

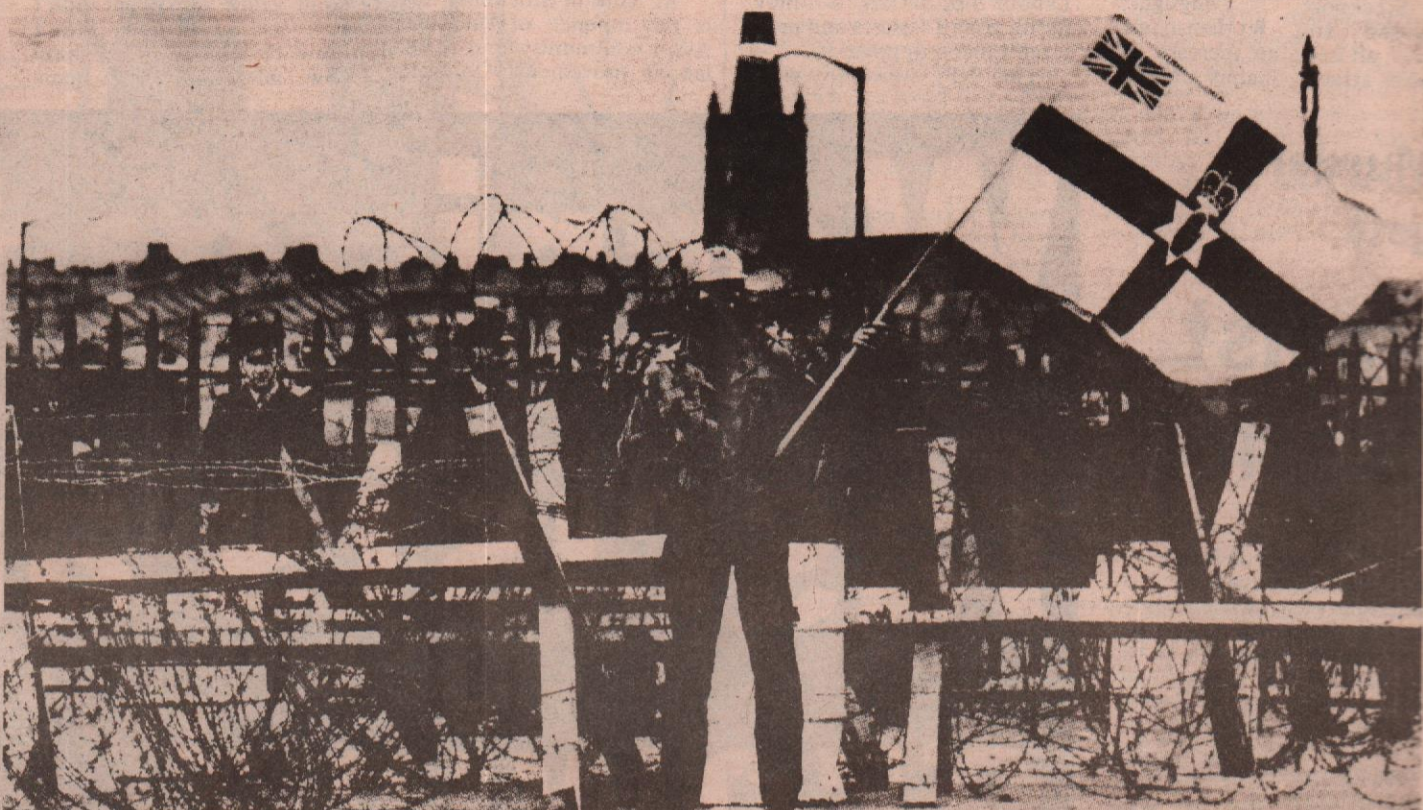
Socialist Organiser

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By accepting the sectarian structures and tinkering within them, Thatcher prepares the way for worse communal conflict. Right: 1974.

THATCHER SETS IRISH TIMEBOMB

LAST FRIDAY, 8th, Kim McPolin, a joiner, was sitting in his car having lunch on the Old Warren estate in Lisburn, where he worked. Members of the ludicrously misnamed Ulster Freedom Fighters fired at him repeatedly with a shotgun.

He managed to get out of the car and staggered 40 yards before collapsing dead into the arms of a traffic warden.

McPolin was a Catholic working in a mainly Protestant estate: that is the reason that the UFF have given for killing him.

The outlawed UFF is a fictitious organisation, a mere name of convenience for the legal Protestant paramilitary force,

the UDA, when it assassinates or bombs Catholics.

McPolin's Catholic colleagues on the building site where he worked are considering withdrawing from the estate.

This is an early fruit of the new Northern Ireland 'initiative' by Mrs Thatcher and Irish prime minister Garret Fitzgerald. This is what the bigoted rantings of Ian Paisley and Official Unionist Party leader James Molyneux translate into on the ground.

The horrifying probability is that many more such assassinations will follow in the weeks and months ahead as Orange anger mounts against the pro-

posals to give the 26 County government a consultative role in running Northern Ireland.

Assassinations

Between 1972, when the Protestant-controlled home-rule Belfast parliament was replaced by direct rule from London, and early 1976, when Britain abandoned the hopeless search for a political solution through a Catholic-Protestant power-sharing political structure in Northern Ireland, a savage Protestant backlash brought hundreds of similar sectarian assassinations of Catholics. (There were also some killings of Protestants for motives of unalloyed sectarian-

ism, but nothing like as many).

The sectarian assassinations were the most lethal element of the Protestant backlash which also included the mid-1974 reactionary general strike which destroyed the fragile power-sharing executive Britain had set up. Catholics were picked out at random, for no reason other than that they were Catholics, and slaughtered, sometimes with unspeakable savagery.

The expected Anglo-Irish summit and the public unveiling of the Dublin-London agreement have not yet happened, though they still seem imminent. Difficulties are said to have arisen over how to 'present' the deal.

Mrs Thatcher, intent on placating the Orangemen, wants to present the deal blandly as not amounting to very much. Garret Fitzgerald, on the other hand, wants to present it as an important new departure.

The dispute is not trivial. It gets to the heart of what is going on: which is an attempt to wean the Catholics away from Sinn Fein without changing anything fundamental in Northern Ireland, and to do it without alarming the Orangeists.

The problem for Thatcher is that even token concessions to the Catholics, North or South, are unacceptable to the Orangeists. The Orange political lead-

ers and the Orange hard-line militias are already alarmed and some of them up in arms, claiming that any role for the Southern Irish government in running the Six Counties, even a consultative one, implicitly undermines British sovereignty in Northern Ireland.

The signs so far are that the mass of Protestants are not yet prepared for militant action. Britain's reported plan to change the law so that all local councillors will be required to formally repudiate violence before being allowed to take their seats may go some way to

Continued page 3

Labour must fight for a united Ireland!

Stop the NF in Stockport!

The National Front are threatening to hold "a full-blooded rally" in Stockport, Greater Manchester, this Saturday, 16 November.

They have been trying to build some sort of base in the South Manchester area for some months now and it is vital that as many anti-fascists as possible come out to oppose them on the 16th.

Stockport, Longsight, Gorton and Wythenshawe have all seen an increase in racist attacks, mainly on the

Asian community, and a spread of NF symbols and slogans daubed on shops and walls.

In the last two weeks the racist Front applied for permission to meet in Stockport Town Hall. The venue was refused but their right to meet was accepted by Tory and Liberal councillors and an alternative venue was offered to them, despite Labour opposition, a lobby by local anti-fascists and even some Liberal opposition.

The NF, however, were

asked to provide insurance cover for £1¼ million for the building, a local civil hall, and have claimed they cannot afford it. Ian Anderson, a national spokesperson, threatened last Thursday to "pull out all the stops" to hold "a full-blooded rally on the steps of Stockport Town Hall".

Issue

At issue in Stockport now is the defence of the small Asian community and of the labour movement. Opposing

the Front's racist attacks means opposing their meeting.

The NF boasted to the local press that they would advertise their meeting by leafletting all Stockport County's home games leading up to 16 November. In response the local Anti-Apartheid Group and Labour Party got some 40 anti-fascists out to leaflet the next home game. The Front didn't turn up, or at least didn't show themselves. They have now missed all the home

games and have not appeared on the streets.

The recently-established Stockport Anti-Apartheid Group planned a huge counter-demonstration on November 16 to oppose the fascists' meeting. This demonstration is being built throughout Greater Manchester and beyond. We would like to see all anti-fascist activists organising large contingents to come here on Saturday.

Assemble at the Town Hall, on the A6, at noon.

No deal with SDP!

NEVILLE Hough, Labour Party chair, spilled the beans last week: Labour 'might need the help' of the SDP-Liberal Alliance to form a future government.

Those present at the Social Democratic and Labour Party conference in Belfast insist that reports of Hough's speech are accurate.

Labour leaders have been quick to dismiss the idea of a coalition and to suggest that Hough did not really say it.

But Kinnock has already made clear his commitment to 'power' — a place in Downing Street — at all costs.

Torture in Zimbabwe

According to Amnesty International, arrests and torture of suspected government opponents have increased sharply in Zimbabwe since the general elections last July.

Persistent accounts of torture include beatings, electric shock and the tying of bags full of water over prisoners' heads, forcing them to hold their breath until they lose consciousness.

Round-ups are reported particularly from Bulawayo, the major city in Matabeleland, where there is support for the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the party led by Joshua Nkomo.

Those arrested and held without charge include members of parliament, city officials and employees and ZAPU supporters. At least 150 people are estimated to have been arrested in the Bulawayo area since July and many of these are still held.

Torture is reported from a number of places of detention, particularly from Stops Camp, part of Mzilikazi Police Station in central Bulawayo. Recent inmates estimate more than 200 political detainees are held at this camp alone, some of them since the beginning of the year.

In a frequently described torture, the victim's head is forced into a canvass bag of water which is tied tightly around the neck. The prisoner cannot breathe without swallowing water. When the victim loses consciousness through suffocation, the torturers sometimes kick him or her in the stomach until the victim vomits the water. The process is then repeated. Electric shocks are sometimes applied to the feet or genitals at the same time, according to these reports.

Under the state of emergency in Zimbabwe, the authorities are empowered to detain indefinitely without trial people deemed to be a threat to public order and to hold them incommunicado for the first seven days. However, many prisoners are believed not even to have been given the required detention orders, and are apparently held illegally.

