

Socialist Challenge

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THATCHER'S GLORY: WHAT PRICE?



THATCHER'S thief-in-the-night visit to the Malvinas-Falklands islands is a blatant attempt to restore the Tories' flagging political fortunes in time for a hoped for June general election.

In a sordid glorification of the 250 British soldiers killed, the thousands more Argentinians — and the thousands maimed on both sides — Thatcher visited the scenes of the British battle victories and the vast war cemetery at San Carlos Bay.

It speaks for itself that Goose Green and the rest are the big events of Thatcher's political life. They fit comfortably together with her other 'achievements' — four million unemployed, destruction of the welfare state and shackles on the unions.

The economic costs of the war are continually revised upwards. They presently are estimated at £2bn. The armed forces were recently rewarded with £1bn package of new ships, aircraft and other military hardware, to replace that lost in the war. In the same defence White Paper, the government com-

mitted themselves to a 'sizeable garrison in the Falkland Islands maintained for the foreseeable future'. The costs of this will be enormous. Nothing could underline more the priorities of the Tories in the face of the scourges being visited on working people.

Thatcher might still hope to find electoral gains through her victory against Argentina. But her 'blood and treasure' justification for hanging onto the Malvinas-Falklands finds her isolated in the world. The Tory press dismissed Argentina's claim that Thatcher's visit to the islands was a 'provocation'. But the reason she had to make a 23 hour flight with two in-flight refuellings was because not one single Latin American country will grant landing rights to British civilian aircraft.

In the United Nations last November Argentina won the support of 90 countries demanding Britain enter into negotiations over sovereignty. Britain was backed by only 12 countries with 52 abstentions.

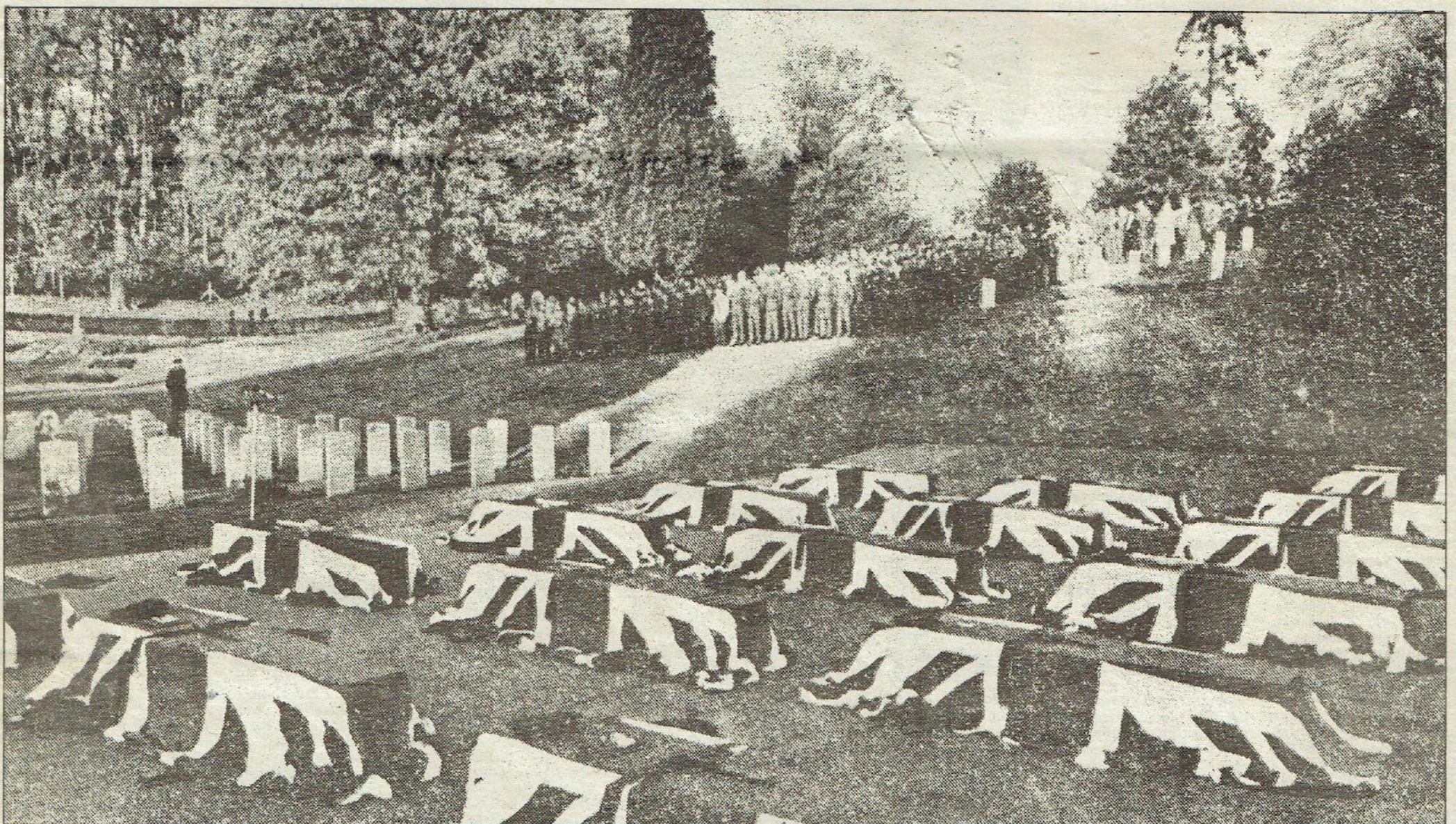
In a meeting of the non aligned movement to be held in Managua this week Britain's

claims to the islands will once again be decisively repudiated.

Labour's front bench has criticised Thatcher's visit. Good. But placing opposition in terms of the Franks report, about to be published, is hopeless. A working class policy cannot be to out-Thatcher Thatcher. It is ridiculous to centre criticism on Thatcher 'not acting earlier'. Thatcher stands indicted for her imperialist denial of Argentinian rights. Her proposal to maintain the Falklands-Malvinas as a military base is further proof of this.

The plight of the Falkland Islanders shows the criminal character of Britain's policy. Previously, the islanders got education, social services, food and everything else from Argentina a mere 400 miles away. Now these things have to come 8,000 miles from Britain. Servicemen outnumber the islanders by two to one. These islands are not British.

This principle should be Labour's policy. Such a policy is the only way to undercut any electoral gains that Thatcher might hope to reap from her Falklands adventure.



Britain's sprat war

By Brian Grogan

BRITAIN'S 'sprat' war with Denmark may have all the elements of a farce, but it has provided Thatcher with a heaven sent opportunity to revive the sagging Falkland gung-ho spirit. At least this is the hope of the Fleet St scribblers.

British workers have no interest in supporting the exclusion of Danish fishermen from Britain's 12 mile limit, the box around the Shetlands, or mackerel fishing off the West coast of Scotland. And neither

have Danish workers got an interest in the 'victory' of Denmark.

Britain's appeal to 'legality' is total hypocrisy. In the 'cod' war with Iceland, Britain claimed access right up to the Icelandic

coast.

But behind the soap opera antics of super rich conservative Euro-MP, Kent Kirk, is a deadly serious warning to working people. It shows how quickly inter-imperialist economic conflicts can come to war. It is not only Britain, but the whole of the Western world that is going through an economic recession.

As a result, the ag-

gravation of inter-imperialist competition is threatening a trade war of the kind seen in the 1930's — which saw the recession turned into a prolonged depression.

The arguments over European steel imports into the United States, of US man-made fibres into the EEC, of Japanese cars and electronics into the EEC and the US are indicators

of a situation which will not ease off. The recent conference of imperialist countries to discuss tariff barriers ended in disorder.

This conference — the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT — was able in the past 20 years to meet and progressively reduce tariff barriers. This time, it ended with a declaration of war by US agro-business on EEC agriculture.

Such developments have a tendency towards war. War is necessary for capitalism to survive. It is the only way in the last analysis that the various capitalisms can establish a new pecking order — and create the conditions for any new expansion.

Strong

Yet, however necessary war is, it is exceedingly dangerous for capitalism in the present world situation. The working class is still too strong to stand for the sacrifices of war; the colonial revolution has by no means been reversed; and the Soviet Union and other workers states are too strong. Any inter-imperialist war in the present situation therefore would threaten the very survival of capitalism. And of course the existence of nuclear weapons makes inter-imperialist war very costly. The imperialist powers will only engage in it as an absolutely last resort.

The current conflict with Denmark show that inter-imperialist conflicts are a hall-mark of the EEC itself. The aggressiveness of Britain's response is meant to serve as a pointer to her future intentions in front of her Common Market partners.

Tied

The fortunes of Britain as a capitalist economy are firmly tied in with the EEC. Some 43 per cent of British exports now go to the Common Market countries — compared with only 21 per cent 10 years ago. Nonetheless, throughout the whole period of its membership, Britain has been in deficit with the rest of the EEC in manufactured goods — the life blood of British industry. It has even been in deficit in iron and steel and textiles.

Thatcher's whole purpose in deepening the recession and creating mass unemployment is in order turn this situation around. This skirmish with Denmark is, in more ways than one, a 'shot across the bows' of other EEC partners.

Out

The Common Market has proved no benefit to British working people. We should get out. But the 'little Englander' alternative of the Tony Benns of this world are even less realistic than ten years ago.

The only alternative to the EEC which would actually benefit working people is a full blooded socialist course based on breaking the stranglehold of capitalism over the economy and instituting instead a planned economy under workers control. This is what needs to be fought for in the debates leading up to the election, and beyond.

Parties manoeuvre for anti-nuclear vote

By Phil Hearse

CND LAST WEEK received its biggest compliment ever — the appointment of Michael Heseltine as Defence Secretary. Heseltine's more or less explicit brief will be to 'defuse' CND. More and more all the political parties are recognising that nuclear disarmament will be a crucial issue in the up-coming general election.

Socialist Challenge readers will appreciate that in the present government Heseltine appears as something of a 'liberal' — all those visits to Toxteth to see the urban poor and make them promises. And by Tory standards he's regarded as in touch with the young. Who better then to lead Thatcher's campaign to persuade people that the Tories are serious nuclear disarmers?

That will be the key to the Tories' campaign — serious nuclear disarmament is multi-lateral nuclear disarmament. The other side of the coin will be the claim that those who propose unilateral nuclear disarmament are either dupes playing into the hands of the Russians, if not conscious agents of the Russians.

Last Friday CND chairperson Joan Rud-dock, together with Bruce Kent and EP Thompson visited the Defence Ministry to hand in a challenge to Heseltine to debate them on television.

The fact that the Tories are running scared of the nuclear disarmament campaign shows just how right the Labour left — and the two thirds majority of the Labour conference who voted for unilateral nuclear disarmament — were when they thought that nuclear disarmament would make Labour popular with the voters.

The huge turn out of 30,000 women to surround the Greenham Common air base made all the major parties think. The Liberals and the SDP are making a big play for the nuclear disarmament vote. While last year's Liberal conference voted in favour of unilateralism (against the advice of leader David Steel) the main thrust of the SDP-Liberals will be for multilateral disarmament.

The argument they are currently using is to attack Thatcher for not responding to the proposals by Soviet leader Andropov — and thus not being serious about multilateral disarmament. As the SDP's David Owen pointed out, Thatcher rejected the last set of proposals on missiles reduction without even having read them.

The SDP-Liberal

alliance like the Labour right is against Trident on grounds of cost, but would be in favour of installing Cruise missiles if the Soviet Union keeps its SS-20 missiles.

