

# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

## TROTSKY

A photo spread: see centre pages

**SINN FEIN SPLIT** See page 5



# Tories stoke up race hate



You're the best friend I can find...

Photo Carlos Guarita/Reflex

## Now it's racist blood tests!

LAST week Home Secretary Douglas Hurd launched a big attack on the Labour Party, alleging that the policies of a future Labour government would lead to a 'flood' of black immigrants. This means that the Tories have decided to make race a big issue in the upcoming general election.

By Payman Reza

They plan to follow in the tracks recently laid down by the racist gutter press when they carried front-page scare headlines about immigrants from the Indian subcontinent 'swamping' Heathrow airport.

The press scare stories were followed by a noticeable increase in attacks on Asians. Last week a gang of over 100 attacked a Muslim mosque in Whitechapel Road in East London.

A big Tory campaign on race in the election campaign will produce a big upsurge in racist attacks and harassment. It will most likely lead to murder on the streets.

### TESTS

And now the government is set to introduce blood-tests for immigrants.

These follow the new 'tighter' controls on visitors from the Indian subcontinent soon to be extended to visitors from Nigeria and Ghana.

According to Home Office minister David Waddington, the blood-test will be carried out in voluntary trials, at first on 40 families who are seeking entry to the UK and whose credentials are in dispute.

The Home Office regards the DNA blood-tests as a very accurate method of establishing paternity or maternity — which is the cornerstone of Britain's racist immigration laws.

The Tories, since coming to power in 1979 on a racist platform of 'doing something about immigration', have introduced many measures to make life even more difficult for those trying to come to Britain. But the main state control on immigration is still the 1971 Immigration Act.

## BIG BROTHER TEBBIT

**DID it ever occur to you that the BBC was wildly biased to the left? That this staid, tweedy institution, which would surely smoke a pipe and carry a shooting stick if it could smoke, shoot, or sit, has conducted a relentless war to undermine capitalist values by doling out a steady drip drip drip of Russian — and even Libyan — propaganda?**

No? And I bet it never occurred to any British worker on strike over the

last 50 years that this clipped-toned airwaves voice of the Establishment was encouraging them and cheering them on.

### Rattled

There are two reasons for Norman Tebbit's attack on the BBC. The Tories are increasingly rattled, and therefore intolerant of anything less than full and outspoken support. Thatcher has a short and sharp way

with dissidents and critics in her own party.

The second reason is more fundamental: it is part of the Tory drive to dismantle and privatise public broadcasting.

The attack on Alan Bleasdale's serial 'The Monocled Mutineer' served the same purpose. The widespread condemnation of Tebbit, even by backbench Tory MPs, shows that would-be Big Brother Tebbit has now overreached himself.

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# THE RISE AND FALL OF OPEC

Sheikh Yamani, sacked last week after 24 years as Oil Minister of Saudi Arabia, was in his own way one of the most effective 'anti-imperialists' of the modern world.

He was the centre of a process whereby the great bulk of the world's oil production — previously owned by US and British multinationals — was nationalised, a vastly greater share of oil money went to the producing countries, and much of that money was used to industrialise Third World countries.

Yamani was far removed from the radical guerilla leaders who more obviously spearheaded the challenge by the world's third and fourth-rank capitalist nations to the great powers. Not for him prisons, people's wars, mass mobilisations.

He operated in the conference

room. As the guerilla leaders turned back the West's values of liberty and equality against the West, he turned the concepts of driving a hard bargain and charging what the market would bear.

He is a graduate of New York and Harvard universities, a multi-millionaire with luxury homes in London, Sussex and Sardinia.

## Architect

But he was among the architects of probably the greatest ever wave of nationalisations of foreign capital.

In 1973-4 the major oil-producing states — united in the OPEC cartel — pushed oil prices up from \$2-\$3 a barrel to over \$10. A second OPEC 'oil shock' in 1979-80 raised the price to over \$35.

The big oil multinationals did not suffer: though they lost control of

## By Martin Thomas

their supplies, the raised prices allowed both them and the producing countries to get bigger profits. But fundamentally the Third World oil-producing states were asserting that they would no longer be mere office juniors in an oil business controlled by metropolitan interests.

OPEC's success, however, laid the basis for its downfall. The higher oil price made many new wells profitable, especially in the US. Non-OPEC production surged. Meanwhile the oil market stagnated, as the big capitalist economies worked, successfully, to reduce their dependence on oil for energy.

Now OPEC has only 27% of the capitalist world oil market — as against 63% in 1979.

Since about 1983 OPEC has been

in crisis. It can keep prices up only by keeping production down. But a number of OPEC countries cannot afford to keep production down. They cheat, and quota systems collapse.

Saudi Arabia is the biggest, richest, and lowest-cost producer in OPEC. It can make profits even on very low oil prices, and it can afford to live with low profits for a fair while. So Saudi Arabia has taken the burden of trying to hold OPEC together — both by the carrot (limiting its own production to allow other OPEC countries more of the market) and by the stick (turning the taps on occasionally to flood the market and warn errant OPEC members that all will suffer if the quotas don't stick).

This year it has been particularly difficult — prices have dropped below \$10 (from \$30 in 1985), and even now are only around \$14. Yamani has been central to the dif-

ficult effort. His sacking probably reflects a loss of patience by the Saudi ruling elite.

A new Saudi policy may push prices up in the short term, but in the medium term the most likely result is the collapse of OPEC, and lower oil prices.

## Long-term

A long-term return to low oil prices is unlikely. That would ruin not only hundreds of small US producers (the number of US rigs in action has already gone down over 70% since 1981), but also, perhaps, some of the giants of the industry. Powerful forces will be pushed into trying to stabilise the market, and maybe some new neo-OPEC will emerge.

Whatever happens, however, the shifts in world capitalist power introduced by the Yamani era will not easily be undone.



The Jarrow march arrives

Photo Andrew Wiard, Report

From the Unemployment Bulletin

## How Tories fiddled figures

Date	Change	Estimated effect on monthly count*	April 1983	Men aged 60 and over and not entitled to benefit no longer required to sign on at benefit offices in order to get NI credits	-107,400 by June 1983
October 1979	Change to fortnightly payment of benefits.	+20,000	June 1983	All men aged 60 & over allowed long-term supplementary benefit rate as soon as they come onto supplementary benefit.	-54,400 by Aug. 1983
October 1979	Compensating downward adjustment to published seasonally adjusted totals.	-20,000	June 1983	As a result of provision introduced in November 1980 barring school-leavers from claiming benefit until September each year, together with change in monthly count to claimants only in October 1982, between 100,000 and 200,000 unemployed school leavers are missed from the monthly figures for June, July and August each year.	
February 1981	First published estimate of register effect of special employment and training measures (coverage increased from 250,000 participants at start of 1979 to 668,000 by Jan '86).	-370,000 (-495,000 by Jan. 1986)	October 1984	Change in CP eligibility rules. Entry now limited to unemployed benefit claimants.	-29,000 by Jan. 1986
July-Oct 1981	Seasonally adjusted figures for these months reduced by 20,000 to compensate for effect on count of emergency procedures to deal with DHSS industrial action.	-20,000	July - August 1985	Reconciliation of Northern Ireland DHSS records with computer records.	(July) -5,700 (August) -5,150
July 1981	Unemployed men aged 60 and above, drawing supplementary benefit for a year or more given option of long-term rate in return for not registering for work.	-30,000 by May 1982	July 1985	Payment of unemployment benefit in arrears.	no estimate available
July 1982	Taxation of Unemployment Benefit. Suggested that this might have reduced count by encouraging single parents to switch to (untaxed) supplementary benefit.	no estimate available	March 1986	Introduction of a two week delay in publication of the monthly unemployment count "to improve accuracy".	between -40,000 & -90,000 average -50,000
October 1982	Change in definition and compilation of monthly unemployment figures from a clerical count of people registered for work at Jobcentres and careers offices to a computer count covering only benefit claimants.	-170,000 to -190,000 In addition: estimated effect on number of school-leavers recorded -26,000	March 1986	New method of calculating unemployment rate, using larger denominator. Initially this will be published alongside rate calculated on old basis.	-1.0 to -1.5 percentage points
October 1982	Monthly publication of number of unemployed people seeking part-time work (less than 30 hours a week) discontinued. Final figure - for September 1982 - was 52,204.		Date to be announced	Abolition of right to half and three-quarter rate Unemployment Benefit for people with insufficient NI contributions to qualify for full rate (decision announced on 15th January 1986).	-57,000 over a full year

\* Estimated effects are those published by the Department of Employment except where marked.  
 ◊ Estimated effect derived from Department of Employment, DHSS or Treasury data by the Unemployment Unit.

## Tories screw the jobless again

By Jim Denham

The new "availability for work" test is just the latest in a long line of cynical Tory manoeuvres designed to reduce unemployment figures by driving the jobless off the unemployment register.

The new test takes the form of a four page questionnaire to be filled in by all new claimants. It includes questions about how far the would-be claimant is willing to travel for work, whether s/he is willing to work unsocial hours, the minimum wage s/he requires, whether immediate arrangements can be made to look after children or disabled relatives, and whether s/he is placing any restrictions on the sort of job that would be acceptable.

A wrong answer to any of the questions could mean the claimant's benefit is immediately suspended.

Under the previous system, all claimants for Unemployment Benefit and Supplementary Benefit had to sign a statement confirming their willingness to accept any available job. But in practice, it was accepted that a claimant had six months in which to look for a job appropriate to their qualifications or experience. The new test obviously represents a major tightening up on the "availability for work" rule, and the questions relating to child care and looking after relatives will hit women in particular.

## Pilot

The new test follows a pilot scheme carried out in twelve areas, which showed that 7.2% of the unemployed did not pursue their claims — compared with 3.5% under the previous rules. In the pilot scheme, a further 2.6% of claims were finally disallowed by the adjudication officer, as against 0.2% before.

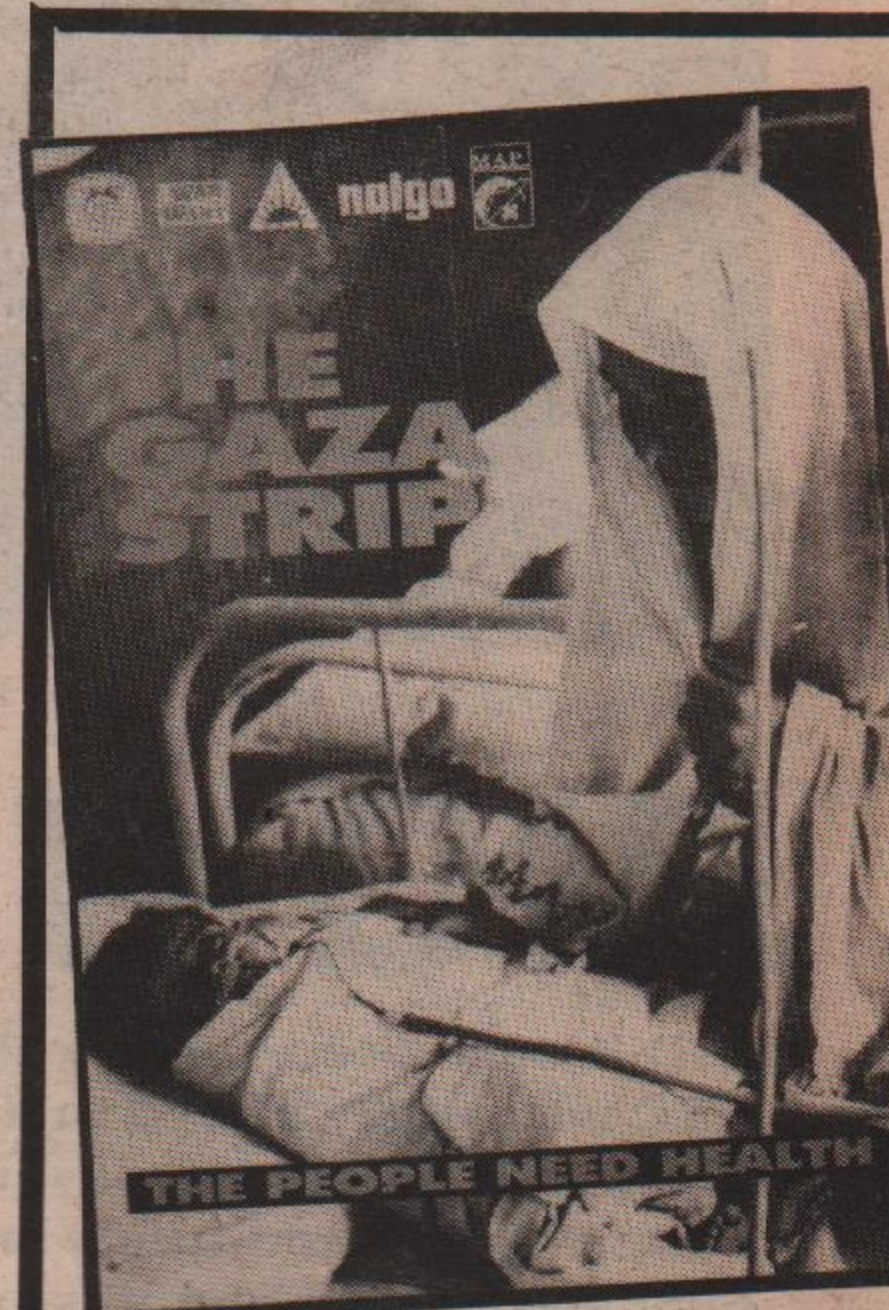
An internal DHSS paper says that "a fair assumption" would be that the new test will affect 5% of claimants which would remove 240,000 people from the unemployment figures in a year.

The new test follows hard on the heels of the much-vaunted "Restart" scheme under which all claimants who have been out of work for 12 months or more (soon to be reduced

to six months) are being called in and pressurised to go onto a Community Programme, a government-subsided low-paid job (Jobstart) or one of the Manpower Services Commission's other useless schemes. Despite the hype from the Tories and the MSC, only 1% of those interviewed in the Restart pilot scheme actually found a job.

## Wrong

The insufferably smug Employment Secretary, Lord Young, claims all this is intended to help the unemployed find work. The truth — exposed by the new "availability" test — is rather different: the Tories' major preoccupation between now and the next election is to push the unemployment register down below three million. And that means denying new claimants their benefits, and bullying existing claimants into withdrawing their claims.



Support the Gaza unions' health project. For details of the campaign write to: War on Want (Freepost) 1 London Bridge St London SE1 9UT.



## Hungary '56: Workers against Stalinism.



# AGAINST STALINIST TYRANNY!

EXACTLY 30 years ago this week Hungarian workers armed with rifles and petrol bombs were fighting heavily armed Russian tanks in an unequal battle for control of Budapest.

The Russian army had withdrawn at the end of October, and it seemed as if the heroic insurrectionaries had won Hungary's liberation from Russian domination. But then at the beginning of November fresh Russian troops poured across the border and converged on Budapest.