Murderer gets Racist 'justice'

Martin Newhouse, the murderer of 16 year old Eustace Pryce, has been found guilty of manslaughter rather than murder.

Newhouse is a known racist and it is clear to everyone in Newham that he set out to kill a black youth, for which he is now a hero in Canning Town; but the prosecution refused to recognise the racist element of the incident.

The sole aim of the police during their initial investigations was to criminalise Eustace's brother Gerald Pryce and the other black youths present at the incident. On the day of the incident, when police officers arrested Gerald, instead of allowing him to go to hospital with Eustace, they taunted him with questions about why he had hurt his brother — trying to blame the murder on him.

They had previously framed him up on a charge of attempted burglary for which he was convicted, because they caught him looking through the letter box of his parents' house. His family protested his innocence, but it was of no use.

The verdict is an insult to innocent Eustace Pryce who lost his life, and an offence to Gerald Pryce and his family, who have suffered so much pain as a consequence.



Eustace Pryce.

Warning: the fascists are growing



Between 1500 and 2000 fascists turned up at the Cenotaph in London on a National Front demonstration last Sunday, 10 November. Their ranks were swelled by ex-servicemen. The counter-demonstration was very small. It was one of the biggest fascist marches for many years, and at a time when racist attacks are increasing. Next time — in Stockport (see above) — the left must drive the fascists off the streets. Photo: Adrian Franklyn.

Mass strike in Brazil

A TWO DAY strike last week (5-7 November) by over half a million Brazilian workers won significant concessions.

Chemical and plastics workers, retail clerks, bakery workers and metalworkers struck in the Sao Paulo industrial area to demand wage increases and a cut in hours.

The main demands were for real wage rises of 20 per cent, and a change from six-monthly to quarterly cost-of-living increases, and the reduction of the working week from 48 to 44 hours.

The workers won the demand for increases every three months, an immediate increase of 12 per cent, and a working week of 45 hours beginning in January. This represents an important if partial victory.

The strike saw a high level of collaboration between the country's two union federations,

the CUT — a rank-and-file-based militant federation largely dominated by the Workers' Party — and the CONCLAT, a more conservative body set up by the union bureaucracies as a rival.

Collaboration began during a bank strike in September. 700,000 bank workers struck for a 118 per cent pay increase, winning only 94% (below the level of inflation).

President Jose Sarney, who took over when President-elect Tancredo Neves died on the eve of taking power, has made clear his intention of beating down the workers' movement, although he is resisting calls from business circles for 'shock treatment' austerity measures. In fact the civilian government is in no stronger a position to inflict a defeat on the militant working class than were its military predecessors.



The leaders of the council have not tried to expand the organisational base of the campaign.

Liverpool: organise the real left

By Kevin Feintuck

An aggregate meeting of 400 members of Liverpool District Labour Party was held in November 6. This meeting overwhelmingly reaffirmed the policy of no cuts in jobs and services, no rate increases to compensate for Tory cuts and protection of the house building programme.

The position of the District Party stands in sharp contrast to the suggestions contained in the Stonefrost Report, in which great stress was laid on the Council re-establishing its credibility in the eyes of top bankers and Public Works Loan Board. The specific methods to implement this all hinge around a substantial rate rise — 15% on top of the existing rate rise is the example quoted throughout the report.

The report also suggests a selection of capitalisation, rent rises, freezing of vacancies, loss of jobs and increased council charges in order to regain lost ground and pave

the way for future budgets which might fit in with Tory guidelines.

This dismal selection, which would represent a real defeat for working people, is being urged on Liverpool by the trade union bureaucrats and the Parliamentary misleaders.

Rhetoric

There is a major problem which confronts socialists in trying to build support for the council at this time. Two years of strong rhetoric from the leadership of the District Party has totally failed to establish a body capable of carrying out the measures necessary to beat the Tories, particularly if services do collapse due to lack of cash.

There has never been any attempt to expand the organ-

isational base of the campaign into the communities and the direction of the struggle has been kept in the hands of a very small number of leading figures from the council and the District Party.

Following the failure of the move for an all-out Council strike during September, it will require a massive turnaround to rebuild a fighting unity with the Council workforce.

The disintegration of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee and the disastrous confusion caused by the issuing of redundancy notices show the difficulties in the situation.

To overcome these weaknesses the labour movement needs a much greater degree of honesty than the statement passed on November 6 which persisted in "reaffirm-

ing the correctness of the tactic of issuing notices".

Against this background it is likely that the followers of Militant who call the shots in the District Party, will seek a solution which they will be able to present as a victory. The basis for this settlement will depend on the amount of money raised from other councils via the Blunkett initiative.

Grouping

Meanwhile, the last few weeks have seen the emergence of a grouping called Liverpool Labour Left. Following a large public meeting called under the Tribune banner on November 3, the LLL held its first members' meeting on Sunday 10th.

As a leaflet issued by Socialist Organiser supporters pointed out, the LLL could provide a useful forum for discussion. On the other hand the leaflet also made clear that if the left was to succeed in Liverpool it could not afford to take an equivocal stand on the main plank of the council's budget campaign.

Expulsions

Likewise the leaflet made it quite clear that under no circumstances should the LLL be identified with prescriptions or expulsions of fellow socialists from the Labour Party.

At the meeting on the 10th, attempts were made to distance LLL from previous press items which had linked the organisation with those who are looking for a large rate rise.

Unfortunately at the end of the meeting, no position was taken up on the rate rise or the overall budget situation.

Paul Whetton's diary TUC: acting like the CBI

NUM members in Nottinghamshire refused to participate in the UDM's ballot on the NCB's wage offer which was accepted by a 2-1 majority of those who did vote.

We refused to participate because we do not recognise the UDM as representing us.

Despite Lynk's bragging about what a good pay offer it was, in fact it was the worst pay offer made to miners in the last thirteen years.

People who worked during the strike, people who have said they are going to remain with Lynk were obviously disappointed with it.

I'm sure there was a lot of disappointment among pit-top men when you consider that the generous offer of a 50p increase in the bonus worked at for them at 20p.

If the 6,000 or 7,000 supporters of the NUM can be added to the 6,000 who voted against the offer, then more people were opposed to it than in favour of it.

So there is no way that Lynk can really claim a victory here.

Everybody was expecting the Coal Board to fall over backwards to accommodate them, and give them a few sweeteners at the beginning in order to try and attract waverers in other areas, but it looks like the Coal Board is prepared to pay just so much and no more, and it suggests to me that within a short period of time, the Coal Board is going to drop them like hot bricks.

Of course they are giving them every assistance at the moment while at the same time denying us facilities, but it points to the fact that when the Coal Board have used them and got out of them everything they can, they will drop them.

Pits

I'm not unduly perturbed by the votes at various pits up and down the country to join the UDM. There are obviously going to be a few more of them. It is to be expected in the early stages that the UDM will appear as an alternative, as something new. But it is bound to tail off and that is when we will start to recruit away from them. I can't see this union lasting as long as the Spencer breakaway in the '30s. I hope

that within two years they will have blown themselves out.

I don't think that is being optimistic. I'm sure we've got the organisational ability to fight Lynk and the UDM.

I'm bitterly disappointed at the response of the national executive. I think they have sat back and said it is not a problem, it won't affect us. What they have failed to do is recognise the reality of the situation and allowed the UDM to go out and make the running.

Areas

The national executive and the strong areas have got to recognise that there is a threat and that if they don't pull their finger out and campaign within their own areas they will let the UDM take the initiative. I would have thought it was in their best interests to make sure that they did not get a foothold.

In my pit the campaign to recruit into the NUM is continuing. At our last meeting new people turned up, more forms were filled in — we've not got 300.

I'm sorry to see the TUC coming out with the positions contained in the document that was widely leaked last week. It is the sort of thing you expect to come from the CBI. They are starting out from the typical capitalist economic point of view and are not considering working class economics.

They are a pillar of the establishment, part of the second eleven. When the Tories are in trouble, the Labour Party goes into bat backed up by the TUC, who will not radically change the system under which we live, but nurse it along until such times as the Tories are once more in a position to take the reins again.

I put it to the last meeting of Newark Labour Party EC and GMC that under no circumstances would we continue to recognise any member of the UDM as a card-carrying member of the Labour Party. This was unanimously endorsed by the EC and unanimously endorsed by the GMC.

They will have bigger battles in other constituencies in the area to get that policy adopted, but the argument has got to be had.

Thatcher sets Irish timebomb

From page 1

placating the less militant Protestants, because it will drive Sinn Fein out of the council chambers. But it will not placate the hard-liners.

Fitzgerald, for his part, is harried by the opposition Fianna Fail, which denounces the deal as a sell-out of Dublin's constitutional claim to the whole of Ireland. And another problem for the London/Dublin initiative is that the Southern parties' disagreement on the deal seems to be reproducing itself within the SDLP. A harder, Fianna Fail, wing, and a softer wing of the constitutional nationalist party in Northern Ireland seem to be emerging.

If the SDLP were to fall apart or cripple itself by internecine strife on the issue, it could seriously undermine Britain's chances of following through on the

Anglo-Irish agreement with a new experiment in devolved power-sharing Belfast home rule.

Any steps that give even partial recognition to the demands of the Six County Catholics for a united Ireland — even the involvement of the 26 County government in a consultative role — should in principle be welcomed by socialists. But the Dublin-London deal looks like little more than tokens and window-dressing behind which repression will be stepped up against the irreconcilable nationalists in the Catholic community.

Tokens and symbols which do not tackle the basic issues, which give the Catholics little or nothing of substance while they enrage the Orangeists, are the worst of all worlds. After 17 years of turmoil the lesson is clear as daylight that no good

can come from tinkering with the partitioned state.

Thatcher's and Fitzgerald's policy has set a time-bomb ticking in Northern Ireland.

The Six County state is a failed entity, a communal/sectarian bearpit for the two communities enclosed within its artificial boundaries. The only democratic solution to the Catholic-Protestant conflict in Ireland is for Britain to withdraw and make way for a united Ireland within which the Protestant areas have as much autonomy as is compatible with the rights of the Irish majority community.

Socialists in the labour movement should fight for this policy — to commit a future Labour government to recognise Irish self-determination, and to help lay the basis for Catholic-Protestant and North-South unity in the Irish labour movement.

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Broad front

Tory environment minister Kenneth Baker must find life stressful these days, with Liverpool hovering for weeks and months on the brink of running out of cash.

