

# Socialist Challenge

**No expulsions!**

Lobby the Labour Party NEC

Labour Party headquarters, Walworth Rd.

**9.0am Wednesday  
24 November**

Bring Party banners

Called by Labour against the witchhunt.

# Labour can win

THE TORIES are getting ready for a General Election in 1983.

They have the bit between their teeth. They have the miners out of the way for now. The TUC is fragmenting the health dispute and the Labour Party is split by an all-out assault from the new right wing NEC.

A Tory victory would be a disaster. How can it be prevented?

First, by understanding that we are not being driven to defeat, but *led* to it.

It is not because the Tories are strong but because the TUC and Labour leadership are catastrophically weak, that Thatcher even stays at Number 10.

Her own backers in the CBI admit the economy is in ruins. One fifth of industry has been wiped out. Millions reject this wanton destruction. The health strike showed they will fight if the TUC gives a determined lead. And Labour's socialist policies have never been more popular.

A majority would be in Labour's grasp if its leaders came out fighting for unilateral disarmament and radical measures to secure full employment.

Yet there has never been less confidence in the Labour Party and trade union leaders. Railworkers, steelworkers, healthworkers have been

betrayed or led to defeat. Instead of campaigning for Labour's socialist policies Healey and Golding have launched a vicious internal battle to purge their supporters.

A return to 'Labour's traditions', say the right wing, will bring back the voters. This is simply not true. We do not live in 'traditional' times. The ruling class does not want *any* kind of Labour government in office, and the right wing's leadership merely loses Labour's rank and file, without winning anything in return.

Only the most determined socialist lead, combining mass action with the defence of Labour's socialist policies, can secure a Labour government against such opposition.

There is a straightforward lesson from the setbacks and defeats of the last two weeks, from the miners' ballot to the Labour Party NEC. The whole left must learn it.

Neither the Labour Party nor the trade unions can progress an inch further in the fight against Thatcher, at the polls or on the picket line, unless the left organises an all-out fight to remove the right wing traitors. Tony Benn's line of conciliation with the right is the road to defeat. The time has come to organise a united left, throughout the Labour Party and unions, to fight for a Labour Victory through:

**Defend socialist policies**

**Replace the right wing leaders**

**Stop the witch-hunt**



## Facing reality

AS WE go to press, it looks certain that the miners have rejected the proposal to authorise the union executive to take industrial action in pursuit of the pay claim and over threatened closures by a margin of 60-40. This is a blow to the whole working class. The struggle of the healthworkers looks that much more isolated now. The likelihood of a major industrial confrontation with the Tories this winter is much diminished. Why has this defeat taken place?

In the first place, the vote represents a decision by a majority of miners to accept the NCB's eight per cent offer. It does not however represent a mandate to go ahead with pit closures. Scargill's attempt to link together the issue of closures and pay failed: most miners recognised that there was the possibility of resorting to industrial action if the pit closures went ahead.

The crucial point however is that the majority of miners saw the eight per cent offer as acceptable within the current industrial and political situation — if the only alternative was an all-out battle to defeat the Tories, which they were not prepared to undertake.

The poll result is obviously a reflection of the general industrial climate, and the

current level of wages settlements. Compared with what many other groups of workers have accepted eight per cent doesn't look bad — especially when inflation is falling.

Moreover, the Tories have shown in the civil service dispute and again with the healthworkers that they are prepared to dig in for long hard industrial struggles.

What this defeat definitely *cannot* be put down to is betrayal by the miners' leadership. In some respects the campaign by the NUM leadership was a model of how an industrial dispute should be prepared. But a majority of miners were just not ready to be an industrial battering ram to bring down the Tory government.

That they were not is a crucial indicator of the mood inside the working class. While Scargill was able to carry the militants, they were unable to overcome the bridge between the militants and the mass of the membership.

In one respect Scargill can be faulted. He tied everything to a traditional economic battle, against the Tory government, to create the preconditions for a general election. But he has failed to promote the organisation of the left minority in the unions on a cross-union, class struggle basis. The isolation of the miners, the knowledge that they were being asked to

be the front runners in the fight to bring down the Tories, was an important factor in the 'no' vote in the ballot.

The decision of the miners not to go for a strike is compounded by the decision of BL workers to accept the company's pay offer, and not to take industrial action either.

Undoubtedly therefore the miners' decision represents a turning point. The pressure in the workers movement to look to the general election as the decisive test, as the crucial mechanism for getting rid of the Tory government will build up.

The job of socialists however must be to point out that basing everything now on an electoral strategy is not effective even from a narrowly electoral point of view. The best conditions for defeating the Tories at the polls is to challenge them in a mass struggle. For example, the healthworkers struggle has made the Tories immensely more *unpopular* and has started to make their opinion poll rating slip.

The foolishness of a purely electoral strategy was demonstrated by last week's Labour party political broadcast, hosted by Colin Welland, in which in 15 minutes of hard-hitting attack on the Tories over the health service, not one single mention was made of the health workers struggle!

The miners' decision leaves the health workers dangerously isolated. Every nerve must now be strained to build solidarity with the healthworkers, above all through the national transport workers day of action on 8 November.

But it is becoming increasingly obvious that without a decisive lead towards all-out action the healthworkers struggle will be doomed to defeat.

The present climate of cynicism about the possibility of success in the struggle against the Tories, the essential backdrop of the miners' decision, is above all the responsibility of the TUC and Labour Party leaders who have failed to co-ordinate and lead a real fight.

What the miners' decision shows above all is the urgent necessity to build a *national left wing movement* in the unions and the Labour Party to take on the right, to remove the labour traitors.

In the face of the witch-hunt and continual TUC betrayals, Benn and Scargill face a choice. Peace in the unions and peace in the Labour Party will not deliver a general election victory. They will only deliver the movement into the hands of the right wing — and a menu for more betrayals and defeats. Nothing could better prepare a Tory victory at the general election next year.

# Peckham - why they abstained

By Jane Kelly, Peckham CLP

MICHAEL FOOT says the Peckham and Birmingham Northfield election results 'mark a revival of fortunes for the Labour Party'. I wish it were true.

In Peckham the turnout was only 38 per cent, and Harriet Harman, the Labour candidate, took 50 per cent. Dick Taverne of the SDP Alliance pushed up the Liberal vote by 25 per cent to 33 per cent of the total vote.

It was taken from both Tories (16 per cent) and Labour (10 per cent), with a marked surge from Labour in the last week.

Peckham is a 'Labour stronghold'. But it's a bit of a problem in a 'stronghold' when only 38 per cent of the people vote at all and where the SDP with no policies can take a third of the vote.

Why did it happen? The campaign itself was efficiently run, with lots of help from Labour Party

members and trade unionists. Canvassing, leafletting and knocking up were done by hordes of people and Harriet Harman, the candidate, worked extremely hard to get herself known. The answer lies at a national level.

On the doorstep the response was, 'I don't vote, there's no difference between you, and even if there was, it won't do us any good.' And even if they accept that Labour Party policy on disarmament, the EEC and public spending is different, they have no faith that the Labour government could carry any of it out.

Far from the NEC attacks on the Bennite left regaining the wavering Labour vote, it has had the opposite effect. Many Labour voters agree with Labour Party conference decisions but recognise that the present NEC and cabinet of a future Labour government will not carry



Harriet Harman canvassing in Peckham.

them out. This showed up in the public meetings.

The first on the police with Paul Boateng, Roy Hattersley and Pat Hewitt (NCCL) attracted about 80 people. The second, with Tony Benn, drew at least 350 with more turned away.

Whether the centre and right of the Labour Party like it or not (and it was clear from David Basnett's face, chairing the meeting, that they don't) Benn has massive support amongst the rank and file — not just amongst Labour Party and trade union activists

but from ordinary Labour voters.

The attack on the left of the party is not popular with Labour supporters, not just because it highlights internal struggles but because it is seen as an attack on the policies of the left, which are popular and recognisably different from those of both other parties.

This has led to a confusion and demoralisation and — in Peckham at least — to a massive 62 per cent abstention.

This is going to be a long hard battle, because

as the BL vote shows, the mass of workers won't go into battle unless they have a leadership they can trust. We must widen our sights.

The issue is one of leadership across the labour movement. The right is on the offensive on this question of leadership. We must take up the fight on the LP question and defeat the witchhunt.

This will mean fighting to organise the left in the unions to deal with the block vote. And we must use this to establish left currents in the unions to remove the right.



## BL's two year deal — blazing the trail for Thatcher

BY A majority of nearly 2 to 1 the BL workforce has decided to accept a wage deal which will run from now to November '84.

In return for just over £5 a week this year, and the same next, the right to negotiate has been signed away for two years. This is something the Tories and the employers have been after for some time.

Government spokespeople have been saying that due to falling inflation and the need to make British industry more competitive workers had to get away from the idea of yearly wage rises.

In fact the BL deal is a two year wage cut. Not for the first time BL has been used as a stalking horse for a new employers offensive.

PAT HICKEY asked Grant Kier, a Longbridge shop steward about the deal.

What do you think the deal means for BL?

It is a big step forward for BL management and the Tories. It stops the unions putting in a claim until 1984, which means that on the major issue of wages and conditions the union is removed from the scene for two years.

The deal will be used to further attack the workforce on manning levels and conditions. It will also be used to attack the shop stewards.

Yearly wage deals have been the rule in British industry for 20 years. This deal is an important break with that.

In view of its importance why was there not a call for all-out action, instead of an overtime ban and one-day strikes?

All-out action was necessary to defeat BL. But it was clear that such a call would not succeed at the mass meetings.

The idea was to use the one-day actions to build towards all-out.

The BL workforce have had a number of heavy defeats and long experience of betrayal at the hands of the officials. Taking on BL means taking on the government and the members did not have the confidence to do that at this stage.

Our only chance was to get the limited action rolling and build on that.

What plans have militants in BL got now? Firstly the right have taken control of the union. They wanted to accept the 2 year deal from the start which is why there was a chance of an all-out strike.

Despite the unfavourable conditions almost one third of the members voted for action. We must use this to fight the unions from top-bottom for a new leadership.

## JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

Union/CLP (if any).....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

## INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT



## International Viewpoint

Latest issue includes major articles on the situation in Spain, Poland and Bolivia, together with an extended interview with a leader of the Iranian Trotskyist movement. Individual copies 65p from The Other

Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1.

Subscriptions £16 per annum. Send cheques, POs made out to 'PEC', to: IV, 2 rue Richard-Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.



## Labour Against the Witch-hunt established

OVER three hundred delegates representing 101 constituencies, 67 Young Socialists' branches, 87 Labour Party branches, twenty union branches and eleven women's sections set up a national campaign to prevent expulsions from the Labour Party this Saturday, 30 October in County Hall, London.

They heard speakers from a broad spectrum of the labour left including Audrey Wise, MPs Ernie Roberts and Reg Race and Euro-MP Richard Balfe, the *Militant*, the Young Socialists and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

The overwhelming feelings of the conference were summed up in the afternoon by John Gardner of Luton East and a member of the CLPD executive, when he told conference that 'this witch-hunt is a direct attack on the accumulated victories of the last three years: it is an attack on our socialist policies.'

The conference agreed, with around fifty voting against — including less than ten CLP delegates — to establish a national labour movement organisation to co-ordinate opposition to ex-

pulsions under the terms of the NEC's register.

The campaign is to be run by a National Council, directly elected from among participating organisations, with a secretariat elected by conference.

It further agreed to two model resolutions for CLPs and for affiliated organisations, calling for a refusal to accept expulsions and for support to any local party disaffiliated for resisting the NEC.