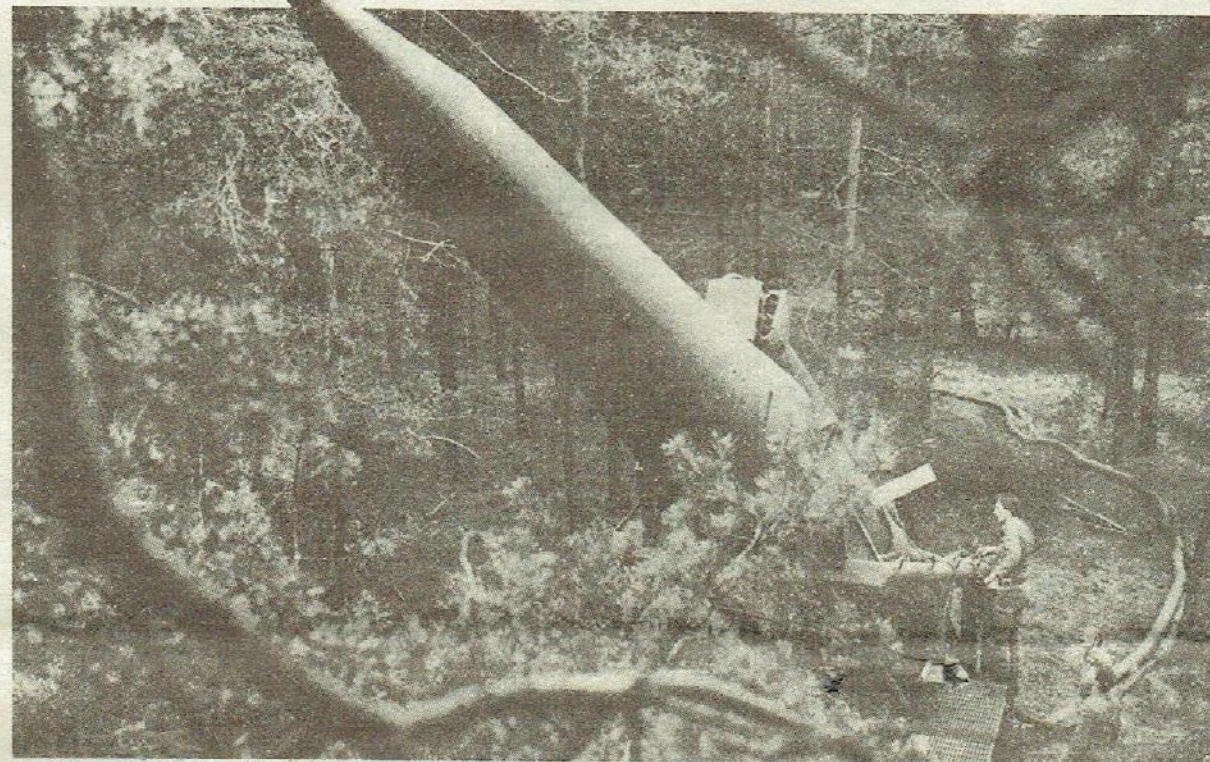
These manoeuvrings by the SDP-Liberal Alliance are unlikely to upstage the Labour Party or seriously confuse the nuclear disarmament movement. Even while raising the slogan of a 'Nuclear free Europe from Poland to Portugal', CND has remained constant in its campaigning slogans against all nuclear bases and for withdrawal from NATO. The real question being raised by the present debate among the party leaders is will a Labour government get rid of nuclear bases and missiles; and will unilateral nuclear disarmament be in Labour's election manifesto?

Michael Foot, interviewed on Channel 4 news last week fudged the issue again. He said that Labour would send back Cruise, cancel Trident and take 'serious unilateral steps' towards nuclear disarmament, but re-affirmed that 'unilateral disarmament is not counter-posed to multilateral disarmament'.

In other words, he left open whether a Labour government would automatically get rid of the British Polaris 'deterrent', the F-111 nuclear bases and the rest of the US-UK nuclear paraphernalia.

There is no doubt that if Michael Foot did try to get unilateral nuclear disarmament into Labour's manifesto, then he would face a serious challenge from the right wing majority on the NEC. But he has the overwhelming authority of a two-thirds majority of Labour's conference behind him, together with the six million trade unionists affiliated to CND.

Labour's right wing, of course, know full well the consequences of a Labour government coming to power committed to nuclear disarmament. Such a government would be thrown headlong, irrespective of its intentions, into a full-scale show-down with the British military and political establishment and



Pershing missile in West Germany forest.

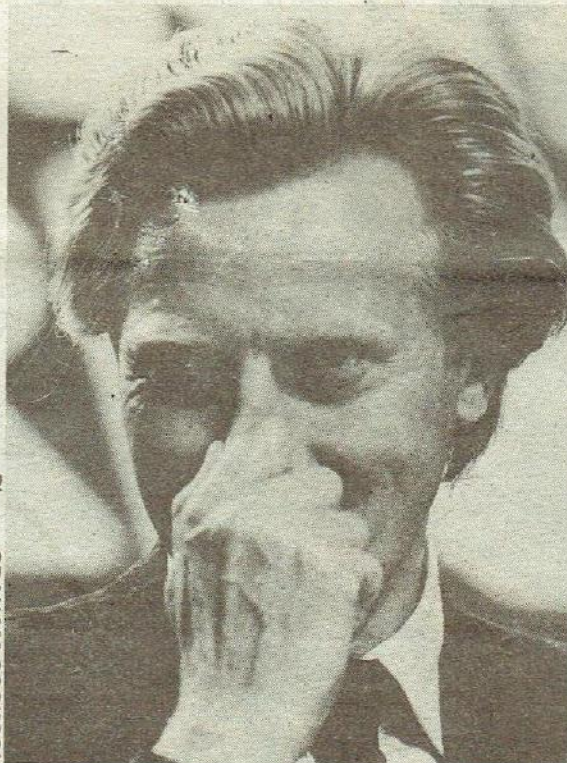


Photo: GRAHAM COOKSON



Photo: GRAHAM COOKSON

Heseltine aims to combat CND, while Foot avoids a clear commitment to unilateralism.

with the United States. A government which threw out all the US bases and refused any nuclear weapons on its soil would have effectively withdrawn from active participation in NATO — which is one reason why the slogan of unilateral nuclear disarmament goes hand in hand with the slogan of 'Out of NATO'. Such a move would change the politico-military map of Europe.

You don't have to be an addict of political thrillers to see the consequences of such a move.

The United States would do everything in its power to de-stabilise such a government — as would all the political representatives of the British ruling class, the intelligence services and the military. Only the most massive mobilisations of the working class and the peace movement could defend a Labour government which seriously went for nuclear disarmament against such a sustained attack.

Those like Tony Benn and Michael Foot, who regrettably think that it

would be possible to get rid of nuclear weapons and stay within a NATO framework are kidding people — including themselves. Only a determined socialist government could carry through unilateral nuclear disarmament, with all the consequent re-alignments in Britain's foreign policy, and the necessary adjustments in the armed forces and the defence industry.

It is precisely because they want no such challenge to the Atlantic alliance that the Labour right will try to avoid

unilateralism being in the manifesto.

As the date for the arrival of Cruise missiles gets nearer, the debate on nuclear weapons and the campaign against them will come more and more to the centre of the political stage. While it will be absolutely necessary to fight the Tories and the SDP-Liberal alliance on this issue, the Labour left must lose no opportunity to hold Foot to conference policy — no nuclear weapons, no US bases of any kind!

Tatchell for Bermondsey!

PETER TACHELL'S choice as Labour candidate for Bermondsey is the first victory in a long line of self-inflicted defeats for the Labour Party and trade union left.

The whole left, both inside and outside the party, should back him to become Bermondsey's MP. One year ago Michael Foot told the Commons that 'Peter Tatchell will enter this House over my dead body.' Now he eats his words. Why?

The *Sun*, Rupert Murdoch's answer to Salome, gets it wrong as usual. Tuesday's edition, in an editorial you can hardly read for spittle, tells us 'nothing has changed except Michael Foot.' Wrong, Mr Murdoch. What has changed is that the rank and file of the party you want to destroy have refused to tolerate the campaign you and your Tory friends have organised, to persuade the Party to commit suicide by purging its most resolute activists and its most popular policies.

The *Sun*'s John Akass is even more hypocritical. Tatchell stands condemned because 'he will lose Labour thirty seats in the election.' Since when has the *Sun* wanted a Labour victory?

The truth is this: those who conspired to deprive Bermondsey of their right to choose their candidate came from *outside* the labour movement and want to smash it. This includes ex-Labour, ex-Bermondsey MP Bob Mellish, who means that Foot is without honour and has stabbed him in the back. And how would Mellish describe his own action in leaving the party? Michael Foot's 'crime' is that, just once since taking office as leader, he has had

to bow to his members instead of their enemies.

But what made Michael change his tune? True, it doesn't take much to sway him. A whiff of high office, and he ditched the pacifism of his middle age for the militarism of the dotage. But it was not Tatchell's convincing argument for extraparliamentary mass action, or his dedication to Labour's socialist policies, that moved dear Michael.

It was his failure, after three months of trying to serve the union right wing Militant's head on a platter, because Labour's rank and file won't allow it.

Election

And not the same John Golding who told us in November that he would 'throw out Militant root and branch because they will cost us the general election,' and found himself alone in voting against Tatchell because his bedfellows have been made uncomfortably aware that they are losing Labour the election, and that they, too, may suffer the fate of Sidney Weighell if they press ahead.

Tatchell's selection went ahead, not because Michael Foot has changed his mind or because the witch-hunt is over, but because the Bermondsey Constituency Labour Party offered an example to the rest of the left by standing firm: no Bishop Stortford-type compromises, no deal, no 'sacrifices in the cause of unity' — just the defence

of their decisions, their rights, and Labour's policies.

Split

That is why Tatchell must win in Bermondsey. The Communist Party, who are standing a candidate to Tatchell's right, and the Revolutionary Communist Party, who are standing a candidate to his left, are both equally wrong. For the vast bulk of working people, this election will pass judgement neither on Eric Hobsbawm's road to socialism nor on the dictatorship of the proletariat. It will pass judgement on the simple, basic issues over which the most socialist section of the working class has been fighting, through the unions, through the Labour Party and through CND, for the last three

years: for unilateral disarmament; against wage restraint; for EEC withdrawal; for the healthworkers' strike and the ASLEF strike.

This election will be a direct, open contest between the policies of the most advanced section of the British working class and Thatcherism, with a third corner taken up, in the shape of the SDP-Liberal Alliance, by the policies of Labour's right wing shorn of their cover inside the Labour Party. Three hundred odd votes for fringe candidates will not be seen as a vote against Labour's right wing but a vote for it and for Thatcher.

The future of the healthworkers, railworkers, of CND, and of the Labour left depend on the outcome of this election. We say, unconditionally: **We're with Tatchell. Are you?**



Tatchell's victory as the *Sun* saw it.



Bermondsey: now help beat the Tories

By Peter Tatchell

THE NEC DECISION to endorse my candidature is not a personal victory, nor simply one for the Bermondsey Party, but for all in the labour movement who have fought to uphold the democratic right of CLPs to choose their own parliamentary candidate.

To everyone who stood by Bermondsey over the last year, we offer our thanks and gratitude. The forthcoming by-election is the most important the constituency has had to face for sixty years.

Not since 1922 when Bermondsey was first won for Labour, has there been an election of such significance.

A victory in Bermondsey will pave the way for a massive Labour victory in the general election. We urge members of the labour and trade union movement to come to Bermondsey to help lay the foundations for this victory.

Bring members from your ward and union branch:
 Sunday 16 January, 11am, 79 Balfour Street, London SE17;
 Sunday 23 January, 11am, 156b Union Street, London SE1;
 Sunday 30 January, 11am, 133 Lower Road, London SE16;
 Tuesdays 7pm, 133 Lower Road, London SE16
 For information contact Dave Fryer 732 8274 or Anne Coltart 231 9572

Don't wait for the by-election: Bermondsey needs your help now!

Why trade unionists should control the block vote

TRADE UNION Broad Lefts and branch delegates will meet in Liverpool on 19 February to discuss controlling the block vote at Labour Party conference. Speakers include Tony Benn. Socialist Challenge asked PHIL HOLT of the Post Office Engineers, who is closely involved, to explain what he hopes the conference will achieve.

'We've called this conference because trade union leaders — particularly at the Labour Party conference — take decisions without proper consultation with the union rank and file.

They disregard even their own union conference decisions. For example, the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Trades' delegation backed the register at Labour Party conference though their own members voted against witch-hunts.