But there are consolations. Last Tuesday he will have been cheered by receiving a telex message of support from what the Morning Star enthusiastically described as "a remarkable political alliance of Tory, Labour and independently-controlled [Scottish] councils [with] the backing of building trades employers and the Scottish

TUC".

This labour-and-capital coalition was rallied to support Mr Baker's "fight" within the Cabinet for more money for local government.

Calls

"You don't have to pay as much to say as much", claims British Telecom.

In fact most people will be paying about 8 per cent more.

Privatisation in telecom is working as socialists predicted. Because of competition from the Mercury consortium on long-distance business calls, British Telecom is reducing its charges on those calls and increasing rentals and most other call charges.

Profits from high-volume business telephoning used to subsidise 'uneconomic' services to domestic telephones. Now the law of the market rules.

Steal

"What on earth is going on in our society? If I go to the East End of London and pinch 80 pence out of a till, three carloads of police come down.

"If I steal 280 million pennies as Mr Hepker has done, he is sitting up in Leeds running a public company".

— Labour MP Brian Sedgmore, speaking about the Johnson Matthey scandal.

Control-but by whom?

"A radical break", "a massive advance", "a light year ahead of any popular economic pamphlet produced on the left for a very long time". Socialist Action devoted its centre pages last week to enthusing about Andrew Glyn's pamphlet 'A Million Jobs a Year'.

The great virtue of the pam-

phlet, Socialist Action argues, is that it understands that nationalisation must flow from a struggle for "control of capital".

It is true that revolutionary nationalisations generally do come out of a struggle for workers' control: Portugal in 1975, where workers first took over the running of their factories, then

demanding nationalisation, is an example.

But what Socialist Action misses — and it's hardly a minor point — is the difference between workers' control of industry and government control of industry.

Sometimes the two may converge, where it is a workers' government accountable to the working class. But at a time when Roy Hattersley is touring bosses' conferences assuring them that a Labour government will "listen to industry" more than the Tories, it is foolish to suppose that the next Labour government will be any such thing.

The Glyn policy, with the gloss that Socialist Action puts on it, is in fact a state-capitalist policy. Far from being a 'radical break' from traditional Labour Keynesianism, it is a radical version of it.

Big loopholes

Roy Hattersley thinks that his scheme for manipulating financial institutions' tax concessions is a brilliant way of getting planned investment without any nationalisations or class struggle or anything of that sort.

Among themselves, however,

financiers are pointing out that it won't work.

In the November 'Monthly Investment Report', an investment expert from an insurance company identifies "ample scope to develop loopholes in any new legislation".

Unequal pay

Women workers are generally low paid and often part time but are overall increasing in numbers. These are some of the conclusions of a recent report on the economic position of women in the major capitalist industrial countries.

The study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), covering Western Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, found that in every country studied women were paid less than men. The biggest gap between men's and women's earnings was in

Luxemburg where women earn only 63.5% of the male hourly rate. The smallest gap — of 89.9% — was in Sweden. In the UK the figure was 69.5%.

The gap has decreased slightly since 1973 — with UK women raising their pay from 62.5% of the male rate to 69.5%, and Swedish women from 80% (1970) to 89.9%.

But the improvement in Britain came almost entirely in the immediate aftermath of the Equal Pay Act, and the gap is now widening again.

(Source: Labour Research)

A time warped slice

Gerry Healy got some sympathy last week from a strange quarter. The charges against him by

Michael Banda's WRP were dismissed as a "witch-hunt", "muck" and "foul polemic" —

by Paul Foot in Socialist Worker!

Not that Foot actually supports Healy. But he takes a lofty 'more in sorrow than in anger' attitude to the whole business.

"I heard Gerry Healy speak twice a long time ago when I was a young socialist in Glasgow", explains Foot. "I was taken to his meetings by fanatical young men..."

"This small band concentrated all its efforts on the construction of a leadership for a crisis which first didn't come and then, when it did come, demoralised the workers..."

Even as a young man, apparently, Paul Foot was well equipped with middle-aged wisdom. He could see that these 'fanatics' would come to grief.

How can anyone who seeks to pioneer, to act with a sense of urgency, end up other than like Gerry Healy? How could any sensible person think that capitalism might have big crises, or that those crises might lead to big workers' struggles?

Foot's article is a curiously time-warped slice of early-1960s SWP (or IS, as it was then called) in the middle of today's Socialist Worker. Back in those days IS would have no talk of 'One Solution — Revolution', or 'Build the Revolutionary Party', like today. Trotskyism? Leninism? Democratic centralism? All that was outdated sectarian junk. Capitalist crisis? It might come some day — but as late as 1968 IS assured its supporters that the prospect was only 'a cloud no bigger than a man's hand'.

No — the answer was to be 'modest', 'realistic', to coast along inside the Labour Party, and to sneer knowingly at Gerry Healy's talk of building a revolutionary leadership.

Perhaps Foot's article helps to explain why, despite all its absurdities, Healy's group was able for so long to recruit many of the best revolutionaries in the movement — and so criminally to mislead them.

Stress

Unemployment makes you ill. A survey by a team of doctors of the medical records of workers at a Wiltshire factory which closed in 1982 and their families has shown that after they lost their jobs they visited doctors 20% more often, and hospital out-patients' departments 60% more often.

Rates of illness also increased in the period immediately before the closure when the workers were under stress.

Listening to youth?

By Mark Osborn

One of Neil Kinnock's problems at the next election will be getting youth excited enough to get out of bed and vote Labour.

Policies offering real hope for youth might help, but Kinnock's preference was shown by the 'Labour Listens to Youth' launch conference at London's County Hall on Saturday 9th. It was a snappy PR job, with left-wing politics frowned upon and occasionally shouted at.

TV

Kinnock's responses to questions were geared to the TV cameras. He flatly rejected the demand that the Labour Party should be committed to guaranteeing jobs for school-leavers. 'I'm not going to tell people lies'. He turned on Militant and was healthily booed for his pains.

But the endeavour also seemed to offer Kinnock a change to stifle the left within the Labour Party, in this case the Militant-dominated Labour Party Young Socialists.

By bureaucratic manoeuvring, rather than a repeat of the botched frontal attack on 1983, the LPYS can be submerged in a right-controlled 'youth movement'.

The conference was composed

in roughly equal parts of LPYS, National Organisation of Labour Students, Trade union Youth Sections and 'various other youth organisations'. The new element is the right's support for the building of the trade union youth sections. Obviously the plan is to set up such sections from above, with union leaders pulling the block vote strings in conferences of a merged LPYS, NOLS and trade union youth sections.

The result could be a Kinnockite dream: a sweet-smiling youth organisation to be turned on at election time, gently pressing the Trotskyists under their thumb.

'Labour Listens to Youth' will be meeting in "small and large groups" (Kinnock), all round the country. There will be regional rallies in early 1986.

Cooperation

Closer cooperation between the labour movement's different youth sections is a good idea in itself. The left should support it while warning against, and fighting, bureaucratic control and witch-hunts.

And we should take the initiative to build trade union youth sections, making sure that they are organised in a democratic way.

An apology

The final paragraphs of one of our articles on the WRP got garbled in last week's paper. They should have read:

Indifference and sloppiness allowed the WRP to make a limited re-entry into the labour movement in recent years. Socialist Organiser sounded the alarm when the WRP turned up in force at a cuts conference in early 1981. The WRP through Vanessa Redgrave sued us for libel. Many on the left advised us to make an apology. 'We know about the WRP,' they said, 'but it's not worth making a fuss'.

Soon afterwards 'Labour Herald' was launched — printed on the WRP presses on terms which have allowed it to survive as a full-colour weekly with no visible organised network of sellers, and with a managing editor long associated with the WRP. Many prominent figures on the left — Tony Benn, Arthur

Scargill — have chosen to shut their eyes to the evidence of the Herald's links with the WRP, and to speak at its rallies.

In 1982 the WRP in alliance with Ted Knight hijacked the Labour Campaign for Palestine: Socialist Action went along with the WRP, attacking those who fought to maintain a genuine Palestine campaign as Socialist Organiser sectarians.

Split

Such behaviour by people on the left will rebound on them now, and will help our common enemies use the WRP scandal to smear the whole left. When we insisted on branding the WRP as a group alien to the labour movement, it was not 'sectarian' but a necessary hygienic task.

The way to rid the labour movement of the poison of bureaucracy — in both its mainstream and its addled WRP forms — is clarity, honesty and courage in the battle of ideas.

Socialist Organiser has local supporters' groups in most large towns. We ask £5 a month minimum (£1 unwaged) contribution from supporters.

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An open letter to 'International'

Last month, a new socialist journal, 'International', began publication, founded by a group of comrades disillusioned with the latest turn in the politics of 'Socialist Action'. In this open letter to 'International', we look at the major issues confronting the Left.

ROY HATTERSLEY is touring bosses' conferences assuring them that the next Labour government will "listen to industry" more than the Tories, and that Labour leaders believe in "the importance of high profits".

Meanwhile Neil Kinnock declares brusquely that any promise that Labour will create a job for every school-leaver would be "a lie".

Kinnock and Hattersley feel firm ground under their feet to promise a safe capitalist administration partly because the miners' defeat has inevitably depressed and demoralised the labour movement.

But the depression and demoralisation is very far from total. Strike figures are already beginning to increase again. The confidence of the working class will revive.

The question is: can the left make sure that the labour movement does better in the next big struggle than it did in the miners' strike? Is the left doing what is possible now — regrouping, building on the crash political education that thousands received in the miners' strike, stiffening that education with a core of Marxist ideas, consolidating?

Depression

On the whole it isn't. On the whole both the broad left and the would-be Marxist left are suffering from, rather than limiting and combatting, the general depression in the movement.

There are some positive developments, however: and we see your break from Socialist Action as one of those. That is why we are writing this open letter.

The Marxist left is more isolated than it has been for some time. Large sections of the erstwhile Bennite left have run for cover. The local government left, having submitted to Thatcher, is also submitting to Kinnock. Even honest socialists who were mobilised in support of the miners can see no option but to knuckle under to the Kinnock strategy for the next Labour government.

The socialism of managers rather than fighters, socialism 'from above', is still central to the left, despite the lessons of the latest local government fiasco and decades of Stalinism and Fabianism. It can mislead and hamstring even the bravest class fighters.

It affects even the avowedly anti-Stalinist groups.

Militant's disastrous bureaucratic tactics in Liverpool, focusing everything around the prestige of the 'socialist council' rather than the mobilisation of the workers, are a fresh example.

