

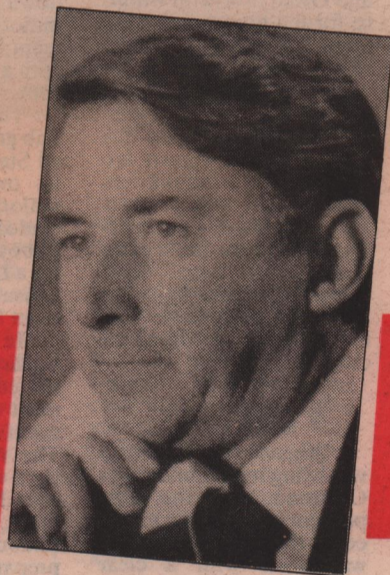
# Socialist ACTION

BUILDING AN ALLIANCE FOR SOCIALISM

## LABOUR'S CHOICE



## UNITY WITH THE LIBERALS



## OR UNITY ON THE LEFT



ONE MONTH after the election the essential lines of divide in the labour movement are already clear. Three currents are clarifying themselves.

● The Labour right is more explicitly than ever before advocating a deal with the Liberals, and 'new realism' in the unions. The *New Statesman*, *New Society* and *Guardian* are all openly advocating a Liberal-Labour agreement. Gavin Laird, general secretary of the AEU, has called for both proportional representation and for the unions to work with, not against, the Thatcher government.

● The 'soft left' majority in the Labour Party and trade unions are maintaining their bloc with the right wing. They are being drawn steadily to the right — with calls for Labour to re-evaluate its economic policies yet again, to become a party not simply of council house sales but of share ownership, and to abandon anything which resembles even a formal commitment to socialism. To give organisational muscle to this shift the trade union leadership are pushing one member one vote (OMOV) through the union conferences. These are only the first of a series of political and organisational shifts to the right the majority of the party membership are going to be asked to accept in this parliament.

● The only current consistently opposing these developments is the Campaign group in parliament, the left wing in the trade unions, and a number of campaigns tied to them in the Labour Party.

These three currents are separating out even before the most important events of the next five years, the fights that will take place against Thatcher outside parliament, unfold. These struggles the most important developments taking place, will deepen these differences still further.

In this situation it is vital the left in the party has a strategic line. There is no doubt what it must be.

The right wing of the party is going down a road which will end in coalition with the Liberals. As long as the soft left remains in a bloc with the right wing — and that is how the Labour Party and labour movement is being led today — it will itself be drawn closer and closer to coalitionism no matter what its intentions today. Long before it arrives at that point the soft left will have to accept policies — new witch hunts, sabotage of struggles, political shifts — which some in its ranks will find hard to accept.

The 'hard left' of the party must have one demand systematically addressed to the soft left majority: break with the right and work with us to defend those in struggle, to win the policies that are needed for the success of the labour movement, and to break the right's grip on the party.

There is no necessity for the party, to be run by the right today. The alternative to the party being run as a bloc between the right wing and the soft left, increasingly on the politics of the right, is for the 'soft left' to break with the right and join with the left.

That can be done at every level from the shadow cabinet elections, through campaigns in the interests of the trade unions such as the 'link up' campaign of the TGWU, through to the most important question of all — defence of those who will be resisting Thatcher.

'Break with the right and join with us. Defend those who are under attack from Thatcher. The only alternative to a final agreement with the Liberals is unity on the left'. These must be key elements of the strategy of the left. They can be pursued in every struggle that takes place.

# Socialist ACTION

## Strike against the poll tax

IF EVER there was a single measure that could lose a government an election, if it is exploited correctly, it is likely to be the poll tax. But if Labour is to lead the fight against that tax it has to have a very different approach to Neil Kinnock and the Labour front bench.

The Labour leadership is planning a purely parliamentary opposition. But that has about as much chance of success as the charge of the light brigade. With a parliamentary majority of 100 Thatcher can withstand any scale of parliamentary opposition. Worse still if Labour waters down its opposition to rely on 'revolts' by Tory wets such as Heseltine, Heath and Biffen, or to 'unite' with opposition by the Liberals, the opportunity to deliver a severe blow against Thatcher will be lost.

The poll tax is vital because it affects not just those who have to pay it but the entire community. In particular it directly affects the trade unions and the labour movement. The real aim of the poll tax is to make local authority expenditure so unpopular that there is a public outcry for it to be cut back in order to reduce the tax. That would result in massive loss of jobs for the local government workers.

It is for that reason that the local government unions, and the Labour controlled local authorities, can put themselves at the front of that struggle. Actions taken by the unions against the poll tax are likely to receive widespread support.

There will, hopefully, be calls within the labour movement not simply for parliamentary opposition to the poll tax but also demonstrations and other actions against it. But the demand of the labour movement must be for *strike action* against it.

A decisive weakness of the struggle against rate capping was that, for the short time it lasted, it was waged simply within the council chambers. There was no real involvement of the local government unions, let alone the community, in the struggle. This time local government has in its sights a deeply unpopular, and unjust, tax. The entire labour movement can be mobilised against it.

By placing high among its priorities a fight against the poll tax, and *not* confining that fight to parliament but undertaking mass demonstrations and strike action against it, Labour can protect working people against an unjust tax, undermine Thatcher's popularity, and build its own support. The whole labour movement should be drawing up plans for that fight.

## A few questions

AFTER KEN Livingstone, Peter Hain is the best known member of the 'left' wing of the LCC. Last Sunday, in *News on Sunday*, he wrote an unequivocal article attacking any pact between Labour and the Liberals: 'The... suggestion of a Lib-Lab pact should be rejected outright... it won't happen... Nor is it desirable.'

Excellent. But then a few questions arise. Why is the LCC, and the soft left, de facto in a bloc with the right wing which contains those who are in favour of a deal with the Liberals? And why is it in a bloc with the right wing when that opposes the demands of women and black people in the party which the LCC claimed to stand for? And what does Peter Hain, and others who think like him in the LCC or elsewhere, think about the refusal of the Tribune Group to conclude an agreement with the Campaign Group for a joint slate for the shadow cabinet? Do they agree with that decision, like the *New Statesman*, or disagree with it like *Tribune*?

This is not about 'exposing' anybody. It is about extremely practical questions. The Labour Party today is being run as a bloc between the soft left and the hard right. But the right is going down a road which large sections of the soft left totally disagree with.

Shouldn't they be thinking about breaking off their bloc with the right and forming one with the left instead?

# Where is Steel going?

WITHIN THREE days of the election David Steel set about dismembering the SDP. Formally speaking the question was over a merger of the two parties. But in reality the issue is wholly political — and treated as such by all serious bourgeois figures. The *Economist* on 4 July put the issue squarely: 'David Steel would take Britain's Alliance party into a pact with Labour. David Owen would not. Hence the ructions.' JOHN ROSS looks at where Steel is taking the Alliance, and why he took the initiative so decisively against Owen.

AT a quantitative level the Alliance's vote at the 1987 election, as many commentators have pointed out, was a setback but not a disaster. It received 7.3 million votes — 22.6 per cent of the poll. This was only 2.9 per cent, 400,000 votes, down on its 1983 result. It was the second highest vote for a third party since 1929. As Malcolm Rutherford wrote in the *Financial Times* on 3 July: 'After all, in the general election last month the Alliance did not do as well as it had hoped, but it did not do all that badly. It won 23 per cent of the vote, which would be the envy of a third force in any other country in Europe.'

But from a strategic, qualitative, point of view the 1987 election was a decisive turning point for the Alliance — which is why Steel moved so rapidly.

David Steel is not primarily discussing organisation. He is calling for a *political* reorientation. Steel made this clear by releasing simultaneously with his organisational proposals a quite explicit call for a new political orientation.

Writing in the *Sunday Times* on 14 June, three days after the election, Steel stated his orientation clearly: 'Labour with only 31.5 per cent support, after such a markedly improved campaign over its 1983 debacle, must think again about whether it is prepared to inflict endless Tory governments on this country while it nurtures dreams of going it alone in government.'

### Recall

'It should recall the commitments of its founding fathers and early Labour conferences to electoral reform and re-examine its own intensely undemocratic attitude to this issue.'

'The scope for the two oppositions working together is severely limited by the drift to the left inside the new parliamentary Labour Party. But on some issues there should surely be an effort to make common cause across the party barriers — and why not with the disaffected Tory "wets" as well...'

'The Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, which has doggedly tried to keep Scottish self-government as an all-party issue, should not delay in re-attempting to convene discussion of representations from all the political parties.'

In the memorandum setting out his proposal for the merger of the SDP and Liberals Steel made his orientation equally clear. Talking of the election campaign he stated: 'I would have preferred a clear anti-Thatcher non-socialist alternative.' David Marquand, part of the pro-

merger wing of the SDP also made an explicit call for a new Labour-Alliance pact.

The *Economist*, surveying the new situation, noted: 'Mr Steel... now knows that the only way into government is through some sort of pact with the Labour Party... The leadership of the Labour Party has been trying hard to fight its way back into the middle ground of politics. The election of many left-wing Labour MPs will make that more difficult. But if the fight succeeds, by 1992 Mr Neil Kinnock may have built a Labour Party which can do business with Mr Steel.'

These issues already came to the surface during the election with the public differences between Steel and Owen over with whom to form a government in a hung parliament — Steel making it clear that he would not enter a Thatcher government and Owen fighting to leave open this possibility. All reports are that Liberal headquarters was deluged with protests following Owen's remarks. But beyond the immediate crisis Steel faced over Owen's remarks, a historical perspective will make the issues involved clear.

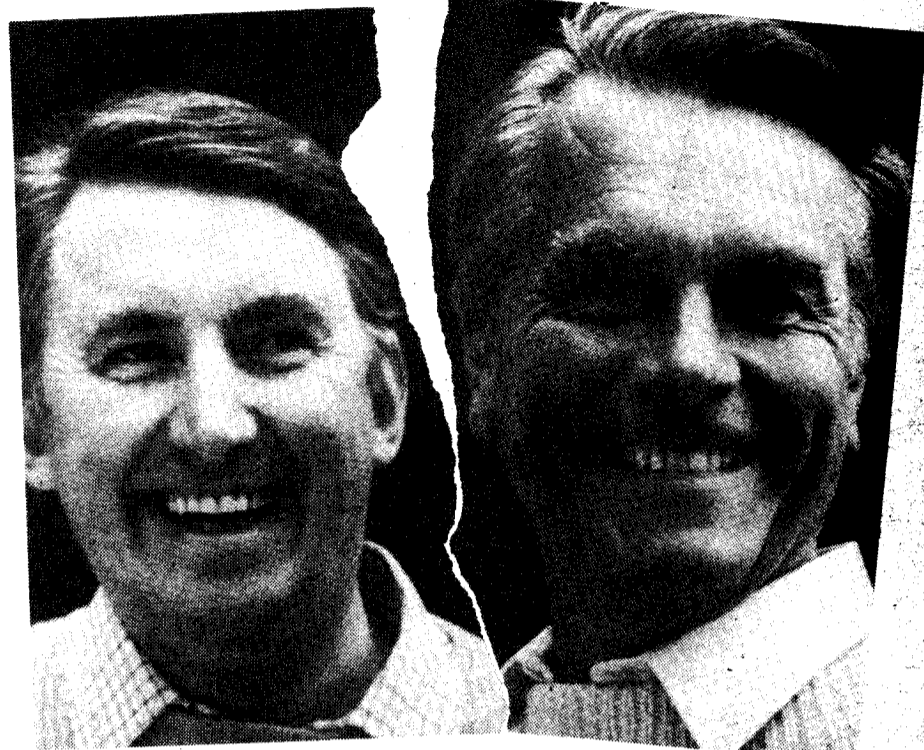
### Vote

When the Liberal Party was rebuilt under Joe Grimond, from the three per cent of the vote it received in the early 1950s, this was done with a clear strategy — which is why Grimond is admired even by present day Liberal leaders. Grimond's strategy was a 'Lib-Lab pact'. He cut away electoral support from the bureaucratic right wing Labour leadership under Gaitskell by emphasising radical support for civil rights and decentralisation. The aim was to weaken Labour to the point where it was unable to form a government by itself — thereby, in the bourgeoisie's terms, eliminating any risk of socialism — and then eliminate the Labour Party altogether.

### Strategy

This strategy continued until the end of the 1970s. Peter Hain, then a leader of the Young Liberals, noted: 'I remember vividly when I was (a) Young Liberal in the early 1970s how leading Liberal strategists made it clear that their Party's only hope was to replace Labour as the Tories principal opponent. "It will be a war to the death" one told me.'

The offer of a Lib-Lab pact was made explicit in 1964 when Wilson was returned to office with a majority of only three. Grimond offered Liberal support in the House of Commons. This proposal was



supported by extreme right wing Labour MPs Woodrow Wyatt and Desmond Donnelly — the former is now a virulently pro-Thatcher newspaper columnist. Wilson turned down the offer, formed a majority Labour government, and was returned with a landslide majority in 1966.

The strategy of a Lib-Lab government also guided Steel when Labour lost its overall parliamentary majority in 1976. Steel concluded a pact to keep Labour in office in return for a Liberal veto, and prior consultation, over government legislation.

In this period, as Callaghan subsequently admitted, the Labour government was subject to Liberal supervision and control. The result was the most right wing policies ever pursued by a Labour government. They destroyed Labour's popularity and prepared the way for the election of Thatcher in 1979.

### Alliance

The creation of the SDP in 1981 opened up another apparent perspective for the Liberals however. Since 1983, when the Alliance came within 800,000 votes of equalling Labour's support, the bourgeoisie saw forcing Labour into third place as a decisive goal, second only to securing a third Thatcher term. This was seen as marginalising and destroying Labour and reinstating a two party capitalist system. This was the practical political content of Thatcher's declaration that her mission was to 'destroy socialism'.

