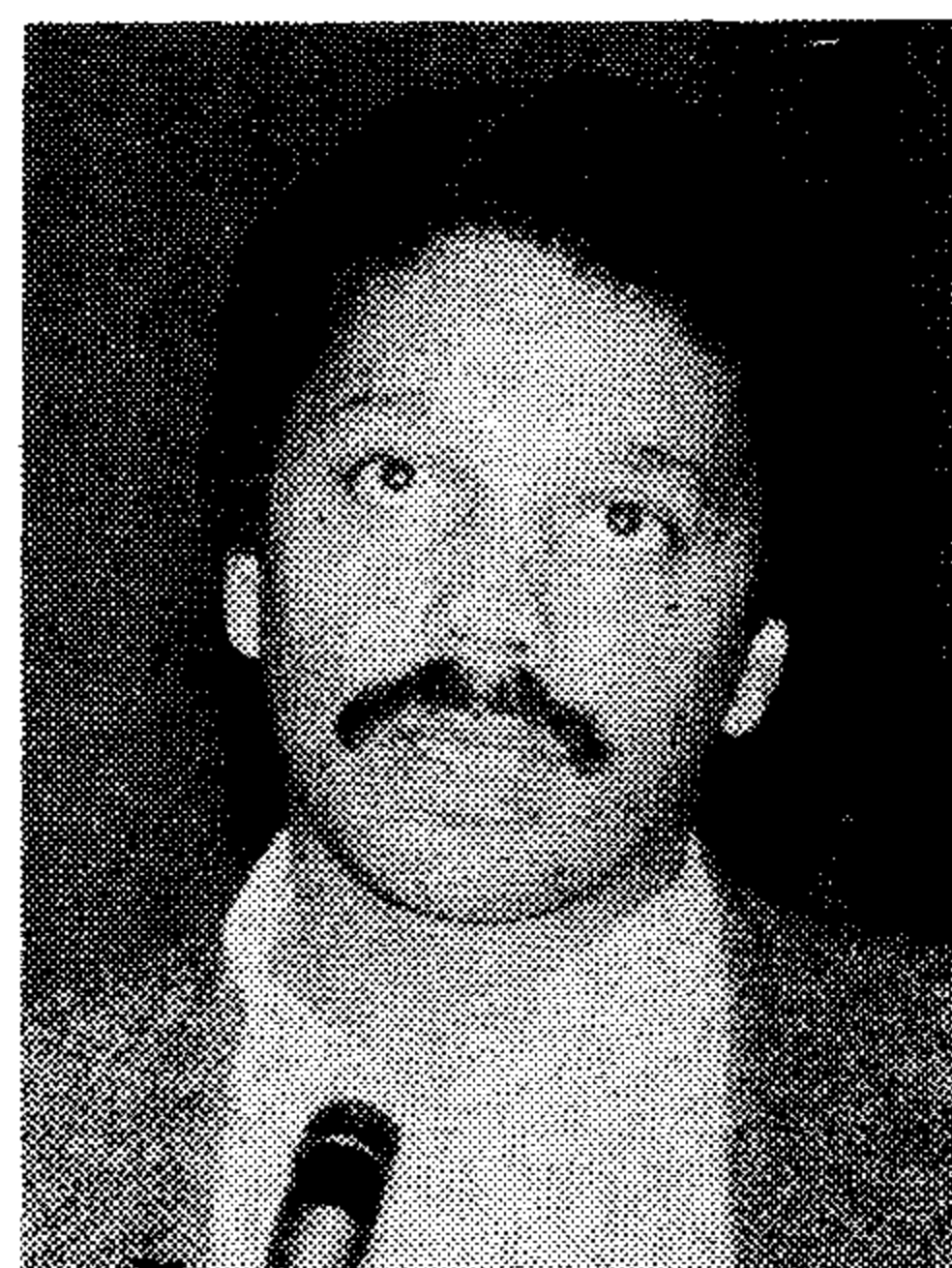
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Teachers - reject Baker's ultimatum

KENNETH BAKER, secretary of state for education, has decided to intervene in the teachers' negotiations on pay and conditions in order to ensure that a deal is reached which ties down teachers once and for all. His message to the unions is a simple one — either you put the noose round your own neck or I'll do it for you! Given the record of the union negotiators up to now it is quite likely that they will oblige and accept a deal in Nottingham from the Labour-led local education authorities this weekend which achieves all the objectives that the Tory government is intent on.