The Socialist Workers' Party proclaims socialism from below. But through their sectarian abstention from the struggles in the Labour Party they bear a large responsibility for the success of Kinnock's programme of socialism — or rather, mildly revamped capitalism — from above. Their only answer to the problems of the labour move-

ment is 'get out and join the SWP'.

What of Socialist Action? A drift to semi-Stalinist politics internationally has gone together with an increasingly sectarian style but minimal content in their politics within the British labour movement.

They accept a monopoly for the ANC over the struggle against apartheid. They reject any notion of independent working-class politics in Cuba or Nicaragua. More and more, they see world politics as a matter of struggle between progressive and reactionary power-blocs, and their role as identifying and tagging along behind the leaders of the progressive bloc.

Scenario

They have adopted the same method in British politics. Arthur Scargill is declared to be the Daniel Ortega, the Fidel Castro, or the Gerry Adams of British politics — the leader of the next wave of History. And all specific questions of class politics are dissolved into this scenario.

What is the role of Socialist Action in the scenario? They are the philosophers who thanks to deep 'theory' know where the next wave of History is going. And thus — like many another devotee of 'socialist fatherlands' far away — in practice they are often sectarian and ultimatum.

That they denounce practically all the groups of the Labour Left, even the broadest, as 'ultra-left' does, to be sure, make them a bit different from more ordinary sectarians who would denounce those groups as reformist. But the practical result is much the same.

Your break with Socialist Action is, as we understand it, due to these trends in their politics. You reject their semi-Stalinism. Without resorting to the politics of self-regarding denunciation, you reject their frantic self-abasement before whomever they find to be the leaders designated by History. You insist on a serious intervention within the Labour Left.

Discussion

These ideas we have in common with you. That is why we have written to you proposing discussions and joint work, up to and including a joint weekly paper (through giving your group an equal say on the editorial board of Socialist Organiser).

For such joint work we will need to work out political common ground and our differences, to be defined precisely and discussed in a comradely fashion. We should, therefore, outline the main issues which seem to need discussion.

Your work in the Labour Party is oriented heavily, indeed centrally, to Briefing. We too are in favour of participating in Briefing. But we think a political demarcation from the Briefing tradition is necessary.

Briefing was launched as the result of a split from Socialist Organiser by those who support-



Moving towards Kinnock: Ken Livingstone

ed rate rises as a response to Tory cuts in local government. The experience of recent years, which we analysed in our pamphlet 'Illusions of Power', has condemned that strategy conclusively. Yet the leading people in Briefing do not draw the necessary lessons. In fact, at every crucial testing-point in the evolution of the local government left they have been inadequate, muddled, or clearly on the wrong side.

This issue of assessment of Briefing is connected, perhaps, with a more fundamental one: socialist economic policy, and our relation to traditional British 'socialism'.

Briefing has never really discussed the basic ideas of socialism. In our view it has obscured the differences between working-class self-liberation and 'state socialism' with its mystical and mystifying slogan 'Labour take the power'.

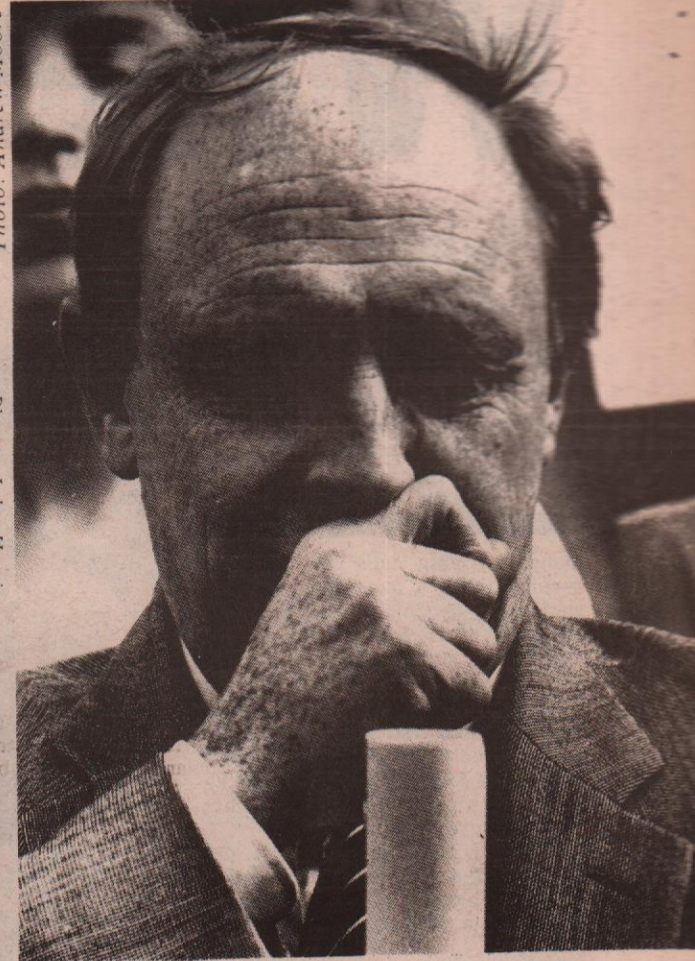
Similar confusion, in our view, is evident in the document circulated by the Campaign Group of MPs and written by Andrew Glyn, entitled 'One million jobs a year'. This document has at least opened debate on economic policy. But it calls for state controls over capital; it advocates, essentially, a revamped version of the classic policy of Keynes, "a somewhat comprehensive socialisation of investment".

Pamphlet

Vague talk of worker 'involvement in decision-making' is far outweighed by the fact that the pamphlet everywhere talks of more control by the existing state, and clearly indicates (by talk of increasing capital gains taxes, etc.) that the capitalist class would remain in place, only subject to more state regulation.

We were not surprised to see

Photo: Andrew Moore



Promising a safe capitalist administration: Kinnock

ualist, statist implications only with the warning that the ruling class would try "every means to bring the government down".

So if only the government could get away with it, that would be socialism? It is not likely that any government, workers' or capitalist, in Britain will ever attempt Glyn's programme; but programmes very similar have been carried out by many governments in the Third World, for example Egypt and Syria. Are they socialist?

South Africa

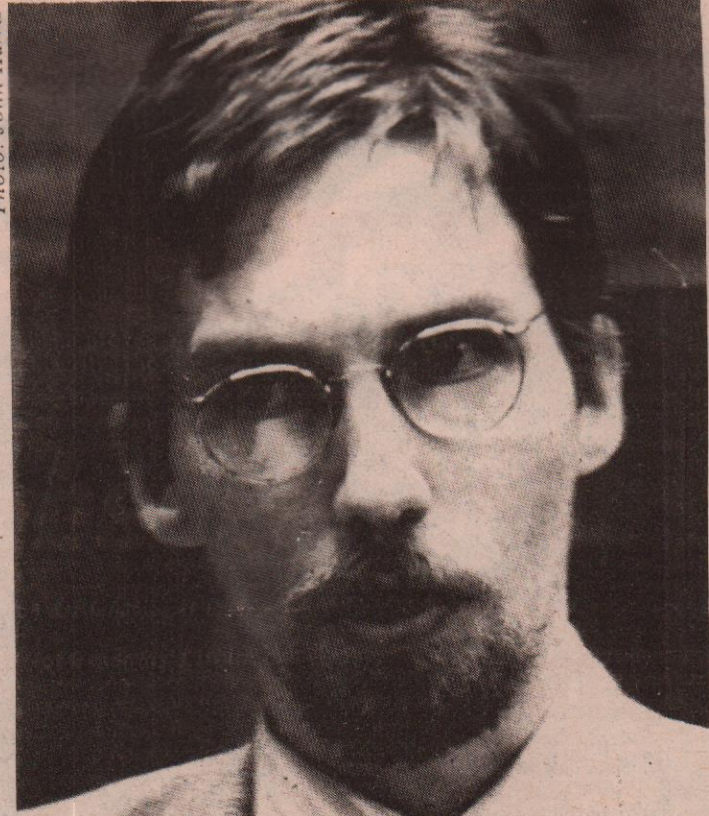
To build an adequate Marxist movement in Britain we need an adequate world perspective on socialism. And in that respect too we find the first issue of your journal disappointing.

Your actual position on South Africa, as we understand it, is close to ours (we advocate a workers' party based on the non-racial trade unions, independent from the UDF). But your journal contents itself with a brief article on the Stalinists and a

Statist

You call this "the socialist answer to the NEC", and distance yourself from the grad-

Photo: John Harris



Theorising the drift: Tribune editor Nigel Williamson

rather bland declaration by the USFI.

Nicaragua has been central to the political evolution of Socialist Action, and the whole international current of which it is part, over the last six years. Yet on this central issue your journal is non-committal: "it is possible to agree or to disagree", you write, with the Sandinistas' alliances with the bourgeoisie.

To learn the lessons of Socialist Action's turn away from Trotskyism towards blind imitation of the Sandinistas, it is necessary, we think, to see this episode (and the pro-ANC turn of South Africa) as the latest development of a long-standing method.

Time and again the Socialist Action current has identified with a vaguely-defined process of 'Revolution' — classless, nameless, self-propelling — seeing working-class action as only a desirable contribution to that process. Yugoslavia, China, Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam — the precedents are numerous.

Socialist Action is applying the self-same method now to Irish politics. Shutting its eyes to the fact that the Six County Catholic community includes only 10% or so of the Irish working class, and that Catholic nationalism cannot and will not mobilise the Southern working class into socialist revolution, mystically identifies Sinn Féin with its militant base among the Six County Catholics, as the bearer of an irresistible drive in Irish history towards socialist revolution. The actual flesh-and-blood Irish working class (over 20% Protestant) disappears from the picture in this vision of revolution.

Ireland

We understand that you reject the extravagances of Socialist Action on this question. We regret that your journal does not include any statement on such a central question.

Today is a time when the Marxist left needs to regroup, reassert basic socialist ideas against an adverse tide, and educate comrades for the future. We believe that you and we could work together on this task. We need to discuss seriously.

Where is China

Is China going capitalist? Or has it discovered a new form of socialism? Martin Thomas looks at China's new economic policy.

Deng Xiaoping calls it a 'second revolution' — a drive to modernise socialism in China. The business magazine 'The Economist' calls it 'the retreat from Marx'.

"The centrally planned economy of Marx, Stalin and Mao is to be stopped in its tracks and put on the market road; the traffic, if good intentions hold, will now be regulated by profits and prices rather than by bureaucrats in Peking".