It established a trade union subcommittee and passed a resolution from Oxford Young Socialists (published in last week's *Socialist Challenge*) calling on delegates to help build the Young Socialists and to defend it against attempts at disbandment or other attacks. They also agreed

to set up a youth subcommittee.

Two main points of dispute ran through the discussion. One current, supported by a small minority of delegates, argued that the campaign should take non-cooperation with the register as a central campaign and should prepare for a network of disaffiliated parties.

### Focus

This was rejected by conference, which wanted to focus the struggle on expulsions. As Tessa Van Gelderen explained, speaking on behalf of Brent South — itself under NEC investigation — many people in the labour movement who were still confused about the register were nevertheless opposed to expulsions, and the crucial task was to unite with them to stop the register being applied where it counted most — by expelling people.

A second, much stronger current, mainly supported by the *Militant*,

argued that the conference should not seek to commit labour movement bodies to support disaffiliated parties at all. Parties threatened with disaffiliation, it was argued, should simply accept expulsions. This was also rejected: delegates agreed with the steering committee that they would only prevent disaffiliations if they readied the labour movement to stand up to them.

Despite an attitude on behalf of leading *Militant* supporters which many delegates felt was disruptive and divisive, the substantial *Militant* presence was welcomed by most speakers, who called on delegates to support the coming *Militant* regional rallies on 27 November, and for close co-operation between the new campaign and *Militant's* 'Labour Steering Committee against the Witch-hunt'.

The conference represented a vital step forward for the labour movement. We call on all *Socialist Challenge* readers to throw their energies into building this new campaign.

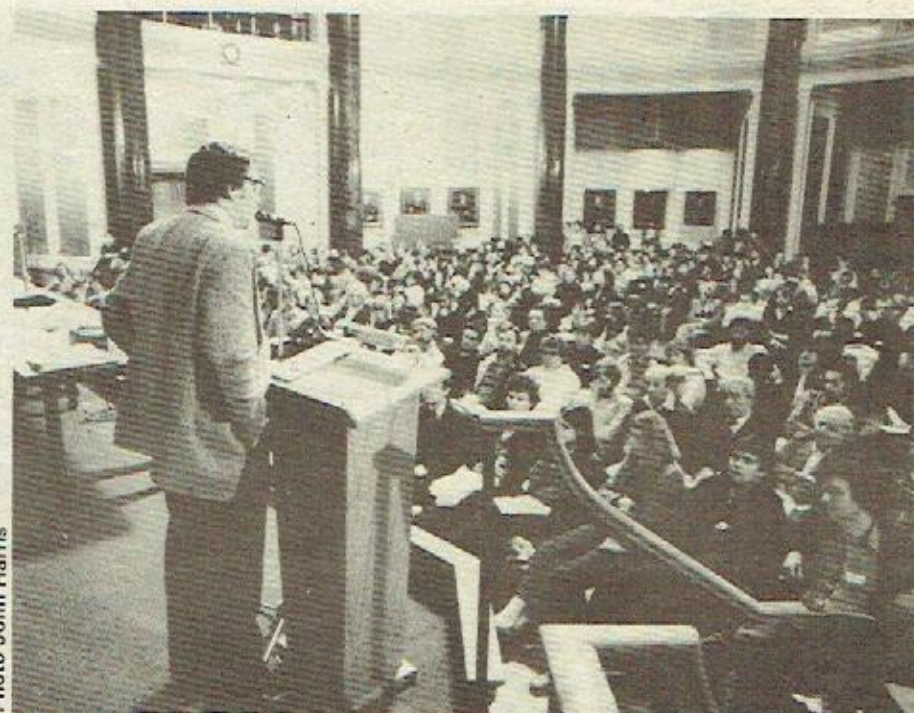


Photo John Harris

## Next steps

**Socialist Challenge** urges its readers to pull out all the stops in the next month to build the campaign against the witch-hunt.

Encouraged by the left's concessions, the right wing will go for broke as quickly as possible. Labour's Organisation Committee reports on 10 November, for approval by the NEC on 24 November.

The steps to be taken are:

(i) to ensure your Labour Party branch, GC, or YS, and if possible trade union branch back the lobby on 24 November. Out of

London readers should try to ensure a message of support is sent. Banners are important.

(ii) win affiliations to Labour Against the Witch-hunt, and commitments to build local support for it. In each district or borough, conferences on the lines of the 30 October conference should be organised to win the support of the local labour movement. These are not in counterposition to the 27 November regional conferences being organised by the *Militant*-backed Steer-

ing Committee against the witch-hunt; they complement them.

(iii) preparations are beginning now in the unions for motions to annual conferences. The trade union subcommittee will be discussing detailed model resolutions for each union; the model agreed by the 30 October conference will be a working basis.

(iv) each week *Socialist Challenge* will be giving you detailed up-to-date news about the progress of the struggle. Watch this space!

## Steelworker greets conference

GREETINGS were read to conference from Ray Davis, a Llanwern steelworker who has just been chosen as Parliamentary Prospective Candidate for Cardiff North and was heavily involved in building for the conference at Blackpool last month. Ray has the following message to delegates:

There wasn't one annual conference of the trade union movement that supported a policy of expulsions and proscriptions. We are now approaching the period of resolutions for this year's trade union conferences. It is vital to involve the unions in our fight against the witch-hunt.

We won the CND vote — the two thirds majority — in the unions. There are lessons to be learnt from this. If we are serious about winning the battle against expulsions and witch-hunts, the real fertile ground for support is the individual trade union annual conferences, and the TUC at national level.

90 per cent of CLPs are on our side, and it is very important to stop the expulsions at that level. But the only way to get rid of the cancer once and for all is to cut it out at the root. So the removal of the register which lays the basis for expulsions, can only be done with the support of the union movement.

I am confident that from this conference we will go out to win the unions to save our party and its socialist policies.

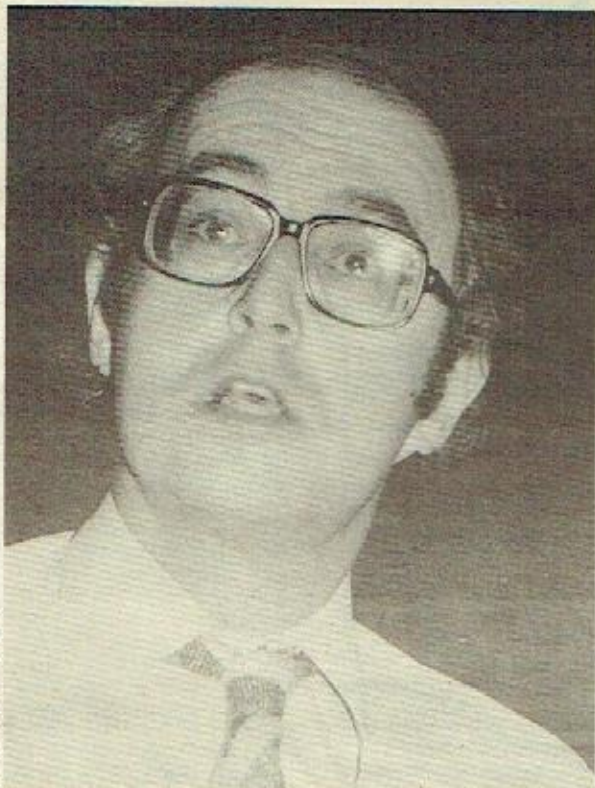


Photo John Harris

Reg Race MP summing up on the discussion.

## Trade Union committee formed

TRADE UNION delegates to the Conference met in the lunch break to discuss the prospects for a campaign in the unions against the witch-hunt. There was a short but wide-ranging discussion, which agreed that the fight against the witch-hunt had to be directed against the 'trade union barons' and their use of the block vote.

This fight was closely tied to the fight for democracy in the unions. The fight on the

witch-hunt had to be taken into the unions in a much more systematic way than the deputy leadership fight.

Delegates agreed to set up a London-based steering committee to chart a way forward. The first meeting will be at 2 o'clock at County Hall, London on Saturday 13 November.

Contact Carol Turner, 29 Stodmarsh House, Cowley Estate, London SW9 for details.

## The Young Socialists

By Richard Rozanski, Hackney North LPYS

SIXTY SEVEN LPYS branches sent delegates to the Hackney North Conference. Twenty-six agreed to further coordinate their activities, ensuring that the defence of the LPYS is placed at the heart of the new campaign. With new talk in the press this week, of right wing moves against the LPYS, this must be done immediately.

The campaign's open youth subcommittee will act on the basis of an amendment presented to, and passed by, the conference from Oxford LPYS.

This includes 'full support for the building of a mass campaigning LPYS;

... complete opposition to any attempt to close down or restrict the activities of the LPYS; ... defending the right of the LPYS to decide its own policies and elect its own leaders.'

All labour movement bodies — CLPs and union

branches — as well as LPYS branches — must be won to the defence of the LPYS. This cannot simply be left to the LPYS for two reasons.

The LPYS is not strong enough to withstand the labour right on its own. Secondly, and unfortunately, the LPYS's *Militant* leadership does not support this new broad-based campaign. They counterpose to this the Labour Movement Steering Committee set up by the 11 September con-

ference to defend the *Militant*.

At a lunchtime meeting of the LPYS delegates and observers, they tried to prevent the establishment of the youth subcommittee by delegates who *did* support the establishment of the campaign.

Despite this divisive behaviour the conference declared its full support for the building of the LPYS, and for its defence against any moves to close it down by Healey's new kitchen shadow cabinet.

## Militant sectarianism defeats itself

By Alan Freeman

ONE BLACK spot in an otherwise successful conference was the divisive and disruptive approach of leading *Militant* supporters at conference.

The main proposal they put forward called for 'a single united campaign' against the witch-hunt, and for the conference simply to join with the Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-hunt (established from the 11 September Wembley conference) and wind up.

Delegates rejected this proposal. First, they argued, unity would not be achieved simply by ramming two organisations with different functions into a single body. It would be

achieved by joint action against expulsions. Second, the new campaign would be *directly* accountable to the official bodies of the labour movement.

*Militant's* resolution was not a proposal for unity. It would have *split* the new campaign and forced those attending the conference to put their future in the hands of a body they could not control, with a clear majority of *Militant* supporters. No-one attending conference had any objections to the *Militant's* decision to create such a body. But they rejected the bureaucratic demand that everyone fighting the witch-hunt should be subordinate to this body.

These tactics rebounded on the comrades of the *Militant*: and so demonstrated that the way to deal with the *Militant* is by political arguments, and not by witch-hunts or manoeuvres.

*Militant* had every opportunity to put their case. Even knowing they intended to put a wrecking resolution to the conference, the steering committee invited both a *Militant* and a YS speaker. Many *Militant* supporters spoke in the debate. And at the end of the day they *lost* — decisively — in a vote of all delegates present.

*Socialist Challenge* welcomes the — late —

participation of *Militant* in the campaign. A campaign against the witch-hunt cannot be united unless *Militant* take part in it. We call on all our readers to support all the activities now being organised by *Militant* in its own defence.

But we address a straight proposal to these comrades. It is not in your own best interests, nor in the interests of the left, to allow your leaders — effectively — to spit in the faces of those who are trying to defend you. They and you should back the new campaign, build its activity, and take part in its work — or their sectarianism will continue to explode in your faces.



## Labour right hijack

By Alan Freeman

LABOUR'S RIGHT WING are back in the driving seat at Walworth Road. Michael Foot, they say 'sat aghast' as John Golding, the right's new angel of vengeance, brushed aside Jim Mortimer's report and drove both Benn and even Foot's supporters from any position of influence.

Foot can't really have been as surprised. In the last week the media have been crowing about the coming coup, which was inevitable as soon as the NEC election results were announced at Blackpool.