It was this project which lay behind Owen's rise to power in the SDP in 1983. Roy Jenkins, the first SDP leader, had sought, in 1981-83, to take votes relatively evenly from Labour and Tories. This was behind his utopian view, publicly announced, of securing an Alliance government in the 1983 election. Jenkins believed Labour could be minoritised, but not eliminated — and has continued to argue that since.

Owen had a different strategy. He believed

Labour was far weaker than the Tories. The Alliance should concentrate on smashing and eliminating Labour.

For this project, naturally, Owen had the enthusiastic backing of capital. He was suddenly discovered to be a great leader, second only to Thatcher in stature. The debacle of Labour in the 1983 election, when Labour literally appeared to disintegrate, seemed to confirm Owen's strategy and allowed him to replace Jenkins as SDP leader within days of the election.

This miscalculation regarding the strength of Labour, 'bourgeois triumphalism' in the real sense, affected all sections of capital. It was behind a serious miscalculation of the relation of forces made by the Tories in the last parliament — that over the political fund ballots.

The original Tory proposal was to replace the system of 'opting out' for payment of the political fund with 'opting in' — a policy which would have weakened Labour but not destroyed it. However following the 1983 election Thatcher replaced this with a more ambitious project — severing Labour's links with a number of major unions altogether and destroying its finances from the labour movement.

The proposal to introduce 'opting in' was abandoned and instead ballots held on the existence of political funds. The aim was shifted from reducing the number of trade union members paying the political levy to the more ambitious one of taking entire unions out of the Labour Party.

### Drastic

This was a drastic miscalculation of the relation of forces — an adventure in objective terms. It ended up with not simply every existing union voting to retain its political fund, but a number of new unions voting to establish them.

The 1987 election showed the same pattern. Labour did not crumble. The attempt to push it into third place failed.

In one sense the 1987 election only brought into the open the real situation. It was never possible, in any real sense, for the Alliance to become the second political force in the country. It is only the Tories and Labour which, have the institutional sense necessary to form the core of a government. The Alliance is a weaker force destined to switch between the two. Its fundamental role is to prevent the formation of a majority Labour government.

But it is nevertheless important that the real relation of forces has been clearly revealed. Because it means Owen's old project, of annihilating Labour, is finished and Steel's project, of orienting to a deal with Labour, to block a majority Labour government, is the only credible one. This is why Steel has seized the initiative in the Alliance.

The reason most of the major capitalist papers are backing Owen is equally clear. The bourgeoisie today does not want a Labour-Liberal government. It wants a fourth Thatcher government.

### Popular

There is no doubt a merged 'Liberal Democratic Alliance' could be more popular than the old two party SDP-Liberal Alliance — taking votes from the Tories as well as Labour. The threat to Thatcher's victory at the next election is therefore greater. Steel's Liberal party interests, and the long term interests of the bourgeoisie in creating a 'non-socialist' opposition to the Tories, therefore can conflict with the desire to return a fourth Thatcher government at the next election.

Whatever the precise developments over the next five years it is clear Steel now has the initiative. He is reorientating the Liberals, and the 'Liberal Democratic Alliance', towards an attempted pact with Labour. That is going to have very big implications inside the labour movement indeed.

Trends in British politics which have previously been 'underlying' are now very rapidly coming to the surface.

# Soft left faces hard choices

**THE IMMEDIATE** outcome of the general election has posed more concretely than ever before the choices facing the 'soft left'. Within three weeks of the election many of the basic strategic choices that will dominate politics in this parliament were posed in miniature. They posed without ambiguity the basic, and sole, strategic choices facing the 'soft left' majority of the party.

First off the mark to make demands on the soft left were the pro-coalitionist right. The *New Statesman*, which now acts as the weekly organiser of the Labour right, heralded the outcome of the election by explicitly coming out in favour of a coalition government and a deal with the Liberals. It accompanied this with an article by its political editor, Peter Kellner, praising the *Tribune* group of MPs for refusing to draw up any joint slate for the shadow cabinet with the Campaign Group.

By Dick Carter

The *New Statesman's* political editor, John Lloyd, spelt out the analysis in his 'Monday column' in the *Financial Times* on 6 July. He started from the situation in the Alliance and linked this directly to the situation in the Labour Party and the differences over the shadow cabinet elections: 'Dr Owen is concerned to carve out an ideologically distinct position for himself (and it may soon be just himself). A merged Liberal Democratic Alliance without him will be more amenable to deals with the Labour Party. No one will talk about this with any seriousness until next year when the Alliance will — it is assumed — have sorted itself out. If talking does start, the principal differences may be found to be few.

That will be partly because the Labour Party seems to be in the throes of

a realignment of its own: between the soft left and the right. The *Tribune* shadow cabinet contains Mr Bryan Gould (whose huge political and presentational talents include the ability to travel ideologically light); Mr John Prescott (a former union official, who found himself in a campaign studio debate supporting the proposition that Labour should be state funded to break its dependence on the unions) and Mr Jack Straw (blooded in endless battles with London borough leaders of the left) ... The party is no longer producing stars whose politics are fundamentally different from those of Mr John Cunningham, Mr Roy Hattersley or Mr John Smith.

Turning to the Alliance Lloyd noted 'on Labour's side, there is a nice and delayable calculation to be made, as to whether it can hope to squeeze the Alliance down by convincingly re-occupying the centre-left ground — or if it cannot, whether it must make some sort of deal ...'

## Won

Lloyd then outlined his perspective: 'The safest bet is this: that a Liberal Democratic Alliance will emerge, with left-of-centre leaning; that the Labour leadership will continue the process of signalling to the electorate that it is now a modern, social democratic-type party with lots of ideas about wealth creation as well as a concern for those at the bottom of the heap;



**The winning alternative for Labour**  
ALLIANCE SHAMBLES SHOULD OPEN THE DOOR TO KINNOCK

By PETER HAIN

TEMPTING though it may be to sit back in satisfaction as the Liberals and SDP tear into each other, Labour leaders should move decisively.

The Alliance's disarray opens up a real opportunity for Labour to build upon the general election result.

If the Liberals and SDP do not merge they will remain fractious and clumsy. If the Party is to be the outcome, the Opposition will be alienated and Liberal radicals emboldened.

Either way, these radicals are likely to be still further emboldened. They have already been forced by Dr Owen to re-examine their position and to be prepared to make more radical proposals. They should be invited to join the Labour Party with which they have much more in common.

This is also the time to set winning back the soft left. The Liberal Party has a long history of being a party of the right. For reform to be a reality, the Liberal Party must be able to attract the soft left. The Liberal Party must be able to attract the soft left. The Liberal Party must be able to attract the soft left.



**Towards a true break**  
THE MONDAY  
THE TIMES TUESDAY JULY 7 1987

**Now for a real alliance?**  
The Liberal Party, having swallowed the SDP, would be in a powerful position to attract Labour into a more formidable pact. R.W. Johnson examines the possibilities for realignment.

that these two groups will gently incline towards each other in an attitude of listening-to-what-you-say ...

'It is the result of this possible mutual inclination towards each other by Labour and Alliance which will determine whether or not the mould is really to be

broken ... the pursuit of power may not leave a choice.'

But while appearing to hedge his bets Lloyd staked out his ground on the fundamental issue without ambiguity: 'It is becoming clear that there is a broad identity of political view stretching from the jagged fissure between the Campaign and Tribune groups of the Labour Party, to the equally jagged fissure in the Alliance.'

The Labour right of course rushed to openly distance itself from the coalitionist consequences of Lloyd's position — Roy Hattersley doing so publicly on television and Bryan Gould attacking it at the LCC conference last weekend. But then, at present, they have no choice but to be extremely careful over this issue otherwise the alliance between the soft left and the right wing will break down and Kinnock's whole project in the Labour Party will be undermined.

## Success

As *The Times* noted on 7 July: 'To keep the soft left in line, Kinnock will need to re-emphasise his commitment to a non-nuclear defence policy ... And he will, of course, have to deny that he has any interest in a Lib-Lab pact, just as David Steel will have to disclaim such a pact while forcing through the Alliance merger. The likes of Eric Heffer and David Owen will have a joint interest in trying to bring the subject up, alleging a betrayal of socialist or centrist principles respectively.'

However as the article

continued the Labour right, and Kinnock, in any case can delay their decision over whether to try to win a Labour majority at the next election or go for a deal with the Liberals. It urged that: 'Neil Kinnock would need to push through rule changes within the Labour Party — one member one vote in candidate selection, perhaps also new disciplinary rules — aimed first at bringing the hard left to heel, and ultimately to rolling back its recent advance within the party ...'

## Unions

'Neil Kinnock ... doubtless never intended to become the Labour leader who surrendered for ever the hope of a majority Labour government. The temptation to keep his options open will doubtless remain strong right down to the wire, especially since his reform package is equally consistent with a Lib-Lab pact or a final attempt by Labour to go it alone: that is, Kinnock will want to displace the likes of Sharon Atkin from Labour marginals whether it is in order to improve Labour's image nationally or to entice Liberals to vote Labour locally.'

## Majority

This necessity of the right and Kinnock to stoutly deny any suggestion on the topic of a deal with the Liberals was confirmed in last Sunday's *News on Sunday*. Here Peter Hain outlined the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC's) view — which was indistinguishable from Kin-

nock's. However Hain stated clearly: 'The ... suggestion of a Lib-Lab pact should be rejected outright ... The main beneficiary would be the Liberals.'

Such views are important because, as *The Times* pointed out, to carry through his changes in the Labour Party: 'Kinnock ... will need to win and hold the support of two key groups, the union bosses (especially Ron Todd of the transport workers), and the soft left within the parliamentary party ... There is no prospect of the hard left achieving outright victory, but if enough of the soft left were to defect to them (in the shadow cabinet elections, for example) they could block Kinnock's drive for reform.'

Figures such as Hain therefore have to be kept in line, even by the right, until the process of crushing Labour's left is carried through. Then a turn can be made to coalition — and those like Hain can be given the choice of going along with it or being tossed aside like the proverbial squeezed lemon.

## Process

The delicacy of the operation for the Labour right and Kinnock is that while the soft left were prepared to go along with all the demands placed on them during the last parliament, inveighing them on to the road of coalition with the Liberals is quite a different matter. Furthermore, even if the goal of coalition is not announced, the demands that will be placed on the soft left as the right wing moves in that direc-

tion are going to grow and grow.

What is inevitably going to result is a process of differentiation. This already started at the LCC annual conference last autumn when it divided over whether to work with Labour Left Liaison or not. The same choice has now spread into the Parliamentary Labour Party with the Tribune group voting 37-27 against a joint slate with the Campaign Group — with the *New Statesman* supporting the 37 and *Tribune* itself the 27. The same divisions are going to appear in the trade unions.

A majority of the soft left, in particular in its leadership, will undoubtedly go over to the right. But a minority will go over to the left.

## Lead

These divisions will inevitably deepen because the soft left's political project is incoherent. On the one hand it genuinely wants to avoid a coalition with the Liberals, with all that would entail, and on the other hand it rejects the only alliance, that with the left in the party, that would build an alternative. Inevitably one section of the soft left will maintain its refusal of unity with the 'hard left', and therefore finish up by going over to support coalition, and the other, because it rejects the practical policies that the coalitionist perspective entails will finish up by allying with the campaign left.

The task left of the party faces is to continually pose the 'soft left' with that choice.

## 'Politics after the election'

**150 PEOPLE** attended Socialist Action's 'Politics after the election' conference on 4 July. At the main morning session Les Huckfield MEP, Linda Bellos — leader of Lambeth Council, Ken Livingstone MP, Ann Pettifor — national organiser of the Labour Women's Action Committee and John Ross discussed the way forward after the election.

Discussion centred

on the drive to open up a debate on coalition with the Liberals by the Labour right, attacks on the Labour Party's constitution, notably OMOV, to drive through a political shift to the right and how Labour should be expanding its appeal.

The afternoon sessions heard Ernest Mandel speaking at discussions on the development of the 'dual society' in Europe and glasnost in the USSR. Sean McKnight from

Sinn Fein spoke on Ireland after the election, and John Harrison on Thatcher's economic policies.



## In Brief

### London Labour AGM

**THE London Labour Party annual meeting on 11-12 July will be the first major Labour Party event following the election. It will witness an attempt by the Labour leadership to blame the left in London for the party's defeat.**

The agenda has been reorganised to take a major discussion on the general election and a discussion on the Inner London Education Authority.

Moves are being floated to change the constitution of the London Labour Party to cut down the influence of the left, for example by reducing the number of places elected directly to the regional executive by the regional women's conference.

There will be a Campaign Forum meeting on Saturday lunchtime at the London School of Printing. Speakers include: Eric Heffer, Linda Bellos, Ann Pettifor, Pete Willsman and the LCLGR.

### New anti-abortion legislation threatened

**LIBERAL MP David Alton is one of the MPs who have come high on the Private Members Bill ballot to be in with a chance of putting legislation before parliament.**

Further restrictions on abortion is amongst the topics he is considering.

However, whether or not it is chosen by Alton, anti-abortion legislation is likely to be introduced in one form or another in Thatcher's third term. Before the election the government was already announcing its intention to bring forward new laws on embryo experimentation based on the Warnock Report. Pro-choice activists be prepared!



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### THE SECOND ASSASSINATION OF MAURICE BISHOP



**A reply to the slander campaign against the Grenadan revolution**

**SPEAKERS**

**GEORGE LOUISON** a leader of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement, former Minister of Agriculture in the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada  
**BEN BOUSQUET** Labour candidate in Kensington in the General Election

**CELIA PUGH** Socialist Action

**TUESDAY 14 JULY  
7.30pm, Hackney Town Hall,  
Mare St, London E8**

Organised by E. London Socialist Action, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

## Witch hunt continues in Birmingham

**IT'S BACK to business for the right wing in Birmingham now that the general election is out of the way. In the two weeks since June 11 one ward has been closed down and a constituency has been informed that it may be next.**

The Sparkhill ward of Sparkbrook constituency was closed down by the general committee at its meeting on 23 June for so-called membership irregularities. The first that the ward members knew of the proposal was when the constituency's executive committee passed a resolution on 15 June that the ward should not meet.