The people resisted, but they were overwhelmed. When the Hungarian

workers continued to resist by way of a general strike and factory occupations, the Russian army and their Hungarian collaborators systematically broke that strike, driving the workers out of the factories at the point of guns and bayonets.

They imposed a new Stalinist regime of terror on the Hungarian people — they were still hanging insurgents for years afterwards. Many thousands received long jail sentences. All forms of independent working-class organisation were crushed and destroyed.

Thirty-seven years before the 1956 Revolution, in 1919, the Hungarian workers had set up a Hungarian

Soviet Republic, following the example of the Russian Bolsheviks. But the workers' republic in Hungary was overthrown by bourgeois counter-revolution, and merciless reaction reigned in Hungary for decades.

## EDITORIAL

The Stalinist repression of 1956 and after was more savage and relentless and thorough than even the

White reaction had been in the aftermath of the defeat of 1919.

It has taken the Hungarian workers decades to begin to recover from that terrible defeat and bloodletting, and the prolonged repression that followed. Today Hungary is among the most 'liberal' of Stalinist regimes, but still repression of the opposition continues. On this page we print the programme of the Hungarian opposition.

Socialists in Britain may well disagree with aspects of the programmes put forward by opposition groups in the Stalinist states. Their ideas are often shaped and deformed by the fact that the tyrannies they op-

pose lyingly call themselves socialist.

Nevertheless the proper place of socialists and of every independent labour movement in the world is with those opposition groups and against the totalitarian Stalinist states. It is a major scandal that many British labour movement organisations continue — even after the banning of Solidarnosc in Poland — to have 'fraternal' relations with the police-state fake unions in the Stalinist states.

The 30th anniversary of the murdered Hungarian revolution of 1956 should remind us of what Stalinism is, and what the attitude of working class socialists to it must be.

# Stirrings of a new movement

The publication earlier this year of the draft political programme of the underground opposition movement in the illegal magazine *Demokrata* has marked the 30th anniversary of the Hungarian revolution.

The production of this programme is known to have caused enormous concern in government circles because it is further evidence that after many years of disorganisation and demoralisation, following the bloody suppression of the 1956 Revolution, opposition forces are beginning to organise around concrete political demands in modern day Hungary.

Over the last few years harassment, intimidation and occasional arrests by the security police of leading oppositionists such as Nargy, Rayk, Hirostani, has been stepped up within Hungary. For instance, last year Rayk's samizdat boutique held in his flat was closed down by the authorities and Rayk warned about his activities.

The previously 'liberal' Hungarian regime has over the last few years passed a number of laws designed specifically to further tighten the screw on the opposition movement and on all other forms of independent political activity.

For instance, under the terms of the Forced Labour Code passed in 1983 any person stopped by the police who does not possess proof of his/her employment can be sent down to work in the mines for up to two years.

### Tony Jain introduces the programme of the new Hungarian opposition.

Another provision under this law enables the police to determine if your income is sufficient to support your lifestyle and if they decide it is not, then the same two year prison sentence applies.

Finding the reasons for the recent crackdown is not too difficult. Since the mid 1970s the previously prosperous Hungarian economy (in European terms, anyway) has been in crisis. Unemployment and inflation have soared and workers' living standards and wages have fallen drastically. Given such conditions the Kadar regime clearly fears the development of Polish style trade unions as part of the Hungarian working class's response to such a crisis. Hence the government's urgent need to stifle and destroy all remnants of opposition and other independent thinking and activity.

Other factors, too, have influenced the current clampdown, most noticeably the call for higher internal discipline by the Soviet bureaucracy to all its client states in the late 1970s in response to events in Poland 1980/1, the invasion of Afghanistan 1981, and the disarray in CPSU circles caused by the struggle over who should succeed Brezhnev as party leader.

The demands outlined by the programme fall into five categories dealing with citizens' rights, public life, foreign policy and national defence, economic and social policies, cultural and national traditions.

The demands under the first two categories include the right to free speech, free religion, free press, the free movement of individuals, the right to strike, the right to join political parties which provide an alternative to the ruling Hungarian Socialist Workers Party and a central role for Parliament in the running of the nation's affairs.

The section of the manifesto dealing with foreign policy and national defence calls for the right to question Hungary's membership of the Warsaw Pact, although it recognises that withdrawal is extremely unlikely in

the near future; a review of the continued Soviet military presence inside Hungary.

The economic demands put forward include calls for greater competition to be initiated between the state, private and cooperative sectors; greater autonomy for individual enterprises; an end to barriers preventing foreign investment and imports coming into Hungary; an abandonment of the principle of full employment; better social security provisions for all.

Finally, in the section dealing with cultural and national traditions, the demands made include equality in the treatment of all the country's various ethnic groupings; a formal recognition of the contribution made by the Jews to the development of Hungary; an end to the persecution of the country's large gypsy population; freedom of artistic expression, publishing, etc.

While all serious revolutionaries should support the Hungarian opposition movement in its attempts to secure basic civil, human and political rights from the totalitarian regime under which they currently exist, we must nevertheless recognise that the movement's programme has a number of shortcomings.

A central failing is the absence of any perspective for fighting and organising within the Hungarian working class to overthrow the existing system and replace it with a socialist one where working class demands and needs are central.

In fact, throughout the programme, and I have analysed it very carefully, there is no mention of class, the need for socialism, etc., and this makes me wonder just what the oppositionists are getting at. Do they simply want the regime to become more democratic and honest, something it cannot possibly do, or do they want their role and position in society to be upgraded and recognised? More importantly, do they simply believe that the only thing wrong with the regime is the lack of a free press, free religion, etc.? Surely not.

The economic demands put forward by the oppositionists, which essentially call for the establishment of a market style economy, can offer no real solution to the basic needs of the Hungarian working class. Only workers control under real socialist planning can meet the needs of workers everywhere.

Likewise, calls for a greater role for parliament in deciding the affairs of the country can offer workers no



Armed Hungarian workers in October 1956

more say in the running of their own lives than the present system allows. The comrades in Hungary should look back to the glorious revolution of 1956 and the organisations and

demands put forward by workers in the Budapest central workers' council for inspiration rather than to reformist writings of modern day eurocommunists.

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# GRAFFITI



## Bullying the unemployed

As the Tories increase their efforts to frighten unemployed people off claiming benefit, new figures show that £750 million a year goes unclaimed in supplementary benefit.

In a parliamentary written reply last week, are for 1983. The government's own estimates for social security fraud are much lower — £4.7 million to £135 million.

The 'Restart' scheme has been used to bully

claimants into signing off — 2% of those who go through the mill have their money cut off, and another 8% or so abandon their claims — and now the government is planning new measures to grill new claimants on their 'availability for work'.

Department of Employment workers have been given 'targets'. They must achieve "at least 30 sign-offs per year" — not by finding jobs, of course, but by intimidation.

## Domestic violence

About 25% of violence is estimated to be wife-battering; more certain figures rate domestic violence at one-tenth of all unlawful killings.

Yet less than two per cent of the serious assaults recorded by the Metropolitan Police in 1984 were domestic. According to an inter-

nal police report leaked to the Observer last Sunday, the reason for this is that the police do not take wife-battering seriously. They will not prosecute unless death is likely; and mileage allowance rules apparently stop police using police cars to take threatened women to refuges.

## US deals

ANOTHER landmark in the 'Americanisation' of British industrial relations?

Two trade unions have agreed to a wage cut deal at a Bristol factory. Such 'givebacks' have become commonplace in US industry, but are still rare in Britain.

Under the deal, now being recommended to the 750 workers at the DRG paper and packaging firm, the lowest-paid workers — mainly women — will have their wages cut by £11 to £13 a week.

Existing employees will receive a £1000 lump sum in compensation, but all new recruits will be at the lower rate. The deal also includes a 12-month pay freeze, 50 voluntary redundancies, and speed-up proposals.

What's in it for the workers? The deal is supposed to safeguard jobs. But US workers negotiating 'givebacks' have often found that the jobs go just the same.

## Easier with profits

Complaints about the telephone service have increased 20% since British Telecom was privatised, according to a recent report from unions in the industry.

British Telecom has made huge profits — a 19.2% return on capital

last year — but at the expense of domestic customers and of workers.

To compete with the rival company Mercury, which offers services only on peak business routes, British Telecom has cut its rates for business users and increased its charges for ordinary household users.

It has cut 22,600 jobs from its workforce since privatisation, and overtime has increased by 43% since 1983. Greater pressure on workers has led to poorer service.

But one British Telecom employee has done well. BT chair George Jefferson had his salary increased last year from £111,000 to £172,000.

## Book cuts

Some local authorities are spending less than half what they spent on new library books before the Tories came in.

Overall, the Tories have forced a 34% cut in library book-buying since 1978-9. A new report from the National Book Committee says that some authorities are abandoning whole subject areas in their libraries.

## 'The evil Mr Boyson'

"PROBABLY the most evil product of our time", according to Tory Minister Rhodes Boyson.

What was he talking about? The nuclear bomb? Starvation in the Third World? Mass unemployment?

No: for Boyson the Great Satan is... single parents. They are to blame for "the wildness of the uncontrolled male young", because "boys can generally only be civilised by firm and caring fathers".

Maybe this explains the way the minds of most Tory Party leaders work: they were brought up by wealthy parents, who shuffled them off to nannies and to boarding schools, and, lacking a close relation with their fathers, they grew up (in Boyson's words) to "a life of violent crime".

Let's just hope Boyson doesn't find out about the old Indian custom of burning widows on their husbands' funeral pyres. He might suggest that it be applied to orphaned boys in order to preserve Tory values.



## Debating federalism

I was interested by Liam Conway's letter a few weeks ago about his experience when he argued for a federal united Ireland in his local Labour Party.

I have recently debated this issue in my ward Labour Party and in a workshop at the Communist Party's 'Left Unlimited' weekend school with Clare Short MP and Matt Merrigan (former president of the Irish TUC).

In the ward there was a brief debate between myself and a right-winger, and then a vote: the great majority abstained. After the meeting I was told: "Yes, some federal solution seems to be the answer in Ireland. But I can't see how it would work..."

At 'Left Unlimited' Clare Short agreed "Some degree of federalism will be there". But her focus, and that of Matt Merrigan and CP speakers too, was on the British state dealing with the Protestants.

They said that if British troops pulled out immediately, there would be a terrible sectarian civil war in Northern Ireland; but "if Britain pulled out on a planned and organised basis, then there would be no bloodbath".

Now withdrawal with a political settlement is better than withdrawal without; but the essence of the matter is not less or more speed — just being slow about it won't necessarily bring a settlement! — but what a democratic political settlement could be. Hence federalism.

As far as I can see, the 'left Labour' view represented by Clare Short differs from the not-very-left view in my ward mainly by greater confidence in the capitalist state to see off the Protestant workers! (I say Protestant workers especially, since Matt Merrigan was emphatic that it was chiefly the workers, not the Protestant bourgeoisie, who militantly oppose a united Ireland). A strange basis for a left wing to define itself!

Interestingly, most of the speakers from the floor had the same great confidence in the British state dealing with the Protestants (and the same



Derek Speirs/Report

Unionists last November in Belfast burning an effigy of Thatcher

uninterest in a democratic programme to reach the Protestant workers 'from below'.

Sympathisers of the Workers' Party said that the answer was for a Labour government to legislate social and democratic improvements in Northern Ireland which will facilitate class unity there (after which, at a later stage, the issue of a united Ireland can be raised).

Speakers from the Socialist Workers' Party talked about uniting Catholic and Protestant workers for immediate economic struggles and for socialism. Very good. But what does it have to do with Partition or a united Ireland?

Socialist propaganda and economic militancy may convince Protestant workers of the need for Catholic-Protestant class unity on economic issues (which many of them understand anyway) or even of the supremacy of class issues over national/communal issues: it will not

persuade them that they are 'green Irish', any more than it can persuade English workers that they are French.

And in fact, hiding behind their general socialist propaganda, the SWP also have a reliance on the British state. On the front page of Socialist Worker a few months ago they called for the British state to disarm the Protestants.

It sounds like an orderly business of putting a notice in the newspapers asking all UDR members to hand in their guns at such-and-such a time and such-and-such a place. In reality it could only happen through a vast and bloody war by the British army against the whole Protestant community — a war during which the SWP's calls for workers to think about bread-and-butter economic issues instead would ring very hollow.

Yours fraternally,  
MARTIN THOMAS  
London

## Economic strategy to take on capitalism

The Big Bang and the growing internationalisation of capital markets described in SO 290 raise some fundamental questions about socialist economic strategy.

Traditionally, the Labour Left has supported the Alternative Economic Strategy — import controls, exchange controls and "encroachment" on capitalist power through planning agreements and limited nationalisations. SO has always argued that this strategy is both nationalist — import controls cause unemployment elsewhere — and utopian — it is not possible to "control" capitalism or to create socialism behind the tariff walls of a national state.

The forces behind the 'Big Bang' reinforce this argument. Dennis Skinner asks in SO 290 "Why is it not possible to have statutory controls over the export of capital?" (in the programme for the next Labour government). The shortest answer is that it just wouldn't work: as soon as any government or potential government announced its intentions to impose controls, the capital it was trying to control would be moved elsewhere within minutes. As Martin Thomas pointed out in SO 290, these markets are outside the control of any national government, whether right or left wing.

Hattersley thinks he can get round this problem by winning the confidence of the international bankers and showing that a Labour government would not be a threat to their interests — hence his recent trip to talk to the US in New York. Even so, any sort of Labour government will still face the same problem of having no control over the capital markets.

This is not a new problem: the right-wing Wilson governments of the '60s, which had far tighter controls at their disposal than exist today, were unable to avoid the economic pressures from international finance shuffling capital around the world.

We should have some more discussion in SO on the sort of economic

strategy that really could take on capitalism internationally. It is clear that we cannot oppose the rightward drift in Labour's economic policy by going back to the non-solutions of the AES.

Yours fraternally,  
BRUCE ROBINSON  
London

## No surprise at Labour!

Your editorial (9.10.86) states that "...the dominance of Tory ideas come(s) from...the failure of the official labour movement over the last seven years to mount a sustained and vigorous campaign against the Tories' ideological offensive, and to organise all-out working class action against the Tory government's attacks on the welfare state and the working class".

To expect such a campaign is equivalent to expecting the last Labour government to have mounted a campaign against itself, as it, through tax increases, welfare cuts, anti-'scrounger' propaganda and increases in inequality of wealth and income, mounted numerous attacks on the working class.

You should not be surprised at the actions of that government or at Kinno's failure to support the miners. The Labour leadership will inevitably bow to capitalist imperatives unless forced in a socialist direction by a mass socialist base in the Party. The building of that base will not come about because you "write to every CLP in the country and ask them to pass a resolution supporting the demands we have made", but by a lengthy process of activity and educa-

tion in every branch, convincing the majority of members (not simply delegates) of your case and winning their active support.