Teachers in England, Wales and Scotland are facing a massive challenge from the Tory government. Baker, together with Malcolm Rifkind, secretary of state for Scotland are threatening to introduce new proposals over the heads of the unions.

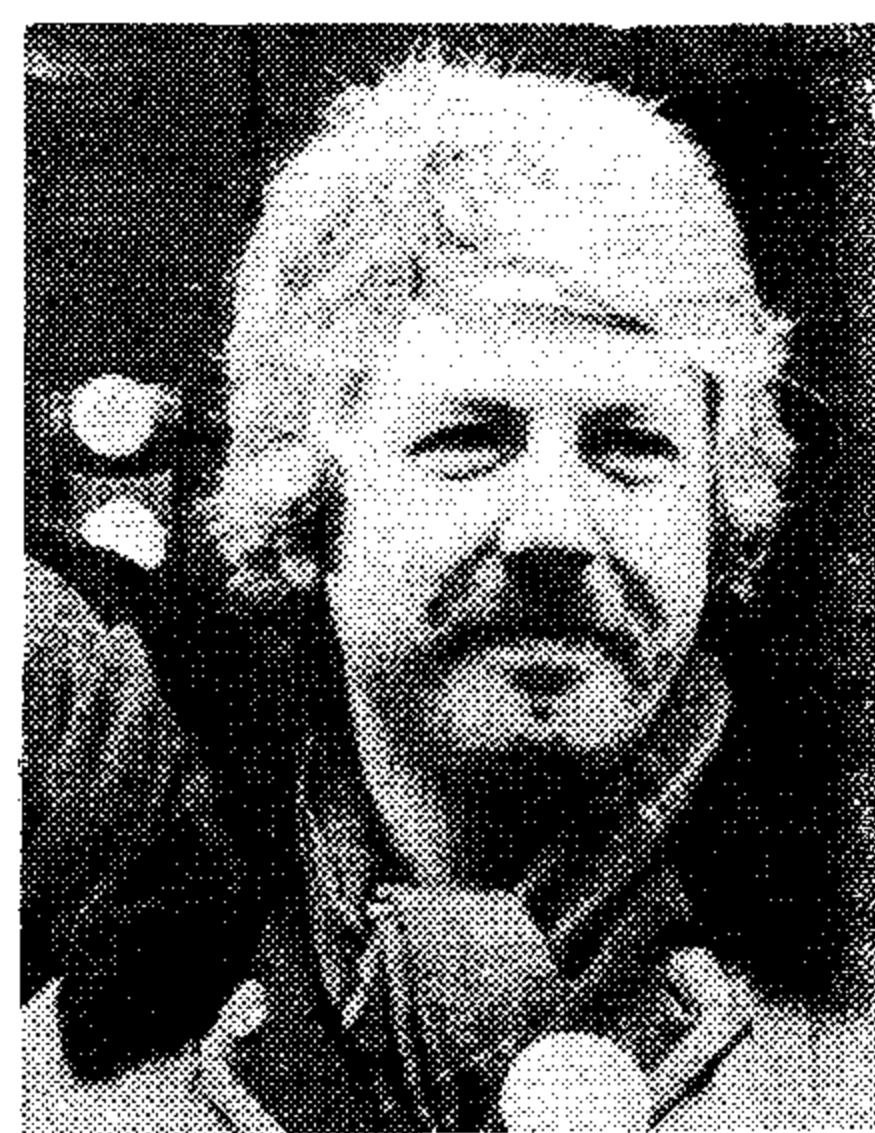
These proposals are linked to new conditions of employment which would, amongst other things, add an extra five days to the working year, add an extra two hours at least onto the working week and make teachers totally subservient to the demands of headteachers.

The right wing leadership of the National Union of Teachers laid the basis for Baker's intervention by their decision to accept the proposals put forward in Coventry by the Labour-led local education authorities in September. These proposals were in fact nothing more than a revised version of those put forward by Sir Keith Joseph in 1984 which

were rejected outright by the same NUT leadership.