The resolution aimed to prevent new officers and delegates being elected to replace those who had walked out during the general election campaign. They denounced Roy Hattersley as an 'absentee MP' and called on Asians to vote for the Tory candidate.

But the ward did meet on 18 June, and despite an appeal to disband made by two representatives of the GC's executive the meeting voted overwhelmingly to go on. Ward officers claim that no evidence of membership irregularities was produced and that a membership list had been approved by the West Midlands regional office at the time of their AGM in March.

Given that the ward is considered a source of opposition in the constituency, members felt the whole exercise was simply aimed at closing them down. As Kevin Scally, the ward treasurer, explained at the time: 'I think they did not like the political complexion of the branch and wanted to wind it up.'

The GMC of 23 June also voted to refer the actions of the local LPYS to

the EC. They had tried to call a public meeting on the issue of Black Sections during the election campaign. Although it never took place proposals to disband the YS or disciplinary measures against some of its members may well follow. Kevin Scally's comments to the local press were also referred to the EC which was asked to bring back recommendations.

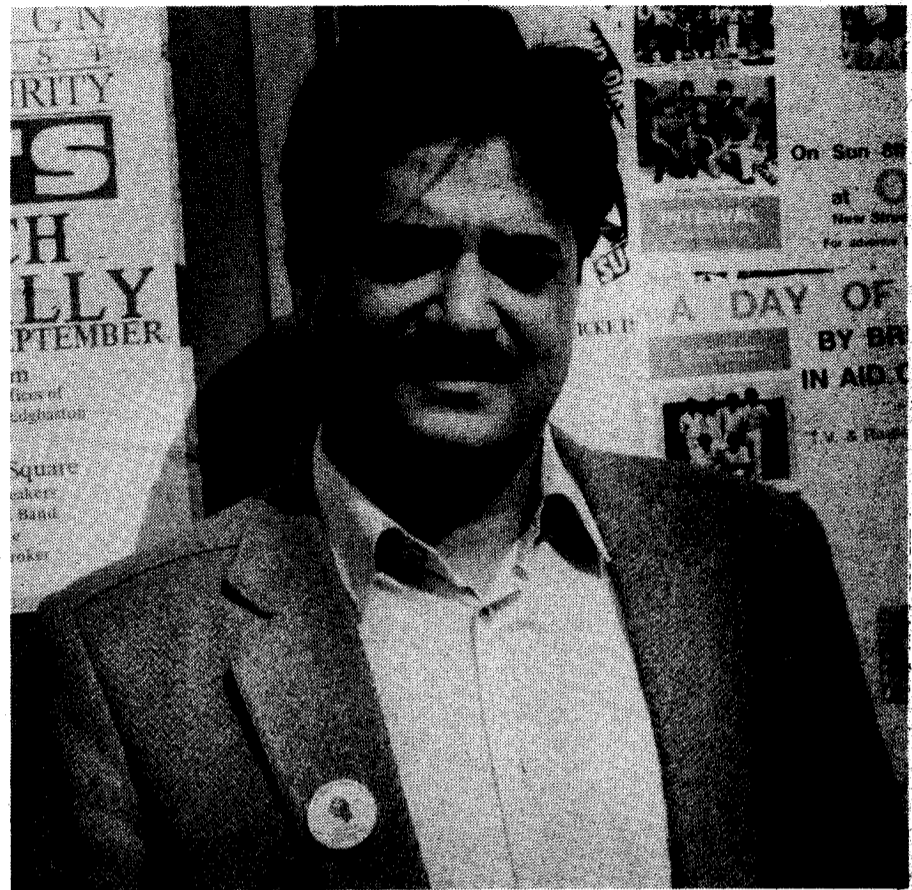
**By Mick Archer**

The GC also voted to disenfranchise Sparkhill ward's delegates to Birmingham District Labour Party. At the moment the DLP is also disbanded following a boycott by right wing constituencies.

When its AGM is finally called the election of officers is likely to produce a close-run race between left and right wing nominees. In anticipation of this, right wing constituencies such as Sparkbrook, Yardley and Small Heath have been doing everything in their power to eliminate left wing delegates.

Meanwhile Selly Oak constituency has been told that it is in danger of being disbanded. Fraser Kemp, West Midlands regional organiser, attended its GMC on 25 June to discuss its ongoing dispute with the NEC over the membership of Bob Whitehead.

Bob was a member of the Labour Party until he



**Amir Khan (above) and Kevin Scally were reinstated in Birmingham-Sparkbrook Labour Party last year, but as the Atkin affair has already shown the right wing's witch hunt is by no means over — recently they have closed down Sparkhill branch**

moved to Yardley in 1985 when he was excluded from membership along with a number of other transferees and new applicants. The idea of the Labour Party being a broad church has never quite reached Yardley with the result that it is the second most working class Tory held seat in the country. This time round it managed to produce a 0.42

per cent swing to Labour from the Conservatives.

Bob subsequently moved to Selly Oak where he was gladly recruited. Officers of Yardley — along with their friends on the NEC — have been trying to put an end to this arrangement ever since.

Selly Oak GMC continued to give their support

to Bob and the regional organiser undertook to convey their views to the NEC. The debate on Bob's case lasted almost two hours.

One delegate caught the mood of the meeting when he said he was 'fed up with it all' and wanted to get on with fighting the Tories. If the last two weeks are anything to go by then he's in for a long wait.

### Opposition to Tories growing in Scotland

**SINCE the general election, Labour's support in Scotland has increased from 42 per cent according to a Systems Three opinion poll in the Glasgow Herald on 4 July.**

The Tories and the Alliance continue to lose support. Malcolm Rifkind's insistence that a Scottish Assembly and the structure of government are not issues in Scotland, has done nothing to enhance the Tories' position here.

Over 80 per cent of people in Scotland want some form of Assembly. The election results gave a mandate to the Labour Party to take that on board.

With the opening of parliament, the 50-strong group of Scottish Labour MPs has made clear that the government will not be allowed to forget its minimal support in Scotland.

A number of MPs have highlighted the likely effects of Thatcher's policies continuing in Scotland — on industry, on low income families, on housing and public services shortages — and particularly

the disastrous effects of the poll tax. This tax will be implemented in Scotland first, hitting those families least able to afford it.

Opposition to the poll tax is growing in Scotland. Resistance to it, led by the Labour Party and trade union movement would make it impossible to implement.

**By Ann Henderson**

It is estimated that it will cost Strathclyde Region alone, over £13 million to implement the necessary staff and computer changes to collect the poll tax.

Last week the Labour group leader of Strathclyde region, Charles Gray, indicated that they were not prepared to start these changes — and pledged the region's support for an all-Scottish campaign against the poll tax.

The Scottish Labour Party and the STUC have called a demonstration and rally in Glasgow on Saturday 29 August to show the popular support for opposition to the Tories' policies in Scotland and support for an Assembly.

The recently published



**In 1979 Scottish workers lobbied the TUC for action against the Tories, in June 1987 they decisively defeated the Tories in the general election — and opposition is still growing**

government statistics on regional trends confirm the growing differences between North and South. As affluence spreads in the South East, to East Anglia and the South West, unemployment continues to rise in the North and deprivation increases.

The Scottish election results showed our response to those divisions — opposition must continue to be organised.

### Convention for sanctions

**SATURDAY 26 June saw the staging of the National Convention for Sanctions Against South Africa at which the Anti Apartheid Movement called together delegates from diverse organisations to demonstrate their disgust at the Pretoria regime and at the Tory government's refusal to implement sanctions against Botha.**

The convention called for the implementation of effective economic sanctions against South Africa, as opposed to the cosmetic 'selective measures' taken by the Tories.

The purpose of this event was to create the conditions whereby a heightened campaign for sanctions could be achieved. The convention hoped to lay out an agenda for action by trade unions, political parties, and a variety of other organisations.

Platform speakers included a representative of SWAPO and of the African National Congress.

Norman Willis, general secretary of the

British TUC, also spoke. He explained the TUC's policy on South Africa, but did not say what effective and practical action the TUC had and would be taking to implement these policies.

This criticism, in fact, can be levelled at the convention as a whole. Although it succeeded in bringing together many representatives of pro-sanctions organisations, a practical and constructive plan of action did not emerge.

Insufficient emphasis was given to mass campaigning action. Hence the absence of speakers advocating such a position from the floor. The importance of the black communities and youth for the Anti-Apartheid campaign was not projected by the convention.

The National Convention for Sanctions unfortunately did not realise its potential for building solidarity with the black majority of South Africa and campaigning for sanctions. This lack of a mass action perspective was magnified by the absence of a call to mobilise for the October AAM demonstration which should be built on the biggest possible scale.

# The Unionists new tactic

**THE UNIONIST** parties in the north of Ireland have officially registered the failure of their campaign against the Anglo-Irish agreement signed in November 1985. The 'Task Force' report drawn up by Frank Millar, general secretary of the Official Unionist Party (OUP), Harold McCusker, OUP deputy leader and Peter Robinson, deputy leader of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), published on 2 July, acknowledges most unionists do not believe that the present unionist campaign against the Agreement can succeed. The report urges the Unionist parties to open talks 'without preconditions' with the British government about alternatives to the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The new report sets the Unionist objective as the most rapid possible installation of a 'devolved government' in the six counties. This has, of course, been the Unionist demand since the Stormont 'protestant parliament for a protestant people' was abolished in 1972. In exchange for the return to a Stormont administration the report is prepared to accept, for the first time, participation of the bourgeois nationalist Social Democratic Labour Party in a government of the six counties. The report notes this is in line with the document published by the ultra-sectarian Ulster Defence Association (UDA) earlier this year.

The UDA, which specialises in random murders of Catholics, spelt out that 'power-sharing' with the SDLP would be an acceptable price for getting rid of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The precondition for the UDA was that the nationalist community must show their 'loyalty' to remaining part of the United Kingdom for ever. The task force report goes further than the UDA in pledging 'willingness to negotiate a British/Irish framework for co-operation within these islands.'

## Control

The key precondition for the Unionists is regaining control of the sectarian security forces in the six counties. The report says: 'a government in Northern Ireland without control of internal security would be unworthy of the name.'

If agreement cannot be reached on such an alternative to the Anglo-Irish Agreement the report adopts a new 'threat': 'Devolved government is therefore our objective and whilst we hope this will prove attainable within the context of the United Kingdom, unionists would be wise and prudent to an-

ticipate that it might not... failure to arrive at consensus would leave the Unionist leadership no alternative but to seek an entirely new base for Northern Ireland outside the present constitutional context. To this end it should be observed that Article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement itself purports to recognise and safeguard the right of the people of northern Ireland to self-determination.'

By Redmond O'Neill

This is a completely empty threat given that the sole guarantee of the existence of a partitioned statelet in the six counties is the power of British imperialism. Without British support the Unionists would be powerless. But this 'threat', alongside the report's rejection of the option of complete integration into the UK, shows that the bottom line for unionists is not, ultimately, even the connection with Britain. Their bottom line is the protestant ascendancy — the monstrous system of relative privilege for unionists and discrimination against nationalists and Catholics which is institutionalised into the foundations of the six county statelet. It is that relatively privileged position which is threatened by the only democratic solution to the lack of viability of the six county state — a united Ireland.

The SDLP — have welcomed the task force report. They have made clear their willingness, indeed eagerness, to take part in a new version of Stormont — as long as it involves power-sharing by the SDLP and the Anglo-Irish Agreement is maintained.

Austin Currie, a leading spokesperson for the SDLP, explained in a recent interview: 'Traditionally the nationalist position has been for a unitary Ireland. This



Last year's 6 July Orange march

was the preferred option in the Forum report and continues to be the preferred option of all constitutional nationalists. On the other hand we have to be practical about it and in the short term there is no possibility of a unitary state. He goes on: I would argue that the agreement is an incentive to the SDLP to get involved in a devolved power-sharing situation.' (Fortnight, June 1987)

## Clear

The SDLP has even made clear that it is prepared to go along with returning control of the apparatus of repression to a six county 'devolved government' — in exchange for a significant slice of the jobs and patronage which would be created. In Currie's words: 'the settlement I propose is, of course, a political settlement in which the necessity for security underpinning will be minimised. But any administration which cannot enforce its decisions is a eunuch.' (Fortnight, June 1987).

In last month's Queen's speech to parliament the Tory government spelt out that it is thinking along the same lines as the unionists — referring to the possibility of greater responsibility

being 'devolved to representatives of the people' whilst maintaining the Anglo-Irish Agreement as a mechanism to prop up the SDLP against republicanism in the six counties.

The meaning of these developments is clear. The Unionists have failed to defeat the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The British government, Dublin, and the SDLP have failed to eliminate the republican movement — as witnessed by the victory of Gerry Adams in West Belfast in the general election. The British government is now attempting to launch a new phase of its strategy by trying to bring the Unionists into line with its policy — in exchange for a return to a Stormont-type administration. This would be propped up by the SDLP in exchange for a share in the spoils of office. Alongside this would go the SDLP and Dublin support for increased repression against the republican movement — and possibly against Sinn Fein as such.

## Efforts

The fly in the ointment is that the efforts of London, Dublin, the SDLP, RUC, and the British army have failed to eliminate, or even significantly reduce,

the mass support that exists for the republican movement and Sinn Fein. The reason for this is the one issue they cannot touch — the fact that all the cosmetic exercises undertaken over the past eighteen years have failed to tackle the roots of sectarian discrimination in the six counties — which are themselves grounded in partition and the British colonial presence in Ireland.

Finally all this is being watched carefully by the Dublin government. A new crisis is developing in the trade union movement in the 26 counties, and in Britain, around the continuing sectarian discrimination against Catholics in employment in the north. Every step by the SDLP in the north, and Fianna Fail in the south, to openly prop up the six county statelet runs the risk of expanding the mass support for Sinn Fein and extending it south of the border. That is what Dublin and London most fear. It is why we should prepare for greater repression against the republican movement as part and parcel of the efforts to create a new pro-partition consensus linking London, Dublin, the unionists and the SDLP.