Without such a base, a socialist party will not be created nor a socialist government sustained when it inevitably clashes swords with capitalist interests. Do not delude yourself that an alliance of disparate 'left' groups, sectionalised and London-based, will necessarily change the non-socialist, reformist, Kinnoite way of thinking that is the norm amongst Labour Party members up and down the country.

Like it or not (and I don't), Kinno is representative of the labour movement, until the base of the movement can be persuaded to adopt an alternative definition and mission of socialism, the search for an alternative leadership or policies will be futile.

MATT SMITH (ILP)  
Birmingham.

Letters are welcome: send to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. 300 words or less, please, or we may have to cut them.



# Behind the split in Sinn Fein

By Paddy Dollard

LAST SUNDAY, 2 November, Provisional Sinn Fein split after its annual Ard Fheis (conference) voted by the necessary two-thirds majority to end the party's 64 year old policy of abstentionism.

If Sinn Fein wins any seats in the next 26 County election, then it will send its members into Leinster House, the 26 County parliament.

The party will continue to boycott Westminster and any future Belfast parliament.

When the vote was announced, the men who founded Provisional Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA, Rory O'Brady and David O'Connell, stood up and led over 30 delegates out of the hall. They had led a similar walkout from the old Republican movement in December 1969 on exactly the same issue — a vote to take seats in Leinster House.

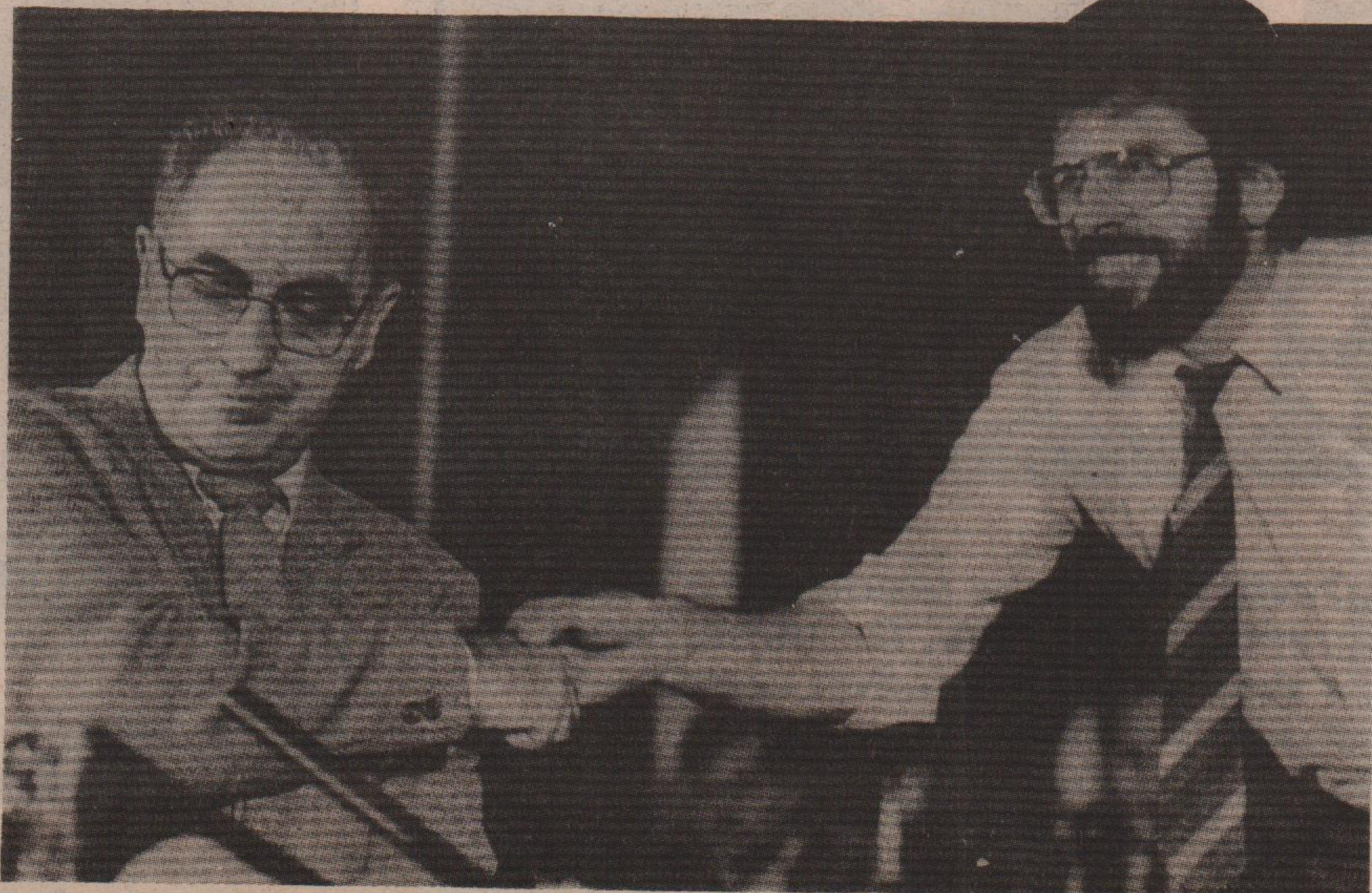
## Northern

At a press conference later that day, they announced the formation of a new organisation, Republican Sinn Fein.

It is significant that those who walked out numbered only a fraction of the 160-odd delegates who voted against the change of policy. How much support O'Brady and O'Connell have is not yet clear: at the press conference they claimed that their organisation represented 130 delegates.

Decisive in limiting the size of the breakaway was the fact that the Provisional IRA had recently met in its first 'Army Convention' for 17 years and voted to adopt the new policy. In one day it went from a ban on its members discussing taking seats in the Dail to support for the taking of seats. It seems that so far there has been no split in the IRA.

When party leader Gerry Adams told the conference before the vote was taken that those who walked out of Sinn Fein were walking out on the



Rory O'Brady and Gerry Adams shake hands

IRA, he spoke the truth and his opponents knew it. The Adams-McGuinness faction had done their work well.

Thus the Northern leadership of Sinn Fein, who ousted O'Brady and O'Connell three years ago, has succeeded in persuading the movement to abandon one of its most inflexible and most crippling principles. Their goal is to build the organisation in the South, and they knew that, apart from exceptional times such as during the hunger strikes of 1981, it is almost impossible for candidates to win seats in the South if electors know they will not go to parliament.

## War

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Gerry Adams' pledge to the Ard Fheis that the war in the

North will continue. That too helped minimise the scale of the traditionalist breakaway. Physical force on principle is still an unchallengeable god amongst Republicans.

But if the Ard Fheis moved Sinn Fein towards more rational down-to-earth politics by its decision to take seats in Dail Eireann, it also took a giant step away from rational secular politics by throwing out last year's Ard Fheis commitment to support a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. This had been passed against the leadership's opposition after many delegates had left. This year it got short shrift.

The Ard Fheis leaves Sinn Fein looking something like this. The 1981 turn towards politics is now probably irreversible. The party exists in the North not only as the political wing

of the IRA but also as a vigorous campaigning organisation engaged in community politics — looking after the thousand and one problems ordinary people have with bureaucracies of various sorts.

The party is committed to a vague and undefined 'socialism', which it thinks is expressed in such documents as the 1916 Declaration of the Irish Republic and the 1919 'Democratic Programme' of the first Dail Eireann, which seceded from the Westminster Parliament.

## Socialism

Within the party there is a layer of left-wing activists who would not be out of place in a hard-left gathering in Britain. These sometimes set the tone of the organisation in its press and in its contacts with British and other socialists. Last year they briefly got their heads on abortion.

What this year's vote to ditch the abortion policy shows is that Sinn Fein remains a Catholic party at both leadership level and at the level of its broad rank and file and broad support.

More than that, it is a party confined exclusively to one community, that of the Northern Ireland Catholics.

## The South

Sinn Fein's immediate prospects in the South are limited, and Adams at the Ard Fheis was careful not to raise unrealistic hopes. Their best hope in the next election is to win one or two seats in border areas.

But even that might give them the balance in a Dublin parliament where government majorities are often wafer-thin.

The Republican Sinn Fein group is not likely to go away tomorrow or the day after. It will be remarkable if they do not manage to create some rift in the Provisional IRA.

And that could lead to a bloody feud such as those that marked the separation of the Provos from the Officials and later the IRSPINLA from the Officials.

Next week SO will carry a more detailed assessment of the Sinn Fein split and the background to it.

## PRESS GANG

### Scandal and scruples

By Jim Denham

I confess that it set me up for the day. I caught sight of the 'News of the World' front page last Sunday, and there it was, a huge headline: "Tory boss Archer pays off vice girl". I didn't actually buy the Murdoch scab sheet, of course.

Fortunately, 'Today' had also devoted its front page to the same story, with a somewhat smaller (but no less pleasing) headline: "My career is over". 'Today' gave what I presume was a paraphrase of the NoW report minus the more salacious detail: "Archer, married to Cambridge don Mary Archer with two sons, offered to pay the woman involved £2000 to leave the country. "Archer was telling friends last night that he was 'set up' and "my career is finished".

The Sunday Express had different information. Under a minor front-page headline: "Archer: I won't quit over sex storm", Express readers were assured that "Tory Vice-Chairman Mr Jeffrey Archer last night flatly rejected suggestions that he was about to resign over a sex scandal.

"Mr Archer vehemently denied suggestions in a Sunday newspaper that he offered money to a woman to leave the country". Presumably, Archer changed his story between Saturday night and Sunday morning. Or maybe the Express got it wrong — a not unheard of occurrence.

## Experience

I can remember experiencing similar malicious pleasure as Sarah Keays put the boot into Cecil Parkinson three years ago. I wondered at the time about the propriety of a socialist gloating over the downfall of a Tory caught with his pants round his ankles. Remembering all Thatcher's guff about 'Victorian values' and the 'sanctity of the family', I decided that it was OK to at least smirk. I reckon the same applies to Archer, who as well as being a hypocrite is also a palpable liar and a smarmy git.

Profumo was before my time, but I'm told he is now doing good work in the East End and should be allowed to put the past behind him.

Of course the Parkinson business didn't actually do the Tories any harm in the opinion polls, and quite possibly Archer's indiscretion won't either: after all, they are both red-blooded Real Men.

Harvey Proctor is a different kettle of fish, and you have to be a little more careful about what exactly you're gloating over, and why. According to Thursday's Mirror, Proctor is soon to "face criminal charges over allegations about spanking sessions with teenage boys".

Now Proctor's sexual preferences are his own business, though I'm not sure that sadism is very nice, whatever the sex of the parties involved. Why I fully intend to enjoy the public humiliation of this ultra-right wing loony was nicely summed up by 'Today' earlier this month: "Harvey Proctor is an authoritarian, a supporter of tough law and order policies and an advocate of greater discipline in schools.

"If he is a compulsive spanker and sadist, his political views about the nature of authority immediately become untrustworthy — not so much the result of rational thinking than of some dark childhood neurosis of the soul".

To hell with your scruples — enjoy it, that's what I say.

## YOUTH FIGHTBACK CONFERENCE

# Building the left in Labour's youth

A NEW two-year YTS, new visas and deportations, more fascist attacks, life on the dole, health and education cuts... and more, much more, on the way.

Fighting the Tories isn't easy — especially if you're young, without much money, having problems with your family, teachers or boss.

For most youth, it's either fight or sink — so we think youth should join a union to fight in the workplace and join the Labour Party Young Socialists to fight for socialism.

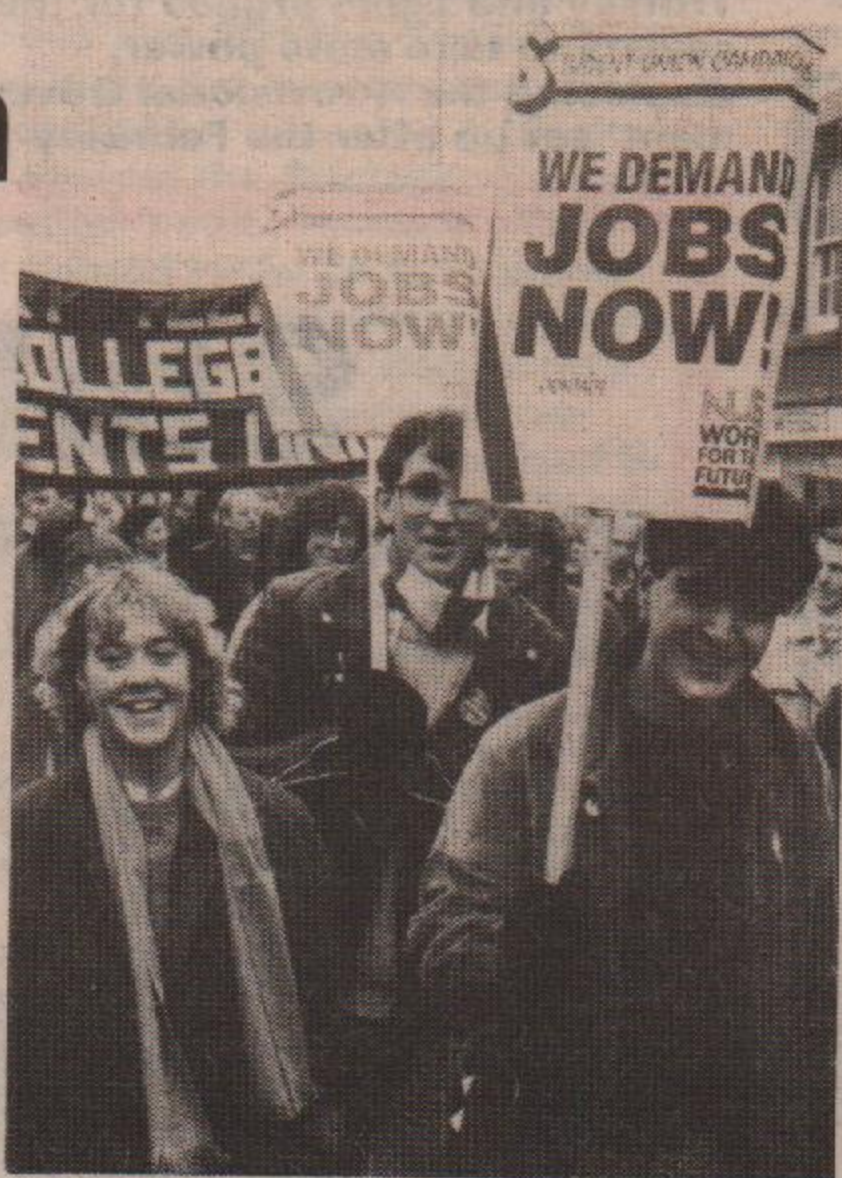
But in your union you'll find you

have to fight to get action. In the YS, led by 'Marxists', it's unfortunately remarkably similar.