The pay deal offered is, of course, dressed up to make it look attractive but it does nothing to restore the 34 per cent losses which teachers have suffered over the last 12 years. Both the offer from Baker to teachers in England and Wales and Rifkind's offer to Scottish teachers are to be spread over a two year period. They are presented as 'indivisible packets' and they are designed to deliver a compliant workforce into the hands of management at school and local authority level.

The report on teachers pay and conditions in Scotland, called the Main Report, went further and proposed that an independent review body be set up to determine teachers pay on a two year basis. In his statement to the House of Commons Baker did not go so far as this but he is threatening to scrap the current pay negotiating



By Bernard Regan
NUT executive
(personal capacity)

machinery and bring in legislation to establish new procedures.

Both north and south of the border massive opposition has been building up against these deals. Last week the biggest teachers union in Scotland the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) agreed to recommend to its special general meeting in Edinburgh on Saturday 8 November an outright rejection of Rifkind's offer and preparations for industrial action to pursue their demands.

On the same day in Nottingham teachers from all over England and Wales will be gathering to express their opposition to the employers' new set of proposals which will be tabled for discussion at a residen-

tial meeting taking place between the two sides. The second largest teachers organisation in England and Wales, the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT), will also be demonstrating in the town but their general secretary Fred Smithies has refused the proposal of London NAS/UWT to invite a speaker from the Inner London branch of the NUT to address their rally.

If a deal is stitched up this weekend it will be put to the NUT executive on Wednesday 12 November. Assuming they ratify the agreement a special conference will be held on 29 November and the recommendation from it will be put to all the membership by way of ballot before the end of December.

An effective campaign has been launched by militants in both Scotland and the South. The Campaign for a Fighting Union (CAFU) based in Glasgow has led the move to establish a united left position through the Scottish Federation of Socialist Teachers, whilst in England and Wales the Socialist Teachers' Alliance has been organising through the local Association Pay Action Conference (LAPAC) to bring together all those opposed to the sell-out and determined to fight Baker's manoeuvres.

The Tories are not just out to get teachers however. Baker has made it clear that he wants to attack the whole of the education system, bringing back forms of selection.

The fact that the further education union, NATFHE, has rejected a similar deal opens up the prospect of a united fight in the education sector.

A major missing factor is the lack of any opposition within the Labour Party to the right wing leadership of the local education bodies. It is their proposals, supported by prominent Labour Party politicians, like Frances Morrell, leader of the Inner London Education Authority, which have opened the way for Baker.

The NUT leaders, like Kinnock, firmly believe that if they settle a deal with Labour now it will be better than having one imposed by the Tories. At a time when the NUT is losing members they believe that the way to solve the crisis in education is to get on good terms with the shadow cabinet in order to be looked on favourably in the event of a Labour victory.

It should come as no surprise that one of the chief architects of this strategy is NUT general secretary, Fred Jarvis, who also happens to be this year's president of the TUC!

Crunch issue for engineers

THE LEFT in the AEU smell blood in their year long campaign to stop a catastrophic dose of new realism. Convenors and stewards who worked to get Bill Jordan elected president of the AEU are today organising petitions and attending stewards meetings to oppose Jordan's plans. The AEU Broad Left has called a lobby of the Confederation of Ship Building and Engineering Unions (CSEU) executive committee meeting on 6 November. This is expected to be the biggest such lobby for many years and is a must for all engineers.

So what's it all about? In January 1985 Terry Duffy led the engineering unions in accepting a national minimum wage for a skilled engineer of £96.20. In exchange for this far from generous offer from the Engineering Employers Federation (EEF), Duffy and the unions agreed to renegotiate some of our national agreements. The national agreements protect our wages and conditions and should not even be considered for use as bargaining pawns. The employers added the carrot of reducing working hours, and the stick that all cuts in working hours would have to be financed by members sacrifices.

In July the *Financial Times* leaked the unions own proposals for conceding many of the employers demands. The unions offered to concede:

- Complete flexibility. Workers 'will perform any task within the scope of their capabilities regardless of whether the task forms part of their normal work, and regardless of whether or not the task is traditionally performed by members of another union.'
- No demarcations: 'unions and their members will cooperate with the employer in eliminating unnecessary job demarcations between members of different unions.'
- Management control: 'the employer shall determine the production hours necessary on a weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual basis.' The employers want us to work extra hours when busy — say 55 hours a week without overtime pay — and when less busy to work a 25 hour week to average it out.