This came to a head in the elections for the Labour Party's National Executive Committee: Sidney Weighell's

disgraceful behaviour is typical of what happens in many right wing unions. It not only undermines union democracy but it discredits the whole union movement.

We think that the union lefts must get together over this to exchange information, contacts, and ideas and to try and start Broad Lefts where they don't exist at present.

We and others on the left, by linking up, found we were able to ensure that the demand for a shorter working week was passed by Labour Party conference. We want to

extend this by ensuring that union delegations oppose the witch-hunt, for example, at the 1983 conference.

The union democracy issue and the Labour Party democracy issue are completely interlinked, and therefore a big issue at conference will be a drive to set up Labour Party factory branches. Obviously, therefore, conference will be discussing proposals to change the proportion of votes cast by the unions at the Labour Party's conference.

There is no cut and dried view on this, but I think delegates will feel the Labour Party must remain based on the unions as the organised expression of the industrial working class.

Although people rightly feel emotional about the way the block vote was used, we want to ensure that it is cast as the rank and

file want, under their control.

Therefore we'll look at measures like:

- * Opening up the way unions make their decisions, abolishing unnecessary secrecy and reporting on what delegations do and how their decisions are made.

- * In line with this, fighting for minorities on union delegations to have access to union journals and the right to circulate their views.

- * Ensuring that there is ample time to discuss political issues at union conferences.

- * Obviously, ensuring full time officials are elected. I would urge trade unions and broad lefts to send delegates to this important conference.'

Credentials for the BLOC Conference on 19 February from 108 Princes Boulevard, Bebington, Merseyside, L63 7PE.

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.

Raindi's — The best possible for the T&G, but good enough for black workers?

By Valerie Coultas

ON 4 JANUARY the first batch of 65 Raindi strikers returned to work. The 12 week long strike in Sandwell in the West Midlands had won union recognition, one of the central demands of the strikers and a minimum wage guarantee, but three victimised militants did not return with the rest. They were the sacrificial lambs who 'allowed' the rest, according to T&G official Don Marston, to get a settlement.

The balance sheet of most of the militants involved — both IWA members and the strikers themselves — was that this was the best deal that they could get from a ruthless employer such as Raindi, who was taken to court for setting thugs on a tailor and garment union official who had earlier tried to unionise this sweatshop.

It was also the assessment of members of the Sandwell Tribune group who had consistently given support to the strikers on the picket line and through the local Labour Party.

But the question remains to be answered as to whether or not the T&G did give the lead necessary to win this dispute right from the word go? And here we have to answer in the negative. The problem with the T&G leadership in the West Midlands, and this was glaringly illustrated in the 1981 Ansell's strike, is that it consistently underestimates the militancy of its members when they move into action.

The advice given to this Asian workers' picket line

was not to antagonise the police, ie. to let scabs go into work. This inevitably led after weeks of picketing to 30 of the workers becoming demoralised and calling for a settlement as soon as possible.

The assumption was made that the inexperience of the strikers, particularly Asian women strikers, would lead them to back away from any confrontation with the police. But as one of the solidest leaders of the strike was Mrs Bashki Kaur, and everyone knew this, it seems likely that a clearer lead on the picket line or even a decision to occupy the plant at an early stage in the dispute would have at the very least been given serious consideration by the strikers. But no such suggestions came from the T&G.

That the Asian community in Smethwick was split right down the middle on this strike cannot be in doubt. The entire community was polarised, for and against Raindi or the strikers. Raindi sent out his relatives to fetch the scabs to work, took adverts out in the local papers, even got shop keepers to refuse to serve labour councillors who supported the strike, and mobilised right-wing Asian Labour Party members to sign leaflets calling for a return to work.

Saw

The packed strike committee meetings clearly saw that those who backed Raindi now had to be exposed before the community as a whole. The last meeting pledged to en-

sure that right-wing Asians would get their comeuppance in selection meetings in Dudley and Ladywood, where two of Raindi's friends hope to win support.

Such a polarisation called for an escalated militancy among the strikers themselves as a precondition for forcing the issue of Raindi's into the left/right divide in the labour movement as a whole. When Warley East Labour party was requested before Christmas to hold a demonstration in support of Raindi the right-wing used the excuse that the strike committee should call for such an action first and then they would support it. The traditionally passive attitude of the Labour Party to such disputes was made harder to challenge by the straight-jacket placed on the picket lines by the T&G.



Sean Geraghty (left) and other Times electricians.

'We saved jobs'

SEAN GERAGHTY, secretary of the 1250-strong London press branch of the electrician's union, achieved fame last summer when his branch took a strong stand in support of the health workers' dispute. He hit the headlines again recently when electricians from *The Times* group of newspapers stated an 11-day strike. CAROL TURNER talked to him about the dispute and the future of the union.

THE media presented the recent *Times* strike as a case of Luddite union practices. What was the dispute really about?

It goes back to when Murdock took over *The Times* empire. We have a locally-negotiated agreement which covers everything, all electrical requirements — with provision for an annual review.

cooperation — although no one's been asked to work on the equipment since they went back.

We've got our right to review the agreement which will be finalised by 1 July, when the extra pay will be consolidated. And we've got more besides.

We've saved four electricians' jobs which were under threat. And *The Times* group have agreed

FRANK CHAPPLE
The men seem to enjoy being out on strike and I really couldn't care less what happens to them.
'I couldn't care less what happens next. As far as I'm concerned *The Times* management and my members deserve each other. All I know about the dispute is what I've read in the press.'

Management were refusing to update the agreement because, in effect, they wanted to impose a wage freeze. For the same reason, they'd unilaterally withdrawn from the Newspaper Proprietors Association negotiations in the autumn.

We've been fighting for the right to have our agreement reviewed and to break the wage freeze. Management not only refused to negotiate during the dispute, but their Friday 31 December ultimatum was a threatened lock-out.

to take part in the national NPA negotiations. These are all real gains from the dispute.

Throughout the dispute, Frank Chapple made a series of disparaging statements. How do you feel about this public role?

We've never had the support of Chapple and his executive. All our gains — on jobs, wages, and conditions — have been made despite the executives' attitude towards us. And the new president-elect, Eric

THE TIMES DISPUTE

THE TIMES electrician's dispute started on 20 December, when nine electricians walked out over management's demand that they operate new and additional equipment which had been blacked. Within half-an-hour management had announced that none of the 92 electricians would be paid unless the men returned to work. The chapel (works unit) met, and walked out in support. The dispute was backed by the London press branch.

Management refused to negotiate, they wanted the men back unconditionally — working on the blacked equipment — before they'd begin talks. The men stayed out, support by all the other unions involved, until an agreement was reached with the aid of SOGAT negotiators.

On Friday 31 December, a meeting of the chapel voted to accept the negotiated settlement with only one vote against. They returned to work, as Sean Geraghty put it, 'smelling of roses'.

Management had egg on its face: the attempt by Murdock to impose a wage freeze had been effectively broken.

electd shop stewards and putting it in the hands of appointed officials.

How do you think this can be changed? What needs to be done?

What the unions needs most is democracy. First, the decisions of conference must be binding on the executive. They reflect the views of the rank and file member. One way to make sure of this is to elect

When my branch supported the health workers dispute in the summer, Chapple alleged it was a political strike. Every strike is a political strike.

We were carrying out TUC policy, and helping protect the health service for everyone in this country.

Chapples's role in the TUC and in the Labour Party has always been a reactionary one. He

In an attempt to break the dispute, management announced that no member of the paper staff would be paid unless an edition of *The Times* appeared on Friday 31 December. Sean Geraghty drew his own conclusions:

'Undoubtedly, part of the Board of Managers' motives for the Friday deadline was the feeling that their readership must be able to read the New Year's Honours List, fresh from the Palace.'

our officials.

Take the vote on whether of not to join the Common Market. Our conference voted two to one against. Yet the delegation at that year's Labour Party conference voted in favour.

When Chapple came to power in the EPTU it heralded a purge of the left in the union. What does that experience tell you about the Labour Party witch-hunt?

It's a question of who the real wreckers inside the labour movement are.

follows in the footsteps of many past labour leaders — like those who sold out the general strike.

If such people have power — Chapple and his cohorts in the TUC, Healey and Hattersley in the Labour Party — the prospects for the working class are very bleak indeed.

We'll end up with watered-down Tory policies which they claim are in the interest of getting good returns at the ballot box.

These are the labour leaders whose politics will maintain the divided society we live in, not change it.

NATIONAL BOOK SALE

15 January - 5 February at

The Other Bookshop
328 Upper St London N1
Hours - Mon, Tues, Sat 10-6; Wed 12-7; Thurs, Fri 11-7

and

Birmingham's Other Bookshop
137 Digbeth Birmingham B5
Hours - Mon-Sat 10-6 Closed Wed

SEAN GERAGHTY
'My members don't deserve to be saddled with Frank Chapple. He treats us like Jaruzelski treats the Poles.'

Our settlement has broken their wage freeze strategy — they've done a complete about-turn.

What exactly did the settlement achieve?

We got what we wanted, even though we had to make some compromises. Our lads have agreed to work on the disputed equipment, with an extra hour's pay for their

Hammond, will be more of the same.

The union executive is hell-bent on destroying the rank and file organisation. Just look at the way it's closed down the branches who didn't agree with the policy of putting tame appointees on Labour Party management committees.

Union policy is one of removing the power from

Triple Alliance call in South Wales



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

S Wales miners support nurses. Now they need support.

AS WE go to press, the South Wales miners' executive has still to meet to decide to proceed with the strike call scheduled for 17 January. But, as BARRY WILKINS reports, the rank and file are preparing for an all-out fight to save the S Wales coal industry.

A PUBLIC meeting in Newport on Monday night called upon S Wales trade union leaders in the steel coal and rail industries to organise a triple alliance in defence of jobs in all three industries.

The meeting was supported by steelworkers from Llanwern, Port Talbot and other smaller plants in S Wales, together with miners and lodge officials from several pits, two S Wales executive members and many other trades unionists.

Speakers argued that the triple alliance of rail, coal and steel unions could be a powerful instrument for saving jobs in S Wales as it has been in Scotland with the saving of Ravenscraig. A motion calling on local union leadership to get moving

on it was carried unanimously.

Dai Davies from Penrhiwceiber NUM lodge and a member of the S Wales executive outlined the threats facing the S Wales coalfields. 'We produce seven per cent of deep mined coal but receive only 1.5 per cent of their investment. We are due to receive only £31m investment in this financial year compared with £1,600m in Yorkshire. In the last eight months of 1982, we lost 1200 jobs in S Wales.'

All this amounts to a deliberate policy of running down the coalfields Dai explained. The demand for new recruitment and immediate investment of £400m is vital for the future of the S Wales coalfield. 'If those

demands are not met by the Board, we must go out on strike to win them.'

Dai explained the commitment of the NUM to the triple alliance and Arthur Scargill's attempt to get cooperation from the other unions. 'The S Wales miners would participate in any meaningful triple alliance to fight in defence of our jobs and communities,' Dai concluded.

Ray Davies, a member of the largest steel union, ISTC, in Llanwern stressed what a victory it was in Scotland to have saved Ravenscraig from closure. He explained that his had been done by the activation of the triple alliance by pressure from the rank and file. Ray argued that we must now build up pressure from the regions for a national triple alliance and that the recent shift to the left in the ISTC executive would help this.

'We can't afford to wait for the outcome of

the next general election hoping for a Labour victory. We must start organising now to be ready to defend our plants at jobs whether the next government is Tory Labour. The message must go from this meeting our regional and national leaders — we will fight for our future.'

Tommy Lyons from the electricians' union at the Port Talbot steelworks supported the call for a triple alliance and emphasised that we can simply rely on trade union leaders to do it. The pressure of the rank and file would be necessary getting it off the ground.

There was general agreement that the next step must now be to build up and organise more rank and file support in various unions and plants. Finally, the meeting pledged support to the S Wales miners in their battle for a secure future for their industry and jobs.