At the moment the LPYS is a truly pathetic organisation. This was proved when the recent national demonstration only managed to muster two or three thousand marchers.

But the LPYS is the best thing the movement has on offer, so our task is to organise to change it.

'Youth Fightback', the left wing of the LPYS, aims to build a much larger youth movement than the current LPYS. This movement must be more democratic; must get out on the



streets more; must seriously campaign with groups like Anti-Apartheid.

And we must build a YS with militant socialist politics, replacing the stale politics of the YS's current 'Militant' leadership.

So come to our conference. It promises to be the biggest, best, most political, and most-fun conference ever staged by an opposition group in the LPYS.

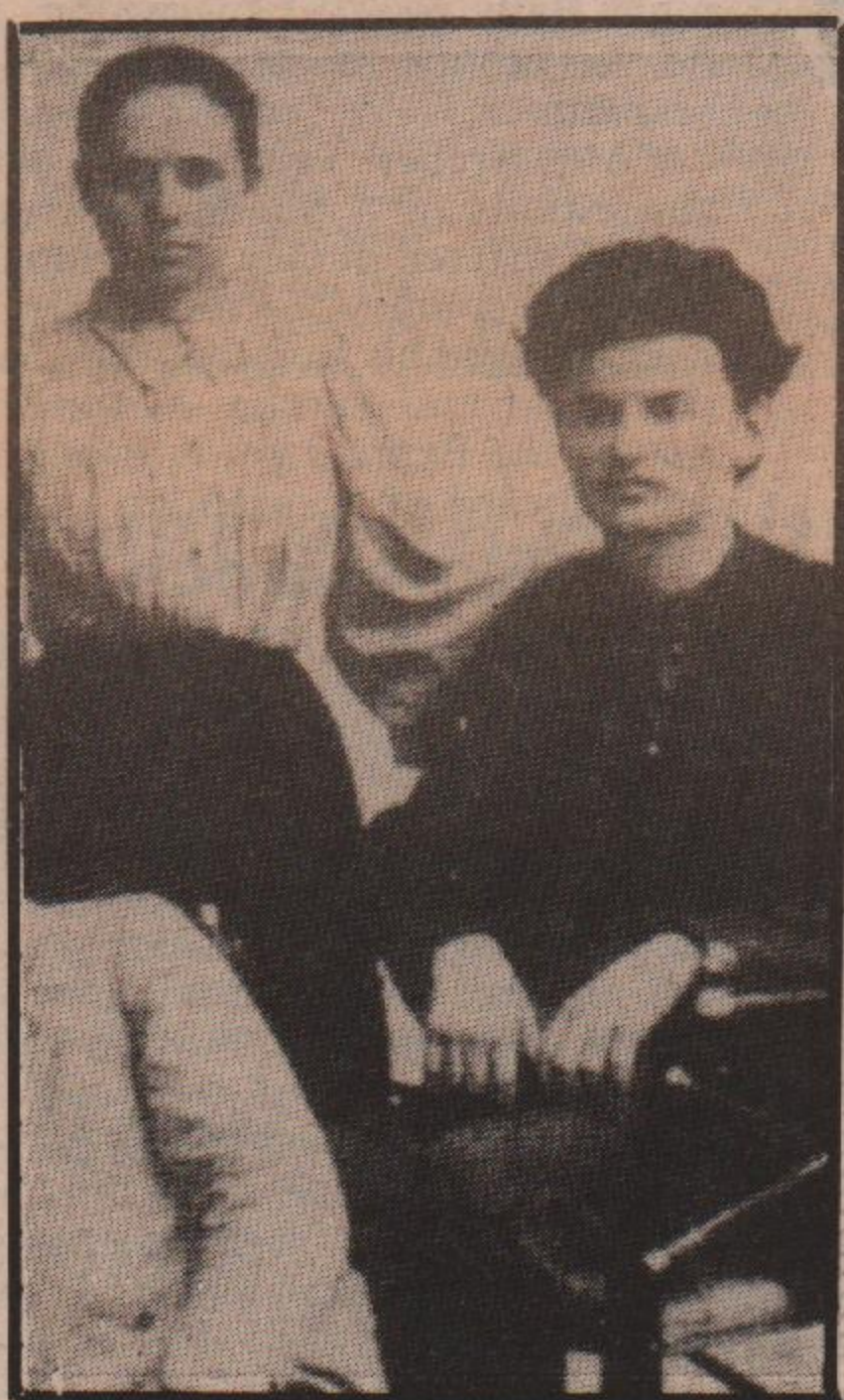
Speakers include: South African socialists, Anti-Fascist Action, Women Against Pit Closures, Sheffield Asian Youth Movement. Debates with the Socialist Workers' Party — 'Where now for Socialists?' — and with Youth Action — 'Which alliances for Socialism?'



# Trotsky a life for socialism

James Ryan and David King have produced a new photographic biography of Trotsky. On these pages we reproduce some of the photos from that collection.

'Trotsky' is published by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, and is available from most good bookshops.



## Young Trotsky

● Trotsky was born Leon Davidovitch Bronstein, son of a Jewish peasant family in the Ukraine. Even at school he was a radical, and he was won to Marxism by Alexandra Solovskaya in the last years of the nineteenth century. Alexandra would be his wife. Together they became involved in the early 'social-democratic' — which in those days meant revolutionary Marxist — movement in Russia. Like many other Russian radicals, Trotsky suffered imprisonment and deportation to Siberia. In 1902 he managed to escape to join Lenin, one of the Party leaders, in exile, working on the newspaper 'Iskra', the Spark. The young Trotsky is on the right of this picture, with Solovskaya next to him.

## 1905: the year of the Soviet

● In 1905 there was a mass revolutionary wave in Russia, beginning with huge demonstrations outside the Tsar's — the Emperor's — palace. Central to the revolution was the small but militant working class. Strikes and general strikes were the dynamo behind the revolution. The workers created new democratic organisations called 'Soviets', which means 'councils'. The Soviets were a new, distinctly working-class, form of democracy. Trotsky was elected President of the Soviet in the Russian capital of St Petersburg. Unfortunately, the revolution remained largely isolated to the cities, and so it was defeated. Trotsky and other workers' leaders were put on



trial and again sent to Siberia. He managed to escape a second time, and lived in exile until the revolution of 1917. This picture shows Trotsky in a cell after his arrest in 1905



## Revolution 1917

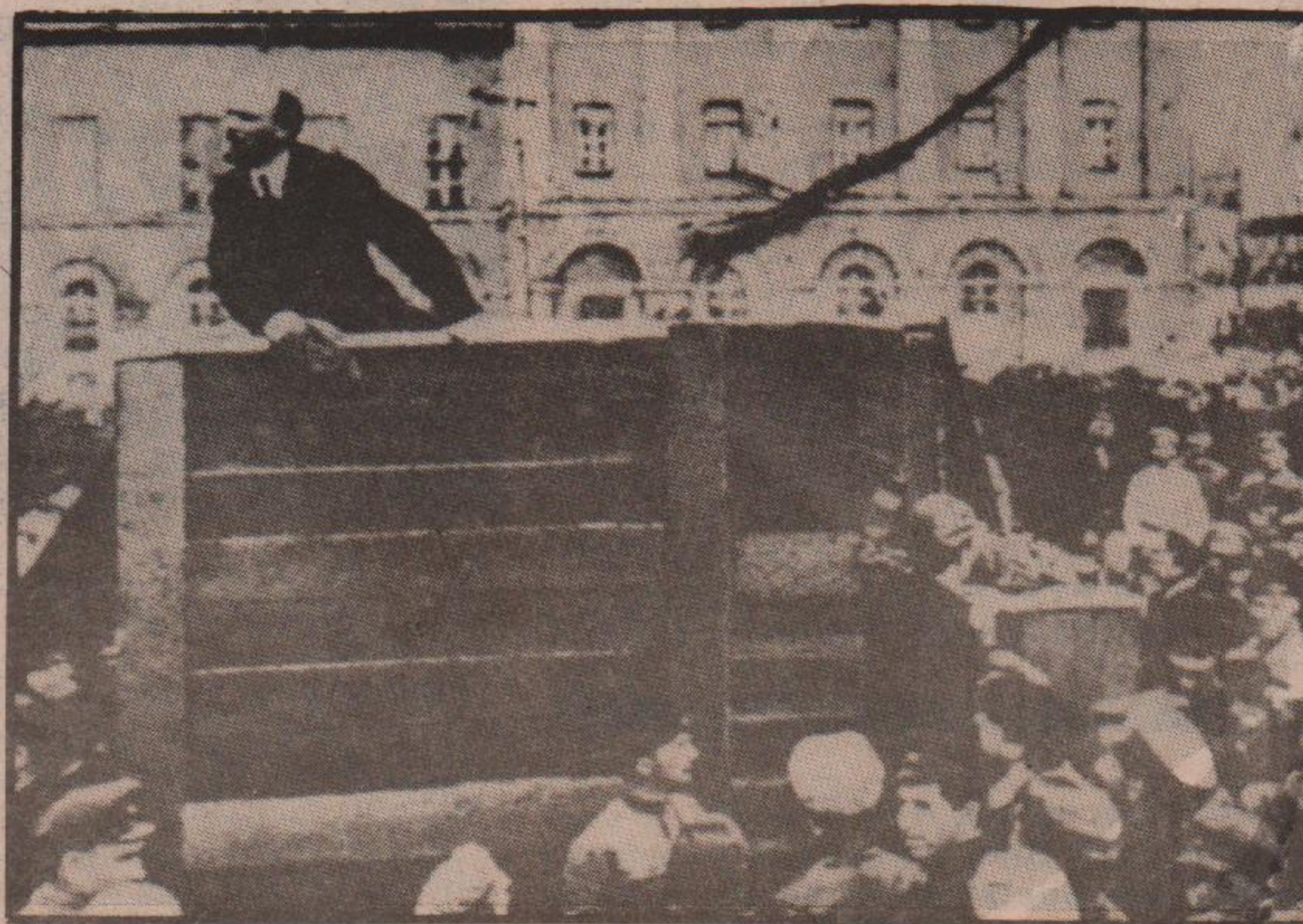
● The workers rose up in revolution again in February (or March by later and modern calendars) 1917. Again soviets were created. This time the Tsar was overthrown. Trotsky and Lenin argued for the soviets to take state power, displacing the 'Provisional Government' set up after the February

Revolution. Lenin's party, the Bolsheviks, soon to be renamed the Communist Party, at first disagreed with this idea. But after April 1917, the Bolshevik party was won over to it, and Trotsky ended many years of estrangement from Lenin by joining the Bolshevik party.

## Civil war, and the So

● The new government had plenty of enemies. Backed up by foreign governments, those who supported the old order in one way or another organised a civil war against the revolutionary workers' government. Trotsky created the Red Army to fight against the 'Whites', or counter-revolutionaries. It was a long and gruelling war, in which the Russian workers and peasants had to endure terrible suffering. Eventually the Whites, as well as the invading foreign armies from 14 countries, were defeated. But the victory was at a terrible cost. There was famine; the cities to a large extent became depopulated; and the working class was massively reduced in size as factories were deserted. After the civil war, an enormous task of reconstructing society had to be carried out. This photograph shows Trotsky inspecting a detachment of the Red Army.

## Stalinists paint Trotsky







## Against 'socialism in one country'

● Why did Trotsky become 'persona non grata' in the USSR? With the defeat of the international revolution, and the isolation of the workers' state in Russia, workers' democracy fell victim to a privileged bureaucracy, whose leader was Joseph Stalin. Trotsky and others tried to prevent the rise of Stalin and his faction, and to defend the original aims of the revolution. They formed the 'Left Opposition' to fight for workers' democracy, and for the international extension of the revolution, because the rulers in Moscow were increasingly content to rest on their laurels. They began

to argue that world revolution was unnecessary in the short term. Russia could build 'socialism in one country'. In practice this meant a turn away from the world socialist revolution and the transformation of the international communist parties from organisations fighting to make a working-class revolution in their own countries into frontier guards and foreign policy makeweights for the Soviet Union.

This photograph shows the funeral of Dzerzhinsky in July 1926. It was Trotsky's last public appearance as a leading member of the Communist Party.

## famine, the Red Army Soviet Republic



## out of history



● The Russian revolutionaries were part of an international movement. They saw the revolution in Russia as only the first step in socialist revolution all over the world. After the revolution, great workers' struggles were unleashed across Europe and elsewhere. These struggles were defeated; but under the leadership of the Bolsheviks in Russia a new international Communist movement was built to fight against capitalism, and against the old Socialist Parties which had betrayed the cause of international socialism by supporting the First World War.

This picture was taken in Moscow at a rally after the Third World Congress of the Communist International (Comintern). Later the Stalinists were so determined to wipe out the memory of Trotsky that they erased his image from the photograph.