But was Foot really unhappy? He abstained in the vote on Golding's proposals, not once voting against.

There was only one important dispute between Foot and the right wing: he wanted Heffer to chair the crucial Organisation Committee, which will decide how to proceed with the witch-hunt. This committee now has a clear right wing majority.

The right wing will now go ahead with their 'Plan

A' — kicking out 60 leading *Militant* supporters including their prospective parliamentary candidates. This will lead to open civil war in the Party. If it succeeds it will destroy Labour's election prospects and open the road to a further five years of Thatcherism.

This is not just a defeat for Benn; it is a defeat for everyone who believed Foot could carve out a 'middle ground' in the



John Golding, Labour's answer to Norman Tebbit.

party. It is also a crushing defeat for Foot.

Foot might have been stupid enough to believe that the right were interested in the olive branch of compromise, or he may already have given up hope of compromise and thrown in his lot with them. It does not make any difference really. They

are now in control.

They intend to use their control to attack Labour's socialist policies, and the left, as rapidly and audaciously as possible.

The media are ecstatic.

The *Daily Mail* said if the right complete their attack 'voters will now have a real choice'. Sure: a choice between Tory nuclear

weapons and Labour nuclear weapons, between Tory unemployment and Labour unemployment, between Tory IMF policies and Labour IMF policies. This choice will lose Labour the election just as surely as it did in 1979.

Just as nauseating was the media's label for people like Golding who they call 'moderates'. A strange

name for backers of nuclear blackmail and gigantic bank profits.

But a note of caution seemed to creep in here and there: 'The Bennmen are down but not out', said the *Mail*.

The *Guardian* was even

## Benn stands for Shadow Cabinet

TONY BENN is standing for the Shadow Cabinet. The announcement was quietly made, in the small hours before the National Executive Committee pulverised the left, by a well-known friend of his — Norman Buchan.

His decision to stand coincides with the selection, by the *Tribune* group of MPs, of a slate of 11 who will fight for Shadow cabinet places. Bennites and Kinnockites will jostle shoulders, somewhat uneasily, in this allegedly 'left' platform.

A lot of sacrifices have been made to achieve this semblance of unity. The 'hard left' group of 23 MPs, who at one time announced a public split from the *Tribune* group, are to meet now only in private, holding conspiratorial discussions one at a time with the various Broad Left groups. The original idea that the group should help to organise a united extraparliamentary and parliamentary left, at both grass roots and national level, has been shelved. Benn has accepted many policy sacrifices.

The concessions are all from the left. Not one inch has the right conceded. John Golding, the Labour Party's answer to Norman Tebbit, is pressing ahead with his purge.

And this is the crucial



problem. What is wrong with Benn's approach? Not the decision to stand, nor the decision that the new left group should remain in the *Tribune* group.

The error is that in order to maintain a fic-

titious unity, which the right wing has no intention of preserving, and which will result in a Labour defeat if it continues, the left is making concession after concession, instead of organising, fighting to defend socialist policies,

and taking the battle into the unions to make the block vote accountable at the next Labour Party conference.

Tony Benn has to answer a straightforward question, as do his backers. Is he standing for

the Shadow Cabinet to cement a relationship with Michael Foot and the right wing, or to cement a relationship with the rank and file? Is the campaign he conducts going to appease the right, or organise the left? Will he come forward and lead the battle now being organised against the witch-hunt, and take that battle into the Shadow Cabinet, making it plain that a vote for him is a vote against expulsions — or will he float above the battle, making vague general pronouncements?

### TRIBUNE

The rest of the *Tribune* left understand very well what is involved. When Guy Barnet's Greenwich constituency voted to advise him to vote for the whole *Tribune* slate — including Tony Benn — he made it quite clear that his vote would depend on whether or not the principle of 'collective shadow cabinet responsibility' was applied.

In other words, if Tony Benn accepts the gag which Michael Foot and the right wing have prepared for him.

The 300 delegates at Saturday's conference against the witch-hunt have made their position clear: they aren't accepting any gag. They're going to fight, and the question every CLP has to put to their MP is this: are you joining the fight, are you against the fight — or are you, like Tony Benn, abstaining?

## Pino Khan defence Hattersley sells Asian Youth

By Bob Smith, Sparkhill CLP  
ROY HATTERSLEY, the man who spearheads the Race Relations Act, urged Sparkhill CLP to disaffiliate from the Pino Khan Defence Campaign on Tuesday.

Pino Khan, a member of the workers association, works at Birkenhead Batteries and is in the Selly Oak branch of the Asian Youth Education Workers' Union (AUEW). He lives in Hattersley's constituency.

He has been charged with Grievous Bodily Harm by Sparkhill police because he defended himself when three racists attacked his house at 3am on 20 March 1982, after they had been on a drinking spree.

Roy says there should be a 'police investigation' into the case, but that Pino does not need a 'defence campaign' which, he argues, is simply a front for the 'ultraleft'. The campaign has backing from Highgate and Northfields AUEW branches, ASTMS West Midlands Health Services branch, Moseley and Kings Heath CLPs, Sandwell branch Labour Party and Sparkhill YS.

### INNOCENT

Pino's friends have been at all the court proceedings. Perhaps it was the Labour Party banners on the picket lines which Roy sees as 'ultraleft'.

Pino Khan is innocent. His only crime is having a black face, which in the eyes of the Sparkhill police makes him guilty at a glance.

more pessimis Foot... should be happy at the thought of Mr Benn being exiled by other ass-wingers. It is not likely that any decision has helped the isolation in Benn has found since the race for leadership... dust of Peckham's field has settled may yet regret the enthusiasm of his found allies.'

### LEFT

These people just don't understand what is happening. Forty per cent of the population don't want nuclear weapons. They don't want unemployment. They don't want the Labour Party to be a reference point for these things.

The reason Labour's flagging at the polls is Foot as figurehead. Healey as captain believes Labour out its policies.

As soon as the left decides to realign itself to show itself. Weighell and if been fighting have got rid of and his cronies.

Union conference what its leading if the left resist.

That is now task of the hour. October against the witch-hunt only the first step.

The Roy Hattersley this world cannot defend black faces. He can talk about it.



ing race relations until he goes to the face. But comes to the court Pakistani membership constituency months in prison nothing but himself, he is racist police on that the 'left' are. This is where hunting leads: why Hattersley must be removed leadership of the movement.

If you want to send donations to: Defence Committee, 12, 134 Alcester Road, Birmingham B13 8EE.



# Why railworkers should strike on 8 November

By D Ellis

**'NO WAY I'll be out on 8 November. The TUC sold railworkers down the river and now when they say jump, they think we'll move. If we support the TUC, they'll have a green light to put the boot in the next time round.'**

As the TUC day of action in support of the healthworkers nears, this is a common point of view heard in the messrooms in the rail industry. It's dead wrong, and not only will regular working on 8 November put the healthworkers' fight back, it'll also be disastrous for workers in our industry. Why?

● If we go into work on Monday, we let the TUC leaders off the hook and hand the fate of the healthworkers to the TUC on a platter. If the pressure isn't kept up — against the government, but also against the union leaders — then without a doubt the General Council will find it that much easier to get round the negotiating table and come up with some 'nice' compromise which will spell disaster for healthworkers.

We've tasted the consequences of the TUC's wheeling and dealing behind closed doors. Let's make sure — by showing the TUC that the healthworkers aren't alone — that they can't afford another sell-out without paying a price for it this time round!

● If we show that our union has a fighting

membership ready to act — not only in defence of our jobs and conditions, but also to support other workers — then we can be certain that this will have an impact in the current elections for general secretary in the National Union of Railwaymen. Sidney Weighell found out he couldn't do what he liked without any consideration of the members' views when the Special General Meeting accepted his resignation.

And we've got to show to the new candidates coming forward that there is an active membership no longer prepared to sit by and let the general secretary trample over our interests.

If we're apathetic and just hope the healthworkers will win on their own, that's the best recipe for another round of a Weighell-type general secretary.

● The healthworkers are leading the fightback against the Tories' attacks. That's our fight too! If the healthworkers pay remains disgracefully low, then that'll help Maggie Thatcher's efforts to run down the health service and promote private health care. We all know who that benefits!

## Telecoms

### Public action not private words

By Denny Fitzpatrick

THE TELECOM workers day of action on 20 October was overwhelmingly supported. It's clear that most workers see the Tories plans to privatise as a serious threat ... and serious threats have to be met by serious action.

It's no use thinking that the one day strike will be enough. The Tories now plan to bring forward the sale of British Telecoms to this spring — hoping to use sales profits for a 'tax cutting' election gimmick.

To date, the POEU executive have announced no further action. They ducked their responsibility having talked out any policy at the annual conference. They now reject the call by the City branch for a special conference. But such a national conference to plan opposition to the Tories schemes is now even more urgent since the Tories decision to bring forward the sale.

Such a conference would enable us to map out a real strategy;

\* of rolling industrial action in conjunction with other workers against the Tories  
\* blacking Project Mercury and other companies intending to buy shares  
\* for a national levy for national action

\* for 35 hour week now. No job losses, no redundancies.

The forthcoming executive elections must be actively contested by the Broad Left. A serious campaign for action has to be mounted in the membership for policies to protect jobs and for a special conference. Such policies should include:

\* No job loss — for a shorter working week.  
\* 35 hour week now — leading to a 32 hour four day week.  
\* New technology under our control for better conditions and a better public service.

*Socialist Challenge will be regularly covering the fight of Telecom workers, campaigning for the special conference, and for solidarity action against the Tories. We still have a small number of pamphlets outlining the threat to jobs and how to fight it. For copies and information write to D Fitzpatrick 11, Hemstall Rd, NW6.*

Healthworkers will be forced to leave the NHS and we'll see even more hospital closures which directly affect us and our families.

We already know that 35,000 jobs are to go on British Rail. Management is putting the boot in everywhere — sackings, disciplinary hearings, redundancies, and the complete disregard for procedure is more and more common. With the disgusting pay rise this

year, we'll have to go for a big increase next year to catch up. We have our own battles in this industry and we need help from other sections of the labour movement.

● If we don't put our money where our mouth is — because everyone claims they support the healthworkers — then we can say good-bye to any hope of support for our battles which are ahead. On 22 September five million workers took ac-

tion to support the healthworkers.

Our union's decision to keep working — supposedly at the request of the leaders of the health unions — means we're the only section which hasn't taken one inch of action so far. We've let other workers make the sacrifices so far, so now we've got to take our responsibility in winning the goals we all say we agree with.

## Replace Weighellism not just Weighell

By Hazel McPherson

SIDNEY WEIGHELL'S departure as general secretary of the NUR occurred after a period of growing unrest and dissatisfaction with his blatant betrayal of the membership. Having got rid of him, NUR members will be looking for a candidate who has a clear alternative to Weighell's class collaborationist policies. This means that the candidates will have to address themselves to the questions which all rail workers will be facing in the industry — low pay, productivity, privatisation and closures.

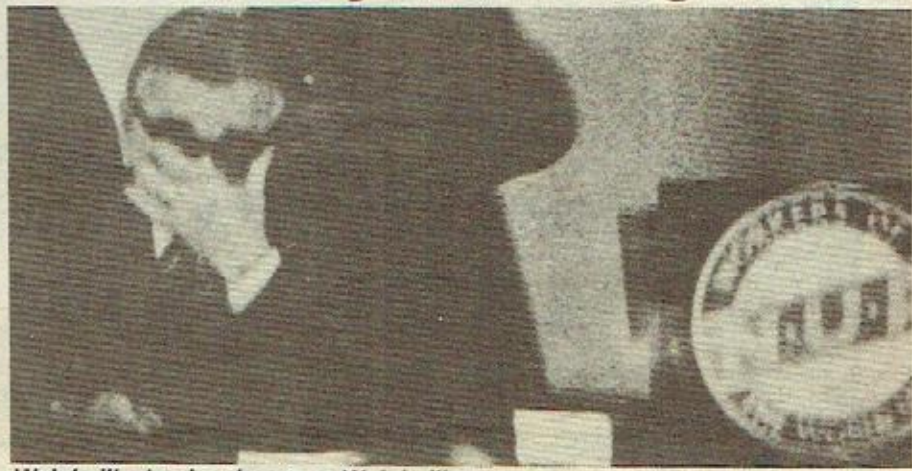
The battle for general secretary will also take place against the background of wider political issues. The press are already posing it as a left/right battle. For once Socialist Challenge agrees with them.