Socialist transport policy needed

By Brian Grogan

THE TORIES are planning the biggest cutbacks on Britain's railways since the Beeching massacre in 1966. This is to be done behind a smokescreen of 'rejection' of the most ridiculous and obscene recommendations of the Serpell report.

This report, drawn up by an inquiry team headed by Sir David Serpell, a former member of the British Rail Board, recommends a series of options for the Tories to consider.

Its most suicidal proposal is to cut the rail network from the present 11000 miles of track to 1,600. This is the size where no subsidy would be required. Such a plan would have the East coast line terminating at Newcastle; a West coast line serving Glasgow — with an Edinburgh link but going no further; a line terminating at Cardiff; and proportionate cuts in the South East.

Such is the logic of the anarchy of capitalism. It would take 50 lorries to carry the same as one train or 20 buses to carry a trainload of passengers. It needs little imagination to envisage the result of such a plan.

But even if this option is rejected, the Tories are likely to utilise the other options to block the proposed electrification programme. Other cutbacks recommended include extensive use of single track — thus slowing trains down further.

These proposals are argued on the grounds of

the supposed massive subsidy received by British Rail. Yet, as the British Rail Board itself has pointed out, Britain has the most cost effective railway in Europe. Its subsidy is a third of French railways and one half of the German.

However, this 'cost effectiveness' has been achieved at the expense of vicious attacks on railworkers and a slashing of investment to the bone. BR has a lower level of investment per train kilometre than any country in Europe. Its yearly investment is a mere £350m. The electrification programme would boost this to £600.

Increase

Some 98 per cent of diesel and 60 per cent of electrics in BR's fleet of 10,000 are over 15 years old. Just to replace them needs an increase in investment of 30 per cent over the next 10 years.

The entire fleet of shunting locomotives was built between 1948 and 1956 and nothing has been added. In 1978-79, there were too few locos to cope with the programmed number of trains.

The shortage of replacement rails means speed restrictions. 3000 miles of track will have to be closed by 1990 for safety reasons unless policy is changed.

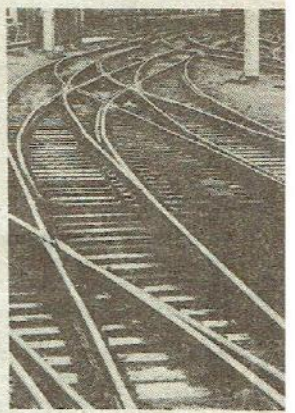
Only 16 locos were built in 1979, the year in which nearly £15m of profitable freight traffic was turned away because of lack of rolling stock. 54 freight yards were closed between 1980 and the end of 1982. The British Rail Engineering workshops are, absurdly, under continual threat of closure.

Benefit

The inefficiencies and wastefulness of capitalism are highlighted by the present transport system which encourages one section to compete against another, instead of utilising all the resources as fully as possible. An integrated transport system is needed that works for the benefit of people, not the profits of capitalists.

In the heat of the debate opened up by Serpell, the Labour Party should announce such a policy including a massive programme of public investment which would boost steel production, electric consumption and therefore demand for coal.

It should also announce its plans to nationalise the road haulage industry to allow proper planning — including the



rescinding of the decision to allow 30 tonne lorries, which will do so much to further destroy our environment.

Private transport is much more heavily subsidised than rail. The cost involved in maintaining road transport would have to include policing, fencing, repair, maintenance and cleaning which presently met from a variety of sources.

BR estimates that in 1981 the 516,000 lorries above 3.5 tonnes gross weight imposed costs totalling £2,080m. Subtracting their tax yield, each lorry was subsidised by £2,400.

The rail unions' answer to Serpell and the Tories must be the fight for a socialist transport policy backed up by industrial action if necessary. This will not only begin to halt the anarchy and put people's need above that of profit, it will also begin to create the sort of jobs necessary to seriously dent the present 4m unemployed.

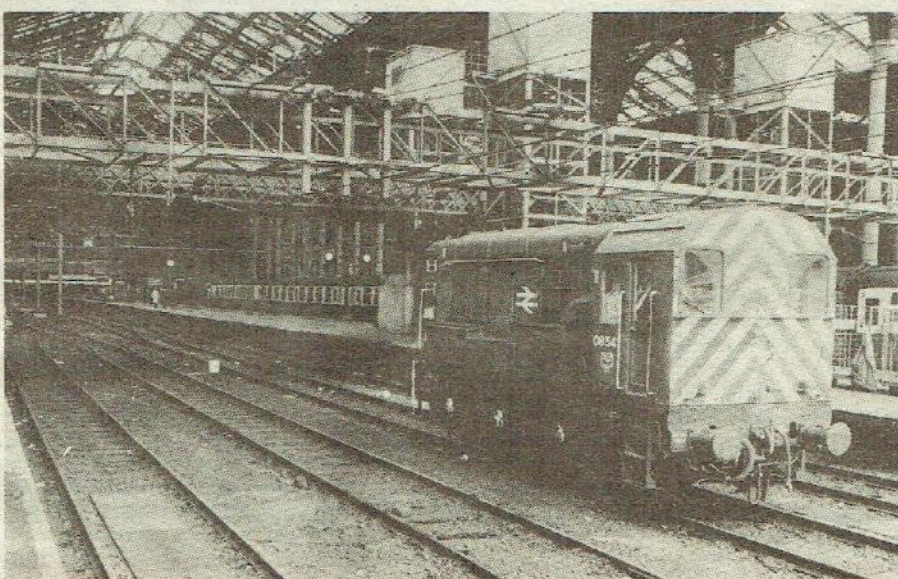
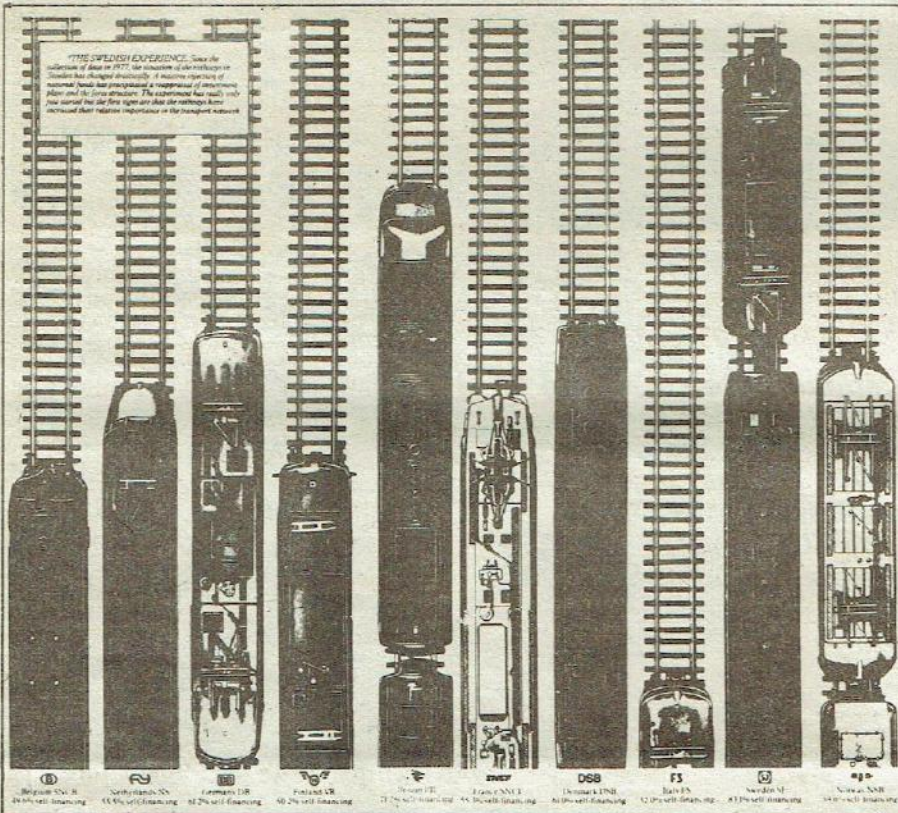


Photo: GRAHAM COOKSON

KICK OUT THE

By Paul Lawson

THATCHER'S VISIT to the Falklands, coupled with the announcement that there will be an April budget, shows that it is now virtually certain that there will be a general election this year. Taking place against the background of a literally catastrophic economic crisis, this general election will determine the course of British politics for a decade or more. In this article we attempt an overview of the state of the class struggle in Britain, in order to map out what are the crucial tasks for socialists in the coming period.

There is no doubt that the working class and the political left suffered some important defeats in 1982. In 1983 the left must go on to the offensive to unite the labour movement around socialist policies to defeat the Tories.

But the election will not be the end of the story. So severe is the economic crisis that any government coming out of the election will be unstable, beset by hostile forces on all sides. A Tory victory will mean a major challenge to the future of the working class movement in this country. In order to reverse the demoralising effects of such a defeat, the labour movement would have to attempt a major re-assessment of the past few years leadership. The struggle inside the Labour Party would undoubtedly intensify.

An inconclusive election — with a hung parliament — would mean a major opening for the SDP-Liberal alliance. It would also present the Labour right with a major temptation to engage in a coalition with the Alliance, a temptation which would have to be bitterly fought by the left.

A Labour victory, on the other hand — while of course being by far the best outcome for the working class — would mean a Labour government dominated by the right wing facing a serious economic situation. Such a government would in all probability turn towards austerity measures while only radical socialist measures would really begin to tackle the problem. It would be a Labour government under relentless pressure from ruling class circles not to take radical measures on any front.

All the possible outcomes point to an intensification of the struggle inside the labour movement and the need for a strongly organised left both inside the Labour Party and the trade unions.

But the course of the struggle in 1982 created a series of obstacles to organising a strong left wing; by and large it was more notable for its defeats than its victories.

The willingness of the trade union rank and file to fight the Tories was evidenced in the sharp climb in strike days recorded last year. But in both the Labour Party and the trade unions the right wing was on the offensive, outfighting the left. The consequences were horrendous for the battle against the Tories.

Among the important defeats suffered by the working class in 1982 we have to note the following depressing list: the defeat of the ASLEF drivers; the bitter defeat of the healthworkers despite eight months of struggle; the continued massive waves of redundancy among the steelworkers with virtually no resistance; the defeat of the proposal of the NUM to go into struggle against the NCB and the government over pay and jobs; the

failure to pull the Scottish miners into a fight over the closure of Kinneil pit; and a series of defeats in the car industry, including the sacking of Alan Thornett at Cowley without a fight. This has to be set against a very small list of successful struggles.

In virtually every one of the cases mentioned above, the treacherous role of the union bureaucrats — and the top TUC leaders in particular — was decisive in demobilising and defeating the struggles. The most graphic cases were those of the healthworkers and of ASLEF. Over the health strike there was an enormous groundswell of popular support and solidarity, demonstrated by the huge turnout on the 22 September day of action. The workforce itself was militant and determined.

But at each stage the TUC health committee cynically manoeuvred to prevent all-out action which could have won the dispute, instead they demoralised and demobilised support through an endless round of one day regional actions. The will to fight was there, but the leadership was lacking.

But we have to note that even if the crucial question was that of leadership, this in itself does not explain what happened in unions like the NUM. The bitter truth is that the effects of these defeats become cumulative, creating a deep scepticism among the mass of workers about the possibility of taking on the bosses and the government in struggle.

'... the right wing attack is causing a recomposition of the Labour left.'

There is a huge objective obstacle to be overcome: the fact that more and more economic struggles directly pose the question of job loss and closure. The news that BL last year had a 99.5 per cent strike free record is a graphic illustration of this. Even the most left wing class struggle leadership would be faced with this problem.

The trade union bureaucrats will find it harder and harder to treat the working class like a 'stage army' — marching them up the hill and down again. Eventually the bureaucracy demobilises its own ability to get workers to take even limited steps, if the workers see no prospect of success. Hence the increasing refusal of trade unionists to take part in limited one-day protest action and so forth.

While there will continue to be limited exceptions to this general pattern, more and more workers will look to overall political solutions, in particular the election of a Labour government, to solve their problems.