## Murdered by Stalin

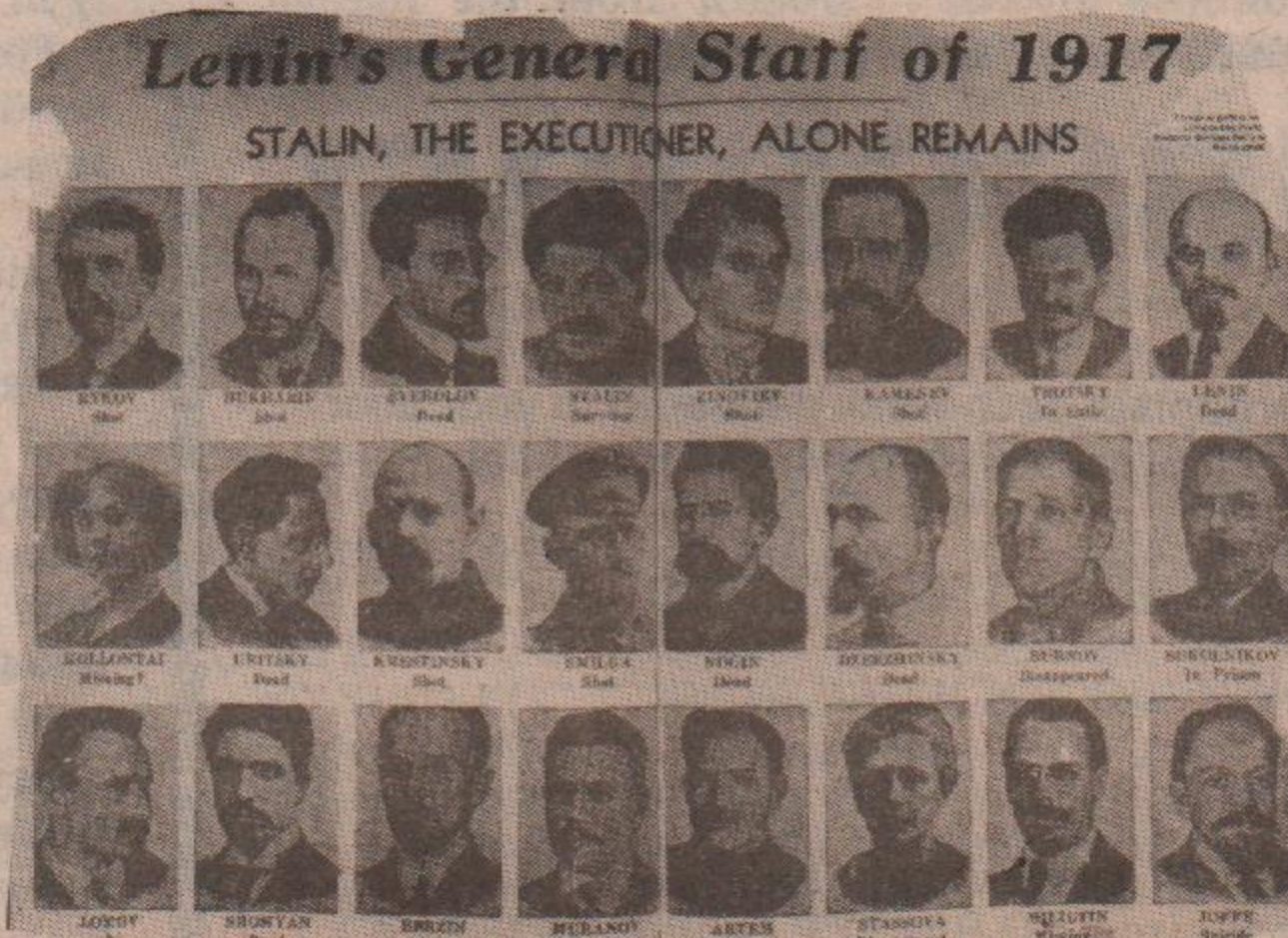
● After years in exile, Trotsky eventually settled in Mexico. During these years he watched the Comintern degenerate along with the Soviet state itself. Faced with the rise of Hitler, the Stalin-dominated Comintern took the ridiculous line that the Socialist Parties were the main enemy. They collaborated on occasion with the Nazis against the Socialists, whom they called 'social fascists'. This policy helped Hitler to take power without serious opposition, though the CP and the Social Democratic Party had many millions of supporters, some of them organised in CP and Social Democratic militias. Then in Spain, in 1936-7, the Comintern helped strangle a workers' revolution in order to keep in with their capitalist allies.

The Trotskyists concluded from all this that it was necessary to

build a new working-class International — the 'Fourth' International.

The Stalinists had to get rid of the Trotskyists, who were like a ghost from their revolutionary past — and, so they feared, the harbingers of a future revival of revolutionary socialist politics in the working class. So in 1940 an agent of the GPU, the forerunners of the KGB, assassinated Trotsky at his home in Mexico.

They killed his body, but they could not kill his ideas, nor the international struggle of the working class. Over the last 35 years the working class in Germany, Hungary, Poland and elsewhere have gone into action against the totalitarian bureaucracy which lying claims to be the embodiment of socialist and working-class interests in the USSR and Eastern Europe.



Poster published by the American Socialist Workers Party in 1938.

**TESTAMENT**  
For forty-three years of my conscious life I have remained a revolutionist: for forty-two of them I have fought under the banner of Marxism. If I had to begin all over again I would of course try to avoid this or that mistake, but the main course of my life would remain unchanged. I shall die a proletarian revolutionist, a Marxist, a dialectical materialist, and consequently an irreconcilable atheist. My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today, than it was in the days of my youth.

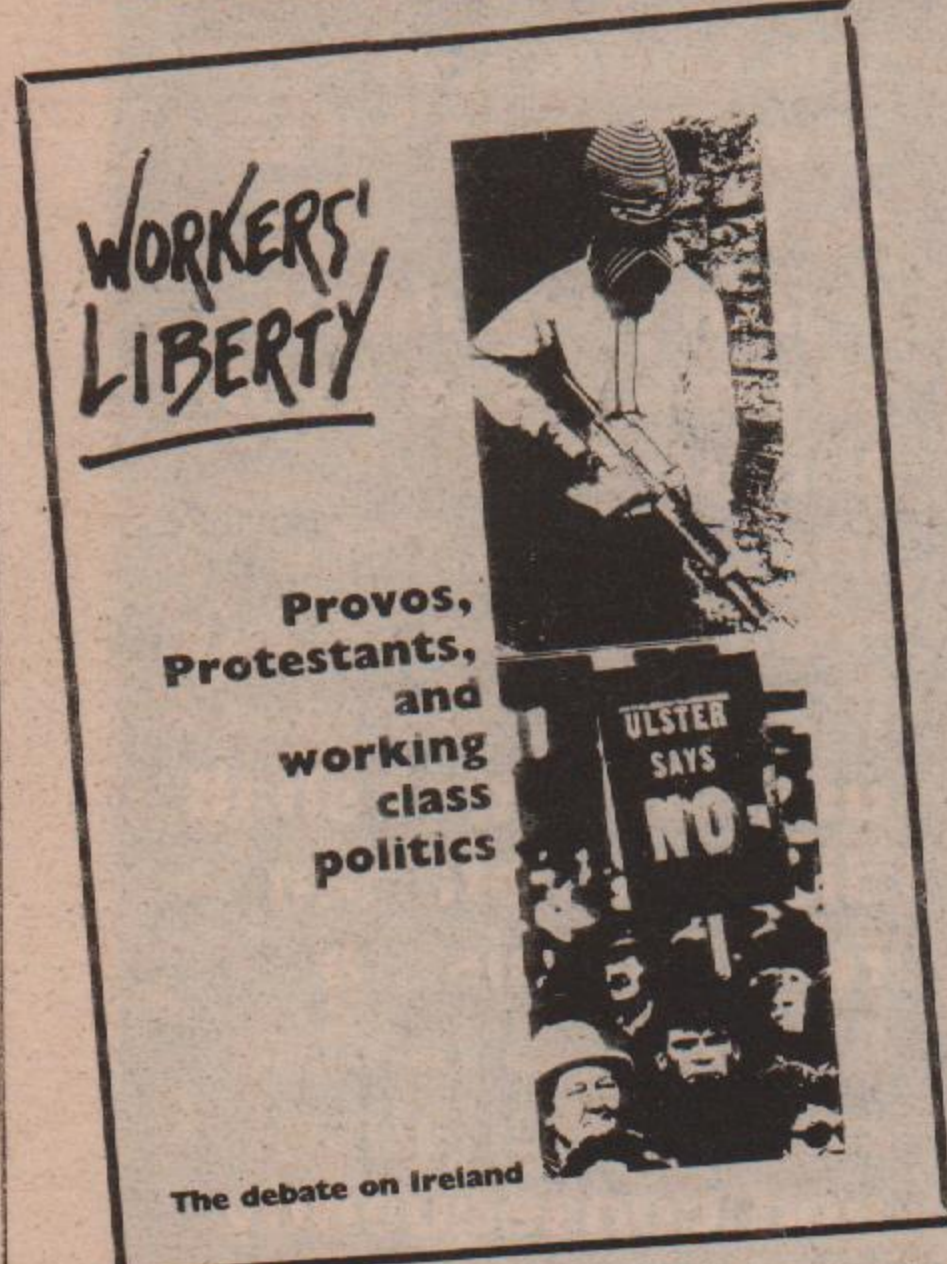
Natasha has just come up to the window from the courtyard and opened it wider so that the air may pass more freely into my room. I can see the bright green strip of grass beneath the wall, and the clear blue sky above the wall, and sunlight everywhere. Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence and enjoy it to the full.  
L. Trotsky  
Coyoacan  
27 February 1940





## Provos, Protestants and working class politics

# THE DEBATE ON IRELAND



Workers Liberty no. 5 is available, price £1 plus 18p postage, from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

A unique confrontation between the views on the left. What sort of united Ireland could win the support of Protestant workers? What way to working class unity?

# Paper sales weekend

Next weekend, 7-8-9 November, we're organising a second Socialist Organiser paper sales drive weekend.

We're urging supporters in every area to make this weekend the time for a drive on SO sales — door-to-door, on the streets, at meetings, and to people who already buy the paper occasionally and could become regular readers.

## Previous

We had a previous effort of this sort on 13-14 September. Many areas started new sales — Merseyside supporters started about five — or gave a new boost to existing sales rounds.

Nottingham supporters reckoned up a total of about 130 sales from their special sales efforts that weekend. Sheffield supporters did a par-

ticularly successful door-to-door sale on a council estate.

Now we're asking you to try again — to try to make sure that the September effort was a springboard for continuing higher sales, rather than a one-off business to be followed by a slow decline into a low-level routine.

## Open

It's worth making a particular effort to involve comrades who are not yet regular SO sellers, or even labour movement activists. Paper-selling is an activity open to the newest comrades, in a way that the to-and-fro of labour movement debate often isn't — and, indeed, the new sellers are often much better at it than the old stalwarts!

Send in reports about your local sales activity — successes, failures, lessons, good ideas — to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

# Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

# Scientists against SDI

Scientists often find it difficult to get funds for research. It may not pay to be too choosy, therefore, and many may find their money coming from dubious sources. Thus, in Britain, over 50% of research is funded by the Ministry of "Defence".

So what do you do if you believe your pet project can benefit people but the only source of funding is the defence budget? This happened to a young scientist in the US who wanted to develop an X-ray laser for medical purposes. He found himself designing and building an X-ray laser...for President Reagan's "Star Wars" project.

This caused a lot of heart-searching, particularly when his relationship broke up and his partner started picketing the weapons lab! He has just resigned from the project.

## Subverted

In Britain and America, attempts have been made to try and stop research being subverted by Star Wars cash. Here, 500 university scientists, including three Nobel prize winners and 25 Fellows of the Royal Society, have signed a pledge not to work on Strategic Defence Initiative projects. They condemn SDI as technically dubious, potentially destabilising of world peace and likely to escalate the arms race.

One organiser, Dr. Richard Ennals, had already resigned from his job as head of Computer Research at Imperial College, London, rather than work on SDI. Others have turned down SDI cash.

One expert on space astronomy warned that SDI money could "corrupt" astronomy by taking over research into the Earth's atmosphere, optics, and infrared space telescopes. Some SDI projects would employ infrared telescopes to observe missiles taking off and huge orbiting mirrors to reflect and focus laser beams onto these missiles, while knowledge of the atmosphere is important for predicting how strong lasers would need to be to get through or at what point in the missiles' flight it would be best to fire the lasers.

Some 6000 US scientists have signed a similar pledge. These movements should help dissuade many wavering sci-

**Seminars on science and politics.** November 10. Piers Corbyn on "The Labour Party — the need for a socialist science policy". November 24. Tony Webb on "Food irradiation". 6.30 p.m. Marquis of Granby, Chandos Place, WC2. Organised by BSSRS.

tists from taking SDI money and give support to those under pressure to accept.

## CANCER IN THE BACKGROUND

A major argument of the nuclear power industry is that the amount of radiation they release is small relative to the natural background of radiation we all experience. At first sight, therefore, the evidence of Dr. Alice Stewart that most child cancers are caused by background radiation must have been welcome to representatives of the industry at the public inquiry into the expansion of Dounreay.

But there was a sting in the tail. The nuclear industry also relies on the assertion that low levels of radiation pose no significant risk to health. Stewart's research disproves this and clearly points to the need to keep all additional leaks to an absolute minimum. She also firmly resisted the industry's attempts to blame "clusters" of leukaemia cases around nuclear installations to "chance".

Dr. Stewart is a researcher in social medicine at Birmingham University and helped to set up the Oxford Survey of Childhood Cancers which, nearly thirty years ago, showed that children exposed to X-rays in their mothers' wombs ran an increased risk of cancer.

## Findings

Preliminary findings from her current research were presented to a meeting of the European Society of Radiation Biology in September. Based on records of child deaths over more than a quarter of a century and on data about variations in background radiation, Stewart's conclusions are that some 80% of child cancers are caused by background radiation.

This "background" is made up of contributions from radioactive elements in the soil and rocks, cosmic rays, medical X-rays, weapons tests and emissions from the nuclear industry.

The research turned up many clusters of cancers, some a long way from nuclear plants, but, as Stewart told the Dounreay inquiry, "In my role as a research worker, if you find something, you have to find a cause. We found evidence of clusters that had clearly nothing to do with radiation, but I should add that clustering and radiation do go hand in hand."

Other causes of clusters could be cancer viruses being passed around, epidemics of other viral diseases and cancer-causing chemicals in the environment (like asbestos or pesticides).

While we can do little about radiation from the Earth or from space, we can certainly try to limit the other sources.

# ACTIVISTS' DIARY

## Why not form a Campaign Group?

A number of Labour Party members up and down the country have formed themselves into local Campaign groups.

These groups are organised on non-sectarian lines. The aim is to provide a unified left campaigning force in the constituencies.

If you have already done this and have not yet informed the Campaign Group, or if you wish to do so, please contact the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, c/o Alan Meale, secretary, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

All TGWU and ACTSS members who support SO please contact Jim Denham at 021-471 1964, home, or 021-771 0871 (daytime).

**Youth Fightback conference: 29-30 November, Sheffield University. More Speakers include: South African socialists, Women Against Pit Closures, Anti Fascist Action, Asian Youth Movement, debates with SWP and Youth Action.**

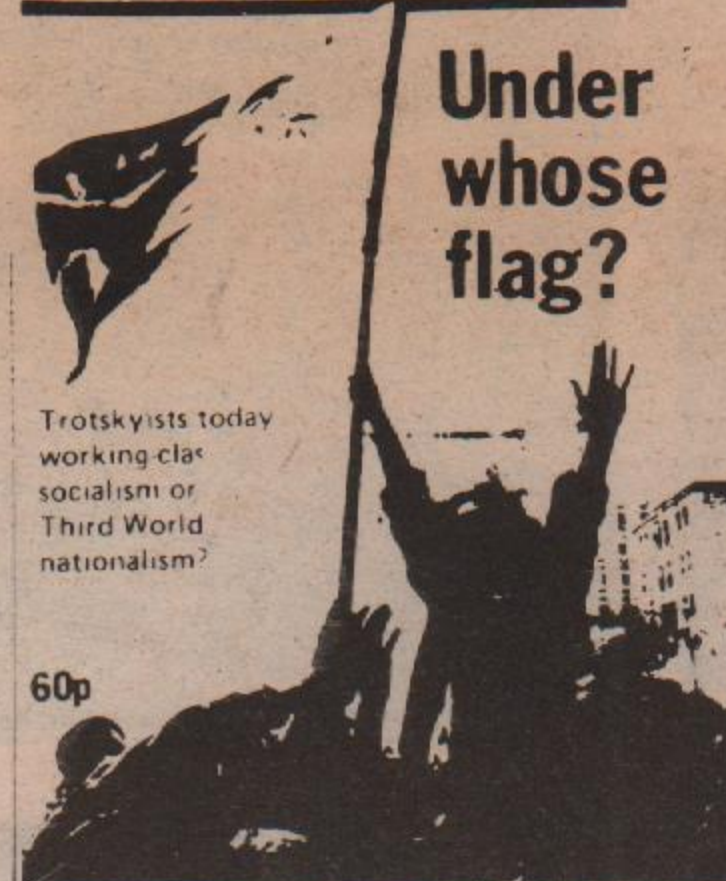
Further details: contact Mark, 01-639 7967.