Our supporters in rail will be looking for a candidate with a definite position in favour of a national fightback on pay and against privatisation. We believe that a left candidate will need a clear strategy for building class solidarity against the Tory government. Support for

the healthworkers is key in building such solidarity at present — plus a firm commitment to build a triple alliance of rail, coal and steel workers.

Such a candidate will also require a strong position on all those political issues which have come to the fore in the past few years — including unilateral nuclear disarmament, positive action for black and women workers and union democracy.

A left candidate who fails to give answers to these questions will risk handing the leadership to



Weighell's demise threatens Weighellism.

the right wing. It is against this background that Kings Cross no 1 branch of the NUR are to be congratulated for calling a public rally in London in support of the healthworkers on 8 November — the transport day of action.

This rally will not only be a focus for solidarity action. It will set the terms

of the debate around the general secretary fight. That there has been a dramatic shift at the base of the union is indicated by the fact that the right wing candidate Charlie Turnock is willing to speak on a platform dominated by left wing trade union leaders.

Now is the time for the union left from executive

level to the branches to push home their advantage.

*Geoff Hensby, branch secretary of Paddington no 1 NUR, and a well-known militant in the union has announced that he intends to stand for general secretary. Socialist Challenge will carry a full assessment of his candidacy next week.*

## Telecoms

### Redundancies on the cheap

THE GUARDIAN two weeks ago featured an article spelling out how British Telecoms plans to 'shake-out' staff 'who although they cannot be regarded as inefficient, are not proficient enough to meet the full vigours of British Telecoms changing culture: that is, they are beached whales.'

Such 'shake-outs' are simply redundancies by another name — which avoid confronting the unions and making big redundancy payouts. In a Socialist Challenge pamphlet for Post Office Engineers, published last summer, we took up the arguments that Telecoms needed to be more 'efficient' and competitive.

Below, we outline that response.

Are you opposed to making Telecoms more efficient?

When Sir George Jefferson in a letter to all Telecom employees this year said 'we had to gear ourselves up to meet the challenge of competition'; When he asks for '25 per cent more efficiency', he means axing jobs — 45,000 of them to be more precise.

When the Tories ask for more 'efficiency', they really mean more profit at the expense of our jobs, our pension rights, our working conditions and our public telephone system.

The fact is that it is already 'efficient'. How else can it make record profits of £458 million (July 1982)?

Since 1971 the number of customers connected to the national system has doubled (9,214,000 to 18,418,000). The number of jobs, however, has remained steady. What



private company has such a record?

But won't competition make BT more efficient?

Is it efficient to have two or more different sets of cables from London to Manchester all competing for the same traffic? That's what Project Mercury is.

Is it efficient to have several private companies all running cable TV when there's an existing network?

Is it efficient to have the public financing Mercury and British Telecoms, which are in direct competition with each other? (NB Cable and Wireless

and BP are still partially publicly owned.)

This anarchy is not efficient. Efficiency would be a communication system where new technology was used to improve the whole system, not replace it by many unconnected systems running in parallel, with the aim of stealing traffic from one another, while the majority of the population are left with a primitive communications system.

But it certainly makes sense to the Tories' pals in private industry. The truth is that they're more concerned with private profit than the overall efficiency of the Telecommunications system. And

privatisation also has the very attractive benefit of effectively smashing union muscle in the Telecoms industry.

Will competition and 'efficiency' safeguard our jobs?

Productivity increases and efficiency drives will not create jobs — they will be the excuse for cuts.

British Telecoms has assets of £10 billions, an infrastructure of underground plant, exchanges and so on, built up over years of public ownership and the skill and expertise of nearly a quarter of a million workers. It is because Telecoms is so profitable that they want to sell it off.

The problem for private capital is that it can't compete with British Telecoms! ... But it can't afford to buy it either. Therefore the Telecoms bill will break it up and sell it off in bits, leaving the less profitable but socially necessary domestic and small business subscribers in public hands.



# OCTOBER 1917

Sixty-five years ago the workers, peasants and the oppressed minorities stormed the heavens, lighting a beacon of revolutionary hope and inspiration across one-sixth of the world's surface. In every country in the world the exploited turned their eyes in the direction of Russia and the more conscious and more militant asked, 'Can we also do that? If so how do we do it?' BOB PENNINGTON writing below describes how, and why, the Russian revolution happened and how it was won. He explains that its lessons are just as important today as they were in the winter of 1917.

THE GREAT WAR tore and wrenched apart the old order of capitalist Europe and nowhere were its effects felt more than in ailing, backward Russia.

The war, a product of inter-imperialist rivalries, dragged into its wake the advanced countries like the United States, and the backward nations like Russia. But the demands on Russia were just as severe as those made on the most advanced nations, whereas her ability to bear them was far less.

The war ravaged its economy. Its people died by the millions for a cause in which they had no interest. At home, away from the front, cold, misery and starvation were the lot of the masses.

As the war produced one disaster after another, the War Minister Polivanov explained the strategy of the ruling class when he said: 'I place my trust in the impenetrable spaces, impassable mud, and the mercy of Saint Nicholas Mirlikisky, protector of Holy Russia'. A general Ruzsky told the ministers of war: 'The present day demands of military technique are beyond us. At any rate we can't keep up with the Germans.'

As the army fell apart under the German offensives its leaders wasted time on superstitions and witchcraft by discussing whether or not to remove the bones of the saints from Kiev.

In the war the Russian army suffered 40 per cent of the total casualties suffered by the alliance against the Germans. More than two and a half million of its soldiers died. No nation before had ever suffered such casualties.

Despair and dissatisfaction grew like wildfire at the useless butchery. As the military oligarchy retreated before the Germans, so did their fury grow against their own hapless troops. Flogging became the order of the day for even the most trivial offences.

A soldier Pireiko, quoted by Trotsky in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, told how: 'And sometimes they flogged them to arouse their fighting spirit.' The same Pireiko also wrote: 'everyone, to the last man, was interested in nothing but peace ... Who should win and what kind of peace it would be, that was of small interest to the army. It wanted peace at any cost, for it was weary of war.'

By late 1916, the despair of the army was turning into rebellion. In Moscow the Minister of the Interior spoke with alarm at the presence of 30,000 convalescent soldiers saying: 'In cases of disorder this entire horde will take the side of the mob.'

A general Brusilov talking of the Riga district told how soldiers 'refuse to attack' and how they 'lifted one company commander on the points of their bayonets'.

At first the revolutionaries in the army had been small and their influence negligible. But as disorder swelled so did their influence begin to grow and when the government sent striking workers to the front as a punishment the number of skilled and experienced agitators grew in the fertile soil of the army's discontent.

At home misery and despair with a war that nobody wanted, that hardly one single person believed could be won, fed the people's hatred for the regime. Everyone wanted peace as the deaths mounted. Everyone wanted bread as the food queues grew longer and the prices became higher. And every peasant wanted land in a country where 30,000 large landowners owned as much land as 50,000 million peasants had to live off.

All the ingredients for revolution existed. The old order had become intolerable to the great majority of the masses. Normally the decisions are made by the specialists, be they ministers of state, civil servants or dictators. But as Russia's crisis grew in intensity the masses began to cross the barriers that normally exclude them from the arena of politics.

Their old representatives no longer seemed adequate. Their old institutions were insufficient. As the confidence and hopes in the old order broke down, so the workers and peasants demanded change and to get that change they had to take action of a forcible character and begin to take charge of their own destiny.

In the great bourgeois revolutions of the past the bourgeoisie had won the peasantry to its side by breaking the power of the feudal-monarchic system. They had done this by offering the peasants the land. Only the offer of the land can inspire the peasantry to join with the revolution.

But in Russia the bourgeoisie could not do this. In fact they did not dare raise this demand. The peasant insurrections did not drive the capitalists forward against tsarism. Instead it drove them back into the camp of reaction. A numerically weak Russian bourgeoisie which had come too late on the scene to play any progressive role and whose wealth often came out of the great semi-feudal estates, did not dare raise a hand against feudal property.

In 1917 a nobleman Bokorkin wrote to Rodzianko, the chairman of the last municipal Duma 'I am a landowner and I cannot get it into my head that I must lose my land and for an unbelievable purpose to boot, for the experiment of a socialist doctrine.'

Had the capitalists solved the agrarian question then Russia would have entered into the era of bourgeois democracy. Instead the war of the peasants for land which by the autumn of 1917 affected 482 departments out of 624, had to find its ally in the Russian working class, the natural enemy of the bourgeoisie.

As the peasants set fire to the property of the landowners the flames lit up the insurrection in the cities. The two factors necessary for the birth of the Soviet state had come into being — the peasant war that is a characteristic of the development of capitalism and the proletarian insurrection, the movement that announces the ending of bourgeois rule had combined.

The four million industrial workers were joined by over 100 million peasants. For the first time in history the wrath and land hunger of the peasants was

given a lead and direction, not by the capitalist class but by a class whose historic interests lay along the path of the socialist revolution.

But the hand of the revolution reached out even further. It raised the banner of the rights of oppressed nationalities. Of Russia's population of 160 million, 90 million were 'other races'. These peoples were subjected to persecution and deprivation of legal rights by the bureaucratic regimes of Moscow. The revolutionaries, by demanding land for the peasants and supporting the right of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities were able to win them over to their side. These too in their overwhelming numbers were peasants.

That a revolution could take place in the hell hole that was tsarist Russia came as no surprise. But that it should be a proletarian revolution, surprised everyone but the marxist revolutionaries. People who had thought about change in Russia, and this included most Russian socialists, had predicted that Russia would first have to go through the experience of the capitalist revolution, before the basis could be laid for the socialist transformation.

But to marxist thinkers like Trotsky the fact that the proletariat could take the power in an historically backward country was expected. He had in fact predicted such a thing happening as far back as 1905.

In his pamphlet *Results and Prospects* he had written: 'In an economically backward country the proletariat can arrive at power earlier than in a capitalistically advanced one.'

'The Russian revolution creates the conditions under which the power can (and in the event of a successful revolution must) be transferred to the proletariat, even before the policy of bourgeois liberalism receives the opportunity of unfolding its talent for governments to its fullest extent.'

What Trotsky explained was that in its immediate tasks the Russian revolution was a bourgeois revolution. This meant it had to solve all the problems taken on by the classical bourgeois revolutions like the French revolution of 1793.

But the Russian capitalist class was anti-revolutionary. It could not solve the agrarian and democratic needs of the old capitalist revolution, in fact it was absolutely hostile to them. Only the working class could lead the fight for such demands, but a victorious proletariat would of course not stop at getting these demands.

Such aims for the working class could only lead it on towards its own goals and therefore the Russian revolution would not stop at the bourgeois democratic stage but would be permanent in character.

But for Trotsky and the Bolsheviks that was only a part of the theory. The other part rested on the understanding that the productive forces of capitalism have long outgrown their national limits. As capitalism has spilled over its national boundaries and entered its imperialist stage, it is utopian to imagine that socialism can be

constructed within those national boundaries that even capitalism finds an intolerable restriction.