The defeats in the economic struggle in 1982 were compounded by the right wing offensive inside the Labour Party. Very quickly the true meaning of Bishop Stortford became evident — it amounted to a mechanism for keeping the left leaders quiet while the right wing went onto the attack. The Labour Party conference, with the imposition of the register and the right-wing capture of the NEC was the culmination of this attack.

The Bennite leadership symbolised by the quietism of Benn himself — were thrown into disarray by these events. But their overall response has been one of bureaucratic calculation rather than struggle. The calculation involved is that if there is a Benn-led fightback against the witch hunt then the left will be blamed for an electoral defeat.

This attitude both creates and feeds off defeatism about the overall political situation, and leaves the left relatively exposed to right wing attack. It has also led to a notable



The Tories political capital is their 'resolute approach' — the Falklands factor. But if it fails to come off it will create a major opportunity for the SDP. The labour movement should break from the class collaborationism of the TUC leaders and fight on nuclear disarmament and unemployment.



political retreat with Benn lending his name to the joint TUC-Labour Party policy statement which has a 'minimalist' interpretation of the alternative economic strategy.

The right wing attack is thus forcing something of a 'recomposition' of the Labour left, with the 'hards' increasingly breaking from the soft left. This development is symbolised by creation of the 'Campaign' group of MPs — a much smaller group than the reliable vote for Benn in any election in the PLP.

Overall though the witch-hunters on the right were incapable of overturning the major policy gains of the

left wing. But what the witch-hunt has succeeded in doing is disorganising the left, throwing it onto the defensive, and taking the steam out of the clamour for further left wing advances. The fight now is to get those left wing policy advances, like withdrawal from the NEC, unilateral disarmament and so forth included in the election manifesto.

On this issue the 'soft left' around Foot, Kinnock et al will soon find out that in their attempt to balance between left and right they have allowed the right wing to go too far. In manoeuvring against the left they have become prisoners of the right.

The two key questions that will dominate the election are nuclear disarmament and unemployment. If Labour is to win the election it has to unite its forces around the demand for unilateral disarmament and policies to ensure full employment — otherwise its key political weapons will be thrown away.

The electoral capital of the Tories can essentially be reduced to the 'Falklands factor'. Briefly summed up, this means the Thatcher government's record for decisive and successful action — on the military front and in reducing inflation. Thatcher is of course doing everything possible to

TORIES IN '83



Photo: GRAHAM COOKSON

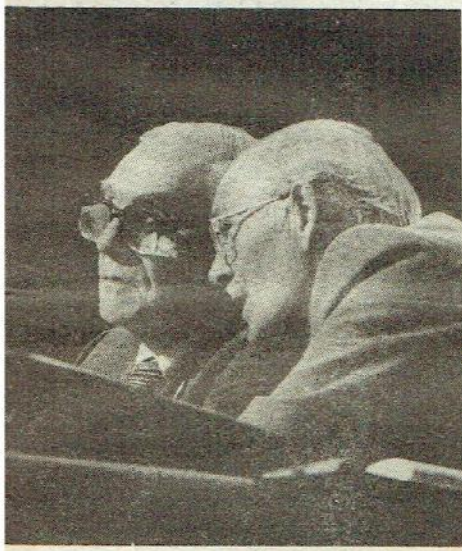


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

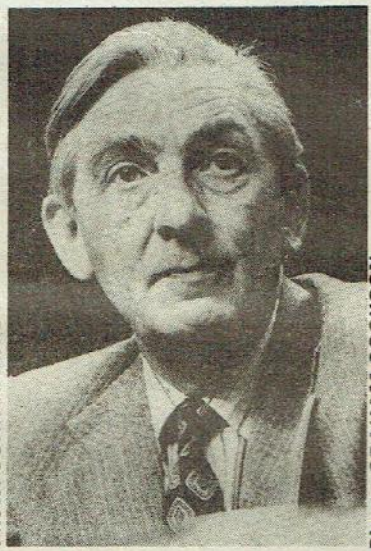


Photo: GRAHAM COOKSON



return to the fighting spirit of the Falklands — even the 'sprat war' with Denmark is designed to re-ignite exactly the same feelings.

'... the effect of successive defeats creates deep scepticism among the workers.'

But while the Falklands war was undoubtedly a political victory for the Tories, we can be sure that it was a very limited victory. It does not represent political capital that can be lived

off indefinitely. Inflation may be slowing down, but the decline of the economy is not ending.

There is no prospect of living standards rising in the foreseeable future. As the year progresses the basic issues of unemployment and the state of the economy will re-assert themselves with a vengeance.

Thus despite the defeats which the Tories have succeeded in imposing on the working class there will be no 'easy' victory for them in the general election. There is neither the prospect of an early Labour victory. Thus the SDP-Liberal alliance whose fortunes have seemed on the wane in

1982 could still play a crucial role as power broker in the coming parliament.

The Labour Party would, in the event of a hung parliament be faced with the crucial question of whether or not to form a coalition with the SDP to keep the Tories out. The socialist answer to such a proposition would be 'no'.

A minority Tory government led by Thatcher could be hounded and defeated both in parliament and by mass working class action. There is no question from a socialist point of view of forming a coalition with a bourgeois party like the SDP, which could only implement pro-capitalist policies and tie the hands of the left.

The basic principle of working class political independence must be maintained. That's why the present discussion initiated by sectors of the Communist Party about the possibility of a 'broad alliance' which includes the SDP is so dangerous. It plays right into the hands of the right wing of the Labour Party, the Healeys and the Hattersleys who would be only too pleased by the prospect of a coalition with the SDP.

In this situation, while in general being in favour of democratic reform, socialists should oppose any move towards proportional representation which would play into the hands of the SDP-Liberal coalitionists.

'... socialists should oppose moves towards proportional representation.'

As we have argued therefore in 1983 socialists need to gather their forces for a mighty onslaught against the Tories on the basis of socialist policies, to end the retreat and prepare for further advance. A basic action programme for this project has to be as follows:-

1. **Stop the missiles in '83.** As we report on page 2 of this issue, all the parties are running for the nuclear disarmament vote. Thatcher hopes to defuse this movement both by pretending to be serious about multilateral disarmament and by advancing the date for the installation of Cruise missiles.

Massive action by the labour movement can strike a body blow at the Tories this year. The proposed CND-TUC-LP demonstration on Hiroshima Day should have as its target a million on the streets.

2. **Fight unemployment.** Every day under this government brings a fresh cascade of redundancies. But the union tops have given up any determined resistance. The example of Sirs in the steel industry is the most chronic. This year there will be another Peoples March for Jobs — this time from Scotland. Foot and Murray both opposed this in an election year, but they were defeated on the TUC general purposes committee. The march goes ahead. In fact it can be the most massive aid to anti-Tory propaganda in an election year, and should be supported by every section of the labour movement.

3. **Defend socialist policies.** The right wing onslaught in the Labour Party is aimed at winning back the policy gains made by the left over the past few years. The right wing re-capture of the NEC and the attack on *Militant* are just an episode on that road. But it is the radical policies of the past few years which are the trump card for Labour in the coming election fight.

4. **Organise against the witch hunt.** The anti-left crusade of the Labour Party NEC seems to have a stop-go character, with the legal difficulties being put in the way of the witch hunt

against *Militant*. But we should not underestimate the determination of the Healey-Golding axis. They will fight until their witch hunt is utterly defeated. Therefore the task of building Labour Against the Witch Hunt (LAW) remains a crucial one. As part of this task, to show that left policies can win, the left should put all its resources into winning the Bermondsey by-election for Peter Tatchell.

5. **The left leaders must organise against the right wing to end the retreat.** A basic problem of the militant forces both inside the Labour Party and the trade unions is the refusal of the left leaders to *organise* forces on a class wide basis. This is often argued on a 'tactical' basis; but it represents a major concession to the right wing.

Thus since the demise of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, inside the LP the Bennite forces have been dispersed and disorganised. Benn should call for rank and file organisation inside the Labour Party. The precise form of this cannot be prejudged. But clearly *Tribune* is in the best position to act as an organiser of the Bennite left, if a clear call went out from the leadership.

Equally, in the unions left leaders like Scargill should try to organise on a cross-union basis to end the isolation of the militants.

6. **Build broad lefts in the unions.** Since the mid 1970s the gradual downturn in industrial and other strike struggles has led to a steady drift to the right in the unions. The grip of the right wing is once again posing basic questions of union democracy and accountability. The fact that the right wing dominate the Labour NEC is in good part due to the stranglehold of the Chapple's Duffy's and Goldings in the unions. Their reign can only be ended by systematic organisation from top to bottom, and this means building permanent caucuses of the left against them. In most cases this will mean building Broad Left-type formations. The move to set up a Broad Left Organising Committee on a cross union basis is very valuable in this respect and its conference on the accountability of the block vote (see the article by Phil Holt on page 3 of this issue) should be widely supported.

7. **Build a mass campaigning LPYS.** While the YS is in the sights of the witch hunters, the situation of mass unemployment and despair among youth creates the best opportunity for decades for the creation of a mass campaigning YS. The domination of this organisation by the ultra-propagandism of the *Militant* tendency has created an enormous obstacle in linking up the YS with YCND and those youth in the Labour Party who really want to fight.

But a mass YS is a possibility; as a first step the Easter conference of the LPYS should be built on the most enormous scale possible, and opened up to the labour movement as a whole, as a decisive rebuff to the NEC witch hunters.

8. **The Labour Party must defend all sections of the oppressed.** Every section of the oppressed has suffered from this Tory government. Women have been the hardest hit by unemployment. The Tories are tightening the screws on immigration, strengthening the police to use against blacks and youth, and clamping down on social security benefits.

In this situation the Labour Party and the LPYS must be in the forefront of championing all the struggles of the oppressed, and especially bring forward policies for positive action for women, blacks and youth.

Pound falls shock horror

WHO CAUSED the slump? Why, as everyone knows, the Arabs. How did they do it? By raising the price of oil, as everyone knows.

And who is behind the banking crisis? Why, as everyone knows, the Arabs. How do they do it? Er... by cutting the price of oil.

When capitalism goes into crisis, the first thing to go is its technique for excusing its own bellyflops. Up until December, the (last) governor of the Bank of England confidently told an invited audience that 'the basic cause of our difficulties was the oil shock'.

In January's *Economist* a U-turn may be found: the greatest threat to the pound, we're told, is the falling price of oil.

Between the two comments came a lowly event: the near collapse of OPEC, the oil-producer's cartel, which the Western nations have been out to smash since it was formed — led by Britain, with a gigantic balance of payments deficit and a lot of oil to sell in a hurry.

But though they didn't like Arab control over oil prices, both the American oil magnates and the British producers needed the high prices which OPEC produced. Now, more than anyone, Britain needs them — because *thirty per cent* of all the British capitalist's profits now come from oil.

More important still, the banks, unable to invest in Western industry with its collapsing profit rates, have lent their capital to third-world countries who mortgaged their future against the production of raw materials such as oil. Mexico, for example, is responsible for half the assets of nine major American banks.

But this slump, unlike the 1974 slump, marks the beginning of the end for monopoly price maintenance. Basic commodity prices are falling, though you haven't noticed because the food importers (surprise, surprise) haven't passed on the decrease. And suddenly, all the bank assets in third world countries are about as desirable as toytown money.

Britain gets it *both* ways. Bank assets and hence the banks' capital are collapsing because of the world decline in commodity prices, and the pound is under threat because if oil prices go down much further, Britain's oil income will vanish.

Moreover, Britain's oil income will vanish exceptionally fast, because profit margins on North Sea Oil production though fabulous, are not nearly as high as Saudi Arabian oil.

Do not shed too many tears for Britain's bankers. Most of them, like the good Mr Raymond Postgate of Lloyd's insurance, have salted their money safely away in art treasures and the Cayman islands. But do, on your next visit to the Stock exchange, pause and reflect awhile on the changing fortunes of those who have to justify their antics to the likes of you and me.