What is the truth? China has never had a working-class socialist system. The revolution of 1949 was made by a peasant army entering the cities and, as it did so, issuing warnings to the workers to stay at work and not to press any demands of their own.

Monopoly

The Maoists soon established a Stalinist-type state. Those who fought for working-class socialism, the Chinese Trotskyists, were jailed. Stage by stage, the capitalists had their property taken over by the state (with compensation); but the working class was allowed no independent voice. The bureaucracy had a monopoly of information, of communications, of politics.

Now the command economy is being drastically reshaped. The Economist exaggerates, however: China is not likely to become a free market economy. It is undertaking the same sort of changes as some East European states, though more abruptly and turbulently.

Between the collectivisation of agriculture in China, in 1958, and 1978, the Chinese economy was highly centralised. 80% of industrial production was in state enterprises (the remaining 20% being in enterprises run by regional and local government). All important



State pressure through 'moral incentives' is being partly replaced by financial incentives

prices were fixed by the state, the main ones centrally. Practically all enterprise profits went directly to the state budget, making up the greater part of public revenue, and the central bureaucracy then allocated investment funds.

The communes in the countryside had rather more autonomy than the industrial enterprises; and centralisation on paper could conceal all sorts of make-shifts and black markets in reality. But, despite the vast size of China, and its underdevelopment and poor communications, the economy was probably more centralised than the USSR's.

It was also as isolated from the rest of the world. In the 1960s, exports were only about three per cent of China's output; in 1976, still only 5½%.

Dismantled

Since 1978 the state monopoly of foreign trade has been dismantled: regions, cities, enterprises, individuals are free to trade. Foreign trade has risen fast.

Foreign investment has been encouraged, especially in four Special Economic Zones set up as free-market enclaves within China and in coastal cities. The free play

of profits and prices, rather than central command, has been allowed much more scope in industry. In the countryside, the communes have been replaced by individual enterprise.

80% of China's people live in the countryside; 75% of its labour force is in agriculture. That is where the changes have been most dramatic and most successful.

From 1979 the economic functions of the communes were progressively transferred to small groups or to individuals, and food prices were raised to encourage peasants to produce more. From 1981 the communes began to

divide up their land among households. Initially, each household got a three-year contract on their land; these are now being replaced by contracts for 15 years or longer.

The communes were abolished in 1983. And this year the government has scrapped the system of compulsory state purchases from peasants: it now relies on market incentives to buy what it wants from the peasants.

Some individuals producing cash crops have become quite rich, and the new system certainly has an inbuilt drive towards increasing differences between rich and poor. But tensions have been relieved by a very rapid overall increase in agricultural production.

Ill-equipped

Between 1952 and 1979 Chinese agricultural output rose by something over three per cent per year. Between 1980 and 1985 it has risen by over 9% per year.

By international standards, 3% a year is not bad, especially considering that China's land has long been overcrowded and Chinese industry is ill-equipped to provide fertilisers, tractors, and other machines. 9% per year is dramatic.

The 1949 revolution cleared away the landlord and usurer classes, who were a drain on productivity. But the forced-march enlistment of peasants into communes in 1958 was terribly costly. It had nothing to do with Marxism, which advocates gradual and voluntary collectivisation in agriculture, especially in underdeveloped countries. It served only the interests of the bureaucracy, enabling it more easily to squeeze resources out of the peasantry. The state is still the overlord of agriculture: but the relaxation of its premature 'barracks communism' has greatly boosted productivity.

The new economic policy has had less clear success in industry. The major measures were p



Deng Xiaoping, leader of the 'reformers'

going?



which see small opportunities for immediate profit but want to get a foot in the door in case prospects improve.

According to the Financial Times, only one foreign investment venture in China, a Hong Kong-owned hotel, is actually making profits. Foreign capitalists complain that China's roads, railways and ports are inadequate; the phones do not work; power supplies are erratic; workers are unskilled; and the bureaucracy is difficult to deal with. The Chinese bureaucrats, for their part, complain that their deals with foreign capitalists are not bringing in the up-to-date technology that they want.

Domestic Chinese industry has grown quite fast under the new policy, with output increasing by over 9% per year between 1980 and 1985, and a particularly big boom in 1984-5. Light industry has grown especially fast, modifying China's previous strong bias towards heavy industry.

Slower

But 9% per year is slightly slower than China's overall average rate of industrial growth since the early '50s (about 10% per year in 1952-79, despite the effects of disruption in the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution). And the government has had great problems regulating the recent growth of industry.

Consumer-durable output has vastly exceeded plans - in 1982 there were 60% more factories producing bicycles, sewing machines, watches and clocks than allowed for in the state plan, because of unauthorised plant conversions - and a lot of investment funds have been directed into private or local authority building projects. Billions of dollars have been siphoned off by corrupt officials; one particular racket had made \$1.5 billion, and this year some 9,000 private businesses illegally run by individual bureaucrats have been shut down.

In 1984 the deputy director of the State Statistical Bureau complained that "In recent years we could not guarantee investment on key state projects because there was too much investment through self-raised funds..."

China's foreign trade has risen very fast, about 20% per year between 1976 and 1983 - from 5½% to 9½% of national output. Imports of consumer durables from Hong Kong and Japan have risen especially fast. But corruption is widespread here too.

In an underdeveloped country with poor communications like China, a wide scope for market mechanisms would be rational even if the economy were planned according to workers' democracy. The bureaucratic-centralist system of the 1950s to 1970s worked well for a one-track forced-march build-up of heavy industry, but it becomes increasingly cumbersome and unworkable when the country moves to a more varied pattern of growth.

So there is sense behind the loosening up of the command economy and the attempt to acquire foreign technology. However, the operation is being carried out by, according to the methods of, and for the enrichment of, the bureaucracy - and at the expense of the working class.

To acquire foreign exchange, the Chinese government has exported



The communes have been dissolved and China's agriculture returned to individual households

thousands of contract workers, mainly to the Middle East - pocketing well over 50% of their wages for itself. It has also been seeking profits from Chinese investment abroad. The Chinese government owns some \$6 billion of investments in Hong Kong, and others in the US and Australia - the total is possibly bigger than that of foreign investments in China.

The Chinese Trotskyist journal October Review sums up the issues like this: "China should make use of foreign capital, borrow loans from abroad at low interest rates (without any political conditions), break from the self-isolation of the Mao Zedong era... introduce advanced technology and equipment in a planned way, learn foreign advanced experience and management methods (but not methods to exploit the labouring masses)..."

"However... the rights and interests of the labouring masses must be protected, they should be mobilised to intervene in politics and supervise and restrain capitalist activities..."

The bureaucracy does it differently. After 1949 the urban workers were given a relatively favoured material position, with job security - the 'iron rice bowl'. The bureaucracy tried to enlist the fast-growing industrial working class as its social base, and drew the new recruits to its own ranks from the top layers of that class.

Now a self-reproducing, 'technocratic' bureaucracy has consolidated. The new scope for market forces corresponds to the interests of that managerial caste.

Economically China has done nothing not already pioneered in Eastern Europe. Heavy industry in China is still regulated more or less directly by the state. But in Hungary, for example, centrally-fixed targets for individual enterprises have largely been abolished: the government regulates the economy mainly through taxes and interest rates. In Hungary, too, since 1982 hundreds of small private businesses, and cooperatives of workers leasing equipment from the factories where they have their first job, have been legalised. Yugoslav industry has long been decentralised. Poland shows that a powerful central bureaucracy can coexist with and dominate private farming over a long period.

The economic changes in Eastern Europe have generated great tensions. What are the prospects in China?

There is more or less open opposition to Deng's reforms within the bureaucracy. Deng and his cothinkers have set out to purge the Communist Party and slim down the armed forces, but with little success so far.

So far the conflicts within the bureaucracy have led to one small opening for the mass of the people - in 1978-9 when, to rally support, Deng's faction briefly allowed relatively free expression on 'Democracy Wall'. The wide-ranging democracy movement which grew out of that brief period was eventually crushed in April 1981, with a big wave of arrests.

The state has emphasised its repressive power since then, particularly in the 'anti-crime' campaign of August 1983 to January 1984, when some five to ten thousand people summarily convicted of murder, rape, or embezzlement were executed. People sentenced to death are still paraded in front of mass rallies before being taken away to be shot.

Presumably because of the rapid overall growth in incomes, the big price rises of recent years have as yet caused no open revolt as in Poland. It is not clear how much working class resistance there is to

the attacks on job security and egalitarian wages scales.

According to the head of the government-run trade union in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, over 20 industrial disputes have taken place there in the last six years, but "due to the conciliation of the trade union... not one case of labour-capital dispute intensified". In 1982 the right to strike which previously existed at least on paper was formally abolished in a new draft of China's constitution.

Re-emerge

But there can be little doubt that the democratic movement will re-emerge. As a Chinese Trotskyist, Li Si, puts it in a recent issue of October Review:

"The democratic movement saluted Solidarnosc with enthusiasm, reproducing the 21 demands and the Charter of workers' rights... The vanguard, mostly made up of young workers, began to be aware of the necessity of turning to the masses of the people... As for their political programme, it focused on demands for socialist democracy and workers' control of production and distribution, in the manner of the Paris Commune. This socialist alternative is absolutely distinct from the dissident movements which have appeared in the Soviet Union, for example".

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Why Israel can't be reformed

Socialist Organiser has been carrying a discussion on socialist programmes for the Israel/Palestine conflict. Here we print a contribution from Lenni Brenner, author of the recent books 'The Iron Wall, and 'Zionism in the Age of the Dictators'.

The Palestine question is of the profoundest importance for revolutionary internationalists. "Israel" and a "democratic secular Palestine" are not squares on an American Monopoly game board. Human equality, legal, economic and social, is at stake. The slightest accommodation to Jewish chauvinism in Palestine will, inexorably, lead to similar capitulations in principle to communalism in other parts of the world.

Classic Zionism was unabashedly colonialist, and never concealed its aim of converting an Arab land into a Jewish state. However, lacking the power to seize Palestine on its own, Zionism perforce developed under the often grudging patronage of British imperialism, until it was able to take advantage of the unusual conjuncture of political factors in the post-World War II period to establish a racist regime. The near-Apartheid system in the territories conquered in 1967 is an extension of, rather than a departure from, the herrenvolk order created in 1948.