The unions made this suicidal proposal but still the employers didn't say what cut in the working week was on offer. Of course, such weakness in the face of the employers only encourages them. The EEF now wants concessions on negotiating procedures and stewards rights. These negotiations have been carried out by a CSEU sub-committee. The secrecy with which this sub-committee has been operating has fuelled the widespread suspicion and rejection of these negotiations.

The employers' image of the future is clear. They want an industry of flexible workers who can be moved between jobs at the whim of management. By increasing the proportion of these workers on short term contracts, casual labour, or 'contracted out', they want to alter the size of the workforce as demand fluctuates. Unsocial hours, no dispute agreements, and sweetheart single union deals where militant trade unionists will not be tolerated, are their proposals.

The defeat of this deal would be a gain for millions. The negotiations directly affect one million workers in federated companies. But two million more employed in the industry, and many further afield, would be directly affected by this rewrite of our conditions.

● Lobby the CSEU executive on 6 November, 9 am, at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London WC1.

Borderway fightback

TASS CRAFT (Metal Mechanics) have called a mass picket of Borderway PLC, Catherine Street, Aston, on Wednesday 12 November from 7 am to 5 pm. They are mobilising the Birmingham Labour move-

By Bob Smith

ment to support it. The owner of Borderway sacked its entire workforce on 19 August. A militant picket has been mounted on his premises ever since.

In April the 20 workers applied for membership of TASS craft. The union's initial application for recognition and negotiating rights was ignored by the company. Following this the workers refused overtime and shift working without extra payment on the hourly rate. They faced arrogant intimidation from the company but stood firm. Despite the profitability of this metal pressings company, the wage rates are poor. Four male setters receive £2.49 per hour and 16 women operators are on a miserly £1.40 an hour — and receive no payment when the machinery is being retooled or breaks down.

When the two shop stewards approached Mr Nemeshanyi, the owner, to express the unanimous dissatisfaction of their colleagues, and warned that industrial sanctions could follow, they received 20 minutes notice from their employer.

● Messages of support and donations, which are desperately needed, should be sent to TASS Craft (Metal Mechanics) Sector, 70 Lionel Street, Birmingham B3 1JG.

WAPPING

Women Against Murdoch formed

WAPPING PRINTWORKERS have found a powerful ally in their renewed fight which rejected Murdoch's offer with increased numbers. It is the formation of WAM, a printworkers women's support group (Women Against Murdoch). Its launch, nine months after the dispute began, shows renewed determination and spirit to win. Last week over 50 women, mainly relatives of the printers, and including sacked women workers, decided to put women on the map at Wapping.

'It's about time' was the view of many of the women who attended the meeting. Drawing on the lessons of Women Against Pit Closures those women realised how such a powerful force can be built. The unity and determination expressed at the meeting is another blow to the divide and rule tactics of the bosses, and a reply to the TUC and Labour Party leadership.

The women started with a bang. The meeting last Wednesday evening moved on to Wapping — where they led the march down to the picket. In the opinion of many they made the biggest impact for some months. The full force of the law was there to greet them. Four women were arrested and two charged with actual bodily harm — putting defence work high on the agenda of the new movement.

On the Saturday following women again led, behind the Jarrow marchers, and organised their own stall selling badges and refreshments to raise funds. Hardship is now taking a toll amongst many families.

Part of the effort to raise funds will be to make sure

By Denny Fitzpatrick

printers families and kids had a good Christmas.

But as the miners wives

and Women Against Pit Closures showed, it is their political support which builds the unity and confidence of workers in struggle. Already the women have decided to get letters out to all possible women, via the sacked printers, appealing for their involvement. They plan to organise their own march at Wapping and to lobby Fleet Street printers to get behind the dispute. They will be visiting trade union branches and factories not only to raise finances but also to build the boycott of Murdoch titles. Further demonstrations are also planned. With a new banner and badge available soon the women are clearly on the march.