The Russian revolution therefore was not an end in and of itself. For the Bolsheviks 'the chain had broken at its weakest link'. But for that link to healthily survive, it was dependent on the extension of the revolution on a world scale, particularly to the metropolitan countries of western Europe.

Only the revolutionary marxists understood that. Just as they had been the only people to understand that the objective conditions in Russia, like the weakness of the capitalist class; the revolutionary character of the peasant question and the oppressed nations; and the specific social weight of the working class would produce a situation where the workers would have the chance to take power.

These conditions produced the revolutionary situation of 1917. They could not, however, on their own guarantee the success of the revolution. That success depended on the existence of a party: the Bolshevik Party of Lenin to be precise.

In all previous revolutions new forms of property have developed in the womb of the old society and these new property forms have generated a new class with its own spokespersons, leaders, and its own parties.

But the working people are in a different position. In no society, except in a workers' state, does the working class hold the power. Under capitalism it delegates its authority to people who rule on its behalf.

But they rule in the interests of capitalism, not on behalf of the workers they allegedly represent. Unlike the rising bourgeoisie who owned enterprises and businesses under feudalism and therefore accumulated power and wealth, the working class does not rule and control its own means of production under capitalism.

For many years the removal of tsarism had been a necessary condition of the Russian economy and cultural life was to advance. However, the forces for the removal of this outdated feudal-type monarchy were insufficient.

The capitalists feared the revolution, dreading the thought of unleashing the anger and wrath of the new proletariat and the giant mass of the peasantry. The intellectuals had always turned to the peasantry and believed that the 'deed' would inspire the revolt, and as a consequence, the cream of the Russian intelligentsia wasted itself in heroic terrorism.

The Bolsheviks began anew. They saw that the way to unleash that powerful force in the countryside was through the workers. The 1905 revolution in its defeat had pointed the way to the victories of 1917.

It had demonstrated the power of the young Russian proletariat. It has shown that new forms of power existed called Soviets, which had been spontaneously created by the workers.

By combining the struggles of the workers and peasants, and by championing the cause of all the oppressed peoples and minorities, the Bolsheviks by 1917 had become a truly national party in the sense that it represented the overwhelming majority of the population. What is more it, and it alone, understood that victory was only possible if the masses followed the road of proletarian revolution.

Sixty-five years later the main lessons of that first great successful revolution are still there to be learned from. It showed in dramatic form that it is only the masses that make revolutions. Only when they are convinced that things cannot carry on in the old way, and they step into the arena of politics can a revolution take place.

The tasks confronting the mass of the people when they go along the paths of revolutionary insurrection and start seeking power are political. But for years they have been precluded from politics and decision-making and therefore cannot have an independent revolutionary theory and revolutionary strategy to achieve their aims.

Yet these are essential for revolutions to be successful. The key to the success of the Russian revolution was the understanding that it was not a capitalist democratic revolution but a combination of the bourgeois revolution and the proletarian revolution, and therefore the revolution had to be permanent in character, both nationally and internationally.

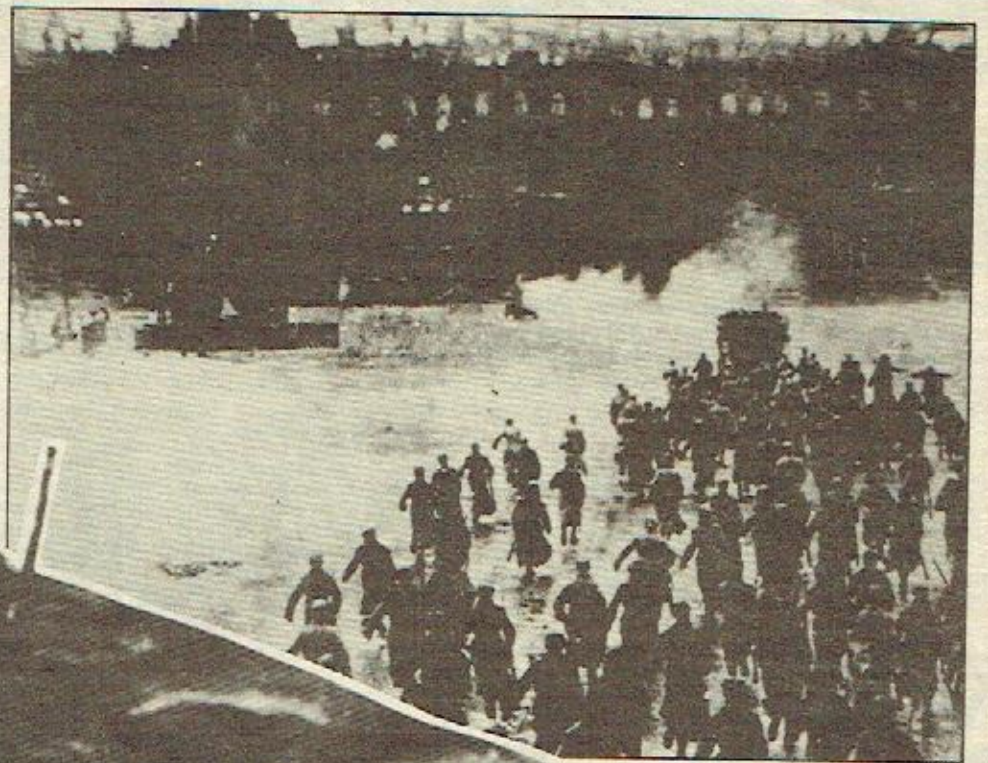
Such a theory is not reached spontaneously. It requires study, discussion and analysis and therefore requires conscious intellectual application by individuals organised in a party.

Once the Bolsheviks were clear about the character of the revolution they took the logical and practical step of constructing a workers' state based on the soviets, the most democratic political organisations yet created. There is no road to socialism without the existence of democratically run workers' councils (soviets) and these are the only real alternative to the state created by capitalism. The Bolsheviks had learned that by the actions of the masses in the dress-rehearsal of 1905, and the party consciously set out to base the new workers' state on the soviets.

The internationalism of the Bolsheviks is well illustrated by just one of their many actions. Anyone arriving in Russia after the revolution had immediate rights to Russian citizenship and the right to vote immediately. To the Bolsheviks, the Russian revolution needed the support of every worker and for every worker it had to be their international homeland. What a contrast this practical internationalism to the actions of miserable right-wing Labour leaders who introduced immigration laws.

The lessons of October 1917 are still as relevant today as they were 85 years ago. No revolutionary socialist party can hope to lead a successful struggle for power in the advanced countries, unless it has absorbed and understood those lessons.





Above Trotsky, Lenin and Kamenev. Top right the storming of the Winter Palace. Below the masses take to the streets as Russia takes the path to revolution.





# Trade Unions

## Garment workers take action

by Bill Alder, National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers - NUHKW - Mansfield and Sutton District

THE MYTH that women workers can't be militant is taken another knock on the head. 420 women at the Meridian garment factory in Bolsover, North Derbyshire, have now been out on strike for more than a fortnight.

Meridian is part of the multinational giant, Courtaulds Ltd, which sells garments and hosiery under a number of well known brand names - Wolsey, Lyle and Scott, Kayser Bondor. Like most multinationals Cour-

taulds puts the living standards of its workers at the very bottom of the list of priorities.

For some time management at the Bolsover factory have been trying to whittle

away the money the women earn on their piece-rates. The current strike has come as a result of company 'time and motion' men trying to refit women's jobs as a means of cutting the established piece rate for particular jobs. The women's response was to walk out.

The strike has now been made official by the workers union - the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers. The picket line is now maintained 24 hours a day after management tried to sneak work out of the factory in the middle of the night.

Union lorry drivers have refused to cross the picket and the management has now resorted to using non-union scab lorry and van drivers.

### Morale

The women's morale is good but they need financial support, as no strike benefit has been received yet. Socialist Challenge has always pointed out that women do not work for pin money, but because their wage is a vital part of their and their families income.

always pointed out that women do not work for pin money, but because their wage is a vital part of their and their families' income.

The Meridian women have shown that by striking. Readers should recognise it by rushing donations and messages of support to:

National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers, Nottingham North District, 50 Church St, Old Basford, Notts.

## Sheldon engineers show way on CND

This motion is for consideration by the National Conference of the AUEW in 1983 and was passed at the meeting of Sheldon Branch on Friday 22 October 1982.

1. That the National Committee instructs the Executive Council to organise a day of all-out action on Hiroshima Day 1983 as part of a European wide protest against Trident and the stationing of Cruise missiles in Europe;
2. And further, to encourage all links with European Engineering workers to this end.
3. To work with the Labour Party NEC to back this action in conjunction with the TUC.
4. To give aid, through the Youth Section of the AUEW, for building support for Young CND groups in the Engineering industry.

Further, that the National Committee notes that the last Labour Party conference voted for unilateral nuclear disarmament by a majority of more than two thirds and therefore calls for a policy of not only ending Britain's nuclear role but also withdrawing from NATO.

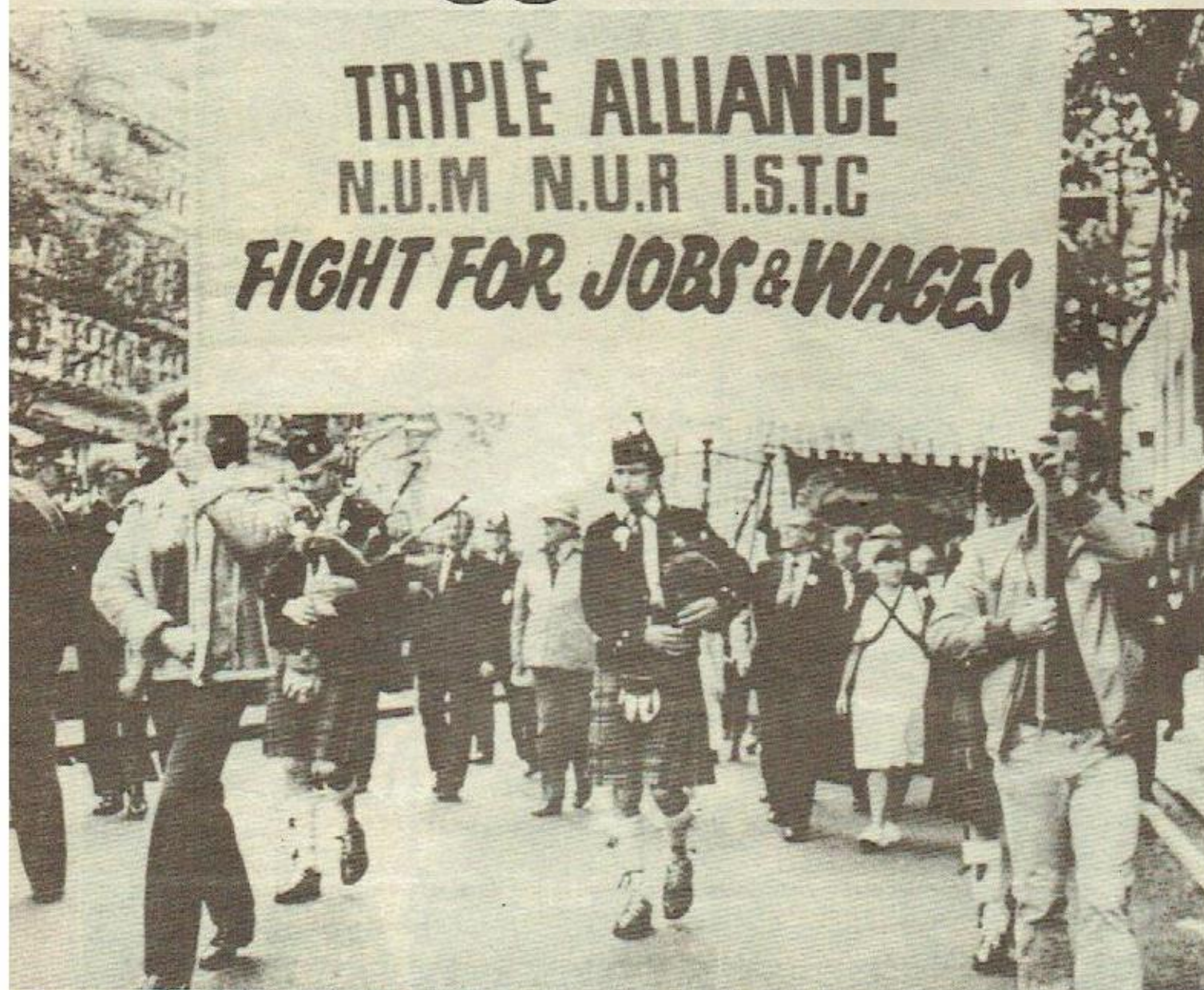
## SKINNER:

# 'Centralise all the struggles'



Dennis Skinner

TRIPLE ALLIANCE  
N.U.M N.U.R I.S.T.C  
FIGHT FOR JOBS & WAGES



One thousand Scottish supporters of the Triple Alliance (made up of miners, steel and rail unions) march in London to warn against further redundancies.