## NUR calls for British withdrawal in one parliament

**IN AN HISTORIC** decision the NUR conference on 1 July voted by 41 votes to 36 to call upon the next Labour government to commit itself to a 'withdrawal of British rule in Ireland within the lifetime of that government'.

The motion was carried against the opposition of general secretary Jimmy Knapp, who warned of an orange uprising in Scotland against withdrawal. An amendment calling for a step-by-step withdrawal

under UN supervision was defeated 39 votes to 33.

The NUR conference also supported the resolution of the Labour Women's Action Committee, submitted by Glasgow No 6 branch, calling for the women's section of the Labour Party NEC to be elected by the National Conference of Labour Women, with three places reserved for trade union women and three for women from the women's sections.

Again the resolution was carried against the advice of Jimmy Knapp, with 37 for and 36 against.

## What price power sharing?

'SINN Fein went out in the Westminster elections to establish a firm Republican base,' said Sean McKnight, a Belfast city councillor.

'And that comrades is what we have done, against great media bias,' he said, speaking at the Socialist Action 'Politics After the Election' conference on Saturday 4 June.

'Sinn Fein fared well out of the elections in the Six Counties. We dropped a couple of percentage points, but nothing to get alarmed about. We held onto West Belfast, the seat that was in the spotlight,' McKnight explained.

However, 'the unionist vote was down in spite of having an agreed candidate in all areas. The unionist pact

took a hammering and began to split and crumble.'

He went on to describe how 'the loyalist taskforce has issued a document saying that maybe they will share power with the SDLP. The SDLP would love to share power with the loyalists, but that does not represent the position of the nationalist people.'

'What would the SDLP get in return for putting a unionist government back into Stormont? I shudder to think of the consequences. surprised if Sinn Fein was bargained off by the British government. Sinn Fein could be proscribed and there could be selective internment if the unionists gave the SDLP a couple more seats in a power-sharing government.'

## Irish CP gives up the ghost

**IF anyone thought we had problems with the line and activity of the Communist Party of Great Britain, they should note the latest turn of events in Ireland.**

The Communist Party of Ireland has issued an open letter calling for the IRA to give up the armed struggle for national liberation and independence.

'The Communist Party of Ireland is a revolutionary socialist organisation pledged to end British imperialist rule and all imperialist influence in Ireland, with the clear perspective of building a united socialist republic in our island,' the document begins. 'Our declared policy is to work for the creation of a united political campaign which would force the British government to declare its intent to withdraw from all interference in Ireland — political, military and economic — by a specific date.'

From this celestial political height, and from 'the sum total of

our experience and our knowledge based on Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory', the Irish CP has concluded that the armed struggle 'does not have popular support among the majority of our oppressed people' and must be dropped forthwith. It proposes to replace the armed struggle, which is 'an obstacle to progress generally but also cripples your political movement's capacity for radical political advance in the struggle against British imperialism', with unity between 'Catholic and Protestant'.

This will be achieved — wait for it — by 'contact between republican and loyalist forces who are both seeking a way forward out of the crisis and suffering created by British imperialism' (!!!). Compared to the Irish CP's statement, the reactionary positions of the British *Militant* seem positively progressive.

The CP should try telling it to the RUC, the British army, and the Reverend Ian Paisley.

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## THE SEAMUS MALLON COLUMN



**W**ITH ALL media attention on the north of Ireland directed towards violence and terrorism, successive British governments have been given the perfect smokescreen to detract from their out-of-sight out-of-mind policies which have left a legacy of neglect, poverty and deprivation. It has been said that our old men see visions and our young men

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## A very broad alliance

**READERS of Tribune** will know of that newspaper's regular eulogies to the bourgeois nationalist Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP). *Tribune* presents the SDLP as some kind of socialist party to the left in Britain. *Tribune* has even given SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon a regular column in *Tribune*.

One thing you will not read in *Tribune*, however, is the call by leading SDLP spokesperson Austin Currie for support for Margaret Thatcher in the British general election: 'I am sorry to say it but — from the point of view of nationalist Ireland — a continuation of Maggie Thatcher in power, for a limited period of time, would be to our advantage.' (Fortnight, June 1987).

In case that isn't clear enough, Currie added: 'I believe that, while we have a strong Conservative government, that is a reason for optimism for the immediate future.'

# 'Our alternative to a pact with the Liberals is re-founded Labour Party'

CONTINUING our series of analyses from the left on the way forward for Labour after the election Socialist Action spoke to TONY BENN MP. Tony Benn has just been elected chair of the Campaign Group of MPs.

THE ELECTION campaign was very professional. The campaign gave people hope and confidence that they were doing well, although in fact the outcome was very disappointing.

My own feeling, looking back on it, was that it was a terrible tragedy that all that professional skill, which was formidable, had not been harnessed to earlier struggles. Supposing the pamphlets, leaflets, and television skills had been put at the disposal of the miners, printers, and teachers. What an educational enterprise that would have been.

The party came out of the campaign in better heart than one would expect compared to the actual outcome. People on the left are looking very carefully at matters, and engaging in serious and constructive discussions about where we proceed from here.

What is clear is that the centre has cracked, the Owen-Steel alliance has cracked. A few years ago every newspaper was telling us that if Labour was more like David Owen, or Roy Jenkins, or Shirley Williams then we would win. But it is they who have splintered, not Labour.

The new 'radical' Tory policies announced in the Queen's speech will sharpen polarisation. The Labour Party can become stronger. That will be registered at the local government elections and the European elections.

Within the new Parliamentary Labour Party I do not believe people are interested in a re-run of the past. Neither the new nor the old MPs in the Campaign Group see the general election as simply a four week truce in hostilities which will now be resumed.

I think that is why the idea of a contest for the leadership and deputy leadership have found no favour. People have other priorities. These are to build the broadest possible base for the Campaign Group.

The Campaign Group must not be seen as a grouping around a few individuals. It must centre around clear ideas which it seeks to build the broadest measure of support for.

First that Labour is an opposition not simply to Mrs Thatcher, and the Tories, but to the whole direction of our economic system.

I do not believe Mrs Thatcher is an uncaring prime minister. She cares for her own people, not for our people.

analytic criticism of events in Britain than was seen during the election — which concentrated on showing that Mrs Thatcher wasn't fair, or wasn't compassionate.

Second economic polarisation will lead to much greater social and political tensions. The poll tax, the centralisation of the state, the attack on the education system, the housing crisis, the attack on democracy in the inner cities, will lead to struggles of a substantial kind. The Campaign Group will have to think carefully about how it can support these extra-parliamentary struggles. If we don't we will be seen simply as MPs and not as an integral part of the movement created by these struggles — as we were seen during the miners strike.

Third we have to look at foreign policy in the light of Gorbachev. We should be considering non-alignment. We should be bringing our influence to bear to unite Europe rather than divide it. The policies Gorbachev has outlined in the USSR have had a great impact. I believe they will have a still further impact.

Fourth we must watch very carefully the proposals that are being made for an arrangement with the Liberals. This is not simply about tactical voting and proportional representation. It is linked to 'cleansing' British society of socialism and cleansing the Labour Party of socialists.

Fifth our alternative to a pact with the liberals is re-founding the Labour Party on a broader basis. We have to build up shared values about what socialism would mean in Britain. This has to draw in people from the left of the Labour Party, and people who are socialists but not in the Labour Party. The aim is not to establish an alternative to Labour but to re-found the Labour Party on a higher basis.

There are socialists in the green movement, socialists in the black movement, socialists in the women's movement, socialists in the pensioners movement, socialists in community groups. All should be affiliated to, or individual members of, the Labour Party. This would strengthen the left and put socialism back on the national agenda.

They must include some who today support the Liberals. I believe there are many Liberals who do not want to join with the SDP. This is one obvious area to start building Labour's support.

This brings us to the role of the Campaign Group. The Campaign Group has to organise itself in such a way that it has organic links with the

trade unions, with Labour Left Liaison, CLPD, the Women's Action Committee, the Black Section and other organisations.

This plays a short term role of making the Campaign Group a force to be reckoned with inside the Labour Party. But its long term objective is ensuring that the Labour Party reflects a broader mass base within which those that are today gathering around the Campaign Group could express themselves.

The present constitutional changes being proposed in the party go in the opposite direction. One Member One Vote (OMOV) is designed to break the power of the Labour Party membership. Those advocating it would eventually like to see a postal ballot — where the media would take the responsibility for advocating particular candidates.

Constitutional change always has a political motivation. The Chartists wanted the vote to strengthen the position of the working class. The Suffragettes wanted the vote to strengthen the position of women. We fought for reselection because we wanted the party without which not one MP would be elected, to be strengthened vis a vis MPs. OMOV is designed to weaken the position of the active members of the party as a whole in relation to MPs.

The same goes for the other, more speculative, constitutional ideas that have been put forward — for example the effective abolition of the NEC. The aim here seems to be to eliminate the constituency section, and reorganise the NEC on a regional basis. Here, it is hoped, the trade union vote could then be used to replace the CLP vote.

All this is part of the long saga of trying to turn the Labour Party in the direction Gaitskell pioneered after 1959. To turn the party into one with much looser links with the trade unions and with the socialist ingredient eliminated. The end result would be to prepare the party for the type of arrangement with the Liberals that existed when Callaghan was in power. Moving Labour in the direction of a European Socialist Party or American Democratic Party.

People should be aware that we know what they have in mind. People can then see the relevance of what we are saying — which is for a broader based mass party, more explicitly connected with struggle outside itself and outside parliament, and with a much clearer socialist perspective. People can then judge from their own experience

which type of party is more relevant to them.

I have no doubt which type of party people in Scotland demanding home rule, or people in Liverpool, or miners, or nurses, or teachers or civil servants will see as more relevant to their needs.

The power of capital in Britain is not based on Mrs Thatcher and her parliamentary majority. It is based on bankers, multinationals, the EEC commission, NATO, the security services, the civil service, proprietors etc. It is here the strength of capital lies. Unless we have a strong labour movement in Britain we have only one effective opportunity to shift the balance of power — and that is at election time. That is wholly inadequate — because capital does not restrict its activity to election time.

In order to win we have to have strong trade unions, a strong Labour Party, strong Labour groups on local authorities, strong socialist analysis, and strong regional organisations. This means building up the labour movement because it is the only force capable of first resisting, and then overcoming, the enormous power that exists outside parliament.

The institutional basis created by the 1918 conference — with trade unions, constituency parties, and a few socialist societies — is too narrow for the very widely based and diverse working class that has appeared as a result of technological change. Teachers, nurses, civil servants, trade union members at GCHQ show that radicalism is by no means confined to the old manual working class. Here we find echoes of radicalism among those who Mrs Thatcher and Dr Owen claim as theirs.

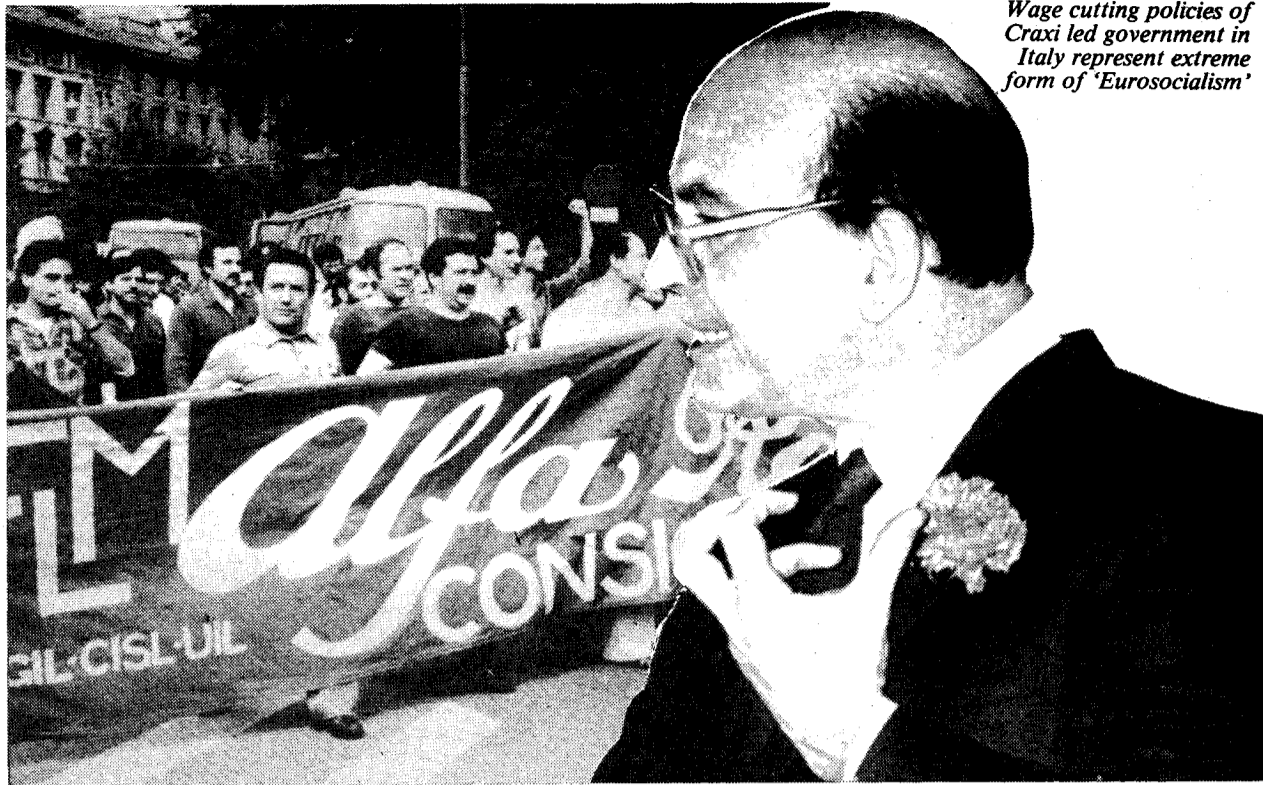
I believe these matters cannot be discussed simply among a few people. We are not working in a vacuum for four years. We are working in a situation where things will change very rapidly.