New Murdoch manoeuvre raises stakes

NEWS INTERNATIONAL boss, Rupert Murdoch, has again raised the stakes in the dispute by appealing over the heads of the unions to sacked printers to individually accept his last offer — which was overwhelmingly rejected in a recent ballot.

The union has

countered by calling a mass meeting to be addressed by SOGAT president Brenda Dean, on the day the offer expires on 10 November.

Meanwhile, organisation of support for the strike is developing further.

By Brian Grogan

The North London district of the engineers union has set up a printworkers support group. One thousand engineers lobbied the AEU's national executive meeting at the South London headquarters. AEU president Bill Jordan expressed his union's supposed 'full support' for their fight. Jordan in fact had recommended acceptance of Murdoch's last offer!

It has also been announced that the north west region of the transport union is to institute disciplinary proceedings against drivers in Murdoch's transport company, TNT, who are refusing union instructions not to distribute News International titles.

In the wake of the successful rejection of Murdoch's 'final offer' in the recent ballot support groups up and down the country are beginning to revive. An important national focus will be the unions lobby of parliament in early December.



A Socialist ACTION

Defend Knowsley North CLP

KNOWSLEY NORTH Labour Party met last Sunday and decided to decline the 'advice' of the NEC to select George Howarth as its parliamentary candidate in the by-election which is now underway. Instead Knowsley has decided to continue its fight for the right to choose its own candidate against the undemocratic imposition of a candidate by the national party. In October the Knowsley GC voted to boycott the election campaign — but recognised the right of individual party members to participate. These decisions reflect the strength of feeling that exists locally against the national executive's unprecedented decision to prevent a selection conference and impose a pro-leadership candidate on Knowsley North.

After Blackpool the party leadership felt confident to take the witch hunt in the party one step further, by intervening to stop a local party selecting a left winger. It is no accident that the front runner in the constituency, Les Huckfield, is a member of the Campaign Group of MPs, the only serious alternative in parliament to the line of moving to the right to try to win the next election. A central part of Kinnock's course is trampling on the democratic right of the party's rank and file. LES HUCKFIELD explains the significance of the Knowsley North decision and the enormous dangers it contains for every single constituency.

THE Labour Party is probably unique throughout Europe in permitting a local choice of parliamentary candidates. In other socialist parties in Europe, to varying degrees, the party hierarchy picks the candidate.

The Labour Party national executive is already blunting local choice of candidates. Hitherto it has relied mainly on its power to refuse endorsement. But, in this context, the Knowsley North precedent is especially worrying.

Right from the start national officials insisted that central office would take over the running of the campaign. Knowsley was told it could have a 'free selection' — but Walworth Road would pay for the campaign and the whole selection process would be organised by the regional

office.

From that day on they have set up office, brought in national speakers, and trailed prominent MPs around the constituency with hardly a word of consultation with the CLP. The first that Knowsley party officers usually know of the latest developments is when they see them on TV.

Well before the conclusion of the NEC's 'enquiry' into the Merseyside East Euro-CLP, full-time officials were openly preparing members for an NEC-imposed candidate. Throughout all of this there had not been one complaint about the selection process.

Clearly the national executive's motive was purely political. This was why it was so vital that Knowsley North CLP should test out the NEC's powers in court. The executive relied

mainly on clause XIV, section 5 of CLP rules, under which it can 'advise' a constituency on a nomination, and clause IX section 4 of its powers to adjudicate disputes. (The fact that the CLP didn't even know there was any dispute within its ranks was something on which affidavits were provided for the court.)

Knowsley did not lose its case. All that happened was that after three separate hearings — on October 23 in the High Court, and on 27 October in the High Court and the Court of Appeal — they were denied the right to have a trial of the NEC's powers before Knowsley North nominations closed on 3 November.

That's why Knowsley comrades still feel that these powers to impose a candidate need to be tested quickly, lest the leadership now feels it has acquired by default the right not only to impose candidates in all future by-elections but to intervene politically in all selections through their power to refuse endorsement.

If the NEC wants to play 'power politics', let constituency parties beware. Though assurances have been given in shadow cabinets and the PLP that the Knowsley precedent will not be repeated, what is there now to stop it?

The trade unions affiliated to Knowsley North have formed a committee to defend democracy in the constituency and to raise the £7000 for legal bills still outstanding. We hope you will respond — not just in their interest but in yours as well.