The CP and coalition government

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ABERDEEN: SC available at Boomtown books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.
EDINBURGH: SC sold Thur 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.
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BANGOR: Sat 10-12 town centre.
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BOLSOVER: Cross Keys, every Fri 8-9pm, Bluebell 9-10.
BRADFORD: SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.
BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.
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STUDY conference on the struggle against imperialism in Africa and the Caribbean. Sat 5 Feb 10.30-5 at County Hall, London SE1. Organised jointly by Liberation and the Britain-Cuba Resource Centre. Speakers include Ken Gill, the High Commissioner for Grenada, representatives of the Cuban and Ethiopian embassies. Details from: Secretary, Liberation, 313 Caledonian Rd, N1.

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SOCIALIST Challenge Forum: John Ross on 19th Century British imperialism and the foundation of the Labour party. Wed 19 Jan, 7.30 at the 'Old Bulls Head' Digbeth (next to Digbeth civil hall) Birmingham.

WITH last week's report of the Socialist League conference a photo was included in error, which showed a public meeting in London. Many of the people in the photo are not members of the SL. Our apologies to anyone to whom this mistake caused embarrassment.

OXFORD: SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.
SHEFFIELD: SC on sale Thursday, Pond St, 4.30-6pm; Saturday, Fargate 10.30-12.30pm.
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PORT TALBOT: McConville's Newsagent, Station Road.
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SOUTHAMPTON: October Books, Onslow Road.
SUNDERLAND: The Ceolfrith Art Gallery Bookshop, Grange Terrace.
YORK: Community Books, Walmgate.

IN THE ISSUE of *Tribune* of 31 December appeared an article by Communist Party member Pat Devine in favour of proportional representation in British elections. This argued rather startlingly that, 'The support of what at present is referred to as the centre is a precondition for a major change in our society. And the real problem facing socialists in the eighties is how to build a new political majority that includes the centre but is under the leadership of the left.'

ROBERT MOSSGEL looks at the issues behind the increasing rhetoric of this type from an important section of the Communist Party.

Pat Devine's article in *Tribune* is in fact only the continuation of a series of articles which have been appearing for two years in the Communist Party magazine *Marxism Today*. The political role of these articles is increasingly openly to put forward the line for a coalition government between the Labour Party and the SDP/Liberal Alliance.

This is the real meaning of Devine's phrase about 'the support of what is at present referred to as the centre'.

This position was spelt out particularly clearly by leading Communist Party economist Sam Aaronovitch in the December 1982 issue of *Marxism Today*.

Narrow

According to Aaronovitch — in a round table discussion with Stuart Hall and pro-SDP *Guardian* columnist Peter Jenkins — the problem with the Labour Party is that it is too narrow and not reaching out to make coalitions with broader forces. Aaronovitch argues: 'We have a set of alliances within the Labour Party which has proved itself singularly unable to construct alliances, both within the Labour Party itself and between the Labour Party and other groups within society. So, with all the changes taking place in the composition of the working people and so on, the Labour Party as a structure has become progressively isolated from many of those changes which have taken place ... And that has meant that all these long term tendencies operating in British politics have left it open for new forces to arise, not only the SDP but for example the nationalist parties.'

Aaronovitch then goes on to argue that this set of alliances which is required must be wider than the Labour Party. Indeed, the Labour Party must not seek to encompass all these forces fighting against Thatcher.

According to Aaronovitch:

'I certainly don't see the Labour Party as comprising all the forces that are required to challenge Thatcherism or any variant of Thatcherism in the future. I think the task of the Labour Party is to construct a historic bloc of forces for progressive change ... I don't want to hanker after a Labour Party which somehow embraced all the forces within

itself.'

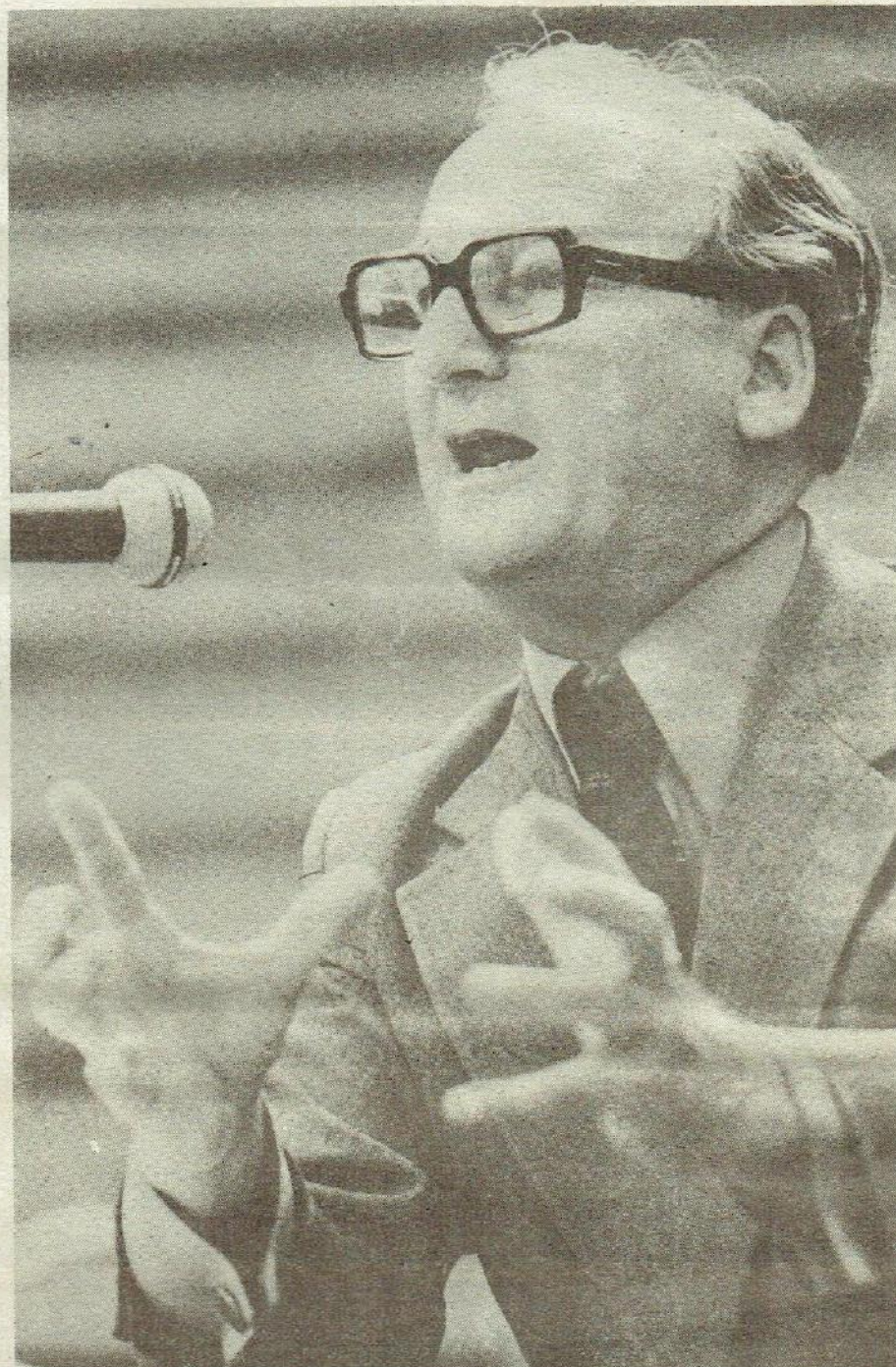
Aaronovitch then argues what the role of the Labour Party should be. 'I regard the Labour Party as having the potential for being a very powerful grouping of forces which could constitute a magnetic force in British society, one capable of helping to build a broad set of alliances against Thatcherism.'

It might of course be thought from this that Aaronovitch, and those in the Communist party who support his line, favoured reaching out to create an 'alliance' with all those sections of the working class and oppressed who have suffered the consequences of Thatcherism and who have been repelled by the attacks made on them by Labour governments and leaderships.

But what Aaronovitch makes clear is that he is not talking of alliances with the working class and oppressed but alliances against them with the SDP/Liberals. He argues: 'I think the forces associated with the Alliance are very significant and I don't want to give the impression of any kind of sectarian view about them. I also think the nature of Thatcherism is such that I'm prepared to construct an alliance with all kinds of forces who are prepared to challenge what Thatcherism is about.'

Elements

Aaronovitch goes on very specifically to include the SDP/Liberal Alliance in this alliance. He argues that, 'I think that the policies the Alliance is putting forward, though very inadequate, contain elements which would certainly be in advance of the situation



Gordon MacLennan, CP general secretary. Will he go along with the Eurocommunist proposals for a coalition including the SDP?

we've got and, with a massive crisis, couldn't fail to bring about limited kinds of revival.'

This emphasis on the progressive character of the forces in the SDP is also a theme of Eric Hobsbawm — another key Communist Party contributor to *Marxism Today*.

Hobsbawm, in a major article in the October 1982 issue, claims that there are two types of socialist party in Europe and that, 'Both

kinds of socialist party belong to the Left ... as indeed do most British Social Democrats'. An even more sophisticated gloss on this rationalisation of a line for coalition government is put forward by Mike Rustin in an article in the January issue of *Marxism Today*.

This course of *Marxism Today* should be taken by Communist Party members and others in the labour movement. It is not an isolated example.

At the end of 1982 a major dispute took place in the Communist Party over an article by Tony Lane which appeared in the September issue of *Marxism Today*.

Entitled, 'The Unions: caught on the ebb tide' it argued among other things that among shop stewards, 'we are ... observing the creation of a new working class elite which has the opportunity (and too often takes it) of sharing in the expense account syndrome: the franchise of perks and fiddles has been widened.' This, and other arguments, drew a hostile, and thoroughly justified, response from a number of Communist Party trade unionists.

The same should happen now with *Marxism Today's* increasing orientation to a Labour, Liberal, SDP coalition.



Sam Aaronovitch, leading CP theorist. He wants a political alliance including the 'centre' — by which he means the SDP.

Labour Committee on Palestine

News bulletin out now. FREE! For copies and information on membership contact LCP Secretary Penny Cole, 30 Foulden Road, London N16 7UR. We have available for hire 'Beirut in 1982' (by Nunokawa Productions, Japan) 16mm 20min film (especially useful for LP & TU meetings), colour slides and a photographic exhibition on the 1982 war in Lebanon.

LCP OPEN MEETING 16 February, County Hall, 8pm. For members and all those interested in Palestinian solidarity work in the labour movement.

Photo: MORNING STAR

Bombay textile workers shake Indian rulers

By Amar Jesani and Kunal Chattopadhyay

250,000 TEXTILE WORKERS have been on strike in Bombay since January 1982, one of the most momentous working class battles to take place anywhere in the last decade. The super-exploited textile workers have been fighting back against the employers' attempts to restructure the textile industry at the expense of the workers.

The strike has seen a massive wave of workers self-organisation, with the workers organising themselves through mill committees, and attempting to throw off the grip of the reactionary pro-Congress Party trade union, the Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh (RMMS).

The textile industry in India has, like many other industries, been badly hit by the world economic crisis. The mill owners are trying to restructure the industry through shifting production to yarn away from cotton cloth — introducing a new wave of mechanisation, speed up and redundancies.

The strike started in October 1981 with seven mills going on strike, and became more generalised in January 1982. The demands of the workers include parity of wages with other industries like engineering; making permanent the 'substitute' workers who are taken on only when the bosses need them; and 'de-recognition' of the RMMS.

The Bombay textile industry was one of the earliest industries in India. Its workers have been among the vanguard of the Indian working class. In 1981 they held a general strike. In 1924-5 over 150,000 workers in the industry went on strike. But through reactionary legislation they have had imposed on them a pro-bosses union, and despite several major struggles have been unable to dislodge it.

In this present struggle the bulk of the workers have not transferred their allegiance to the traditional 'left' unions because of their emphasis on legalism rather than struggle. Instead they have relied on the mill committees, led by Datta Samant a former Congress man. The initial seven mills led by Samant put forward the demand for a wage rise from Rs 300 to Rs 500. Other demands included provision regarding Leave Travel Allowance, House Rent allowance, making permanent substitute workers.



From the beginning of the strike it has been bitterly fought by central government, the provincial government and the RMMS. Throughout there have been bitter clashes involving fights with the police, during which the police have badly injured many workers including women.