Nothing

Can Israel be reformed? No. The Zionist state also discriminates against Jews. Jewish women cannot initiate a divorce, testify in such cases, nor sit on the religious judicial benches, which have exclusive jurisdiction over all Jews in marriage matters. Nor can Harry Cohen — Hebrew for priest — marry a convert or divorcee.

For yea, verily, the Lord will yet restore His Temple in His holy city, and Harry, today a butcher-baker-candlestickmaker would be defiled by sexual contact with such unclean creatures and couldn't perform the ritual animal sacrifices on that grand and glorious day. Their children would be bastards, and Zionism's medievalist rabbis will not marry them, year unto the tenth generation.

Anyone who expects a movement so fanatic in its official discrimination against Jews to ever grant legal equality to any mere Arab is a certified idiot.

There are those who would concede that Zionism is both sectarian and racist, but see an Israeli nation in place, and conclude that it has a right to its own state, sans racism.

To be sure, Zionism has created a Hebrew nation, and that nation, as with the Afrikaners, is entitled to linguistic equality. However no right of self-determination is acquired in today's world by conquering another nation, denying it self-determination in any part of its land, dispersing much of it, savagely discriminating against the national development of the remaining natives, and then bringing in middle class Jewish biblebashers from Brooklyn to usurp their remaining patrimony.

The Palestinian refugees were driven from their homes by rabid Irgan and Stern Gang murderers at De Yassin, and Hagana war criminals at



Lebanese victim of Israeli shelling

Lydda. They and their descendants are fully entitled to return to every inch of their homeland and live there as equals.

Further: equality means that Arabs from the surrounding region have as much right to immigrate into the country as any Jew. But a Jewish state, Zionist or otherwise, would only have legitimacy for democrats if Jews are a majority within its borders. Eventually those borders would have only one purpose: to keep the Arabs from demographically annexing the country, which is exactly the situation today.

And in fact a successful revolutionary upsurge in the Arab world, which is an historic inevitability, would find itself in instant conflict with such a racist crusader castle, which cuts the territorial bridge between the Asian and African Arabs, and which is eternally linked to imperialism, because such a state, like the imperialists, will always be the sworn foe of Arab unity.

Those who call for a two state solution do so as a concession to the prejudices of the Jewish population. They forget that it is the oppressed who make revolutions, and that only a portion of the dominant caste in such striated societies as Israel, Ulster or South Africa will ever come over to the side of the oppressed, regardless of what assurances are given to them.

What demoralizes the oppressed is always to be rejected and it is obligatory to stress that recognition of Israel can never be a Palestinian rallying cry.

The formula for success is an alliance of the majority of the Palestinians and the progressive Jewish minority. Without winning over that minority the Palestinians can never — repeat — never win.

Fanatics

But it must be clear to that minority that they must come over to the Palestinians and not the other way round. That minority must grasp that it is sociologically impossible for them to emancipate themselves from the sectarian and capitalist nature of Israeli society without that alliance.

There can be no illusions: Israeli society is teeming with fanatics. The Harkabah and Fatahite Oriental Jewish

slums of Tel Aviv are the Shankill Road of Israel. Only a minority can ever be won over to the revolution from such reactionary "po' white trash" communities. The doctrine of equality is universal, but it is never universally received. Similarly, only a minority of the Ashkenazi intelligentsia — as with any intelligentsia — can be won over. The bulk of the educated will stay loyal to the system that gives them privileges, and the liberals amongst them will stay loyal to the Labour Party as the lesser evil.

Minority

About 20% of the Jews are religious fanatics and cannot be won over, except in the rarest cases. Even among the women, only a minority of progressive women can envision anything more enlightened than a Labour Alignment government, sans the Likud. That is to say that most liberal Zionist women are prepared to accept a government of the criminal party that took away the right of civil marriage which the state had inherited from the British Mandatory.

An alliance with the Palestinians, the 17% Arab minority of Israel's citizens, the Palestinians of the territories conquered in 1967, and the progressives of the surrounding Arab states, on a programme of a democratic secular socialist Palestine in a democratic secular socialist Arab Middle East, is the only way forward for the Jewish left.

But, in their July 3 Socialist Organiser article, John O'Mahony and Martin Thomas maintain that the implications of "the slogan, 'democratic secular Palestine' are: full conquest of the Israeli Jews by the Arab states".

Which Arab states are they talking about? Egypt? Lebanon? Jordan? Morocco? In fact only a few Arab states can be thought of as resisting Zionism.

Libya, for one, does not accept the slogan, it calls for an Arab Palestine, but it has no following among the Palestinians. Syria backs the Amal gangs against the Palestinians, and by now is opposed to Israel only in so far as it holds the Golan Heights. Algeria is nominally opposed to Zionism, but the struggle is hardly a priority for the bureau-

crats there.

And South Yemen says nothing that could be thought of as seeking a chauvinist solution.

Contrary to the two writers, in today's Arab world, the democratic secular notion is profoundly revolutionary in its implications, and an indictment of the bankrupt regimes. Within the PLO, we have seen the same phenomena.

The Arafat clique long ago abandoned the notion of a unitary Palestine, and for over a decade its entire diplomatic effort was on behalf of precisely the sort of mini-state Socialist Organiser's two writers so cherish. Now the full implications of Arafat's retreat on principle are clear: he is completely demoralised and hopes for nothing more than that Reagan will pressure Israel into agreeing to a bantustan firmly attached to the Jordanian police state.

There is no more communally oppressed group on this earth than the blacks of South Africa, yet the ANC is open to whites, unlike the PLO, or even its most left element, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, for all its Leninist pretensions. Everyone who is intimately involved with the Palestine question knows that the entire PLO is ideologically stagnant, and it said with certainty that it, or even its left wing, will remain stultified until they transcend their reflex nationalism, as have the black comrades within the ANC. All know this — except the two writers.

For they, in their own backwardness, have done nothing more than reinforce the dead end nationalism of both the Jewish and Arab left in Palestine. In so doing they have committed a grave disservice to them both, and not merely to them but to the international revolution. For every word they wrote against democracy and secularism and bi-nationalism was an argument against Marxism.

Nation

We are for democracy or we are for nothing. We are for secularism or we are for nothing. We are for the unity of the workers of both nationalities, and all nationalities, on the basis of an uncompromising solidarity with the oppressed — and no one else — or we are for nothing.



Disciplining working class youth?

A question of justice

The first question which a lot of people seem to have ignored in the Poundswick issue is the question of justice. It is a fact that obscene and personal graffiti appeared on the walls of Poundswick High School. It has not been proved that the five school students at the centre of the row were guilty of putting them there.

The pupils were initially interviewed by the head teacher and suspended. The governors then backed up the head teacher's decision and recommended expulsion. Both decisions were taken without a full investigation and without the five pupils having a proper defence.

The first real proper hearing of the case was at the sub-committee of the education committee.

In a meeting lasting over six hours, the sub-committee, after examining all the evidence, cleared the five pupils.

Evidence

I believe this was the correct decision. It now seems likely that the graffiti was written by people not even at the school. At no time was evidence produced to prove those five pupils guilty.

In the early stages the school students did not have an adequate defence and they have been cleared at the final stage in the disciplinary procedure.

On the basis of justice, the Save Our Standards campaign should be opposed and the five reinstated.

Even if it had been proven that the five did write the

graffiti, I do not believe we should call for their expulsion or give our backing to the Save Our Standards campaign.

If this was the action of a gang, terrorising teachers and making their working conditions intolerable, then of course we would back the call for their expulsion. If the five wrote the graffiti, and that seems unlikely, then there is no evidence that this was anything other than one isolated act. There has been no suggestion that these school students were involved in other disruptive and abusive acts.

Expulsions must only be used as a last resort. The effects of an expulsion on a youth's future can be dire.

School students are in a grim position today. Many have no prospects of a future with a decent job. Many will see hard work at school as pointless and a waste of time.

In this context it is likely that some will revolt against the system in a disorganised and politically wrong manner like throwing personal abuse at the teachers. This is wrong and should be condemned but expulsion should not be resorted to unless a teacher's job is made impossible.

Many people have supported the Poundswick and the SOS campaign because they believed that the expulsions were on the grounds that the graffiti were racist and sexist. Poundswick School has one of the harshest discipline records in Manchester. In the last three years, on average, there has been one suspension every two weeks.

Tony Dale,
Manchester SO.

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Women take the lead!

Lydia Kompe, a branch secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union (affiliated to the Federation of South African Trade Unions, FOSATU), speaks about her experiences as a woman trade unionist in South Africa.

(From 'Working Women', published by Ravan Press and the Sached Trust in Johannesburg. The interview was done in 1983).

AFTER I became a shop steward at MAWU we had a lot of meetings, maybe twice a week. My husband used to expect me home between 5.30pm and 6pm. But sometimes I wouldn't even go home because we'd have meetings at our centre in Tembisa, and I was living in Alexandra. Sometimes it was too late to go home, and I'd sleep with friends.

This made my husband very unhappy and it made our life miserable. He couldn't see why I was involved in this. He was scared I'd be in politics and land in jail. He'd get very unhappy and think I was making excuses about meetings when I was going out jolling. When we got dismissed it was worse because he felt I deserved it.

Encourage

I tried to explain to him — and encourage him to organise at his place. He was a worker at a laboratory in Jeppe. But they had no union.

You know what husbands are like. He'd complain that I didn't do anything for him — cook, make tea or do the washing. It's true that I preferred to do the washing at night rather than miss any meetings. I'd rather strain and overwork at night to satisfy

him. But he wasn't happy and said that wasn't the answer. He needed me to be with him. But he couldn't put me off because I felt it was important to carry on. Now he's got used to it and he doesn't worry me so much. He's getting old.

That's the problem with married women in the organisation. You're in the middle and don't know what to do. Even at work if you think of the problems at home you don't concentrate — you find yourself getting depressed. What will you find at home? What attitude will you get from your husband, even your children?

Three jobs

At one and the same time you have to have a job, be in the union and run the home. If you're a young woman maybe there's also a baby to look after. Maybe in the mornings you take your child to a creche or to an old woman.

If the man comes home early he hasn't the ability to go and fetch the child and look after it while you're working. He expects the woman to go and fetch the baby, put it behind her back, get to the stove and cook for him — and he's busy reading the paper.

And we do it happily because we grew up that way, we saw our parents do it and we think it's the African way.

Women also have problems in the unions. At Heinemann we had six women shop stewards out of twelve. This was because we were insisting, and our organiser, Khubeka, was encouraging us. But our chairperson was still a man.