1,000 SCOTTISH workers came down to London last Tuesday 26 October to demonstrate against unemployment and threatened closure of coal, steel and the mines. It has been called by the Triple Alliance. Dennis Skinner focussed the mood of the demonstrators bent on fighting the Tory government. He brought the house down in a speech punctuated throughout with cheers and ovations. His reception was in sharp contrast to that given by Michael Foot. Here are extracts from his speech.

EVERY victory we've ever won for our class has been won from outside Parliament and we shouldn't be mealy-mouthed about it. We

have to get a Labour Government which carries out these wishes in practice. We need more of this sort of extra-parliamentary activity.

'Last week we had strikes on separate days. We had a water workers strike one day, a telecommunications strike on another, then a health strike and then a steel strike. Why the hell doesn't the TUC get these strikes together on one.

'If we did that we'd

frighten the living daylights out of the Fleet St editors and Thatcher. We would be showing that the real power lies with you, the wealth creators. You are the people who make this country tick.

'We have to dedicate ourselves to smashing the Tebbit law outside parliament.

'I say to Michael Foot and Ian Mortimer. From now on, let's campaign against the Tories. We want no more nonsense

about trying to drive people out of the Labour Party. We haven't got the time and energy to spend on this. We have to go from this meeting to campaign to get rid of the Tories; to campaign for a 35 hour week; shorter working hours; we need a better life for pensioners; to get out of the Common Market and to get rid of cruise missiles. Let's go from this meeting to dedicate ourselves to the most important tendency of all - the unemployed tendency.



## Revolution out now!

A new copy of Revolution is out. It's a socialist paper for youth with supporters in the unions, Labour Party Young Socialists, and schools and colleges all over Britain. We are fighting alongside the health workers in the Youth CND and everyone taking action against the Tories and their policies. And we want to boot out the Tories in the Labour Party too - like Dennis Healey and John Golding.

At the LPYS national conference it fought to get backing for YCND, to get the hundreds of activists in Youth CND to come together and fight the introduction of Cruise and Trident in a united way.

Revolution also campaigned to get the YS out onto the picket lines of health workers to build support in every city to bring down the Tories.

And for our pains we've just had a nice letter from Jim Mortimer asking us to register.

The newspaper covers the fight against the witch-hunt and is against the Tories at home and abroad. There is a page feature on the Middle East, coverage of the war in Central America, a centrespread on Poland and a letter on Iran. There are also articles on fighting sexism, women at work, black liberation. All this for 20 pence. Get your copy now.



# Gonzalez - a Spanish Denis Healey

By Phil Hearse

'POR EL CAMBIO' — for a change — was a central slogan of the Spanish Socialist Party's election campaign. The Spanish people have responded massively to that theme — that only the Socialist Party (PSOE) had the possibility of providing change. In giving Socialist leader Felipe Gonzalez a huge victory (201 of the 350 seats in the Cortez) they have completely redrawn the political map of Spain.

But the irony is that fundamental change is one thing that they are unlikely to get, for Felipe Gonzalez did not even promise it in his election policies.

The election was a disaster for the government party, the conservative UCD. Even the prime minister Calvo Sotelo, lost his seat. They were squeezed by the rise of the hard right Popular Alliance, led by Manuel Fraga, who won 105 seats and 25 per cent of the vote. In effect the ultra-right Fraga has succeeded in making the AP the main party of the right, eclipsing his more moderate rivals.

The Communist Party (PCE) also suffered an electoral disaster, losing two-thirds of its votes and seeing its representation in parliament fall from 23 to 5.

Gonzalez has gone out of his way to provide

guarantees to Spain's rulers that he is going to alter nothing fundamental. The democratisation process in Spain since the fall of Franco has evolved an unstable compromise between the 'democratic' parties and crucial sectors of the old Francoist state apparatus who remain entrenched in the army and state bureaucracy. Gonzalez's first promise was to do nothing to purge the Francoist hard-liners — the hundreds of officers who sympathised with the attempted military coup in 1981, and who have been implicated in coup-plots subsequently.

The PSOE has talked about the army as 'the representation of popular

sovereignty' and the 'guarantor of constitutional rule'. During the interim period between Gonzalez's election and his taking office (six weeks away) many Spaniards will be distinctly nervous about the army.

But given the Socialists' overwhelming victory it seems unlikely that the army would make a move. The crucial thing is, however, that the hard-line army right wingers are still there, ready to move at a time of crisis.

Gonzalez has pledged his support to the 'anti-terrorist' legislation in the Basque country, and will make no concessions to the demands for self-determination in the Basque country and other nations of the Spanish state.

## Jobs

On the economic front Gonzalez has promised an extra 800,000 jobs in four years. If achieved, that would only bring down the unemployment rate from 16 per cent to 12 per cent. But even this modest objective is unlikely to be attained.



The PSOE promises only one nationalisation — sectors of the electricity supply industry. Despite the flight of capital from Spain before the elections, Gonzalez will do nothing to touch the assets of Spain's ultra-right wing bankers.

Recently Gonzalez has opened a polemic against French socialist leaders Mitterand accusing him of being the representative of a 'too-ideological socialism', too dogmatic, too left wing.

Given the extent of the economic recession in Spain it is difficult to see how the PSOE, with its open espousal of economic liberalism, can begin to solve the economic problems of the Spanish workers.

Unlike the Communist Party, the PSOE did not even put forward a proposal for legalised abortion — a burning question of democratic rights in a

country where hundreds of women die each year after back-street abortions.

The main change expected from the PSOE victory is on foreign policy. The Socialists will organise a referendum on Spanish membership of NATO, which they oppose. But Gonzalez is precise: 'We have never been opposed to NATO. What we are against is Spain's joining NATO, which is different.' And he insists: 'we are in no hurry'.

## Collapse

That could be taken as the motto of the PSOE leadership. Despite all the talk of change the 'socialism' of Gonzalez is the 'socialism' of Denis Healey.

Why then has the vote of the Communist Party collapsed? For several years the PCE has been in a state of political and

organisational crisis. The 'Eurocommunist' direction taken by party leader Carrillo led the PCE to endorse the various social contracts, notably the Moncloa pact, which imposed wage restraint.

Equally the PCE has been a party of 'law and order' rather than workers' militancy, endorsing the repressive police measures against Basque nationalists.

In this situation, its policies have often seemed none-too-different from those of PSOE.

In Catalonia, historically a stronghold of workers' militancy, the PSUC — the Catalonian CP — was in 1981 captured by quasi-Stalinist factions who opposed the Eurocommunist policies of the Madrid leadership. The recapture of the PSUC by pro-Carrillo militants led to a split of 8000 worker militants to form their own party.

Many former Communist voters will have voted for the PSOE as a 'useful' vote, a vote capable of resolving the main question of who was going to form the government. This is exactly what happened last year in France, with CP voters giving their mandate to Mitterand.

The Spanish workers will get nothing out of the victory of Gonzalez except austerity measures imposed by a 'Socialist' government. Indeed the PSOE comes to power at a time of profound downturn in the strength of the workers movement. Because of the recession and unemployment the unions have lost more than half of their members since 1978. This has particularly affected the Workers Commissions — the pro-CP trade union federation. The beneficiaries have been the UGT, the pro-socialist union federation.

## Result

How then should we assess the overall meaning of the PSOE victory? Unable to go forward on the economic front, faced with all the problems that recession inevitably brings the working class, the Spanish workers have reached for a governmental solution to their problems. The middle class have reacted by consolidating the hard right Thatcherite-Reaganite AP led by Fraga.

The Socialist experiment can only result in disillusionment for the workers. The danger is that Gonzalez's failure will ultimately become Fraga's victory. Revolutionaries in Spain have the task of continuing to fight for real socialist policies to solve the crisis, to build a left wing alternative to 'socialist' austerity.

# El Salvador regime under attack

By Toni Gorton

AS TOP US official, Fred Ikle, arrived in the capital of El Salvador on 27 October, six guerrilla bombs exploded plunging the whole city into darkness. This dramatically demonstrated the latest stage of the new political and military offensive by the liberation forces.

In the past 20 days of fighting, the FMLN, the revolutionary guerrilla army says that 403 government troops have been killed or wounded and 119 have been captured. Traffic on all main routes has been reduced to a trickle, with dozens of trucks and buses belonging to the businesses backing the junta destroyed.

Much of the province of Usulután has been without power for three weeks after pylons were destroyed.

In Britain, the Labour Party has condemned the visit of El Salvador's Foreign Minister, Fidel Chavez Mena, in London to talk to the Tory Foreign Secretary.

Jim Mortimer, Labour Party general secretary said that 'the visit appears to be an attempt to gain the support of a European government for an internationally discredited regime, which refuses to negotiate a political solution to the civil war in El Salvador.'

In another blow at the murderous junta ruling in El Salvador, the United Nations has been exposed as being unable and un-

willing to protect thousands of refugees fleeing the appalling conditions in their country.

There are 16,000 Salvadoreans in disease-ridden UN camps at Colomoncagua and Mesa Grande in Honduras and up to 30,000 homeless in El Salvador itself according to Oxfam.

On one hand the UN claims that Honduran military authorities are blocking access to vital areas and, on the other, the UN has been accused of passivity by the Inter-church committee for refugees in Toronto.

The Canadian relief agency claimed that the UN was seriously understaffed in the border area and the reception centres for receiving new refugees lacked adequate facilities.

The Americans are getting uneasy about the bad press that the regime is getting and have laid down the law — a little.

The US ambassador to El Salvador, Deane Hinton, has warned the regime that unpunished murders and kidnappings tied 'to some elements of the security forces' were



The departments under FMLN control.

endangering US support. The blunt language seems to be a response to the diplomatic offensive of the liberation forces, in particular the stink that has been made world wide over the arrest of eight well known figures in the FDR, the political wing of the FMLN.

The new Social-Democratic government in Sweden sent a letter to El Salvador expressing great concern over the abduction and disappearance of a large number of opposition politicians and calling

for all parties to begin negotiations for a political solution to the conflict.

'Neither internal confidence nor external support can long survive here in the absence of an effective system of criminal justice', said Hinton. This was a reminder that the US hands out more than \$230m in military and economic aid this year.