Lobby CSEU Executive. 6 November at 8.30 a.m., Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London WC1. Called by the Engineering Gazette.

**November 9th Remembrance Day Anti-Nazi march organised by Anti-Fascist Action: Assemble 1pm, Trafalgar Square, London.**

Saturday 13 December. Conference for Trade Union Sanctions against South Africa. 11 to 6, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham. Contact: Bronwen Handyside, 17 Porden Road, Brixton, London SW2 5SA. Tel 01-274 7722 x 2010.

# WORKERS' LIBERTY



Available for 60p plus 18p postage from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

# WHERE WE STAND

Socialist Organiser stands for workers' liberty, East and West. We aim to help organise the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions to fight to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

We want public ownership

of the major enterprises and a planned economy under workers' control. We want democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and management's privileges.

Socialist can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers

in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles world-wide, including the struggle of workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their own anti-socialist bureaucracies.

We stand:

For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of

housework. For a mass working class based women's movement.

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

For a united and free Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.

For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.

For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

We want Labour Party and trade union members who support our basic ideas to become supporters of the paper — to take a bundle of papers to sell each week and pay a small financial contribution to help meet the paper's deficit. Our policy is democratically controlled by our supporters through Annual General Meetings and an elected National Editorial Board.

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# Yuppies and hippies

By Belinda Weaver

Doris Dorrie's 'Men' has attracted movie audiences and attention in both West Germany and the US. A comedy about men made by a woman has curiosity value, if nothing else.

It's a reasonably funny movie with a few guaranteed laughs, but it isn't the sharp feminist satire some of us might hope for. If the director is seeking to make a 'statement', it's hard to know what it is, and since it's all in fun, does anyone really care?

The plot is about marital infidelity. Julius discovers — on their twelfth wedding anniversary — that his wife Paula has a lover.

Though Julius has been up to more than dictation with his secretary at work, he's horrified that Paula should do the same.

He becomes obsessed with finding out why Paula prefers Stefan to him. He tracks him down, and talks his way into Stefan's flat as a tenant, under a false name.

Julius then sets to observing Stefan, and trying to understand Julius also has to deal with the odd frustration and murderous impulse as Stefan talks of the ups and downs of his affair.

But Julius finds himself liking Stefan.

Julius hasn't forgotten Paula and, Stefan or no Stefan, he schemes to win her back. His method is unusual but effective.

The friendship between the two is hard to read because Julius is always manipulating Stefan. Julius knows the whole story but Stefan doesn't. And Julius must edge Stefan out or else lose his marriage.

What seems to be pure male competition is belied by the ending — it's all fun after all.

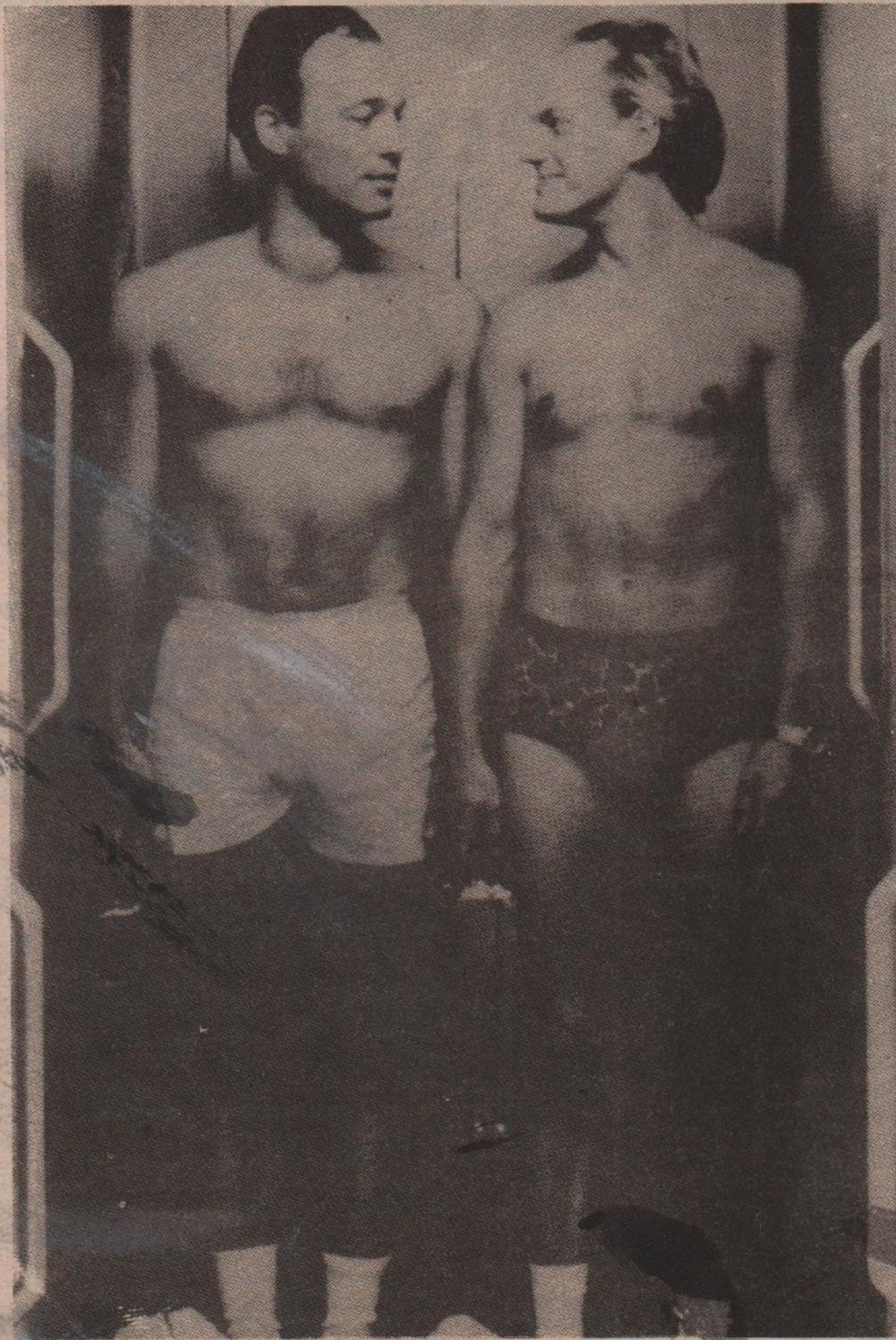
Many films satirise middle-class life-styles. This one, unusually, sends up Stefan's milieu — his grotty flat, his meaningless stop-gap jobs, his amiable idleness, his long-hair, rather than Julius's Rolex watch, Maserati, ad exec lifestyle, complete with suburban mansion.

Dorrie seems to be implying that the drop-outs really prefer the Maserati style, but are too lazy to get it. But if they put in the work, the discipline...and the bluff, they too can have credit cards.

Maggie Thatcher just might agree. But don't suppose that this is a hard-edged Thatcherite movie. Just like the satire on conventional middle class life in many other movies, this film's jokes at the expense of unconventional middle-class life are in a friendly, light-hearted spirit — from an insider, you feel.

Paula is the prize to be fought over, rather than a real character. And all along, it's implied that she's just seeking diversion — she likes Stefan because he's different. She calls him 'her man from another star'. Oh well.

A German comedy probably makes a change, and audiences here seem appreciative. It's a mild entertainment.



Julius and Stefan

## ON THE BOX

### Lessons of Greece

By Ian Swindale

When, at the beginning of this year, Channel 4 screened a four-part documentary on the Greek Civil War (Greece — The Hidden War), which for the first time in forty years presented to a British audience the view of the defeated left on those events, the self-appointed guardians of "the truth" about Greece within the British Establishment protested vociferously to the Independent Broadcasting Authority.

Being influential people with friends in high places, they were able to secure from Channel 4 an assurance that the programme would not be sold abroad, that it would not be shown again in Britain in its existing form and that in order to provide the necessary "balance" — as if forty years of right wing propaganda masquerading as history hadn't been sufficient — further programmes would be made presenting alternative views of the Greek Civil War to that contained in the original programme.

Monday night's studio discussion, Greece — a search for truth — was presumably an attempt by Channel 4 to carry out its pledge.

I must say that if I had been one of the right wingers who had lodged the original complaint, I would be no happier after seeing Monday night's offering.

Channel 4 had assembled in the studio a number of leading experts on modern Greek history and asked them to comment on the views of three participants in the events.

#### Scrappy

Unfortunately, the programme was, to say the very least, scrappy. Given a couple of minutes each to present their respective views, the participants were unable to elaborate in any depth on their own experiences.

The experts, likewise were only given a few, short opportunities to express their views which, in contrast to the participants, were based on detailed study of the period and therefore tended to approach the question from a different perspective.

Since the programme-makers' attempt to summarise the history of the period was crammed into a two-minute introduction, unless the viewer had a reasonably detailed knowledge of the history of events in Greece at the end of World War 2, it would have been a very difficult discussion to follow.

From the point of view of socialists interested in learning the lessons of the British intervention in Greece and the Civil War it was a particularly frustrating experience. All the participants in the programme, most of whom seem to have been brought from America and various European countries, presumably at great expense, would have been worth listening to.

In particular, Heinz Richter, author of an excellent book on British intervention in Greece, and Stratis Haviaras, author of two fine novels in English set in Greece during and after the Second World War, would have been particularly worth listening to.

Instead, all the experience and knowledge of this important but much neglected period of history that had been assembled in the studio was wasted in a debate that rarely got its teeth into the main issues, which added nothing to the original programme and which will have satisfied neither the right or the left wing protagonists in the debate on the Greek Civil War.

# UNSATISFACTORY CONCLUSIONS

Clive Bradley reviews 'Bailing Out the System' by Ian Birchall, published by Bookmarks, 1986, in paperback, price £5.95.

This account of the failures and betrayals of social democratic parties in Western Europe since 1945 is told from the viewpoint of the Socialist Workers' Party. As you would expect, it is a racy journalistic narrative with unsatisfactory political conclusions.

Birchall concentrates on the record in and out of government of the British Labour Party, the French Socialist Party and its predecessors, and the Italian Socialist Party. But he covers other countries — Portugal, Spain, Greece, Sweden, Austria, West Germany — and also delves into other topics, like the character of the Communist Parties.

It is a good, well-written story. From the defeat of the Nazis, through the rise of the Welfare State in Britain and similar systems elsewhere, and the hectic radicalisation of the sixties through to what he sees as contemporary doom and gloom, Birchall describes how the social democratic parties have always and everywhere acted as capitalist parties, defending the system if it was under threat, and making the working class pay for its crises.

It presents an irrefutable case that these parties have failed or worse, and correctly concludes that revolutionaries differ from reformists "not about means but about ends" — which dictate the means. He also shows how the official left wings of those parties have been insipid and weak, and buckled under to the right when the chips were down.

But Birchall's political conclusions are extremely weak. To be precise he spells out no political conclusions at all. He insists on workers' self-activity as the central means of achieving socialism, and on workers' democracy as the form socialism will, to begin with, take. But it is not at all clear what a socialist working class government would actually do.

pre-1917 Social Democracy struggles now, plus general propaganda for socialism in the future.

Struggles in the present are not always piecemeal; and as soon as a struggle is more than piecemeal — and sometimes before — it presents political problems. What do we do about the Tory government? What do we replace them with? How do we get an alternative?

Unless a political challenge is mounted to reformism, unless revolutionaries can give answers to the overall running of society — how to end unemployment, etc., — the piecemeal struggles will come up against a brick wall and be defeated.

Birchall poses no such alternative; and of course he rejects the idea of working within parties like the Labour Party that have deep links with the trade unions.

He poses the issue falsely: it is not a question of whether or not it is possible to 'transform social democracy from within', but of how a revolutionary party is to be built. But in any case, Birchall's approach leads him to a bizarre argument.

"But on the few occasions when the left do come out on top, their victory is likely to be a hollow one, for the right simply change the rules of the game... Where they can't bend the rules, they walk out. In 1920 the French Socialist Party voted by a majority of three to one to join the Communist International; the right wing left to form a new party" (p.224).

The formation of the French Communist Party proves the impossibility of defeating the right wing, then, does it? This is so ridiculous that it leaves you speechless, or whatever the equivalent is if you're reading.

Nevertheless it's a good introduction to the crimes of reformism, and a useful reference book. Birchall has certainly done us all a favour by gathering the information together in one book.

## BOOKS

Worth thinking about, perhaps just as a Xmas gift, is the recently published 'The Labours and Researches of Evans'. Cartoons by Phil Evans on Tory Employment Laws, privatisation, unemployment, racism and South Africa, get the serious message across but in a far from gloomy way.

Price £1.50; published by the Labour Research Department.

Still less is it clear how we are going to get one. Birchall says we need a centralised, disciplined party. But often it is difficult to see what defines this party other than centralisation, discipline and a commitment to workers' self-activity. There is a gaping hole in the middle — political ideas; policies for workers to fight for. 'Workers' self-activity' in itself is not a policy.

Birchall makes his point with remarkable frankness. "Such an alternative must have two components: on the one hand, a generalised account of an alternative society based on workers' democracy; on the other, the building up of workers' confidence in their own self-activity through piecemeal struggles in the present." (p.220).

This hardly differs in essence from the approach of the left wing of

Excuse me sir - can I help you across the Channel?



Between 1979 and 1985 14,533 deportation orders were made, 65% against New Commonwealth and Pakistan citizens.

Home Office statistics, 1985



SSiN

# Putting the record straight

## NUS: Rejecting a fighting anti-loans/ no cuts campaign

NUS is in deep trouble with its anti-loans campaign. SSiN have proposed a nationally integrated campaign. This would tie together our demands for a £35 a week minimum grant with a rolling programme of direct action against loans and cuts, using the November 12 day of action as a launch pad for a national demonstration.

Ideally, the demonstration would have been held on November 28, the day NUS submits to the Baker Review on student financial support.

But this strategy has been rejected; instead NUS continues to compartmentalise and the highlight of the loans campaign will be, on President Vicky Phillips' say-so, getting students to sign a pledge committing them to take personal action against loans should they be introduced!

Not surprisingly, many colleges are particularly unhappy.