During meetings we tried



TGWU branch meeting.

to fight the undermining of women's suggestions. They thought we were not saying strategic things. But we managed to fight that. We succeeded in Heinemann because as I said women outnumbered men. The women were taking the lead when we were on strike. They weren't scared even when the police were trying to thrash us and scare us with dogs. I think that's

when the women realised that women can be determined.

Stewards

But now we have some women shop stewards from Anglo and even though they are not taking the lead they're actually participating quite well. I don't know if it's perhaps because these men have been organised by me

that they give them respect.

There are now a lot of women in FOSATU. But no union has yet elected a branch chairlady. Perhaps a female treasurer, since people think a woman is more responsible and will be more careful with the money.

Even the women feel it's more important to elect men. I don't know why.

I think it's time for wom-

en to come together and see that this thing is a major problem for us. So that eventually we achieve the same rights. And we must think of many ways of doing it.

Generation

It's a problem that will go ahead from one generation to another if we don't actually work on it now.

Education and African famine

The famine in Africa has aroused more public concern in Britain than any other Third World issue.

As a group of people involved in development education, the major question for us has been how far the response to this preventable "natural disaster" has gone in identifying and attacking the long term causes of the famine and preventing a repeat of it in the future? We spent the past school term working with children in West Yorkshire schools on the Ethiopia issue to try to illuminate some of the deeper questions.

The focus of the public's response has undoubtedly been Bob Geldof's Band Aid/Live Aid project. Their collected funds could soon surpass the Tory government's miserly contribution to Ethiopia this year.

Most kids in the Yorkshire schools we visited thought that everyone in Ethiopia was starving. When we asked them to write down their images of Ethiopia, they were invariably 100% negative: "dirty, dying, starving..."

They have been taught that the problem is Ethiopia's people — pictured as helpless wretches in contrast to competent Westerners — rather than the system.

The kids were shocked to discover that only a quarter of Ethi-

opia's 40 million people are seriously affected by the famine and that the majority of the population is still supporting itself in fertile areas and producing food surpluses, part of which ends up in the overfed Western countries through the exploitative cash crop system.

Throughout the whole Band Aid campaign there has been no discussion of the real reasons for the drought's devastating effects. Much of Ethiopia's best land is used to grow cash crops such as coffee, cotton, fruit and vegetables. The Ethiopian government uses the cash from this to pay off their debts to rich countries, and it allows us to have our luxuries cheap.

'Surplus'

Ethiopian vegetables are still on sale in Bradford market while EEC 'surplus' food mountains rot in warehouses.

Band Aid have been praised for saying that Ethiopia needs long-term aid such as transport and irrigation systems. However, while the export of cash crops has continued, western nations, including Britain, have refused to give long-term aid since the 1974 revolution. Geldof has claimed that the "Russians are doing nothing", but the fact is that the USSR is the only country to have funded long-

term aid projects, including irrigation systems and a dam, in Ethiopia.

The cause of the famine which consistently provoked the greatest anger from children in the schools was the revelation that considerable resources in Ethiopia are being channelled into the civil war in the provinces of Eritrea and Tigray.

Obviously the Ethiopian government has to bear some responsibility, but there is a deafening silence over the consistent meddling by the superpowers in local conflicts. Both the USA and the USSR badly want influence in the Horn of Africa because of its proximity to the Red Sea oil routes. Hence both superpowers have made huge purchases of arms the price of their support for Ethiopia, Eritrea and other countries of the Horn. Geldof's arrogant and ignorant message to the Ethiopian government to "get its act together" can now be seen in its full context.

The famine is just the latest incident in a long history of inequality, exploitation and manipulation in Ethiopia. Even a three year drought doesn't automatically lead to impoverished people overworking their inadequate holding of land must also be there.

That is a continuing process



which can only be understood within the context of a corrupt and unequal world economic system which keeps the vast majority of people in Third World countries in absolute poverty. This grim picture is used and manipulated by western rulers to keep their working masses quiet and grateful for what little they've got. Geldof doesn't seem to want to talk about this!

Philanthropy

The most galling aspect of the Band Aid affair is the denial by our philanthropic rock stars that they are anything to do with the problem. With no discussion of

the causes or issues, obscenely overpaid, posturing rock stars have exhorted us to give money.

Our money mind you, not their millions. Wham! and Duran Duran tell unemployed working class kids that they have a duty to help Ethiopia!

The economic system which sells arms to Third World states while exploiting them through the world trade system, is the same system which produces greedy, egotistical pop stars. Michael Jackson probably earned more money last year than some African countries did. Bruce Springsteen donated his expensive stage set to the Live Aid concert? Bid deal! Springsteen has earned

\$34 million from concerts alone in the past 12 months.

Some of them may feel that they can use their position of power for good, but we see 'positions of power' and gross wealth as a major part of the problem.

Socialists must be prepared to be much more critical and aware of the implications of Geldof's project than they have previously. Socialists should demand that all schools consider the implications of the 'Schools for Africa' programme very carefully, and only participate in it if it is part of a much larger teaching programme which focuses on Third World problems, the concepts of fairness and distribution, and our connections to the famine in Africa.

If there is to be a genuine change in the fortunes of Ethiopia and other Third World countries, socialists must be much more active in campaigning on aid, the arms trade, and the built-in exploitation of the trading system.

The Labour Party's record on these issues is sadly little better than the Tories, and it is high time that many socialists put their internationalist ideals into practice.

PAUL THOMAS
Leeds Development
Education Centre
(personal capacity)

Stalin goes to Brookside

Edward Ellis reviews 'Letter to Brezhnev', a film by Chris Bernard.



Whatever you do, don't telephone anyone between 8.00 and 8.30 on Mondays or Wednesdays. Even your nearest and dearest are apt to say 'B..... off! I'm watching Brookside'.

Imprint

And no amount of protesting that you are stuck in a phone box in the freezing cold doing vital work for the Revolution will make the slightest imprint upon their consciences.

'Letter to Brezhnev' would therefore seem to have a ready made and very large

audience, written as it is by a Brookside scriptwriter, directed by a Brookside director, and starring Petra (so that's what happened to Petra...) whose real name is Alexandra Pigg.

Great, right, dead good, d'you know what I mean?, I thought, and off I went.

What we get is Brookside meets Bill Forsyth ('Gregory's Girl', 'Local Hero', etc.), but grossly inferior to both. It is a whimsical, fairy-tale-like love story.

Love at first sight can move mountains, and indeed the heart of the President of the USSR, who takes a mom-

ent off from his usual business of counter-revolution to send a free plane ticket to a young woman in Kirkby who wants to abandon everything for her one-night-stand fiance in the Ukraine.

Escapes

Our heroine, Elaine, escapes from petty-mindedness and long-term unemployment simply by having the courage of her romantic conviction. She ignores the prejudice around her, all the anti-Russian words of advice, and stands by what she knows in her heart. It is a scaled down Romeo and

Juliet with a happy ending.

There are, of course, some snappy one-liners, such as when Elaine is propositioned by an obnoxious Liverpudlian lad who suggests that they go off together to have a good time in a four-poster bed. 'What? When there are dogs in the street?' she quips acidly.

Or again when she instructs her younger sister to go and play with her acne. And Elaine's best mate

Teresa, who packs chickens by day and impersonates a Sunsilks advert by night would brighten up anyone's day.

Jerk

But all this is far outweighed by the film's overall dreadfulness. The Russian sailor, Peter, (Peter Firth last seen in an uncannily terrible film about extraterrestrial vampires), has an impressive Russian accent,

but is a patronising jerk that anyone in their right mind would drop in the Mersey with a brick tied to his feet before they'd fall in love with him.

Elaine is able to fall in love with him as a result of severe brain damage, it seems, such that for the second half of the film she is able to utter few responses to any questions other than 'I just know I luv him, that's all'.

Set against her desire for defection are friends and family — not unreasonably, you may think, if like me you are a heartless beast who finds the notion of life-long love after a night in a disco a little hard to swallow — and the Foreign Office, inexplicably so concerned to prevent her emigration that they produce [presumably] forged photographs to convince her.

Naive

Underlying all this ridiculous nonsense is the film's naive political message. Elaine, unlike everyone else, doesn't believe what she reads in the papers. Bread queues, cold winters, repression in Russia: how do you know? she protests. And anyway, it can't be worse than Kirkby.

Cold-war Trotskyist I may be, but this strikes me as toned-down Stalinist propaganda. True, I've never been to Russia, never seen a bread queue there, nor witnessed genocide in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, I've never been to Kirkby either. I'm still prepared to accept it's pretty miserable, even without Elaine wandering about moping, dreamy-eyed for her Russian sailor.

D'you know what I mean, right?

Science

The causes of addiction

Mood-altering drugs are very much in the news these days, with the panic over heroin and cocaine and the quite justifiable concern about the over-prescription of tranquillisers.

The discoveries of biochemistry have shown us how such drugs work. Put simply, morphine, valium, etc., mimic natural substances produced in the body. Thus the brain makes its own painkiller, called *endorphin*, which explains why people can suffer massive injuries and feel no pain.

This natural system does not work as readily as we would wish, so people have tried to find artificial methods of killing pain.

Acupuncture and hypnosis achieve this by encouraging the brain to release more endorphin, while the opiate drugs replace the natural endorphin. Why the opium poppy should devote its energy to making these substances is one of nature's mysteries.

The body is very economical with its chemical signals and the

same one is frequently used for several different purposes. Endorphin is also found in the intestine where it has the effect of slowing the movement of the bowels. One of the less dignified consequences of opiate addiction is chronic constipation.

Physical exercise seems to encourage the body to release endorphin, resulting in feelings of euphoria (pleasure), although I can't say I've noticed it. It is even claimed that some joggers are literally addicted to their sport.

Religion

Perhaps profound religious experiences also involve the release of endorphin, causing euphoria. Religion may really be 'the opiate of the masses'.

Addiction to opiates is explained as follows:

The body makes what seems an adequate amount of endorphin. If extra is added, the body shuts down the production lines until the gut has passed. When the artificial supply is cut off, it

takes some time for the production line to be re-started, during which time the body experiences *more* pain than usual (while the intestines make the most of their new freedom to move).

The major tranquillisers, such as Valium, also seem to affect a natural system in the brain. This seems to consist of two chemical signals, one a "stress" or "anxiety" substance, one a "calm" substance. These are normally in balance, but conditions of over-crowding, poverty, insecurity, etc., induce the brain to produce more "anxiety" substance, resulting in feelings of anxiety.