One of the tactics adopted by the strikers has been that of clogging up the jails through allowing mass arrests of thousands of supporters. In Lalbaug, the area where most textile workers are concentrated, textile workers were not only batoned by the police, but the police entered their houses and beat up women and children.

Many workers arrested in the industrial area of Saki Naka because of their solidarity with the textile workers have been beaten up by the police, many sustaining severe injuries. Solidarity with the textile workers from tens of thousands of other workers has been one of the major gains of the strike.

From 11 to 13 October last year more than 1.5 million workers all over Maharashtra went on strike in support of the textile workers.

Apart from the far left organisations in the province, who have formed a common front to build solidarity with the strike, women's organisations have also mobilised in support of the textile workers. In Bombay, various feminist groups and organisations have supported the strike by grain-collection, fund raising, staging demonstrations against repression etc.

The Communist League (Indian section of the Fourth International) has made solidarity with the strike a number one task on an all-India level. The textile workers strike will be crucial for the future of the working class throughout the sub-continent.

What is Trotskyism?



Henry Kissinger (left), Richard Nixon (right), architects of detente.

The valuable confessions of Henry Kissinger

What was 'detente'?

DURING THE 1950s the United States waged what is known in history as the 'cold war'. The United States totally devastated Korea in the war in that country. In Vietnam it used the entire might of its armed forces to attempt to crush the struggle of the Vietnamese people for independence. The US supported military governments in Brazil, Indonesia, Zaire and any other place that suited it. The policy under which it justified this bloodshed and exploitation was called 'suppressing Communism' — Communism being defined as anybody who thought that American companies should not be able to exploit them and their country.

In the 1970s however the United States claimed to have changed. It embarked on a policy it called 'detente'. It was the days of Nixon's visits to Peking and Moscow. The Helsinki conference on European Security was held. This adopted a so called policy on 'human rights' — which none of the signatories observed.

This period of the 1970s is still pointed to by the Kremlin as the ideal period of international relations. 'Detente' is also a word much used by the press as opposed to the 'cold war' and the policies of Reagan. It is still seen by many people as the goal of international relations.

commercial and economic ones, during the 1970s.' He claimed that, 'we have a common enemy .. the danger of nuclear war.'

A similar view was expressed by the new Secretary General of the Soviet Communist Party Andropov in his new year interview for 1983. He stated that he wished for 'lasting peace and prosperity in 1983' and that, 'today the Soviet people and the Americans have one common enemy, the threat of war and everything that enhances it.'

But what was the United States ruling class view of 'detente'? Does American capitalism believe that under detente it had a common enemy with the Soviet Union in fighting against nuclear war? What would be its goals in any new period of 'detente' today?

Death

Fortunately we don't have to speculate on that. In the flurry of pronouncements preceding the death of Brezhnev, the very organiser of the American end of 'detente'

under Nixon, Henry Kissinger, felt it useful to explain what goals the U.S. ruling class had been pursuing.

Kissinger explained his view of the world simply by stating that between American capitalism and the Soviet Union, 'We are, in effect, confronted with the conflictual opposition of two systems.'

When asked therefore, 'In summary then "detente" was never for you — unlike for the Soviet Union — anything other than a tactic at the service of a more global strategy?' he replied, 'Absolutely. President Nixon conceived of detente as a means to create a satisfactory relation of forces and a certain world order.'

Why

When Kissinger was asked why therefore they had embarked on the policy of detente he replied that it was due to the tremendous political crisis the effects of the Vietnam war had created inside the United States. 'What else could we do otherwise than calm the atmosphere when in this country (the

United States) the political climate was close to that of a civil war.'

When he was asked what were the goals of US foreign policy he replied with the word 'rollback' which was used by the symbol of the cold war, American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, himself. Kissinger simply explained that 'rollback cannot be a politics in itself. It can only be a result. Rollback is an historical process.'

'Rollback' was Dulles's code word for the restoration of capitalism in China, Vietnam, the Soviet Eastern Europe, Cuba and anywhere else where it had been overthrown. Kissinger simply explained that while the United States ruling class sometimes changes its tactics, it never changes its goals.

Remember that and you'll understand why they want those Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe.

1. Newsweek 25 November 1982
2. The Guardian 31 December 1982
3. Politique Internationale Autumn 1982

6. The French Popular Front

IN JUNE 1936 a great movement of strikes and factory occupations spread through France. For millions of working people something had changed and they felt they could take their fate into their own hands. 'Now everything is possible for those who are bold enough,' wrote Marceau Pivert, the leader of the Socialist Party left wing.

Yet within two years reaction was again in control of France, and the CGT (trade union confederation) could only muster two million, of its five million members, for a one day general strike.

The weakest of the imperial powers, France had long played a role in the world that did not correspond to its economic weight. None felt the crisis more acutely than the impoverished peasants and the ruined small shopkeepers of the towns. Fascism had triumphed in Germany in 1933 and the danger seemed real enough in France.

On 6 February 1934, after a day of violent demonstrations, armed fascist and royalist gangs attempted to storm the Chamber of Deputies to overthrow the government. The government of Gaston Doumergue, which came to power three days later, presided over an eight-month offensive by the fascist Fiery Cross. It seemed that France must go the same way as Germany.

Shaken

The parties of the working class were shaken by the events of the 6 February. The Communist Party had been violently hostile to the Socialist Party, applying the line of the Communist International which said that social-democracy was the left face of fascism.

From the Socialist Party, Marceau Pivert and Jean Zyromsky called for united action with the CP.

Their call was echoed by Jacques Doriot, a leader of the CP and mayor of St. Denis. Doriot had gone too fast. The CP expelled him only to adopt his positions immediately afterwards. Doriot formed his own party and soon became a fascist himself.

Deals

The united front of working class parties was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm, but the leaders were more interested in parliamentary deals than in fighting for power. Almost from the beginning

Maurice Thorez, the Communist leader, wanted to broaden the alliance to include the 'democratic' bourgeois party — the Radicals. To the ordinary militants in the Socialist Party this was unacceptable.

The Socialist Party, or SFIO, led by Leon Blum, was one half of the old party of Jean Jaures. In 1920 a majority of the party had formed the CP, taking the daily paper 'Humanité' with them.

Those that remained in the SFIO were often careerists and timeservers, but as the CP became more sectarian and turned into an instrument of Stalin's foreign policy, things began to change.

Workers began to look to the Socialists and left-wing tendencies emerged in the party. The June 1935 Congress of the SFIO saw a pitched battle between left and right, with Jean Zyromsky advocating the seizure of power by 'direct action'.

The Socialists decided that they could not share power with a party of the ruling class, that it must be 'all or nothing'. Conference decisions did not deter the party leadership. In July, Blum addressed a meeting together with Thorez and the Radical Party leader Daladier. The 'Front Populaire' was born.

Limits

The programme of the Popular Front was very limited — limited to what was acceptable to the Radicals. Under the slogan 'Bread, Peace and Liberty' the alliance promised cooperation with the League of Nations, dissolution of the fascist combat organizations, and an unspecified reduction in the length of the working week.

Added to this were the reform of the Bank of France and the tax system and a few nationalisations. Workers' power was not on the agenda.

When the elections came in May 1936, the left was victorious. The most startling aspect of the results was the defeat suffered by the bourgeois component of the Front, the Radical Party. At the same time as the workers' parties vastly increased their vote, the Radicals lost 43 seats.

The social and political crisis had engendered a deepening division in French society and a growing political awareness among sections of the farmers and shopkeepers as well as the working class.

Occupy

The workers did not wait for Leon Blum to take office, they occupied the factories. All the official leaders of the working class were horrified and frightened. Jouhaux of the CGT, an anarcho-syndicalist turned right-winger, negotiated concessions from the bosses while the CP used its influence to halt the strike movement.

After voting for Blum in order to defeat reaction



Working class celebrate Popular Front victory in Paris

the workers had repudiated his alliance with the Radicals by threatening the rule of their class.

On 9 June the Matignon agreement was signed. The French workers had won a 12 per cent increase in wages, paid holidays and the 40 hour week. They also gained recognition by the employers of their right to bargain collectively. But they had been cheated of power. On the left, only the Trotskyists opposed the agreement.

The leaders of the working class, both Socialist and Communist, could not lead it to power. For all their left wing rhetoric, they were still firmly tied to the ruling class.

New

For a time, it looked as if a new leadership could emerge from the left of the SFIO. As well as the Trotskyists, who briefly joined the SFIO in 1934, there was the tendency led by Pivert, which included such figures as Daniel Guérin.

Trotsky was to be disappointed, the 'Revolutionary Left' tendency could not break with Blum, and so ended up supporting him: 'No matter how much the centrists babble about the 'masses' they always orient themselves to the reformist apparatus. Repeating this or that revolutionary slogan, Marceau Pivert subordinates it to the abstract principle of 'organisational unity', which in action turns out to be unity with the patriots against the revolutionists.'



Leon Blum, socialist Prime Minister of the Popular Front

And so it turned out, Pivert supported the Matignon agreement and acted as the left-wing conscience of Leon Blum.

The government that took power in June 1936 was composed exclusively of Socialists and Radicals.

The CP and the CGT elected not to take part themselves, but to give their support. Carried to power by the workers, the Popular Front proved incapable of changing their basic situation.

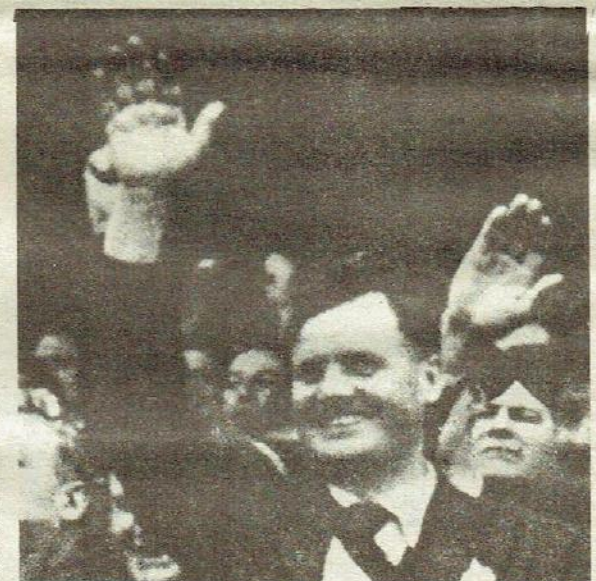
The gains made by the strike movement were however large enough to damage the interests of the bourgeoisie. Economic sabotage by the bosses led inevitably to financial crisis. Revolutionary measures against capital were not open to a social-democrat in alliance with a capitalist party, so Blum was obliged to 'restore confidence' instead.

By March 1937 he was calling for a 'pause' in the

reforms. This only encouraged the ruling class in its attacks. The devaluation of the franc, carried out by the Blum government, helped to unload the burden of the economic crisis onto the shoulders of the working class. A growing proportion of the workers sank into passivity and scepticism and the peasants and shopkeepers turned back to the bourgeois parties. The Blum government fell in June 1937.

In the international arena the Popular Front acted as it did at home. In words it supported the Spanish Republic against fascism. In practice, Blum became the chief advocate of the 'non-intervention' policy promoted by British imperialism. When Hitler and Mussolini were supplying Franco with all the arms he needed, Blum was helping to strangle the Republic.

The same Radical Par-



Maurice Thorez, French CP leader

ty to which Blum and Thorez had tied themselves, showed how 'democratic' it really was.

In November 1938 the Daladier government warned that efforts to enforce the 40 hour week in munitions would be considered a crime; workers could be given a two-year prison sentence for holding anti-war discussions.

The workers responded to this with a spontaneous wave of strikes, but the CGT, with the support of the Socialist and Communist parties, limited action to a one-day protest stoppage, the Popular Front had prepared the road to defeat.

Blum turned on the opposition in the SFIO in June 1938, forcing Pivert to form the Workers' and Peasants Socialist Party (PSOP). But Pivert had not been won to Marxism; he supported de Gaulle in the war and then returned

to the mainstream of the SFIO. Jean Zyromsky, the other former leader of the left, joined the CP.