The liberation forces are now holding 20 towns and villages in Chalatenango, the north eastern province of Morazan and the eastern

province of San Miguel. The 'Arc of Liberty' now stretches some 500 square miles along the Honduran border northeast of San Salvador and the FMLN is stepping up its efforts to widen it.

Affiliate now to the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign. £5 for individuals and £10 for organisations, please make cheques payable to the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, and send to 29 Islington Park Street, London N1, tel 01-359 2270. Details of the 14 May Labour Movement Conference from the same address.

# Defend the Sandinista revolution

By Toni Gorton

FOLLOWING the diplomatic success achieved by the revolutionary government of Nicaragua in getting onto the UN security council, the USA is trying to cover its hostile intentions towards this small Central American country. The US has complained, via an article in *Newsweek* magazine, that their efforts to simply harass and undermine the Nicaraguan government has got 'out of hand' with the recruitment of former Somoza troops into the US backed and trained counter-revolutionary forces.

US attempts to disassociate itself from responsibility for the thousands of armed men it has put in military camps in Honduras, Florida and California must strike a warning bell for the safety of the revolution.

The Nicaraguans have been on full military alert for over a year now as counter-revolutionary activities increased along the border with Honduras. Between July 1981 and March 1982 US military planes violated Nicaraguan airspace on 40 occasions. The CIA was granted \$19m specifically to co-ordinate armed attacks on Nicaragua and development loans have been blocked by the Reagan administration.

*Newsweek* gives details of the military plans against Nicaragua which, it says, are directed by the US ambassador to Honduras, John Negroponte with the aid of 50 CIA agents, dozens of retired military and intelligence officers and 20 Argentine military advisors. Plans have also been drawn up for the creation of a 500-man paramilitary force. Any military intervention into Nicaragua will be the direct responsibility of Reagan and his henchmen in the CIA. Any pretence that Somocistas have taken over is utter balderdash. Nicaragua needs your support now.

For further information contact the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 20/21 Compton Terrace, London N1 Tel 01-226 6747.



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# Bank profits soar

By John Ross

**THE BRITISH ECONOMY is in a dreadful state. For working people it certainly is. But not for all.**

**For some the capitalist economy is booming like never before. Britain's banks have never had a government they liked so much.**

The British banking system is on a scale which, apart from the oil industry, totally dwarfs the rest of the economy. One British bank alone, Barclay's, in 1981, made more profit than the entire private banking system of West Germany put together!

So enormous are the British banks in fact that they make more profit than all the other private banks of the EEC combined.

While British industry has been crashing into the red the banks have been booming as never before. In 1979, the first year of Thatcher's government, the Big Four clearing banks' pre-tax profits soared by 43 percent to stand at a record £1.56 billion.

Despite the small cuts in interest rates in the following year they continued to stand at £1.46 billion. In 1981 they leapt to £1.68 billion.

The bank profits windfall tax of £316 million in 1981 was a flea-bite, both

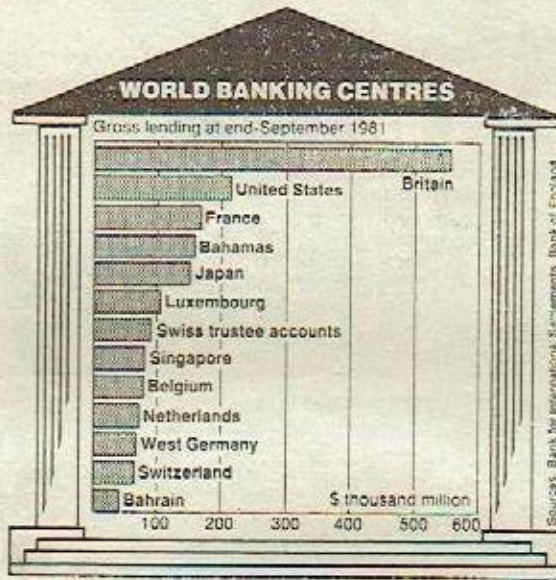
because it was so low and because it did not touch wide sectors of the banking system. And to meet the cost the banks simply increased their charges.

This bank finance has not been used in any major way to promote jobs by creating industry. In Japan in 1974-78 around 15 percent of the national economy was in bank loans to industry. In West Germany it was eight percent. In Britain only around three percent went into industrial loans.

## Oil

The banks are involved however in two boom areas of the economy. One is North Sea Oil - Britain's most profitable industry - but which creates virtually no major number of jobs.

The second is in industrial leasing. This is used by industrial companies frequently as an alternative to capital spending themselves. Britain's



Britain's banks lend twice as much as any other.

BRITAIN'S BIG BANKS	£ million
Barclays	567
National Westminster	494
Lloyd's	386
Standard and Chartered	261
Midland	232
Royal Bank of Scotland	108

tax laws allow firms leasing out equipment to claim 100 percent capital depreciation against tax.

The result was that in 1980, in deepening in-

dustrial recession, and when the profits of the rest of industry were plummeting, the leasing subsidiary of the Midland Bank increased its post-tax profits

from £52 million to £58 million.

The leasing subsidiary of Barclay's increased profits by 26 percent in the same year.

The banks are above all international operations and were the tremendous gainers from the abolition of exchange controls by the Thatcher government in 1979. Midland Bank international division increased profits by 30 percent in a single year.

## Slogan

Lloyd's Bank International increased profits by 122 percent in the first six months of 1981 compared to 1980.

Barclay's in 1980, became the first major European bank to raise money on the New York stock exchange.

When Labour considers its programme for 1982 one of the top items on the list should be to take control of these tremendous financial institutions.

'Nationalise the banks' is one of the oldest slogans of the labour movement. In Britain it is more relevant than anywhere else!

# Smiley's People

By Brian Heron

**IT'S AMAZING!** When you really want to do something, you can. I missed episode two, and barely made it back from Stoke Newington to Poplar to catch the last one. But I did it - I saw 'Smiley's People' from the beginning, more or less, to end.

It was worth it just to join in the discussions afterwards: 'No, the lighter was Smiley's ... Anne gave it to old George - that's why Karla set up Haydon, to have an affair with Smiley's wife.'

I must say Karla was a bit disappointing. He looked like a parody of the KGB hatchet man. Otherwise (though definitely ideologically unsound) it was wonderful. I wanted each episode to go on for an hour longer.

Old Smiley had ideological problems too - and that was the heart of it. The British ruling

class is more than a bit 'ideologically unsound' - a bit unsteady on their pins at the moment. Poor old George has to find his way through the tangle of red herrings, and his moral path through the thickets of the British establishment - now choked with the 'new breed' brought up in the shadow of the CIA.

To make these dilemmas more obvious everybody was played to the edge of caricature. In this, the series was faithful to the book, which I understand was written for the series .. well oiled wheels within wheels. But the drunken Connie being harried by George to get her memory going; Smiley's dismissal of his first and only love Anne (who has given up her racing drivers and wants to settle down) all this was a bit crude.

All the ambiguities in

Haydon's 'betrayal' of his country coupled with Anne's 'betrayal' with Haydon - all the fine tuning was missing. The problems are neatly packaged now. George is the only goody left.

Still, something of the old aroma lingered on. Karla and Smiley, two old knights from the looking glass war, each in turn brought low by their courtly virtues (Smiley overlooked the 'mole' for so long because he was entangled with Anne; Karla only wants 'the Best' for his errand daughter). There they were, staring at each other across what EP Thompson calls the central fracture in world politics, the German border.

Both old. Both from another time. Karla was one of Stalin's monks. A remorseless butcher in the name of an abstraction. We can guess his revulsion at the time-serving, flabby

ways of the post-Khrushchev bureaucrats. Yet Le Carré is acute enough to suggest Karla's vision is stronger than Smiley's.

They meet in the '30s while Britain is presiding over its decaying Indian Empire. And Smiley's certainties dissolve into dust. He loses. The British ruling class loses. Even the horrific monstrosity of Stalin's Russia cannot extinguish the spark of a new society, a new hope for humanity that is worth every sacrifice.

Smiley's People reduces the collision between two social systems to the contest between two individuals - both out of time and place. We are warned to be sad or understanding - but in the end we are all individuals, and all individuals are the same. There are no victories or

defeats any more.

'You've won, George,' says Peter Guillam as Karla is driven away by British Intelligence. 'Yes,' says George, 'I suppose I have.'

But, of course, he hasn't. There will be no recognition. All Smiley has done is tidy up the few loose ends of the previous cold war, the better to get on with the new one.

It's this new one that Smiley doesn't understand. The old ruling class values cannot comprehend it. Public school 'loyalty' and 'decency' are not necessary to de-stabilise the Chilean economy, or manufacture torture machines for Phillipine government.

But then Smiley will never understand, in an increasingly bewildering world, that the collapse of his values is not the end of the story - but only just the beginning.

**BAD TASTE** by Cormac



## Open the Boro's books!

By Dave Carter

SUPPORTERS OF MIDDLESBROUGH Football Club are currently feeling more persecuted than the editorial board of *Militant*. Relegated from Division 1 last season, the club are now bottom of Division 2.

Attendances have slumped to around 5,000, not surprising in view of the team's three consecutive 4-1 defeats at home to start its 'promotion' campaign.

Angry fans have watched a successful team sold off to other clubs. David Armstrong (now an England player) to Southampton, David Hodgson and Craig Johnston to Liverpool, Mark Proctor to Nottingham Forest, Tony McAndrew to Chelsea —

the list is endless. At least the club should have some money from these sales — but it is instead half a million in debt.

The Boro Supporters Action Group, set up by Frank Griffiths, the prospective Labour parliamentary candidate for Teeside Thornaby, has



Malcolm Allison

started to investigate. We have found out that the

club's new sports complex, which cost over £1 million and is still not in use two years after completion, has been offered for sale to the local council.

The complex was largely funded by public money, much of it from the Sports Council, but surprisingly was not put out to tender. It was built by a local firm, Parkway Estates, whose chairman is Charles Amer.

Amer is a director of the football club, and until last season was its chairman. The Sports Council have just announced their own enquiry.

In a novel attempt to

boost its flagging fortunes, the club has applied for permission to build 100 homes on the first team's training ground. No prizes for guessing which building firm will be applying for the contract!

Boro supporters in the Labour Party have drawn up a petition for signing at the home match against Bolton. We are demanding:

- That the books of the club be opened for independent scrutiny.
- An open public meeting to enable supporters to question the directors.
- A policy of reduced admission of prices for the unemployed to all parts of

the ground.

These demands have been widely publicised in the local press and on radio and TV. Even as I write this article, George Kitching, who was Amer's successor as chairman, has announced his resignation due to the 'pressures of the job'.

There are going to be a lot more pressures on the board in the coming weeks as Middlesbrough fans demand to know what the hell has been going on.

Now this ailing club has appointed Malcolm Allison as manager whose buying and selling at Man-

chester City nearly put the club in the 'knackers yard'. What hope have poor old Middlesbrough got?

It's another diversion which can't hide the fact that the business men who have controlled the club have sold off their best players and assets and still managed to 'skin' the club.

The business men have got the gravy and the prestige, and the fans have got frustrated and paid out their cash. But that's capitalism. It even cheats you on a Saturday afternoon on the terraces.

# New immigration rules are a con

By Chris Guthrie

GASPS OF HORROR from the right-wing of the Tory Party greeted the government's publication last Monday of new immigration rules, which are to come into effect on 1 January. How dare this Government confer more rights on black people when they were elected with a manifesto commitment to do the opposite?

These sick reactions from people with sick minds should not confuse people on the nature of the new rules. Not only do they not concede very much, but, in some cases, take even more rights away from black people.