Over 50 colleges wrote to NUS executive last week demanding that a national demonstration be called, showing the level of dissatisfaction with the Executive's timidity.

This Wednesday, NUS is organising a briefing day on loans. During the lunch break there will be a fringe meeting to discuss how to rescue the campaign and how to intervene at NUS conference to ensure the Executive are forced to campaign properly.

NUS conference will be the time to correct this term's mistakes and to call to account those responsible. SSiN is asking comrades to prioritise motions with Grants, Benefits, Housing as number one priority and student financial support as number two priority in the Priority Motions Ballot.

Model amendments on these subjects are now available from SSiN, 54a Peckham Rye, London SE15.

South Africa; RELEASE THE DETAINEES!

**SOCIALIST STUDENT**

25p



Latest issue of Socialist Student available from 54A Peckham Rye, London SE15.

SSiN

Polly Vittorini's report of the SSiN AGM, 'No alternative from SSiN' (SA, 24th October) is more bilious than factual.

Firstly, the Middle East debate at the AGM. Polly asserts, 'the resolution...reserved its condemnations not for the murderous policies of the state of Israel but for the bombings at Rome and Vienna airports'. The facts suggest the opposite.

The motion does condemn civilian bombings and it also reads, 'Israel rules the Palestinian Arabs as a dictatorial colonial power. It maintains control (in the West Bank) by systematic brutality and a permanent reign of terror...' This is hardly evidence of, as Polly puts it, SSiN having 'capitulated to the racism of the Zionist State'.

However if rejection of the democratic secular state slogan is this capitulation then we suggest that Polly takes up the argument with her international co-thinkers, especially Ernest Mandel, whose own position is closer to SSiN's than to the democratic secular state formulation.

Polly asserts that Tony Greenstein was 'clearly invited to the AGM only to give the semblance of a debate'. But had Polly bothered to ask she would have been told that Tony was invited at the request of some SSiN comrades who agree with him. Tony and his co-thinkers got equal speaking time to SO supporters — which in our minds constitutes a debate and not a 'semblance of a debate'.

Polly complains that SSiN discussed making direct links with South African trade unions rather than how NUS could be pushed into campaigning on its own policies. In fact we did discuss the main problem with NUS carrying out its own policies — that FE Anti-Apartheid Groups are not seen as very important, but this is not the biggest overall problem with NUS's anti-apartheid work. The main problem is that NUS is sectarian. The existing policy of NUS rules out the possibility of NUS adopting detainees, organising strike support work or exchanging materials with South African students unions, should they want to. We think this sectarianism is important, even if Polly does not.

Polly considers the lack of detailed discussions on 'the key issues being fought for by the left in the Party at present — for black self-organisation, women's self-organisation, action to get Britain out of Ireland and so on as evidence that SSiN is bankrupt'.

Polly seems to have forgotten what SSiN comrades have repeatedly told her: SSiN's position on these questions is perfectly clear.

We have also put a motion to NOLS National Committee demanding it makes contact with those campaigns she mentions, asking how NOLS can turn its paper support into action to help promote the campaigns' demands.

But there is an issue of substance involved here. Polly seems to think it is appropriate to assume that key developments on the Labour left automatically transfer over to the student movement. This is not the case. Every union, movement or campaign has its own different problems and it is the job of the left to establish what they are and give answers to them. It is not adequate to assume that central questions in one environment are the same in another.

So while we didn't have detailed discussion on Labour Left Liaison, we did discuss how to make NUS fight against loans and for an FE grant (the result of which was 60 colleges writing to NUS to demand a demonstration and a new mobilising committee being set up to try to organise a second term rent strike); Students for a Labour Victory; AFA; FE union development and the need for Labour Clubs to affiliate to local Campaign Groups. Sophie Nicol, a member of CLPD, also told us about a monitoring committee newly set up to independently investigate maladministration in NOLS.

In Socialist Action two weeks ago (SA 151), Polly Vittorini, a student at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London) wrote an article attacking Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN) and its AGM for being undemocratic and unrepresentative. Here we print a reply jointly signed by 36 NUS members from up and down the country, Vittorini's original article and a second letter to Socialist Action following their refusal to print our reply.

That, when added to the debate on the Middle East, the South Africa workshop, various organisational discussions, including elections and lesbian and gay, and black caucuses, amounts to a lot of discussion for a one-day conference. And it is interesting that Polly has absolutely nothing to say about what we actually did discuss. We can only conclude this silence is because she has no idea what the left in NUS are doing, let alone what they should be doing.

Polly observes that many SSiN comrades are SO supporters. But to conclude from that that SSiN must be undemocratic is a non-sequitur. Could Polly please give us evidence of undemocratic practices?

## 'No alternative from SSiN'

The Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN) annual meeting last weekend attracted 60 people. All reports were made and all sessions chaired by supporters of Socialist Organiser. The only policy issue which was debated was that on the Middle East.

For a supposedly left alternative to the Kinnockite Democratic Left leadership of NOLS, SSiN adopted a remarkably backward position on the question of Palestine. This rejected as 'utopian' the PLO slogan for a democratic secular state in the Middle East and capitulated to the racism of the Zionist state, which does not even recognise citizenship for its Arab inhabitants. Instead SSiN called for a separate homeland to be created for the Palestinians: for two states, one Arab, one Israeli. The resolution put forward by Socialist Organiser supporters and adopted almost unanimously, reserved its condemnations not for the murderous policies of the state of Israel, but primarily for the bombings at Rome and Vienna airports.

That a grouping so insignificant in the wider labour movement can dominate SSiN so entirely is proof of the lack of democracy inside SSiN. 'Guest speaker' Tony Greenstein, from the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine, was clearly invited to the AGM only to give the semblance of a debate. His speech was slotted into a debate the whole framework of which was



Scottish students' demo

On the subject of democracy it seems pertinent to ask Polly a few questions. At which meeting of Campaign Group Youth was she elected to be the observer at the SSiN AGM? At which meeting was there a position taken on the Middle East? Someone from SSiN was at all the recent meetings and neither decisions were taken at any of them.

Following on from that we would like to ask Polly some more questions, and these concern the discussion she refers to as 'arousing much interest at the SSiN event itself'. What is the structure of Campaign Group Youth? Who makes the decisions? Who can join and when does it meet?

organised to push Socialist Organiser's politics on the Middle East, with supporter Clive Bradley introducing and summarising.

South Africa was dealt with in a workshop which addressed the question of how SSiN could build direct links with South African trade unionists, rather than what could be done by the NUS, given its position in favour of sanctions. The key policy issues being fought for by the left in the labour movement at present — for black self-organisation, women's self-organisation, action to get Britain out of Ireland, and so on — were simply missing from the agenda of this self-styled left alternative in NOLS.

There is an urgent need for a current in NUS which fights for campaigning activity on all these issues in cooperation with the campaigning Labour left. The possibility of such a current organising in NOLS aroused much interest at the SSiN event itself. SSiN's position on Palestine, its lack of a campaigning and unifying strategy for British withdrawal from Ireland and against apartheid, and its exclusionary structure, all prevent it from leading and building this current.

Students who want NUS to be part of the fight for Campaign Forum's politics are increasingly organising in colleges through promoting the campaigns of Campaign Forum, organising campaign groups, and linking-up nationally to produce a bulletin. They will be organising at December NUS conference.

SSiN are the major opposition to the LCC in the entire student movement precisely because we give answers to the real questions and problems students in NOLS and NUS face. We try to deal with reality as we see it, not to prepackaged formulae. We take seriously our work in NOLS and NUS which is why SSiN wants to develop a relationship with the Campaign Group. And that is also the reason why we are more than happy to challenge Polly to a debate, at any time, any college on any subject of her choosing.

Simon Pottinger, Vice-President, NUS; Melanie Gingel, NUS Executive; Michele Carlisle, NUS Executive; Sue Rossiter, NOLS NC; Shaun Hayes, Sabbatical Officer, Essex University; Lee Robson, Sabbatical Officer, Warwick University; Dave Brennan, MANUS Convenor; Richard Bailey, North Yorks NUS Convenor; Andy Rathbone, Wessex Area NUS Convenor; Jim Kairnes, Welfare Officer, Langside FE; Martin Donoghue, Area Executive member, Aberdeen; Martin Snowden, General Secretary, Kent Area NUS; Mark Tatum, Bradford University Welfare Officer; Ruth Cockerroft, Sheffield University Executive; Jill Mountford, General Secretary, North Staffs Poly; Paul Carey, Staffordshire Area NUS Executive; Colin O'Driscoll, Berks Area NUS Convenor; Paul Magarry, MANUS Executive; Steve Ryden, Chair, Manchester Polytechnic Labour Club; Sandra Cartledge, MANUS Women's Officer and Manchester University Labour Club Executive; Tim Hopson, Sabbatical Officer, UMIST; Martin Pagel, MANUS Welfare Officer; Rachel Kennedy, MANUS Treasurer; Sian Richards, Site President, South Manchester Community College; Colleen Fairbrother, SE Wales Area NUS Convenor; Stuart Beeston, Sabbatical Officer, UCL; Neophitos Tofias, Sheffield University Labour Club Executive; Gail Cameron, Sheffield University Women's Group secretary; Richard Aplin, Sheffield University Anti-Apartheid Group Secretary; Reb Short, Secretary, People's College Students Union; Neil Stonelake, PCL Student Council; Grahame Fairbrother, UCC Executive; Deb Strawbridge, North Staffs Poly Labour Club Women's Officer; Paul Cooper, North Staffs Poly Labour Club Education Officer; Sab Sanghera, Essex Labour Club secretary; Liz Millward, Newcastle Poly President 1985-6. All in a personal capacity.

## Letter to Socialist Action

It is unfortunate that Socialist Action will not give us the space we need to reply to Polly Vittorini's attack on Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN) published in Socialist Action, 24 October 1986.

And we consider this particularly ironic given Socialist Action's cries of foul when they claim that SO refused to give Dave King from Lancs Poly a right of reply, even though SO say they never received an article from King.

Polly abuses us throughout her 488 words and we are not able to adequately reply in the 400 words we have been offered.

It is not possible to even start to reply here, save to say that we contest all the allegations Polly makes and are more than willing to debate her about the article, about Labour Students and about NUS at any time, in any college.

And to say that the next SSiN bulletin and SSiN column in Socialist Organiser will be carrying both Polly Vittorini's article and our reply.

SSiN can be contacted at 54a Peckham Rye, London SE15.



## Reinstate McGoldrick

All 14 primary schools in Brent are expected to be hit by strike action on 5 and 6 November when NUT members strike to demand the reinstatement of head teacher Maureen McGoldrick.

McGoldrick, who was sacked for making an alleged racist remark, was cleared of the charge by a school governors' meeting, but the

council refuses to reinstate her.

The McGoldrick case has been used by the racist press to attack the vigorous anti-racism of Brent council. Nevertheless all the evidence suggests that McGoldrick was victimised. The council should do what the NUT asks and reinstate her.

### CIVIL SERVICE

## CPSA right wing fiddles poll

By Mike Grayson

**"If you can't win under one set of rules, change to another" — this seems to be the opinion of CPSA's right wing leaders.**

Not only are they insisting that the recent elections for General Secretary and General Treasurer be re-run (despite the fact that an independent inquiry found no evidence of ballot-rigging in the original elections), but they are making changes in the balloting procedure that they hope will favour their own candidate.

Most CPSA members believe that rule changes can only be made by a two-thirds majority vote at annual conference. This does not stop right-wing President Marion Chambers from laying down the law as she sees fit.

She has made a ruling that now prevents bodies such as branch committees from making recommendations to their members as to which candidate to support. The rules have also been changed so that ballot forms have to be in members' hands "not later than the day before the [election] meeting", i.e. members can now fill in their ballot forms at their desk, without listening to any debate at the actual meeting.

These changes, of course, have one purpose only: to try to ensure that the Broad Left candidate John Macreadie is not elected *this* time round. In the first elections, Macreadie polled 121 votes more than the candidate of the right, John Ellis. However, the right wing may find that their shameless shenanigans are counter-productive, so blatant

are their crude attempts to twist CPSA's democratic processes.

Meanwhile, the CPSA Broad Left meets in conference at Manchester this weekend (8-9 November). It will be discussing the elections — including the question of whether it was correct to try to use the courts against the right wing — as well as the 1987 Pay Campaign, which is due to get underway following a special one-day conference at the end of November.

Other topics that will be discussed include the setting up of a Broad Left women's organisation, CPSA affiliation to the Labour Party, solidarity with South African workers and possible mergers between CPSA and other civil service unions.

**Socialist Caucus supporters meet in UMIST bar, 9pm on Friday 7 November. Overnight accommodation in Manchester can be provided.**



SOGAT member forced to sell his house because of Murdoch's lock-out, but still determined to fight. Photo Jez Coulson/IFL.

## Call for Fleet Street strike

By Tom Rigby

**As Murdoch attempts to go over the heads of the SOGAT leadership with his latest 'offer', the London SOGAT clerical branch has pointed the way forward in the News International dispute.**

They have passed a resolution calling for a campaign throughout Fleet Street for a 24 hour strike in support of the News International strikers.

News International striker Larry Hyett explained the significance of this to Socialist Organiser.

"The purpose of this resolution is to get strikers into non-strikers'

meetings — to attempt to draw the rest of Fleet Street into action.

"The only way to win this dispute is to fight desperately to escalate the action".

The opportunities still exist to link the fight against Murdoch to a wider struggle against the print industry.

Robert Maxwell has announced his 'Green Paper' for the Mirror which demands much the same sort of thing as Murdoch has at Wapping.

Printworkers at the Mirror need to link up with the News International strikers. A step on that road would be to support the clerical branch's call for a one day strike across Fleet Street.

### DEREGULATION

## Tory chaos on the buses

By Stan Crooke

**Bus companies are now "free to operate without the constraints of a social conscience", as the then Tory Transport Secretary Nicholas Ridley told bosses at the annual Bus and Coach Council dinner earlier this year.**

Since the end of October anyone with vehicles and drivers meeting public service standards has been free to run any bus service they like. Local

authorities have had to hive off their own buses into separate operating companies.

"Deregulation" of bus services, as the Tories term their latest gift to "private enterprise", is supposed to provide the public with a cheaper and more efficient service. Competition and the "free market" will succeed where local authority control has fail-

ed. Under "deregulation" the number of early morning services (before the rush-hour) operated by companies in the umbrella National Bus Company (NBC) has fallen by 37%, the number of evening services (after the rush hour) by 43%, and the number of Sunday services by 52%. The number of rural services has fallen by 35%.

Rural villages will face complete isolation. Urban areas have already suffered from congestion at peak times, especially on Saturdays, and major gaps in bus-services during off-peak hours.

Glasgow, for example, now has 350 buses per day running through one of the main city-centre streets, concentrated in the morning and evening rush-hours.

Deregulation has also demanded a heavy price in jobs.