CHRONOLOGY	
1920	Tours Congress of SFIO — creation of French CP.
1934	Attempted fascist coup Doumergue government. CP expels Doriot.
1935	Mulhouse Congress of SFIO.
1936	Victory of Popular Front Occupation of factories. Matignon agreements. Devaluation of franc. Spanish Civil War.
1937	Blum announces 'pause'. June — Fall of Blum government.
1938	June — Pivertistes expelled from SFIO. September — Munich. November — Failure of General Strike.

Further reading: the only book on the period which is easily obtainable in English is Leon Trotsky's 'Whither France?'

Channel 4's 'The Spanish Civil War'

THOSE READERS who followed the articles in our *Marxism and Social Democracy* series by Bob Pennington on the Spanish revolution will be interested in following the series on Channel 4 on the Spanish Civil War. The programmes are every Friday evening at 8pm for six weeks. Next Friday (14 January) covers the revolution of 1936.

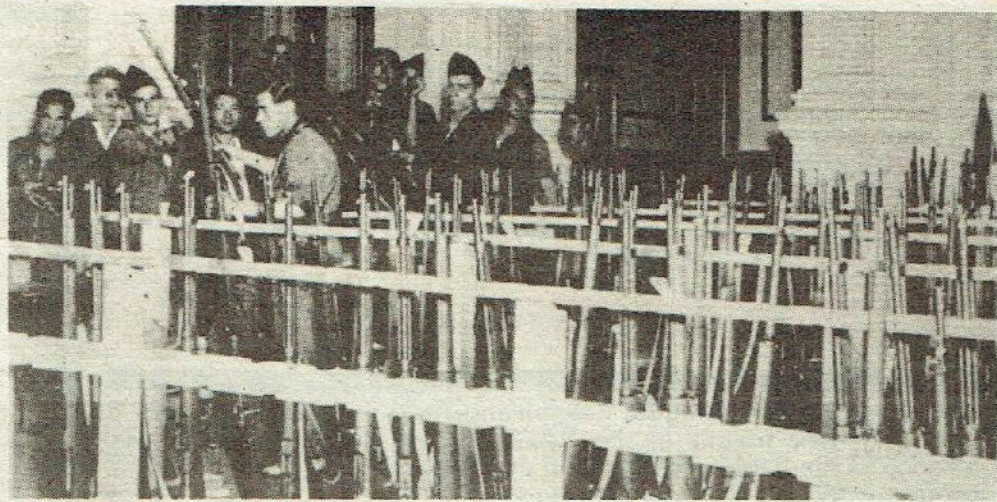
Last Friday's first programme covered the coming to power of the Spanish Republic, the withdrawal of the Socialist Party from the government, the fall of the first Republican government and the advent of the right wing Gil Robles regime. It also movingly portrayed the Asturias Commune of 1934, its brutal repression by the army, and the events leading to the general's counter-revolutionary plot.

The series is written by Neil Ascherson whose book on Poland many of our readers will already know.

The message of episode one was simple: the advent of the Spanish Republic infuriated the bosses and the right wing, but was incapable of satisfying the most basic needs of the workers and the peasants — and was thus doomed. No revolutionary socialist could disagree with that.

Episode two, to be shown on Friday, has already called forth caustic remarks from the *Morning Star*, because (would you believe) it makes out that there was a workers revolution in 1936, that the workers took the power in the areas they controlled, and that this was led by anarchists, revolutionary socialists and the like. After 46 years this basic truth still causes the CP distress.

We recommend all our readers to watch this series. A lavishly illustrated book to go with the series by David Mitchell is in your local branch of WH Smiths now.
Paul Lawson



Workers militia arm themselves.

The Battle of Algiers

By Phil Hearse



Muslim boy rounded up by French troops.



Searching the Casbah for FLN militants.

Ali-la-Pointès hiding place blown up by paras.

FOR THE FIRST TIME for nearly a decade Pontecorvo's film *The Battle of Algiers* is showing in London. It is quite simply the best anti-colonialist film ever made. But its particular merit is the way in which it explores the use of terrorist violence against the colonialist oppressors.

Without ever glamourising this aspect of the struggle, without attempting for one minute to minimise the horror of bombings and shootings of civilians, the film ultimately defends these methods as legitimate weapons against a ruthless colonial power. The parallel with Ireland is of course obvious.

The most favoured method of torture was the *gegene*, an army signals magneto from which electrodes could be fastened to various parts of the body — notably the penis. So says Alastair Horne in his classic book on the period *A Savage War of Peace* (Penguin). The torture by French paras of the Algerian FLN suspects was routine.

Henri Alleg, a European Jew whose family had settled in Algeria during the Second World War was the Communist editor of *Alger Republicaine*; he was interrogated by the paras for a whole month in 1957.

His account of electrode torture is instructive: In his first subjection to electric shock treatment with electrodes merely attached to his ear and finger, he says: 'A flash of lightning exploded next to my ear, and I felt my heart racing in my breast.'

The second time a large magneto was used: 'Instead of the sharp and rapid spasms that seemed to tear my body in two, it was now a greater pain that took possession of all my muscles and tightened them in longer spasms.'

The paras had many other forms of torture, of which various kinds of water torture were the favourites. The use of torture in the Battle of Algiers was deemed essential to gain information about the FLN organisation.

Militants of the organisation were told to resist torture for 24 hours — then they could talk. During that time sufficient re-organisation could take place to make the information given useless.

The FLN was organised in cells of three — most FLN members didn't know one another. Only the central command of four had all the information in its hands.

When the paras arrived in Algiers their colonel Bigard (in the film 'Mathieu') decided to track down the central leaders by wringing as much information as possible out of his captives.

In the face of the barbarities of the French forces — the napalming of villages, the systematic torture, the execution of FLN militants by the guillotine — the FLN decided upon an offensive in Algiers.

The bombing of an Arab house in the Casbah district by pied noir terrorists, led to the unleashing of the FLN bombing squads led by Ali-la-Pointe and the Algerian operational commander Saadi Yacef.

The remarkable thing about *Battle of Algiers* is that Saadi Yacef was co-producer and plays himself (Djafar) in the film. Using Yacef's knowledge it is filmed in the exact locations where the various incidents took place.

The centre-piece of the film is the bombing campaign run by the FLN women volunteers. While the Casbah area was sealed off by the paras, and everyone going in and out searched, the FLN women dyed their hair and dressed in Western clothes.

On September 1956, disguised as French-Algerian women, Yacef's volunteers got out of the Casbah with their bombs and hit the fashionable *Cafeteria* on the Rue Michelet, the Milk Bar on the Place Bugeand and the Air France terminus. All were packed. The film shows the bombings in all their horror. They were a devastating blow to the morale of the French-Algerian population and a turning point in the war.

It's here that the parallels with the situation in Ireland come into play. No parallel is exact, but nonetheless there are striking similarities. In Algeria a colonial power was fighting an insurgent people, but the situation was complicated by the existence of a colonial-settler population which sided with the imperialists.

The parallel between the Protestant population in the north of Ireland and the pied noirs is tempting. Of course in Algeria the French population had been there a much shorter time than the immigrant Presbyterian population in the north of Ireland, and the cultural differences between the native Algerians and the French-Algerians were much greater than between Loyalists and Republicans in the six counties.

The Battle of Algiers, directed by Gillo Pontecorvo and produced by Antonio Musa and Saadi Yacef, is showing at the Gate Bloomsbury, Brunswick Square WC1. See *City Limits* for times.

Socialist Challenge

THE temperature's rising for Reagan and Thatcher and their friends in the NATO military alliance as the Soviet Union's bold new 'peace offensive' gets underway. The proposals coming out of the Warsaw Pact two day conference at the beginning of January have put the spotlight on the responsibility of the West for the threat of nuclear war by showing the willingness of the Soviet Union to negotiate a cutback on weapons in Europe.

The declaration said that the 'present tense situation makes it impossible to wait any longer. There is need for urgent, effective measures which could lessen mistrust between members of the two pacts and diminish fears of possible aggression'.

The pact called for these measures to be taken as a step towards dismantling the two military alliances NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Specifically the proposals are:

- the Warsaw Pact and NATO to conclude an agreement to renounce the use of military force and to preserve peaceful relations
- a renewal of the pledge that the Soviet Union will not use nuclear weapons first and a call for all nuclear powers who have not done so far to take similar steps.
- to work towards an agreement in the shortest possible time to ban nuclear weapon tests
- to agree on the prohibition and liquidation of chemical weapons
- to work towards the prohibition of neutron weapons and the basing of any types of weapons in outer space
- to prohibit the use of radiological weapons

In addition the seven nations in the pact declared their concern about the deployment of nuclear weapons in Europe. Following his suggestion during December that the Soviet Union would cut the number of its SS20 missiles from 300 to 168 matching the number of missiles held by Britain and France if NATO dropped its plan to bring in Cruise and Trident this year, Soviet leader Yuri Andropov declared: 'We view the

situation soberly. We do not hide our disturbance at the military preparations of NATO.'

By Toni Gorton

Andropov put the responsibility for the situation with NATO saying that the Warsaw Pact was ready to respond in kind to any NATO move but warning that: 'The answer to the intention of the aggressive imperialist circles to suppressing socialism must be the further strengthening of our unity and of our economic and defence potential.'

The pact went on to call for the removal of all nuclear weapons from Europe, both those of a tactical and medium range. If this isn't possible it would be useful to radically lower the nuclear capabilities of medium range in Europe on the basis of 'equality and equal security'.

The new proposals will strengthen the hand of the mass anti-missiles movement in Europe as it prepares to fight against the positioning of Cruise and Trident in '83.

Already Margaret Thatcher has constructed a new team led by Michael Heseltine to take on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Britain. CND has openly welcomed the new Soviet proposals as an aid in its fight.

In addition, Michael Foot leader of the Labour Party attacked Thatcher for her 'flippant and slapdash' rejection of the Warsaw Pact initiative. Foot said in a Channel 4 interview that 'These should not be rejected out of hand. They can alter the atmosphere in Europe.'

This is absolutely true. Public opinion in Europe

is already opposed to the possibility of nuclear war in the so-called 'European theatre'.

Over three million people demonstrated against the missiles during the summer of 1982 in Europe.

Polls consistently show public opposition. For example:

* West Germany: 61 per cent want the government to postpone deployment of the missiles

* Britain: 58 per cent oppose Cruise and 56 per cent oppose Trident

In addition the decision in the Norwegian parliament to allocate funds to carry out the NATO decision to install Cruise missiles was only carried on a 77-76 vote.

And in the USA, eight out of nine states holding referenda in the November 1982 elections voted 'yes' to a nuclear freeze.

The Soviet Union's new moves have clearly forced US president Ronald Reagan onto the defensive. According to the 9 January *Observer* his weekly radio address was notable for its lack of anti-Soviet rhetoric and in its opinion reflects a 'growing mood in Washington that Andropov's overtures should not simply be dismissed as propaganda'.

A further comment was that 'Reagan's speech is a recognition that the West cannot always appear to be talking about new weapons while the East appears to be talking about peace.'

The big problem now for Reagan is how to build up his 'peace' image while simultaneously preparing for war. The US strategy is based on its need to contain the colonial revolution, to disarm its own working class anger at austerity measures at home in the name of a bigger enemy abroad.

The new proposals from Andropov throw the responsibility for arms reduction firmly onto the USA and its allies in Europe. The next move is up to the anti-missiles movement to build on the Soviet proposals.

NATO REJECTS PROPOSALS FOR

NATO nuclear war

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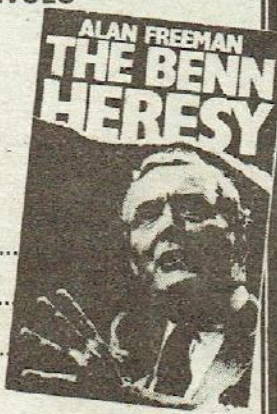
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Our thanks this week to

Rueloffs	£5.00
Woodcock	10.00
Middlesborough	.50
Bath	20.00
Nottingham	154.00
Rotherham	11.00
York	5.00
Anon	5.00
Total this year	£210.50