This is why we are considering a conference on the future of socialism in the autumn. This is not simply a recruiting agent for the Labour Party but an attempt to identify a direction which might find favour within the party and command majority support in Britain.

What must be established are shared values and objectives. Because without these we will be simply promoting individuals. We will not have built the strength at the bottom capable of sustaining representation in the party.



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Wage cutting policies of Craxi led government in Italy represent extreme form of 'Eurosocialism'

## The drive to make Labour a 'Eurosocialist' party

THE MONTH since the general election has seen a series of constitutional proposals put forward by the right wing ranging from one member one vote (OMOV) to abolition of the national executive committee. But there is a coherence behind all these proposals — to take the Labour Party in the direction of the 'Euro-socialist' parties in France, Spain and Greece. LES HUCKFIELD MEP outlines how the organisational structure of the French or Spanish Socialist Parties is used to force through their political line.

AFTER Labour's election defeat, the most incredible solutions are coming forward to the current problems we face. We are being told that we must drop our policy on defence, and drop our policy on what is euphemistically called 'social ownership' and that if we change the mechanism for the reselection of MPs then we've cracked it for next time. It is time for a cool analysis of this.

One member one vote (OMOV) isn't an attempt to extend the franchise. In fact it will diminish the franchise because it will take away the influence and the exercise of power by local parties, and especially by trade union delegates to local parties.

If OMOV is introduced even if it is with some kind of electoral college mechanism, that will quite radically change the shape of constituency parties especially outside London. GCs are comprised of up to 50 per cent trade union delegates. Many of those affiliated trade union branches, if they know that in future they will not be able to exercise the input they currently have, will rapidly come to the conclusion that it isn't worth affiliating.

OMOV is about breaking the trade union link at constituency party level, and more importantly, about breaking the link between the accountability of an MP, on a regular basis, to the same body that reselects him or her. It is designed to take power away from conference and from local parties, and place it firmly in the hands of the leadership.

There are some lessons that we ought to be learning very rapidly. We ought to look at what has happened constitutionally in some of the other so-called socialist parties.

Why is it that Mitterand and Jospin of the Socialist Party in France, that Gonzales of the PSOE in Spain, that Papandreu of the Pasok in Greece, and that the West German SPD leadership have been able to make massive policy shifts to the right? In all those cases it is because the party leaders have a tight constitutional and political grip on the party right the way down.

For example, the reason that Mitterand changed the voting system in France during the last national assembly elections wasn't simply



because he hoped the Socialist Party would get a bigger percentage of the popular vote. It was also because a proportional representation system gives the party leadership and the central party bureaucracy far more control over policy and over the candidates that are chosen.

Look too at the situations we have recently witnessed in Spain and Greece. In Spain Gonzales has wound up large areas of the PSOE because they disagree with him politically. In Greece Pasok candidates in both the European and national parliament elections have been taken off the ballot paper the night before the poll because the party leadership disagreed with what they said.

These parties vary in degree and in method but what they all have in common is that the central party bureaucracy and the central party leadership has acute control over the constitution and a strangle-hold over the selection of candidates — because of that the leadership can manipulate policy changes almost overnight. These trends are beginning to develop in the British Labour Party.

Consider how the last manifesto was put together. You might think it was on the basis of that celebrated Clause V meeting between the Parliamentary Labour Party and the national executive committee. In fact the influence of the NEC and the influence of the party conference was minimal. The leader's office and the shadow cabinet exercised a massive influence. The Labour leadership doesn't as yet feel the need for a proportional representation system, but the same kind of centralisation of the constitution and of policy formation is happening here in the Labour Party in Britain.

There was an interesting article in *Tribune* recently by David Martin, the new leader of the British Labour group in Strasbourg, and Glyn Ford, the new treasurer. Basically they were hesitatingly starting to advocate that Labour's main economic policies and main defence policies shouldn't be determined by party conference and the NEC but that in future should be worked out jointly with what they call their 'European socialist comrades'.

Over the past few years there have been a number of meetings between representatives of the national executive committee and representatives of the Confederation of European Socialist Parties. There have also been

a number of working party discussions with the SP in France and the SPD in West Germany, with the specific task of working out joint policy statements. Until now the British Labour Party has always expressed reservations about the European Monetary System, about European defence policy and about progress towards a federal European union within the common market structure. When the latest meeting of the Confederation of European Socialist Parties took place in Lisbon, those reservations weren't expressed with anything like the same clarity.

The continental socialist parties have already lost the freedom to choose their candidates at local level. They have learned to their cost that it is the central party hierarchy which is the dominant influence.

You only have to look at what happened to Knowsley North and Nottingham East, and listen to what is already starting to be said about the NEC choosing by-election candidates in future, to see that trend is already beginning here. The small print in the consultation document on the so-called choice of selection procedures to introduce OMOV also hints that the NEC will be the final arbiter of whether a CLP can hold a selection conference or not.

The political developments in the other West European socialist parties — shifts to the right by the party leadership — are starting to work their way through the British Labour Party too. The only way that the continental socialist parties have been able to bring about those shifts to the right is because they don't have active local party units with the constitutional right to participate in policy formation and the selection of candidates. Introducing OMOV into the British Labour Party is fundamental to the same shift taking place here.

We must fight against that trend. Based on the Campaign Group of Labour MPs in the House of Commons, based on the various campaigns affiliated to Labour Left Liaison, based on local Campaign groups up and down the country there is already the makings of a good national organisation.

The left has to build up an agenda of political demands. We want to see the defence of unilateralism, the implementation of the demands put forward by the Black Section and the Women's Action Committee. We want to see reselection defended, we want to see a new Labour Party policy on Ireland. All of those ought to be part of the framework of the left's agenda. That is the agenda we ought to put forward against becoming gradually corralled into something that can only be described as Euro-socialism. That is what's before us on the horizon.

This is an edited version of a speech given at Socialist Action's 'Politics after the election' conference on 4 July.

**IN OUR last issue JUDE WOODWARD looked at the roots of the family system in class society. In this issue she looks at the family in capitalist society and its relation to the building of socialism.**

THE monogamous family as it exists throughout capitalist society today, in the working class as much as in the bourgeois class, is a thoroughly reactionary institution, not only founded upon the domestic slavery of women, but also embodying the absence of rights of children. The 'modern' nuclear family is less modern than the monarchy or the House of Lords; and more deep rooted than. The family, resting as it does on the complete subjugation of women, is the site of the brutalisation of women and children, the mechanism which ensures an audience for pornography and prostitution, for the peddling of reactionary clerical ideas, and reactionary campaigns like those of Gillick, or Whitehouse.

Typically the most extreme and brutal forms of capitalist rule are also those most identified with the monogamous family and the values of the family home. As with the case of Hitler's Germany.

The character of the family system as a reactionary, oppressive system of class society determines the attitude of Marxists towards it. Marxists give no succour or support to notions that give any progressive content to the existence of the family system, on the contrary the family is a reactionary institution. Trotsky explained this character of the family in the *Revolution Betrayed*, the forty million families in the Soviet Union he describes as 'nests of medievalism, female slavery and hysteria, daily humiliation of children.'



# Women, socialism and the family

## System

Of course this does not mean that the family system can be simply abolished, or that Marxists propose it is replaced by some system of regimented living which forbids 'love', or which imposes 'wives held in common', as the 19th century bourgeois opponents of Marxism claimed. On the contrary, a materialist understanding of the development of the family precisely reveals it can only 'wither away' on the basis of a far higher development of the productive forces. Only when all inequality of women is eliminated will it be possible for human beings to enter into genuinely free relationships, and the precise form that these relationships will take can be surmised but cannot be predicted in advance. All we can say is that, when a generation of men and women have grown up who have never known women's subordination and oppression then, in Engels' words, 'they will care precious little what anybody today thinks they ought to do; they will make their own practice and their corresponding public opinion about each individual — and that will be the end of it.'

But the issue of the family system as it exists today is of fundamental importance, not to predicting the future of human relationships, but to understanding what must be done to eliminate the oppression of women.

Again it is Engels who has most succinctly put forward the necessary steps that must be taken to achieve this goal. These are threefold. Firstly all legal and formal inequality towards women must be eliminated and their equality of rights guaranteed legally, secondly all women must have the right and possibility of a paid job on the same basis as men, and thirdly domestic labour must be transformed from a private service into a public industry.

On the first of these steps, it is obvious that many legal and democratic rights of women can be and have been won today. But even at the level of this purely formal, legal equality, there is not a capitalist state in the world that has eliminated all legal discrimination against women, let alone positively guaranteed their equal rights. In Britain married women still do not have the same rights in taxation or social security benefits. Few capitalist governments recognise rape within marriage. Restrictions on access to abortion, contraception and divorce continue to exist.

However even where laws have been enacted it is clear from the operation of the Equal Pay Act or the Sex Discrimination Act in Britain for example, that these laws have not in themselves dealt with the fundamental causes of the inequalities of women. On the contrary the introduction of such laws has merely demonstrated the truth of Engels judgement that: 'The peculiar character of the supremacy of the husband over the wife in the modern family, the necessity of creating real social equality between them and the way to do it, will only be seen in the full light of day when both possess complete equality of legal rights.' Or, as Lenin explained: 'No matter how much democracy there is under capitalism, the woman remains a "domestic slave", a slave locked up in the bedroom, nursery, kitchen'

## Steps

The economic independence of women can only be achieved through the full entry of women into paid employment. Again major steps in this direction can be, and have been achieved already. In Britain, the majority of women of working age do a paid job, and this has underpinned women's capacity to take advantage of some of the legal rights they have won. For example the rising divorce rate in Britain, where 7 out of 10 divorces are sought by women, is not correlated to the divorce laws as such, but the increasing economic independence of women which allows them to make the choice to end a violent or unsatisfactory marriage.

However women are integrated into paid employment in a social position determined by their subordination within the family. This operates from two points of view. The workforce is carefully sex segregated and the jobs that women are confined to have a lower status, command lower wages, and are generally less secure and consequently less well organised. Women in their majority are confined to the 'peripheral' sectors of the economy. Secondly women work a 'double shift', their responsibilities in the home means they frequently are forced to choose part-time rather than full-time work, twilight shift work, or early morning

cleaning and so on.

The fight for an extension of equal rights legislation to include positive discrimination programmes to ensure that women have the right of access to all jobs and all training is obviously an important element in seeking to change this. But as with all other formal 'equal rights', such laws, or agreements with employers, do not deal with the root of the problem, which remains women's unpaid domestic labour in the home.

So finally we are faced with the issue which is the fundamental material content of the family under capitalism, women's unpaid domestic labour, and their role in the production and reproduction of labour power.

There are clearly only two conceivable ways to eliminate the unpaid domestic labour of women. One is to maintain the character of 'housework' as private service, but to involve all members of the household equally in it — essentially getting the adult men to take an equal responsibility for the work. The other is for the majority of the work currently done in the home to be taken out of the realm of private service and make it once more a 'public industry'.

## Struggle

Of these two approaches only the latter has any possibility whatsoever of working as a solution for the whole female sex. While individual women will, quite rightly, struggle in their own homes for their husbands, lovers and sons to fully share in the domestic work, and while we totally support women in that struggle, as a general solution it is doomed to failure. The last two decades of heightened consciousness on the position of women in society and the unfairness of the division of labour in the home has resulted in no significant increase in the participation of men in domestic labour! In Cuba, where an extensive 'Family Code' embodies in law the principle that men should do their share at home, it has not made any significant material difference either — although it undoubtedly has an important place in increasing the confidence of women that they do not have to feel their duty is to be confined to the home.

Moral incentives are notoriously in-

effective in increasing the productivity of workers, or persuading them to do more work than they have to. In capitalist society moral incentives have increased productivity in war time for 3 or 4 years at a time, but in general the only way to increase output is through material incentives, differentials and bonuses. The post-capitalist societies like Cuba, or the Soviet Union have had to come to exactly the same conclusions, and reintroduce differentials and incentives in order to develop skills and increase productivity. There is no reason why what moral incentives cannot achieve at work, they will be able to achieve at home, nor is there any evidence anywhere that they can or will

## Burden

The only way to deal with the inequality of the burden of work on women in the home is through the extension of the process that has begun with the development of public education, health, social security and welfare provision.

Such a programme was set out by the Bolsheviks after 1917, although it was rapidly abandoned under Stalin. Trotsky summarised the goals of October 1917 like this: 'The revolution made a heroic effort to destroy the so-called 'family hearth'. The place of the family as a shut in petty enterprise was to be occupied, according to the plans, by a finished system of social care and accommodation: maternity houses, creches, kindergartens, schools, social dining rooms, social laundries, first aid stations, hospitals, sanatoria, athletic organisations, moving picture theatres etc. The complete absorption of the housekeeping functions of the family by institutions of the socialist society, uniting all generations in solidarity and mutual aid, was to bring to woman... a real liberation from the 1000 year old fetters.' And this is only possible through the transfer of the means of production into common ownership.

This is the only approach which, if implemented, could create the material conditions for the liberation of the female sex. Stalinism, in the Soviet Union, ensured that this goal was abandoned, and instead the goal of a new and higher form of 'socialist' family was substituted. In this 'new' family

women were declared free to participate in the real 'joys of motherhood', all marriages were declared free of compulsion so divorce was unnecessary, and women undertook the housework out of love of the job! Abortion was made illegal.

Such a substitution was simply a reactionary abandonment of the struggle for women's liberation. Other approaches, like setting the goal of a new, and higher form of the family, where men share in the housework out of love of the job, are simply miasmas. They either turn attention away from the real issue, the extension of public provision of such services, or serve to prettify and disguise the real social position of women in the family.