The change that received the most media attention was around the right of British women to bring foreign husbands or fiancés into this country. At present, this right only exists for women who were born here or who have a parent who was born here. White women are far more likely to satisfy this criteria than black women.

The new rules say that all British women can now bring in foreign husbands... except that their husbands will have to satisfy immigration and other Home Office officials that they are genuinely getting married.

It was these officials' powers of discretion that kept Anwar Ditta separated from her children for six years, and which have kept many other families separated for even more years, and

were used to refuse entry to 14,000 people last year. The new rules therefore still allow ample room for racial discrimination against black women.

In addition, women resident in Britain who are not British citizens will still not have this right. They may pay taxes to help the government buy Trident missiles or to wage a brutal war 8,000 miles away, but they may not live here with a man who is not British.

One aspect of the new rules which received less media attention, concerns children born in Britain whose parents are neither British citizens nor settled in Britain — students or work permit holders, for example. Under the new Nationality Act which also comes into force on 1 January, these children will no longer have the right to British citizenship.



Anwar Ditta reunited with her children after a six year fight.

The new immigration rules bring their immigration status into line with this.

Although they are not likely to be deported while their parents are here, they may be refused re-entry if they left the country voluntarily because their status is at the discretion of immigration officers.

The new rules are at best only a minor conces-

sion, partly because the government faced some embarrassing cases in front of the European

Commission and Court. The right to repeal the Immigration and Nationality Acts must be stepped up.

### Manchester Labour Party Conference Against Passport Checks

Saturday 4 December 10am  
Manchester Polytechnic Students Union,  
Sidney Building, Oxford Rd.

## Mobilising against the checks

By M Wongsam, Manchester City Labour Party, anti-racist committee

AS THE government increase the intensity of their attack against the black community by deepening the role of the state machinery in the internal control and surveillance of blacks, resistance to these attacks is beginning to mount.

The latest move by the government is to introduce 'with an eyedrop' a scheme of nationality checks into the NHS, whereby blacks will be obliged to show their passports to prove their 'eligibility' for free health care in hospitals. In one hospital where this scheme is operating over 8,000 people have been 'checked' already, since the 1st of October, resulting in only one person being found 'not eligible'.

It is already policy in the DHSS to specially screen blacks claiming supplementary benefit. In Oldham recently there was

reported 680 cases of black claimants being refused benefit on the grounds that they did not 'qualify' for benefits under the 1980

supplementary benefits act. In fact, when these cases were taken by the Oldham Commission for Racial Equality, the DHSS capitulated on all but six.

Cases such as these in Oldham are happening on a nationwide scale, and it is only that by chance the Oldham CRE took the decision to pursue such an investigation that the case came to light. These instances of blatant state racism have not gone unnoticed by local anti-racist activists.

There are in existence several campaigns aimed at particular facets of state racism; now it seems that there is a good chance that they can come together in united action around the

general question of state racism. The labour movement is now also beginning to take a long overdue interest.

Recently, both CPSA and NUPE have taken formal opposition to the implementation of race checks, and NALGO are against their members carrying out passport checks, though only on the grounds that it would create too much work, and would cost more money than it would save. The timidity of these responses can only be challenged by sustained work among the memberships of these unions, in order to make the schemes inoperable.

It is to address itself to

these questions that the Manchester District Labour Party has called a day conference to discuss out the implications of immigration policy and internal control. It is hoped that out of this conference there will emerge united effort on the part of party, trade union members, and anti-racist activists, to fight back these unbridled attacks upon the black community and working class in general.

The Labour movement must see clearly that the attacks being perpetrated are a disguised attack on the whole working class, and that the only feasible response is therefore a united resistance of the whole working class.

## 'Poetry that is everyone's'

Poesia Militante/Militant Poetry by Raque Dalton, available from El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 29 Islington Park S. N.1.

ROQUE DALTON IS EL SALVADOR'S best known poet. His recognition as a major contributor to Spanish literature spreads further than the many countries which have awarded him prizes for his poetry.

But he was not just a poet. He was a revolutionary from his youth through his many years in prison and exile, to his death in El Salvador in 1975. This made him more than a revolutionary poet. He became a spokesperson for his class and of the oppressed of El Salvador.

His poetry gives a personal and vivid picture of the awful repression and poverty in the country that statistics and news reports cannot show. He wrote not as a passive commentator but as an active insurgent.

He believed that the revolutionary is 'the person most useful to his epoch'.

The view also applies to the revolutionary poet and therefore he 'thought it foolish to even discuss the matter with those who assert that, in poetry, the social function and the humanist posture are, at least, extra-poetic elements.'

He did not believe that the revolutionary poet's job is to write 'foretelling of socialist society before raising to the category of poetic material the contradictions, disasters, defects, and struggles of our present society.'

His poems are of torture, in prison, how the rulers scheme, the violence around him, and the sordidness of individual deeds told with a bitter sarcasm that can only come from experience of many years of oppression. What he wrote of shows how the rulers rule. How he wrote shows how people resist.

In 'looking for trouble' we get an idea of how natural the repression and resistance is seen in the country.

'The night of my first cell meeting it was raining the way I was dripping was much applauded by four or five characters from a Goya painting everyone present seemed rather bored perhaps with persecution or even torture forever in

their minds  
'When we left it was no longer raining my mother scolded me for coming home late.'

He showed that he had no time for reformers and charlatans who construct fancy notions of why Salvadoreans suffer repression. He showed where the blame lay. In 'A Few Lines' he wrote:

'Dear philosophers, dear progressive sociologists, dear social psychologists, don't fuck around so much with 'alienation' here what fucks us up the most is the alien nation.'

This pamphlet gives an insight into the poetry of Roque Dalton but also shows how people live in El Salvador and Latin America.

The book contains the poems in their original Spanish with an English translation on the opposite page, making a little Salvadorean culture accessible to many English speakers. But most of all it makes clear the need for the revolution.

'Because otherwise the people-child will still go naked stabbed by the most bemedalled thieves choked by all the rubbish and filth in this country like the river-bank slums of Acelhuate unable to demolish this great shanty town of El Salvador unable to flatten once and for all its mounds and potholes to leave the land ready for the bricklayers and carpenters to come and raise the new houses.'



# Socialist Challenge

## UNITE BEHIND TATCHELL IN BERMONDSEY

By Jeff King

A 'SURPRISED' and 'vexed' Michael Foot has been put on the spot by Bob Mellish's decision to resign his Bermondsey seat.

Why Foot should be surprised is beyond comprehension. After all Mellish had shown his hostility to the Labour Party when he supported 'independent' candidates against Labour in the May 1982 borough elections.

But Foot in his hostility to the left had been quite willing in fact quite eager, to make an alliance with Mellish despite his very dubious socialist credentials. The ex-Bermondsey MP had in the past been deputy chairperson of the Anglo-Spanish group, whose aim was to give a gloss to Franco's brand of fascism — clearly was an excellent ally against the 'over-eager' brand of socialism put forward by Peter Tatchell.

Ever since the Bermondsey saga began, Foot has given an excellent impression of someone who wants to lose the seat for Labour. Under Tory provocation he had publicly denounced Tatchell in the House of Commons. The Tory press grabbed this gift and went to town on the democratically selected Labour candidate.

This was a gift for the SDP/Liberal Alliance and another possible candidate Bermondsey's ex-Labour boss John O'Grady, who with his right wing cohorts had the borough of Southwark like a British version of Tammany Hall.

The behaviour of Foot and the right, and their sordid alliance with Mellish, acts against the interests of Labour in the bye-election. This is why no concessions must be made to the right wing.

Bermondsey Labour Party should once again elect Tatchell as its candidate. Anything else would be a retreat from the rights of the Labour Party members to democratically decide who they want to fight the election and would hand over

that right to the media and the Healey/Golding wing of the NEC. That is the best way to lose elections.

This is why no other left candidate — from Militant or elsewhere, should oppose in Bermondsey at the new selection conference. Right from the beginning forces of the left must unite, and that means uniting behind Peter Tatchell, anything else would create disunity.

If Peter Tatchell is again chosen as Bermondsey's candidate the election will be a real test case for the left. The press and the television will throw everything they have into a campaign of vilification and slander against Tatchell. They will feed on Foot's gift and do their very best to make sure the once impregnable Labour seat of Bermondsey is lost.

The Labour Party rank and file, particularly its left wing cannot permit that to happen. Every London Labour Party must answer this challenge.

The full forces of the London labour movement must be sent into Bermondsey to support Tatchell, so that a resounding victory can be gained for Labour and its conference policies.

# Cops provoke Brixton fires



Police saturated Brixton.

By Toni Gorton

TOP COP, deputy assistant commissioner Robert Hunt declared that Monday 1 November when Brixton's 'front line' again went up in flames was a great success tactically and strategically. In a stroke London's police under the leadership of Sir Kenneth Newman have put into practice new techniques of black-bashing and placed all the blame for the day's events on black youth. The whole thing's a fit up.

At 2am Monday morning some 1,000 police saturated the Railton Road area in an exercise designed to coincide with the eviction of a small group of squatters in houses due to be demolish-

ed later in the day to make way for new council housing.

In the event, no arrests took place during the evictions at 5.30am and all occupiers of the nine properties left quietly.

Lambeth Labour leader Ted Knight said, 'We had agreed with the police that there would be a token presence while the evictions took place.'

Commander Fairbairn did say he would have some forces in reserve outside the area in case of any developments.'

He went on to say: 'We were shocked and surprised by the large number of police in the area. We didn't anticipate any trouble. It is regrettable that the whole thing has been used as a kind of exercise; it wasn't necessary.'

Quite right. Saturation policing à la the Swamp '81 operation that sparked off the earlier Brixton uprisings simply wasn't called for by the actual situation. What was at stake was the need for the police to test their new techniques, new equipment and their new 'Immediate Response Units'.

Later in the day large numbers of youth angry at the overwhelming presence of the police and what they saw as the further destruction of their community as bulldozers tore up the empty houses marched on Brixton police station and also set fire to obvious symbols of the local council.

This was the excuse that the police had looked for and planned. Into action swung the IRUs. These units are similar to the anti-riot squads used in the North of Ireland and benefit from the experience of metropolitan police chief Newman who headed up the Royal Ulster Constabulary for a number of years. They can be mobilised in a matter of moments from 48 separate areas in London.

Most of the press knew something was up. The early morning edition of

the Daily Express, published at the very time everything was happening, carried an article headed 'Brixton police swoop'.

It said: 'A thousand policemen were poised this morning to break up the so-called "no go" London area crime areas. The standby order was given by police chief Sir Kenneth Newman ... his targets: Railton Road, Brixton and All Saints Road, Notting Hill.'

Newman said that he will have no hesitation in using plastic bullets, CS gas and water cannon and the recent police federation's annual conference has shown that the police as a whole are spoiling for a fight with the black community.

This confrontation has nothing to do with black 'crime' but is part of the right wing offensive against the whole of the black community day in and day out.

The Daily Express considers that Newman's performance as police chief will be crucial to Thatcher winning the next election. They go as far as to rate this above three other issues: the Common Market, nuclear disarmament and wages.

Whatever may be thought of their prognosis, law and order has always been high on the Tories' programme. They have consistently used racist ideas to split the working class, intimidate black people and stimulate fear in the middle classes.

It's more than time to rally round the defence of black youth in particular and black people in general. One small step will be to start building for the demonstration on 27 March 1983 sponsored by the Campaign against Racist Laws.

Public meeting and film  
Release Nelson Mandela Victory to the ANC!  
Wednesday 10 November 7.30pm  
Conway Hall (Small hall) Red Lion Square  
(nearest tube Holborn)  
Admission 50p (unwaged 25p)  
Organised by City Anti Apartheid Group

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