NBC firms are planning to make a total of 9,000 redundant, and local Passenger Transport Authorities will be making another 9,000 workers redundant. Nowhere near that number of jobs will be created by the cowboy bus firms now in operation.

Jobs in bus-manufacturing have also been hit in the run-up to deregulation. Between 1981 and 1985 the demand for double-deckers fell by 50%, and is expected to fall by 50% again by 1988. In 1985 the domestic bus market shrank by 25%, and by a further 11% in the first six months of this year.

The Leyland Bus company is now axing over 1000 jobs in Lowestoft, Farington, Leyland and Workington.

Private firms now moving into the bus business are not ordering new buses but using cheap labour to deck out second-hand ones. In Glasgow for example, one firm is running former London Transport buses, refurbished by YTS trainees on MSC schemes.

Thus, from January of next year onwards, fares which have hitherto been kept down to force competitors out of business will rocket upwards. Bus routes which have not provided the expected profits will be axed completely.

Not that any of this will worry the Tories. When was the last time you saw one of them travel by bus?

### SOUTH AFRICA

## 'The factories are ours'

From page 12

Capital is internationally mobile, able to shift from one field of investment in one country to a different field somewhere else according to the needs of profitability. It is extremely difficult for any one group of workers in one country to deal with this. To cope with internationally mobile capital, international working class organisation is needed.

Developing links between workers in South Africa and other countries is therefore an urgent priority.

It is a terrible weakness of the movement for sanctions — which includes disinvestment as a central part of it — that it has not addressed the question of how to build solidarity with workers in dispute at all. Indeed, in Britain the proponents of sanctions have for a long time been extremely hostile to direct worker-to-worker links outside of what are called the 'official channels' — that is outside the organisational control of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

There is a further issue too. The GM workers are demanding only that they be represented on the board of the new South African company. But this is plainly not an adequate policy to prevent redundancies in the future. Their new bosses will do what they have to in the pursuit of profit as much as the old ones. Potentially, worker representation could even be a trap used by management to head off opposition to retrenchments, although the South African unions have so far proved adept at avoiding such traps.

But if this is not an adequate strategy to defend jobs, what is?

COSATU's founding congress adopted a number of relevant resolutions. On disinvestment, it proclaimed its support, but added: "the social wealth of South Africa remains the property of the people of South Africa for the benefit of all..."; and this was later strengthened.

Its policy for fighting unemployment is comprehensive. It calls for a 40 hour week at full pay and a ban on overtime; proper unemployment benefits; a programme of public works to be initiated by the state; work sharing on full pay; control over new technology; a union for the unemployed. Furthermore it blames unemployment on the capitalist system, and concludes that in the long run what is needed is 'a fair, democratic and rational political and economic system'.

But in fact this policy raises the whole question of political strategy in the broader anti-apartheid struggle. The overthrow of capitalism as well as apartheid is, as COSATU say, necessary for an adequate answer to unemployment. But the broad democratic movement with which COSATU is allied has no perspective for the overthrow of capitalism. The African National Congress explicitly sees the 'current phase' of the struggle as strictly limited to 'national liberation' — that is, to the creation of a democratic system within the limits of capitalism.

Such are the contradictions of the disinvestment policy. It focuses the issue of unemployment — which of course would be there, disinvestment or not — very sharply. Necessarily a policy to fight unemployment has to tackle the economic system in South

Africa. Equally, it is meaningless to challenge the economic system without also challenging the political structures built around it.

Of course in current conditions — a State of Emergency that has hit the unions hard — developing these kinds of activity is extremely difficult. But it is precisely such action that is necessary for effective opposition to closures and redundancies.

For anti-apartheid activities in Britain, all these issues should give cause for thought. All too often, right wing arguments against sanctions, to the effect that black people in South Africa (and British workers employed by the affected companies) will suffer most, are glibly dismissed. Of course, when Thatcher makes these claims, what she's really worried about is not black people — in South Africa or anywhere else — but the investment of British companies.

But it is nevertheless indisputably true that disinvestment in and of itself can lead to suffering for workers and their dependents in South Africa. It is much easier to call for such suffering in the cause of freedom from London than it is to be on the sharp end of it.

And so a serious strategy needs to be linked to working class solidarity. Action by trade unions in Britain needs to be taken with the greatest possible collaboration with South African trade unions. The more effective any action is likely to be, the greater the collaboration that is necessary, to be sure that our activities really do help the South African working class — to defeat apartheid, and to overthrow the capitalist system itself.

## WOMAN'S EYE

## Tories and BBC

By Jean Lane

**While the government is hell-bent on privatising everything that moves, be it gas, water, air traffic, bus services or hospital cleaners, there is one area of public life over which they are determined to strengthen government control.**

Their excuse for privatisation is freedom: freedom for employers to ask whatever price they like and offer whatever wage they like; and freedom for people to choose their service and to own shares in public companies. The property-owning democracy I think they call it.

Of course, what it really means is freedom for employers to exploit workers to the fullest while our trade union rights and wages are under attack; freedom for the government to sell off to "the public" that which we supposedly already own.

But they're not daft these Tories. When it comes to public information — to what we are allowed to think — they are not even going to make the pretence of freedom.

The BBC is a difficult victim to defend. The media, just like the police, the courts and the army, is an arm of the state. We've always known that we are lied to day and night on the radio, TV and in the papers. We almost always get half-truths, one-sided information and sometimes downright lies shoved down our throats.

Look at the coverage during the miners' strike. One day at Orgreave power station, before the big battle happened there, a group of miners and women from the surrounding pit villages picketed there. Just for a laugh, at a given signal, they all threw brown paper bags filled with self-raising flour at the coppers, turning the blue line white. What came over on TV that night was a different story. Only the clouds of flour were shown, billowing over the police lines while the voice-over told us that smoke bombs had been thrown by the pickets. There are millions of stories like that, many of them much more horrific.

But now we see that even the tales the BBC do tell us are too much for the Tories. According to them, we should not be allowed to see the effects of staffing cuts in hospitals, of British troops in Ireland, of immigration controls on black immigrants or of America's bombing of Libya.

In other words, we are allowed to feel the effects of government policies; old people are allowed the freedom to die of hypothermia; patients the freedom to wait years for vital operations; we are all allowed the freedom to lose our transport services, telephone boxes and to have our gas and electricity cut off for non-payment of exorbitant bills; and black people are allowed the freedom to be imprisoned for months on end at Heathrow airport without trial; but we are not allowed to be told about it.

Now there's sensible thinking policy for you. You can be oppressed but you're not allowed to know. As if, when a knife's been stuck between your shoulder blades, you're not aware it's there until you've been officially informed. Who said the Tories aren't daft?

**Next week Phil O'Brien continues his series with an article on Argentina.**



# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

# VOTE LABOUR!

Labour must win the Knowsley North by-election on 13 November!

The decision of the Labour Party National Executive Committee to impose its choice of candidate on the local party was a violation of Labour Party democracy. The

Labour Party leaders should be called to account for it at the next Party conference.

But right now the job is to win the election — to give the Tories a bloody nose and stop the so-called Alliance from cashing-in on the disarray caused by the NEC's brutal act of dictatorship over the local party. It is understandable that the

Knowsley North party should not want to take responsibility for the NEC's candidate. But it would be a gross mistake to put the dispute with the NEC higher in our concerns than defeating the Tories. The Labour candidate in Knowsley North must win.

The main enemy is in Downing Street!

## AS GM pulls out of South Africa, workers say 'THE FACTORIES ARE OURS'



MAWU workers stage walk-out in Johannesburg protesting at the detention of union leaders

The announcement by the American multinational giant General Motors that it is to withdraw from South Africa provoked the first strike against 'disinvestment'. 2,400 workers, members of the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU) downed tools on 29 October demanding representation on the new board to be set up when the firm is sold to local managers.

As we go to press, the strike continues. GM have said that they intend to maintain close links with the South African company, but has not con-

By Clive Bradley

ceded the workers' demands.

GM management won a court order last week to force NAAWU to show, by November 3, why their strike should not be declared illegal.

General Motors' decision to disinvest from South Africa is only the latest and most dramatic case of a growing phenomenon. In the words of the Financial Times, 'suddenly the trickle has become a flood'. 29 US companies pulled out in 1986 alone, including Coca Cola, Procter and Gamble, and IBM, who announced their withdrawal less than 24 hours after GM.

British investments have also fallen: from 1984-6 £147 million was disinvested; unofficial estimates of the total UK stake in South Africa suggest that it fell from £13 billion in 1984 to £10 billion last year — a very substantial drop.

Various factors are influencing this withdrawal. US companies generally have less involvement than their British counterparts, and so have less to lose by making grand 'anti-apartheid' gestures. The movement for 'disinvestment', as it is called in the US, is very much stronger than it is in Britain, and has proved able to provoke a serious split in the Republican Party to the extent that the US Congress did introduce a relatively comprehensive sanctions package earlier this year.

Coca Cola is said to have been influenced by its American location in Atlanta, which has a large black population.

But over and above these considerations is a simple question of economics. South Africa has lost a lot of the allure it used to have for the foreign investor. The growing instability of the apartheid state means a growing insecurity for investments. Moreover, South Africa is experiencing a serious economic depression. 'Retrenchments' — that is, redundancies, are widespread. But these face the resistance of the growing and militant trade union movement, in particular the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Withdrawing to a safe distance is a sensible policy for foreign investors. And often it is merely to a safe distance. General Motors, for example, in handing over operations to South Africans, is by no means restricting the sale of its products in South Africa.

And so disinvestment is just a way of cutting the company's losses. The new South African company will be free of restrictive US legislation covering sales to the South African government.

Coca Cola, after its withdrawal, is still supplying the basic syrup to its former subsidiary, and continuing to rake in the profits — at a greatly reduced risk. IBM's withdrawal is part of a general world-wide strategy: they have also pulled out of India, Nigeria and Zimbabwe — but kept the markets via subsidiaries.

The current situation at GM highlights some of the real problems that this whole process poses. Foreign capital can be subject to pressures, but in the main will do what it has to in its own interests. And those interests are contrary to the interests of the South African working class. Disinvestment in practice means redundancy or even closure. And therefore the South African workers find themselves in sharp opposition to the effects, at least, of disinvestment.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) of course has a policy in favour of sanctions; but many within COSATU have noted that this must be seen in the context of defence of jobs.

Turn to page 11

## Contras invade

By Bryan Edmands

In the last week heavy fighting has occurred on the northern Nicaraguan border with Honduras. Four Sandinista battalions (about 3,500 troops) have been trying to stop a major Contra force infiltrating into the country from Honduran bases.

The mountainous and jungle area about 120 miles north of the Nicaraguan capital of Managua has been the scene this year of some of the most intense fighting between the Contra forces of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN, the largest counter-revolutionary army) and the Sandinistas.

New US aid of \$100 million has revitalised the Contras who are attempting to relieve guerilla units they already have inside Nicaragua and at the same time disrupt the coffee harvest (Nicaragua's most important export) which is just beginning. The FDN are expecting to have 80% of its 18,000 strong force re-equipped and inside Nicaragua by January as the US aid takes effect.

A largely unreported consequence of this continued fighting is the fate of Honduran border communities forced to live with the presence of the Contras. In the most recent fighting where there were artillery exchanges between the Sandinistas and the FDN, hundreds of Honduran civilians have fled their homes.

This has helped provoke a public discussion in Honduras about the Contra presence, resulting in a motion to the Honduran Congress to expel them from the country.

But little in terms of real change is likely to come from this in the near future since a major plank of US foreign policy in the region is the continued support of the Contra presence and the propping up of local regimes.

The US has just decided to supply advanced jet fighters to the Honduran military, making it the only country in Central America to have such modern interceptors.

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Since then only wives and children of black Commonwealth citizens settled in Britain have the 'absolute' right to settle.

At present families are asked to trace their parentage via a complicated family tree. The Home Office claims that the trials would involve "various countries, where a parent/child relationship is fundamental to the claim to enter or remain in the UK".

The DNA tests are also known as 'genetic finger-printing'. It deduces heredity information from the blood cells.

The Home Office has already hinted at the introduction of a full scheme within a year.

It is obvious that for many this process will be a traumatic experience. The whole basis of admitting families to settle is racist.

The methods of 'verification' are suited to the objective of humiliating and dismaying black families and keeping them divided.

## AN INITIAL VICTORY

MICK McGINTY went to his interim hearing last weekend, and the Coal Board just hadn't got a case.

The tribunal instructed the Board to reinstate him, and now they are paying him his wages.

The only problem is, he hasn't got his old job back. We won't know the outcome until the full tribunal hearing. In effect Mick is suspended on full pay.

This was a magic lift for the men, particularly at Ollerton and Bevercotes. We are seen to be getting somewhere. Even though the Coal Board has the backing of the courts and all the rest of it, they just couldn't put a case up.

We are hoping that by the time the results of the Welbeck lads' tribunal comes out, and of my own tribunal hearing on 10 November, we can start to really go on the offensive and take the fight to the Coal Board and the UDM members at the pit.

### Shove

Generally the picture we are getting in Notts is that the UDM members are very unhappy with the representation they are getting. All we need is a small shove, to win something like recognition for the Notts NUM from the Coal Board, and the UDM



Paul Whetton is the secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

members will tumble back into the NUM.

The national negotiations over pit closures and back-dating will be discussed by the National Executive of the union on 13 November.

They will also discuss the High Court hearing on the 17th concerning the pension scheme and whether this is to cover strike periods or not. The union has given an undertaking that it will abide by the court decision.

I think this will be an important watershed. If the court rules that the Coal Board is wrong, then we are looking for full back pay, no interference with pensions. If the Board doesn't comply, I would like to see some sort of national policy to deal with our outstanding claims.

In the latest issue of 'The Miner' we've seen what the Coal Board have in store for us with the introduction of American methods of production. I'm sure that the proposals made by the Notts Area director, Albert

Wheeler, concerning speed-ups, double shifts, etc. are totally abhorrent to the vast majority of mineworkers.

### Nine-hour

He's talking about increasing the five day work agreement to allow for a full six days production, increasing shifts from six hours to perhaps 7½ hours or even three nine hour shifts.

This would wipe out the gains we have made over the last hundred years. Wheeler must be resisted. We were told in the early years of this century that no-one should work more than six hours underground, and here's Wheeler pushing himself as the next Chair of the Coal Board.

In Mansfield it looks like the UDM are not only prepared to run against Labour in the general election, but also to put up rival councillors in the local elections. This shows that Lynk is just totally out of touch with his members, and is a recipe for disaster. It won't just be a disaster for him, but it will also harm the Labour Party and the NUM. Lynk seems to want to take everyone with him when he falls.

I'm not surprised that Arthur Scargill isn't standing for Barnsley Central constituency, and I have every confidence in him as leader of the NUM — he'll stand his ground and fight to rebuild a united union.