The goal of Engels, the substitution of public industry for private service, is the only goal worth setting ourselves. And the achievement of this goal will have the effect of destroying the family as it has existed since the beginning of class society. The family as the location for the power of men over women, and the unpaid domestic slavery of women will be ended. Such a final conclusion is impossible without the overthrowing of capitalism, and the organisation of production solely for profit, and its replacement by a system of common ownership of the means of production, which would allow both the massive expansion of the productive forces necessary to achieve these goals, and a method of organising production that puts human needs as its guiding principle.

We do not have to falsely claim that divisions between men and women in the working class are non-existent or negligible, for men and women to be on the same side in the struggle against capitalism and for such a socialist society. Both have an interest in its realisation.

## Division

However, the fact that the working class is divided along lines of sex, and that this division has a real material content, does mean that class-based organisations — like trade unions, or even socialist parties — must therefore take into account the specific interests of women, through specific women's sections, demands and so on.

Secondly, there must be a self-organisation of women in organisations and movements specifically formed to fight for the liberation of women. Such independent movements of women for their liberation have two chief tasks. Firstly, and most obviously, to engage in the struggle for women's rights and liberation, because other organisations cannot be expected to spontaneously place these questions at the top of their agenda. Such women's organisations will have to initiate, lead and mobilise around each issue of women's oppression as it comes up, whether any other sections of society can be won to mobilise alongside them or not.

Thirdly, because the liberation of women in the final analysis is impossible outside a socialist reorganisation of society, it is fundamental that the organisations of the working class also place the questions of women's rights and liberation at the top of their priorities. In the same way as the working class in South Africa has to be the vanguard of the fight against apartheid, or the working class in Chile has to be the vanguard of the fight for democracy, or the working class in Russia had to be the champion of the rights of oppressed nationalities, so the working class in every country of the world has to become the vanguard of the fight for women's liberation. Within that struggle waged by the working class as a whole working class women will of course play the leading role.

All this is necessary for the struggle of women to be successful, and for the struggle of the working class to be successful. The entire oppressed and exploited people, including the majority — women — will not unite in a struggle for socialism for abstract reasons, but because they can see that *only* the victory of the working class means the opening up of the possibility of all oppression and discrimination. The slogan 'no women's liberation without socialism, no socialism without women's liberation' is a perfectly accurate summary of that programme.



## South Korean mobilisations force concessions 'Down with the dictatorship'

FOR three solid weeks, thousands upon thousands of South Koreans have mobilised against one of the most bloody dictatorships in the world. The mobilisations began on 10 June when, according to figures released by the South Korean police, 90,000 students across the country took action. In the weeks that followed, the students were joined by workers, professionals, housewives, street vendors, taxi drivers and others in mass demonstrations for democracy. JON SILBERMAN reports.

WHAT made the 10 June mobilisations such a powerful focus were two particularly revealing expressions of the brutality of the dictatorship on that day.

The first was the trial of police officers for the torture and murder of a young student, Park Chong-Chol. The cover up of the murder was orchestrated at the highest levels and has galvanised broad opposition to the regime of Chun Doo Hwan.

The other 10 June event was the convening of a special meeting of the ruling Democratic Justice Party to appoint Chun's hand-picked successor as president, Roh Tae Woo. The was a particularly provocative move in the light of Chun's claim that he would democratise the country. It sparked a massive movement for direct presidential elections.

From demands against torture and for direct elections, the succession of mass demonstrations raised a wide range of demands for democratic rights. But the slogan which prevailed throughout the country was 'Down with the dictatorship!'

The movement was reminiscent of the last wave of protest in South Korea in 1980. Then the regime used bloody repression to put down the mobilisations. An uprising in the town of Kwangju was met with extreme violence. The riot police and army acted as an 'invasion force' against students, residents and workers who had formed popular committees and taken over their town. The carnage cost the lives of 2000 people.

Kwangju has been one of the scenes of the present wave of protests and the memory of the bloody repression there seven years ago was on everyone's minds as president Chun mobilised 60,000 riot police and a further 60,000 soldiers against the protests.

The state forces arrested 17,000 people and made great use of the £5 million worth of tear gas that the

regime bought last year. But neither the repression nor the threatened declaration of martial law could quell the mass movement.

With the eyes of the world on the Korean capital of Seoul — where next year's Olympic Games are scheduled to be held — the regime reached out to a section of the National Coalition for a Democratic Constitution which had called the initial demonstrations, offering talks.

### Policy

This was clearly the policy favoured by the US. In the early phase of the mobilisations the Reagan administration had stated that they were an internal matter for the South Koreans. This was diplomacy-speak for supporting the government.

The US government has been a major prop of president Chun's dictatorship. US, British and Japanese-based multinational firms have considerably benefited from the low-wage economy and absence of trade union rights. The famous South Korean 'economic miracle' has been funded by US imperialism and South Korea is seen as an ally in the entire region.

The principle imperialist powers led by the US have played a crucial role in the country's entire history. In fact, it was the US that created 'South Korea' when Washington, with British support, divided Korea along the thirty-eighth parallel in 1945. It was the US which, following the Chinese revolution in 1949 — and again with British support — went to war against the north.

Ever since then Washington has assisted in installing and propping up a succession of dictators: from Syngman Rhee to Park Chung Kee to Chun Doo Hwan.

Today, 40,000 US troops are stationed in Korea, the country is a key strategic base for the US's entire Pacific policy, and the US military deploys nuclear



missiles at South Korean bases. But continued open support for Chun and repression clearly wasn't working. George Shultz was dispatched to the region for talks.

What followed was the release from house arrest of Kim Dae Jung and the proposal for talks. Kim is one of the two central leaders of the Reunification Democratic Party, along with Kim Young San, and has been detained since the 1980 events. He comes from Kangju.

### Target

Washington clearly feared that simple brutality would only deepen the mass mobilisations and that the considerable US military presence and political and economic clout would increasingly become a target of the mass mobilisations.

Opposition to the US military presence has already been expressed in slogans during the democracy protests.

But despite the olive branch held out by Chun and pressure from the US, the offer of talks failed. The 'two Kims' found that the mass mobilisations were too deep to be called off without the prospect of serious concessions. Kim Young Sam actually proposed the postponement of the mass march on 26 June but was ignored.

This was a clear signal to the US and to the regime.

If the capitalist opposition party was not to be completely by-passed by the mass movement, serious concessions would have to be on offer.

As Maggie Ford wrote in the *Financial Times* on 27 June; 'as the People's Democratic Movement gains momentum in the country, representing the educated middle class as well as students and ordinary people, doubts remain over whether the two Kims are capable of leading it.'

It was this fear of the movement getting completely out of control that led to Roh Tae Woo's speech offering the 'eight-point plan for democratic reforms'. The main proposals were to hold direct presidential elections, free political prisoners, grant an amnesty to Kim Dae Jung, lift press censorship, guarantee respect for human rights, and introduce local government autonomy.

### Plan

Under the plan, presidential elections would be held by next February. Significantly Chun's resignation was not on offer. His regime is down but not out. It is hoping that a combination of certain reforms with this year's projected 15 per cent economic growth will allow it to salvage something substantial from the crisis.

Moreover, the precise content of certain of the reforms are not agreed. There are, for instance, 3000 political prisoners in Korea, but the regime doesn't acknowledge their political status. It regards people arrested for chanting pro-North Korean slogans as 'common criminals'.

But the mass mobilisations have established an important democratic opening. Moreover, it seems unlikely that it will be shut in the short term by the military. Chun was himself brought to power by a military coup and Roh Tae Woo was a leading two-star general.

### Opening

Already the movement has taken up the opening to publish uncensored material, and to win the release of some prisoners.

But the precarious character of the situation was revealed on 5 July when 5000 riot police were sent to attack students at Seoul's Yonsei university mourning the death of one of their number, Lee Han-Yol, killed as a result of being shot at by a tear-gas cannister.

The possibility that the ensuing demonstration might be the springboard for a further wave of mobilisations was strengthened when the two Kims called off negotiations with the government until the promised amnesty for political detainees had been honoured.

# World in action

## Gulf

THE Reagan administration has decided to put Kuwaiti oil tankers under the US flag. The move constitutes a major escalation of aggression against Iran on the side of Iraq in the Gulf war. Kuwait is a major ally of Iraq. Washington is simultaneously using the 'inadvertent' bombing of USS Stark, in which 37 seamen lost their lives as the pretext for a doubling of US naval presence in the Gulf, to a total of nine warships. Britain has also added to its naval presence in the area.

The combination of US flagging of Kuwaiti tankers and the escalation of US military might in the Gulf has been called an effective 'declaration of war' against Iran by Hashemi Rafsanjani, the speaker of the Iranian parliament. Iran has called for an end to the 'tanker war'. But Iraq has continued to attack tankers leaving Iranian ports, forcing Tehran retaliation. Last week, three tankers were targets of missile attacks. Ships carrying US flags have the automatic right to US military protection.

Meanwhile, mystery surrounds the bombing of USS Stark. The pilot of the aircraft seems to have vanished. A special investigative team sent to Iraq was unable to interview him. Despite many questions being left unanswered, the team said it was completely satisfied.

## Cuba

TWO CIA agents have been captured by the Cuban state security forces. On 8 June, millions of Cubans watched on TV as the two told their story of how they were recruited by the CIA, what work they did for the agency, and how they were captured. This is just the latest episode in a long legacy of CIA attacks on the Cuban revolution.

Meanwhile an intense process of political discussion, public debate and action is taking place within Cuba. Fidel Castro has made a number of major speeches concerning the course of the Cuban revolution. A major process of renewal of the Communist Party and its leadership to include more workers, women and those with experience of fighting as part of Cuba's voluntary international brigades in Africa has taken place. This process of 'rectification' as it is called aims to ensure a deepening political consciousness and mobilisation of the working class as the leading force of the revolution.

## Central America

THE Reagan administration has intervened to prevent a scheduled 25-26 June meeting of the presidents of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras and Guatemala. Washington broke up the meeting after failing to unite the latter four presidents behind its contra war policy in Nicaragua.

The meeting was going to discuss proposals drawn up by Costa Rican president, Oscar Arias for 'peace in the region'. The Arias plan included a cease-fire between all contending military forces in Central America; a general amnesty for those charged with political or military crimes; an end to foreign aid to the contras in Nicaragua and to the FMLN in El Salvador; restoration of suspended civil liberties in all five countries; elections in all five countries for a Central American parliament, to be followed by domestic elections.

Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega who had originally objected to the plan modified his stance. He said that the plan contained some constructive proposals worth discussing and that additionally he was tabling proposals laid out last year by the Contador Group of countries — Columbia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela. Both sets of proposals are unacceptable to Washington because they strike at US Contra aid. US envoy Philip Habib was despatched to the region, and Oscar Arias summoned to Washington to ensure the meeting was scuppered.

● The next issue of *Socialist Action* will carry a full report of Gorbachev's important economic proposals at last month's central committee meeting of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

## General strike sweeps Haiti

FOR the second week running the Caribbean country of Haiti has been gripped by general strike action, in what has become the most serious political crisis in the country since the fall of 'Baby Doc' Duvalier 18 months ago.

Shops and businesses closed, public transport ground to a halt as trade unions and dozens of other organisations supported the strike call.

Throughout the country, provincial towns were the scene of demonstrations and other protest action. Barricades were built as the military government of Lt-General Henry Namphy sent in the US-trained army against the strikers. By the

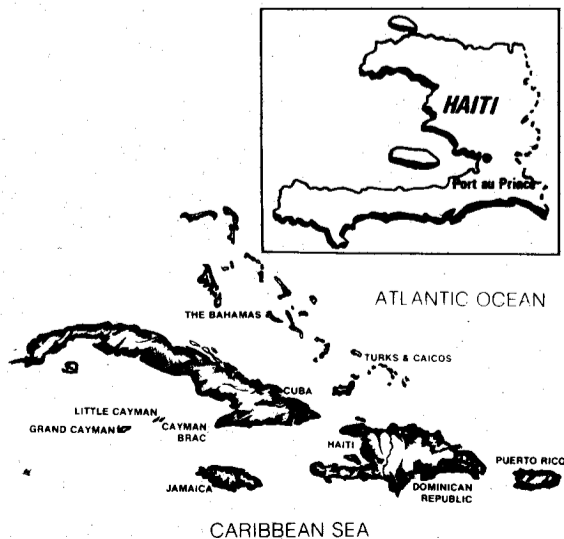
end of last week the troops had shot dead at least ten demonstrators.

### By Nick Adams

The immediate cause of the strike action was the government's decision to dissolve the main trade union federation, arrest its central leaders and refuse to accept the authority of the independent council set up to supervise forthcoming elections.

But increasingly, the strikers have moved to demand the resignation of the government itself. Attempts by the government to defuse the situation have failed.

The release of eight detained trade union leaders and the government's decision to reverse the dissolution of CATH, the Autonomous Central of Haitian Workers — though insisting on a change in the union federation's leadership — have only served to deepen the strikers' resolve to fully secure the democratic rights they sought when they overthrew the Duvalier dictatorship early last year.



## Inside the unions

### Black NALGO conference success

NALGO's National Black Steering Group was established following last year's official recognition by the union of the NALGO Black workers conference in Leeds. There had been two prior unofficial conferences, in Haringey and Birmingham. Three hundred and fifty Black NALGO members attended this year's national conference in Liverpool. BOBBY CHAN is a member of the 32-member steering group, and an executive member of Camden Black Workers Group. He explains the group's activities at this year's annual conference of the union.

WE made significant headway at the conference. The group had prioritised activity around three issues. The first concerned the employment by NALGO of an individual called Paul Kingsley. Kingsley is the trade union organiser of the British National Party, an openly fascist organisation. He is associated with a Loyalist breakaway union organisation in the Six Counties. The union has known about Kingsley for 18 months, following an exposure in the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight*. But nothing has been done about him, despite strong feeling amongst the ranks.