● *Donations and messages of support for Knowsley North should be sent to: Mike Maguire, 65 Coplehouse Lane, Fazakerley, Liverpool L10.*

Sanctions Now!

March and Rally on Saturday 8 November sponsored by the NW Region TUC, NW Region Labour Party and Greater Manchester AAM

Assemble 11.30am, All Saints, Oxford Rd, Manchester
Speakers include:

Norman Willis, Dennis Skinner, Stave Gawe of the ANC, Selma Shilongo of SWAPO, and more.



South Africa's war against its neighbours

THE TRAGIC death of Samora Machel has brought to the world's attention South Africa's hidden war against the states on its borders. Whilst the struggle against apartheid continues to develop inside South Africa, as the recent strikes at General Motors and in the gold mines demonstrate, the forces of apartheid are attempting to safeguard their northern borders and create to totally pliable client regimes in the 'frontline' states. Apartheid is carrying out a massive counter attack against the victories gained by the liberation movements in the 1970s.

A decade and a half ago the whole of southern Africa seemed a bastion of white supremacy. Apartheid was solidly in place in South Africa — which also directly controlled Namibia. Portuguese colonialism still ruled over Angola and Mozambique. Ian Smith's Rhodesia seemed secure.

But things were not as they seemed. The liberation struggles in the southern African colonies were on the verge of toppling the white regimes. Their first major success came in 1974.

Under the combined weight of its own internal problems and, decisively, under the impact of the African liberation movements, the Portuguese dictatorship was toppled. The demoralised Portuguese colonial regimes in Guinea Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique were unable to keep power. New governments, led by the liberation movements, seized control.

South Africa im-

mediately acted to protect its interests in the region. It wanted the whole sub-

By Pete Evans

continent as a market for its goods and investment, as well as a source of raw materials — an area to be sucked dry for the profit of apartheid.

Moreover, the victories of the liberation movements acted as a beacon of hope for the black population of South Africa. That inspiration needed to be extinguished lest the black majority was inspired to follow the example of Angola and Mozambique.

Angola was the first victim of apartheid's counter attack. A government led by the main liberation movement, the MPLA, had taken over from the Portuguese with mass support. Exploiting divisions that existed amongst the liberation movements there — with the existence of two tribally-based organisations the FNLA and

UNITA — South Africa was militarily able to intervene in an attempt to overthrow the MPLA government.

Fighting alongside UNITA, which now openly sided with imperialism, South African forces penetrated deep inside Angolan territory. The MPLA called for the aid of Cuban troops and together they were able to inflict a bloody defeat on the apartheid army and its allies — the first defeat of the modern South African forces at the hands of a black army.

The Angolan intervention of 1975 backfired on the apartheid government. Its defeat helped to inspire the black youth in Soweto and elsewhere who rose in revolt the following year.

Then, in 1979, the Smith government in Rhodesia fell. After a feeble attempt to set up a puppet government, the Mugabe-led Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) government was overwhelmingly elected into power in the country — which was renamed Zimbabwe. This was an enormous new blow to apartheid.

But South Africa has continued a strategy of destabilisation in all the frontline states. It has organised economic sabotage (sanctions, cutting trade routes, etc), direct military intervention into Angola and commando raids into other countries, and supporting

proxy 'contra' forces, such as the MNR in Mozambique and UNITA in Angola. The new South African offensive against Mozambique, which will be stepped up still further after the death of Samora Machel, is the continuation of that policy. It follows the events in Lesotho where the South Africans organised the overthrow of a government sympathetic to the struggle of the ANC in South Africa.

The reaction to Machel's death in the frontline states included mass demonstrations of students in Zimbabwe pointing the finger at South African involvement, and demanding that the governments of the black-led countries take action against apartheid.

The struggle in the sub-continent is hotting up. It is estimated that the undeclared war waged by apartheid has cost more than 100,000 lives in Mozambique alone since 1980. More than one million people have been made homeless in the region.

Those who believe that sanctions against South Africa would hurt the frontline states should study these figures. It is apartheid that hurts the black majority of southern Africa, not sanctions. The labour movement should join the frontline states in demanding full, mandatory sanctions.

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