A motion called for a union investigation into Kingsley and his dismissal should the investigation substantiate his organised fascist activity. Despite opposition from the national executive (NEC) who argued that conference had nothing to do with staffing matters, the motion was carried on a card vote.

The second key issue concerned the union's Positive Action Working Party. This was set up two years ago following a successful conference motion. The working party's report called for direct representation of Black members, women, lesbians and gay men and disabled members on the NEC. The NEC called for a period of further consultation. But their position was defeated in favour of implementing the report.

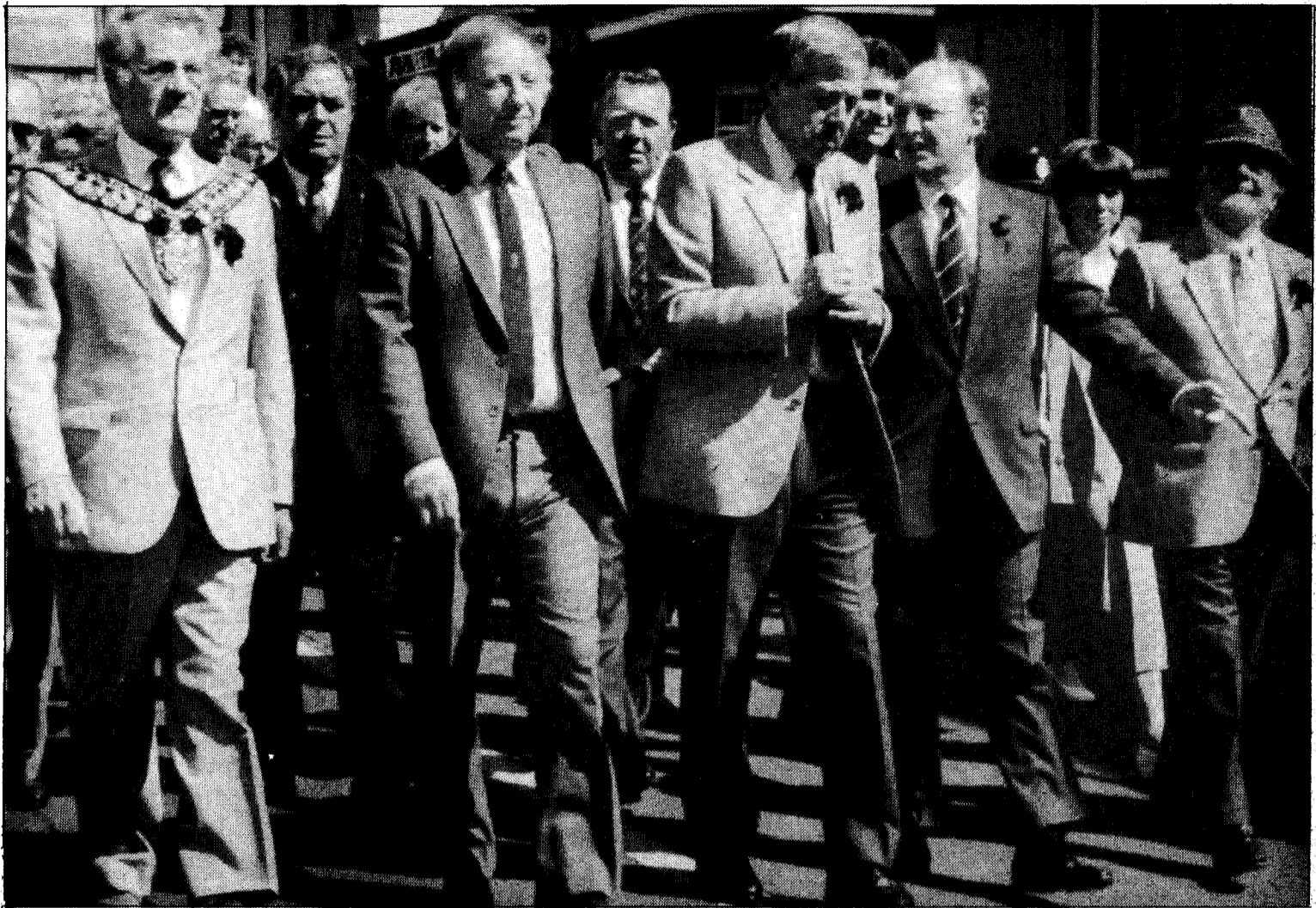
Both the Paul Kingsley issue and the question of positive action were the subjects of a very successful fringe meeting. The meeting, which involved the Black steering group and other self-organised groups within the union, attracted over 150 conference participants.

The third key issue was the union's stance towards the Middle East, and in particular to the Palestinian struggle. The union's policy, passed at conference, has been to support the struggle of the Palestinian people for their right to self-determination and recognition of the PLO as their sole representative. In the past conference has voted to affiliate the union to the Trade Union Friends of Palestine organisation. However, the NEC decided to act as 'peacemaker' by affiliating to the Trade Union Friends of Israel as well. The Zionist organisation was provocatively given a stall adjacent to that of the Trade Union Friends of Palestine at last year's conference. They distributed a particularly racist leaflet which basically suggested that Israel was the only civilised country in the Middle East.

Meanwhile the union nationally has established friendly relations and exchanged visits with Histadrut, the so-called 'General Federation of Workers in Eretz Israel'. In fact, Histadrut is itself a racist organisation which is not open to Palestinians in the occupied territories. Far from being a union Histadrut is in fact the second largest employer in Israel after the government. It controls 25 per cent of Israeli industry, manufactures arms which it sells to South Africa and other dictatorial regimes, and jointly produces steel with the South African Steel Corporation. This is not an organisation with which NALGO should have 'friendly relations'. Conference backed our motion to break our links with Histadrut and the Trade Union Friends of Israel.

Camden Black Workers Group called a fringe meeting on this issue. A Camden NALGO member from the occupied territories, whose father was killed by the Israeli forces was on the platform.

Also on the platform were speakers from the New Jewel Movement and the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement of Grenada. There is increasing interest on the issue of Grenada within the union — both concerning the death penalty passed on Bernard Coard and others and on the killing of Maurice Bishop and the overthrow of his government. The issue will be at the centre of the forthcoming conference of the Metropolitan district Black NALGO group later this year.



Arthur Scargill, Jack Taylor and Neil Kinnock at the head of the gala march

## Yorkshire miners gala

**WHILE right wing trade union leaders were spelling out their political proposals for the future of the labour movement — centring immediately on the introduction of one member one vote (OMOV) in the Labour Party — the class struggle alternative was being spelt out by Arthur Scargill at the centenary meeting of the Yorkshire miners' gala. JON SILBERMAN reports.**

THOUSANDS of Yorkshire miners, their families and supporters rallied in Barnsley's Locke Park on 20 June in the 100th Yorkshire miners' gala. As they marched from Barnsley town centre behind their lodge banners and colliery bands, they made clear what were for them two key issues: their opposition to the Coal Board's proposed six-day working and their demands for the reinstatement of the victimised miners were carried on placards and stickers throughout the length of the march.

Representatives from the workers movement internationally were also on the march. French miners leader, Alain Simon was there to represent the International Miners Organisation of which he's the general secretary. Members of SWAPO were on the march and there was a delegation of women miners — described as 'magnificent' by Arthur Scargill — from the United States.

The women miners, members of the US Coal Employment Project — which assists women to get jobs in American mines and takes up their special demands — had been on a highly successful week-long tour of the coalfields organised by Women Against Pit Closures.

As the marchers rallied in Locke Park they found this international dimension a strong feature of the gala. Stalls representing the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the Nicaragua and Chile Solidarity Campaigns were particularly prominent. Latin

American and SWAPO singers performed to large crowds.

A contingent from the Broadwater Farm Defence Association successfully petitioned against the unjust imprisonment of members of their community following the police riot in October 1985.

At the head of the march were NUM president, Arthur Scargill, Yorkshire Area president, Jack Taylor and Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock. All three gave major speeches to the rally.

Chairing the rally, Jack Taylor spoke of his own opposition to six-day working and explained his Area's strong appeal for justice for the sacked and victimised miners.

Arthur Scargill won huge backing and applause for his speech, as he called for mass action against the Tory government. 'The same policies we fought during the election are still there' he said. 'We should say that while we do everything we can in parliament, it will take the kind of extra-parliamentary activity that we sustained in the 1970s to oppose Tory government policies.'

Scargill said there was one lesson that we should learn from the Tories — 'only one!' — 'and that is that both in opposition and when we win the next election — as we will — we say that without equivocation, without compromise, that our party will give to our class, to our people, the same dedication the Tories give to their class'. With Neil Kinnock on

the same platform, Scargill told his enthusiastic supporters that he'd promised 'not to be controversial'. Nonetheless he insisted on making certain points. In one such, he appeared to depart from the general theme of his speech. He suggested that had proportional representation been in operation in the general election, the anti-Thatcher 'majority' of the British people would have asserted itself and 'Thatcher would have been out and we would have a Labour prime minister and government'.

### Class

For the rest Scargill devoted himself to mapping out a class struggle perspective for fighting back against the renewed attacks of the Tories that were certain to come. He said that Labour's 'devastating defeat' in the election would not be the occasion for mourning but for 're-dedicating our faith and our support in our party and in our movement and in our union'.

He warned against the belief that the source of workers' problems was Margaret Thatcher. 'I'll let you into a secret, there wouldn't be a change in policy with a different Tory leader because what's wrong in this society isn't one woman called Margaret Thatcher. It's a rotten corrupt capitalist system'.

He attacked the new round of proposed anti-union legislation planned by the Tories, highlighting the hypocrisy of those government ministers like the unelected 'Lord Young' talking about union 'democracy'.

He targeted nuclear power for being unsafe and unwanted. To those who argued that socialism could handle it, Scargill countered — 'nuclear power at Chernobyl kills

communists just as effectively as it does capitalists'.

Scargill defended unilateral nuclear disarmament and savaged the 'pirana fish' of the media who suggested that Labour had lost the election because of its unilateralism. 'I've got my criticism of the defence policy, but it's different from theirs ... I don't want unilateral nuclear disarmament in order to transfer £15 billion into tanks and bombs. I want it transferred into schools and hospitals' he said to huge applause.

Scargill urged a fight against the 'dirty obscene system of apartheid', opposed the importing of South African coal and called on the trade union movement to back a total boycott of trade with the apartheid regime.

Much of Scargill's speech previewed issues that are being debated at the NUM conference in Rothesay this week. We reproduce his comments on six-day working on this page. Scargill also spoke of proposed industrial action on wages and laid a clear position on the breakaway UDM. 'There's a place in this union for every single mineworker in the British coalfield' he said 'but as far as I'm concerned, there can never be a place' for UDM leaders Lynk, Greatorax and Prendergast.

The contrast with Kinnock's address couldn't have been sharper. As Kinnock rose to speak there were shouts of opposition which he pacified with appeals to 'unity'. The Labour Party leader took care to himself avoid 'controversial issues' — Kinnock did not reiterate his public support for six-day working, for instance. Nonetheless, whereas Scargill had mapped out a policy of class action and loyalty, the theme of Kin-

nock's speech was the British 'community of interest' between the classes.

Even when delivering radical rhetoric concerning the importance of 'collective action' to secure lasting improvements in conditions and to maintain 'individual liberty' — Kinnock was speaking to his audience — he managed to degenerate such collective action from any class content.

It was 'British industry' he was defending, his attacks on Thatcher were aimed at the prime minister's betrayal of so-called 'national assets'. As he attacked the Tories' privatisation plans, he jingoistically highlighted their 'lack of patriotism'. 'They define their patriotism not by what they put into this country but by how much they can sell off'. Kinnock complained that it was 'the Americans and the Japanese' who were buying up Rolls Royce and Jaguar — the 'flag-ship of the British car industry'.

Kinnock attacked the Tories for 'spitting on patriotism'. They have no right to represent 'this nation either here or in the councils of the world' he said. He underlined his class collaborationist view that 'all parts of Britain' would lose as a result of Thatcherism. 'We have to show every class that it is their assets that are being auctioned'.

Kinnock ended by saying that there was 'too much division in our society'. He spelt out his view of the solution to such division through an electioneering call for unity behind a future Labour government. People 'from every class' had voted Labour because by disavowing some people, the Tories had effected 'the whole social body'. Their policies had to be countered in the 'name of the nation'.

# Scargill 'no' to six-day working

THE issue of six-day working has dominated the proceedings of this week's NUM conference in Rothesay. We will carry a report of the conference in our next issue. Below we reprint an excerpt from Arthur Scargill's speech at the Yorkshire miners gala.

**I PROMISED I** wouldn't be controversial and I'm not. You wouldn't have forgiven me if I hadn't made reference to the six day week proposal of British Coal, to the nine hour day proposal and to the controversy raging around a mine that's not been opened called Margam.

Let me make it clear that there is no one in or out of the mining industry that wants to see Margam more than I do. I fought in 1982, within one week of my election, with the then director Phillip Weekes in Wales, to open Margam which had been promised by the 1974 Labour government.

They told me they couldn't go ahead because there wasn't the demand at that time and that there were geological problems. They have the audacity today to tell me that their plans and projections that they said were correct then are no longer valid.

They claim Margam, with 650 men producing one million tonnes of coal, can't make a profit in five days, whilst at Wearmouth in Durham today, with 2,250 men producing one million tonnes of the same coal, they make, before interest, a profit every single year.

using Margam as a sprat to catch a mackerel.

They want to see this union accept the introduction of a six-day working week and a nine hour working day, not at Margam but at every pit in Britain. Yes, they want to close another 25 pits and axe another 25,000 jobs. I'm urging Yorkshire miners to fight against any extension of the five day week.

## Reason

If you want one good reason why we should be opposing the six day week, read the history of our union. Our forefathers fought a most historic battle to win the introduction of the five day week.

Even the prime minister in 1908 who brought in the Hours of Work Act, said that it was unsafe and unhealthy for mineworkers to work in this industry for more than a five day week. If it was unhealthy, and unsafe and unwise in 1908 I'll tell you what the policy of this union should be in 1987, it shouldn't be even talking about a six day week, it should be fighting



for a four day working week.

The Coal Board are really carrying out attacks day by day on this union. It's not merely the question of the six day working week, it's the disciplinary procedures that they have unilaterally introduced.

## Realisation

Did you realise that the Coal Board today are dismissing miners for incidents that may or may not occur at this gala in Barnsley today? They have already dismissed a miner for an incident in a public

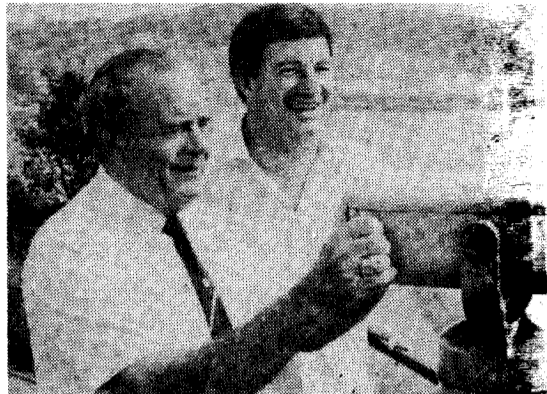
house in the centre of the town. How much longer can this union accept such draconian measures?

## Action

These reporters in Fleet Street have ignored that fact, but I'll tell you that on Thursday of this week the national executive committee of our union unanimously agreed to recommend that our union at the national conference in ten days' time, take industrial action to fight for the withdrawal of the disciplinary procedure.

# TGWU conference

## to back one member one vote



THE TRANSPORT and General Workers Union biennial delegate conference (BDC) looks set to accept proposals for a one member one vote system of selecting Labour candidates when it debates this issue on Thursday. If TGWU delegates support OMOV the union's 1.25 million block vote at Labour Party conference will virtually guarantee to swing the balance behind Kinnock in October. Introducing OMOV is fundamental to the Labour leadership's plans for 'sanitising' the party in time for the next general election. OMOV will ensure that even the minimal level of control that constituency parties currently exercise over their MPs is wrested from their hands and placed firmly in the grip of the parliamentary leadership. This is the first crucial stage in transferring policy-making functions to the leaders and his shadow cabinet.

the TGWU conference, he has come forward with proposals for an electoral college to maintain the voting strength of trade unions at selection meetings.

Not one single NUR branch however had submitted a resolution to reopen the selection debate at the union's 1987 conference. The railworkers union has now replied to the Labour NEC consultation of constituencies and affiliates by supporting option 10 in the document circulated, which maintains the status quo.

But the recent General Municipal and Boilermakers (GMB) conference voted the other way. Delegates considered two resolutions. They rejected supporting the present system of automatic reselection and opted for a general resolution in favour of 'widening the franchise'.

The successful resolution leaves general secretary John Edmonds with a free hand to interpret which option the union's block vote will line up behind at Labour conference in the autumn. Interviews with Edmonds however already suggest that he will favour an electoral college to ensure some trade union input into the selection process is maintained.

The National Communications Union will also be discussing OMOV when it meets this Thursday. A tough battle is expected.

But while the 'soft left' union leaderships are confining themselves to supporting Kinnock's 'Euro-socialist' strategy for reviving Labour's electoral fortunes, the new realist hard right show no qualms about going all the way.

Trade unions should accept the general election results and 'work as best we can' with the Tory government, demanded AEU general secretary Gavin Laird in his presidential address to the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions annual meeting on Tuesday 23 June. Laird argued that the unions had 'contributed to Labour's defeat'. 80 per cent of trade unionists had not voted for the Labour Party in the 1983 election, he said, because they were doing so well.

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The TGWU national executive committee decided last month to back OMOV on the casting vote of the chair, after the meeting had tied 18:18 on the issue. General secretary Ron Todd has already publicly given his personal backing to the so-called widening of the franchise.

When it comes to their own conference, the TGWU executive is leaving nothing to chance. Delegates arriving at Scarborough last weekend were issued with free copies of *News on Sunday* with a special wrap-around supplement on the BDC. Labour leader Neil Kinnock's appeal 'to increase the participation of the rank and file' figured prominently in that supplement.

Kinnock will also address the BDC on Wednesday, the day before conference votes on OMOV. His sweetener for introducing OMOV is an electoral college system which will give the appearance of retaining the same level of trade union influence in the

best imitation of a continental social democratic party that he can manage.

'The influence of the trade unions must be further diminished. The London left must be liquidated. The final vestiges of nationalisation would best be jettisoned. The majority of the party must openly endorse the concept of exploiting the market as a force for generating wealth that can then be directed towards the objects of Mr Kinnock's oft proclaimed compassion.'

## Campaign

The Eurosocijalist party strategy is the one that Neil Kinnock and the soft left have chosen. On the eve of the TGWU conference Ron Todd said of the OMOV proposals: 'If people think they can hold back democracy you might as well walk across the road and try to hold back the sea.'

Other unions have also recently been debating the OMOV issue. For the second year running, delegates to the NUPE conference recently rejected the advice of their executive, which favoured OMOV, and maintained their support for automatic reselection of Labour MPs.

The National Union of Railwaymen will also be supporting the status quo. The eve-of-conference national executive committee meeting rejected an appeal to reopen the debate from general secretary Jimmy Knapp who supports OMOV. This NEC decision was in line with the NUR conference decision of 1986.

In his speech to NUR conference on Tuesday 23 June, Neil Knapp said that the union's block vote would be used to support OMOV. The first and last certain strategy is to carry on turning Labour into the

By Carol Turner

selection process as affiliates to local parties currently enjoy.

Regardless of any 'guarantee' of maintaining trade union influence in constituency parties in the short-term, supporting OMOV in fact prepares the way for reducing and eventually eliminating local parties input into Labour policy-making. Kinnock and the rest of the Labour leadership are rabidly pursuing OMOV precisely because they believe they must be in a position to introduce further policy retreats by Labour in time for the next election.

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# NCU campaign against victimisations

THE CAMPAIGN against the victimisation of NCU members following the union's national pay strike earlier this year was given a shot in the arm this week. NCU general secretary, John Golding was forced to give verbal support to the reinstatement of those sacked and the lifting of disciplinary measures against other union members who were targeted by BT for their activity during the strike.

Golding was speaking at a special mass meeting called by the key London City branch of the union, where two members, John Deason and John Treadaway, were sacked. 'If we do not protect our representatives at every level of the union' Golding stated, 'we will not have a union. We do not deserve to have a union.'

Golding was forced to make a specific reference to the red-baiting campaign orchestrated by BT management, which had been the occasion for the City branch committee to resign in protest against what the press described as a politically-motivated minority. The resignations had seriously weakened the union at a key time.

He stated: 'I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that this is victimisation. This is victimisation of a straight political sort'. He expressed opposition to the 'kangaroo courts of the worst kind' that had found Deason, Treadaway and others guilty and said that they were all innocent.

Between 300 and 400 members attended the mass meeting, including a representative delegation of the union's national executive and other branches in the district. The meeting unanimously adopted a resolution pledging to step up the campaign against the victimisations.



Golding's remarks can be used to disrupt the campaign in the union and threatening to disrupt the union's support - this is developing the sort of militant action that will be necessary for ensuring the union's survival over the victimisations.

# A Socialist ACTION



## NUT leaders backpeddle but Teachers will take more action

BRITAIN'S SECOND largest teachers union, the NAS/UWT will resume half-day strike action from next Monday. The action decision was taken in response to the intransigence of the re-elected Tory government in sticking by Kenneth Baker's law which removed teachers negotiating rights.

Explaining the decision to resume strike action, Fred Smithies, general secretary of the NAS/UWT said 'There can be no realistic peace in the future until there is restoration of teachers' negotiating rights over salaries and conditions.'

This issue is of fundamental importance. It is a basic right of teachers and all unions to be able to sit down face to face with their employers to discuss pay. This is anti-democratic legislation'.

The executive of the major union, the NUT, decided to break ranks with the NAS action this term. Claiming that there was 'complete unity' with the NAS/UWT in opposition to Baker's legislation, the NUT executive opted for what was described as 'different forms of action'.

The NUT leaders say they will organise what they call 'demonstrative days of action' for the autumn. One such day has been floated to coincide with the Tory Party conference in October. The NUT leadership say

that it could be a day of joint national strike action with the NAS/UWT.

The position of the leadership of the NUT, traditionally the key teaching union, not to take action this term will undoubtedly have a demobilising effect in the struggle against the Tories, particularly in the light of remarks made by their deputy general secretary, Doug McAvoy.

McAvoy told a number of journalists that, given the re-election of the Tories, it was futile to continue the campaign against the Baker law. Instead, the union should turn its attention to campaigning against future Tory plans for education.

The union's inner London division, ILTA, has rejected such a course. 'Only by deepening the action against the pay and conditions legislation can we ensure a united and determined stance in defence of education' said Carole Regan, one of the ILTA officers who were suspended by the NUT leadership for organising strike action

against Baker earlier this year.

ILTA has called on the NUT leadership to step up the campaign of joint action with the NAS/UWT, and for a continuation of the campaign of refusing to cover for absent colleagues and non-attendance at meetings outside of the time-table — conditions that have been established in the course of the long battle over pay and conditions.

ILTA has also been in negotiation with the Inner London Education Authority over the implementation of the Baker proposals. At its conference at Easter, the NUT called on Labour-controlled local education authorities to refuse to implement Baker's provisions. But the Labour-controlled ILEA has taken an uncompromising stance and negotiations with ILTA have broken down.

ILEA is also refusing to make any concessions over the issue of compulsory redeployment of teachers, which has been the subject of strike action by London teachers. ILEA is threatening to sack teachers who refuse to accept their redeployment. This will be an important issue at this weekend's London regional Labour Party conference, which ILTA is lobbying

# Cleveland: the real scandal

THE DAILY MAIL, Stuart Bell MP, and most of Fleet Street have spent the past few weeks trying to reverse the results of a decade of gradually growing awareness of the colossal scale and enormous misery inflicted upon tens of thousands of children through sexual and physical abuse within the family. That is the real drive behind the press hysteria against Cleveland health authority and one of its paediatricians Mrietta Higgs and social worker Sue Richardson.

Bell made the aims of his disgraceful campaign clear when he said: 'The idea that we are a nation of child abusers is very dangerous. The time will come, if this goes on, when half the parents in the country will be considered unfit to look after their own children.'

Without presenting a single fact on the cases in Cleveland Bell's aim is to screw the lid back on the massive scale of child abuse revealed by dozens of studies — most spectacularly Childline, but also the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Incest Crisis Line, local social service agencies, and studies in the United States and elsewhere.

Bell has delighted the gutter press with his claim that Cleveland's cases of child abuse have been manufactured in an 'empire building' exercise designed to fraudulently carve out a larger social services budget. No wonder he was echoed by Tory MP Tim Devlin who described local social services as 'another organisation with the initials SS'. Bell has opened up a witch hunt against social

workers.

Of course mistakes occur — and given the utter despair involved for parents and children in any case of wrongful separation justice must be done in every case in Cleveland and everywhere else. But to believe the chief problem in Britain today is wrongful accusations of child abuse, rather than the massive reality of child abuse, is to stand the world on its head. As with the one per cent of cases of wrongful accusations of rape, the fact that errors occur and must be righted, does not make it any less necessary to tackle a problem whose enormous scale is only starting to be understood.

By Redmond O'Neill

Clare Short MP, was quite right to reply in the Commons debate that the Cleveland case showed that the problem of child abuse had been massively underestimated for years and only now were social services trying to deal with the problem.

Facts and figures are hard to come by but those that do exist correlate remarkably.

After its launch on TV

Childline received 12,000 calls during its first two days from children. Since then an estimated 10,000 children a day have tried to get through. Roughly 500 a day succeeded in talking to a Childline councillor. One and a half million children have tried to contact Childline since it was established.

The NSPCC estimates 6,330 cases of child abuse were dealt with nationally in 1986 — with an increase of child sexual abuse of 137 per cent over 1985, which in turn was 126 per cent up on 1984.

A survey of children registered by local authorities as in danger of abuse, released this month, showed a national increase of 22 per cent, rising to 30 per cent in London, 36 per cent in Yorkshire and Humberside and higher elsewhere.

These figures don't mean sexual abuse of children is increasing. They mean that more sexual abuse is detected as awareness of it is increased, and for the first time small steps are being taken to do something about it.

In the US when the first child abuse programs were set up similar results were shown: in San-Jose 30 families were referred in 1971, 600 in 1978; in Aurora County, Colorado 134 cases in 1977, 653 in 1979; in Hennepin County Minnesota 14 cases of incest in 1972 and 200 in 1977.

In the context of these figures the increase in suspected sexual abuse cases in Cleveland to 83 so

far this year, does not appear incredible.

Nor are Cleveland's figures totally out of line with those of other local authorities. Since Leeds social services began to register child sexual abuse in 1983 the figures for child abuse have risen as follows: 460 (62 sexual abuse) to end 1985, 634 (156 sexual abuse) to December 1986, a further 177 (65 sexual abuse) added to the register to May this year.

In Mansfield cases of child abuse have trebled in the past two years with sexual abuse cases rising most rapidly.

A series of studies indicate figures of one in ten children being subjected to some form of sexual abuse before the age of 16, and between one and two per cent being subjected to severe sexual abuse. Eighty per cent of sexual abuse takes place in the family and by relatives.

The weight of evidence is overwhelming. It points not to an over-reaction in Cleveland but an under-reaction elsewhere.

Incest and the sexual abuse of children is a colossal phenomenon which takes place across all social classes, and makes the lives of tens of thousands of children a nightmare. Dealing with it requires first of all recognising its scale and existence and secondly a large expansion of resources, study and debate — not the attempt by Stuart Bell and his allies to re-establish the conspiracy of silence and deny the nightmare exists.