The natural response indicated by such feelings would be to change one's situation. In this society, this is often difficult, so doctors prescribe valium to tip the balance of the anxiety-calm system.

This encourages the body to produce less of the natural "calm" substance, so when the person stops taking the tablets, s/he feels worse than before. This is how addiction to tranquil-

isers can occur, something that has only been recognised in recent years, but which I predicted in my first scientific article (written for the now defunct magazine *Women's Voice*).

Now, I've already mentioned the body's "principle of parsimony" — that of getting one substance to carry out several functions in different tissues of the body. The "principle of parsimony" seems to apply to the "calm" substance, as shown by American researchers into natural opiates and other chemical signals.

Monocytes

They showed that Valium also stimulates a part of the immune system, a type of white blood cell, called *monocytes*. These are a sort of refuse collector, swallowing bacteria, foreign debris and cancer cells. Valium seems to enhance their attraction towards such trash and therefore encourages the immune system.

This opens up some exciting possibilities. If the natural "calm" substance has the same effect, this may help explain psychosomatic phenomena, where the mental state seems to have a direct effect on the physical health of the body.

For instance, stressed people are more prone to infections, perhaps because their monocytes are less efficient. Similarly, shamanism, faith-healing and placebos (inactive substances believed to be genuine medicines by a patient) often have a real effect on the health, perhaps by encouraging the brain to produce the "calm" substance.

Finally, studies seem to show that stressed people are more prone to cancer, perhaps because their monocytes are less efficient at weeding out the cancer cells.

Once again, modern biochemical research shows that there is a scientific explanation for phenomena that were either denied, dismissed or endowed with mystical significance.

Organise in the Broad Left

By Mike Grayson

The conference of the CPSA Broad Left last weekend (9-10 November) was disappointing for activists outside the dominant Militant grouping. Wherever motions were controversial, Militant used their voting strength to push through their own 'line'.

This was particularly noticeable in the debate on Northern Ireland, where by a majority of 18, Militant carried their motion despite well-argued opposition from all the other political groups present.

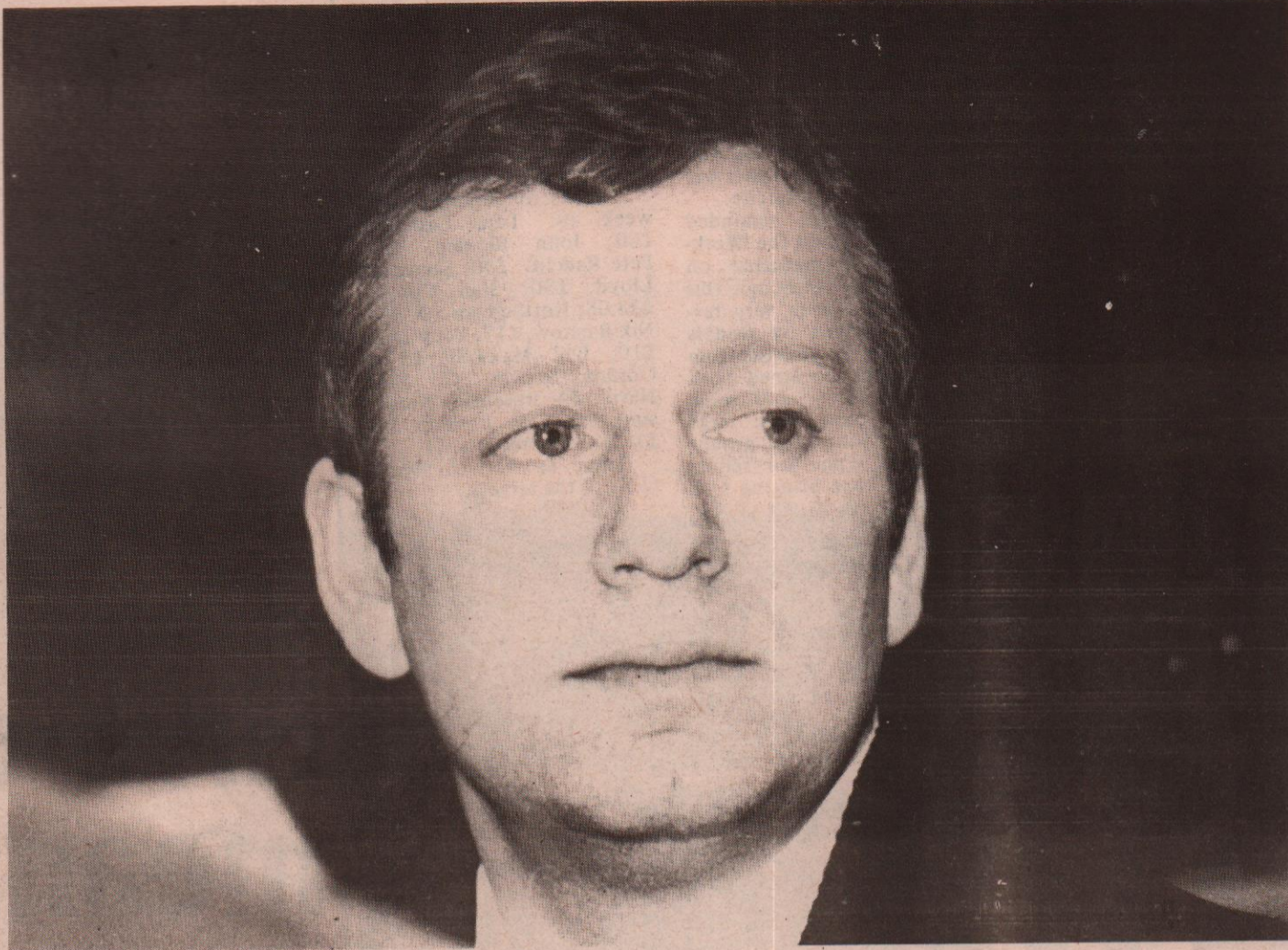
Worrying

More worrying in terms of policy for CPSA itself was Militant's attitude to motions calling for an extension of union democracy. The Socialist Caucus (which includes Socialist Organiser supporters) had tabled motions arguing for the annual election of both senior full-time union officers (currently elected once every five years), and of Assistant Secretaries (more 'junior' full-time posts, currently non-elected).

Militant argued against — and defeated — these motions, on the grounds that tactically the time is not right. All Militant want to do for now is bring Assistant Secretaries into line with the senior officers, and have them subject to five-yearly elections.

It is disturbing that the call for annual elections, which used to be Militant policy, has been dropped as Militant's influence in the union grows. More positively, all sides agreed that we must fight for our officials to accept wages more akin to those of the people they represent.

The worst debate of the weekend came when the Socialist Caucus urged reserved seats for women on the union's Executive Committee and on the Broad Left's own slate for the NEC elections. Despite the fact that



Kevin Roddy

CPSA is a predominantly female union, election slates from all shades of political opinion tend to be male-dominated.

Militant and the Socialist Workers Party combined to ensure the heavy defeat of these motions. They argued that reserved places are a bureaucratic 'short-cut' to avoid 'real work' to make CPSA more hospitable for women members, like childcare facilities. But until recently Militant showed no interest in that 'real work' either. They were nowhere in sight earlier when the Caucus

was arguing for policies such as creche facilities, women-only schools, affiliation to the National Abortion Campaign, etc.

Bandwagon

Half-heartedly, Militant have now jumped onto the extreme rear of the bandwagon of women's rights.

Such debates could not help but overshadow some of the less controversial issues. There was agreement on issues such as the 1986 pay claim, opposition to the Tory anti-union laws (though a

motion originating with the SWP, referring to 'the futility of relying on a future Labour government under Neil Kinnock... or putting our faith in left trade union leaders...' was again kicked out by Militant's heavy hand), opposition to the Fowler reviews, and the establishment of a political fund in CPSA.

Over 200 people attended the conference, and the Broad Left now has well over 500 paid-up members. The Broad Left has proved able to withstand the split last year by members of the

Communist Party and soft Labour left who have formed the so-called 'Broad Left '84'.

'Sewn up'

But it is impossible to deny that Militant's attitude does put off some activists. A common opinion voiced is that everything is 'sewn up in advance'.

The answer, of course, is not to drop out but to organise. Serious socialists should join the Socialist Caucus, which can be contacted c/o 139 Boleyn Road, London E7.

Getting lump labour off Laings

One of the seven sacked UCATT brickies from the J. Laings Surbiton site spoke to Vince Brown.

What is the dispute about?

The removal of lump labour from all Laings sites and the reinstatement of the seven bricklayers sacked from the Surbiton site.

How did the dispute with Laings start?

One of the brickies at Surbiton was sacked. The rest of us walked out. We won reinstatement, direct employment with the subcontractor, Jonoroy, and a guaranteed £36 per day with no strings.

But after we worked up to the top of the scaffolding, Laings wouldn't raise the scaffolding or put us on other work on the site. They tried to split us up onto other sites. Since Friday 18 October we've been locked out.

Since then we've picketed the Surbiton site and other sites for our reinstatement, direct employment, and an end to blacklisting.

What tactics have the lockout committee adopted?

We've kept pickets on the Surbiton and Church Lane, Tooting, sites, and had lightning

pickets on other major Laings sites. Our main strength is turning away lorries, particularly concrete.

What support have you had?

Good support from the Area UCATT officials, they've made all the pickets against the lump official.

But the National Secretary, Len Eaton, won't officially inform the TGWU that our dispute is official on all Laing sites.

The TGWU Building Workers Trade Group conference last week agreed to support all disputes against the lump, not just TGWU ones.

Though some drivers told us their TGWU branch secretary, Dawson, instructed them to cross our picket line.

The workers on small sites like Tooting don't seem interested in a fight against the lump but we had promises of support from large sites like Hay's Wharf at London Bridge and local council DLOs.

What next?

For the moment we'll keep the pickets at Surbiton and Tooting and do lightning pickets of the major sites.

How can trade unionists help?

We need bodies on the picket at Tooting from 7.30 am onwards. We need unemployed workers on the late morning and afternoon shifts.

TGWU and UCATT members can raise the issue of official backing for pickets against the lump, and action at the large

sites.

Donations to Lock-out Committee, c/o 135 Hayward Gardens, London SW15, 789 8283.

Support needed for Silentnight

Over 400 members of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union (FTAT) at Silentnight have held out against their Thatcher-toady boss for more than four months. They struck in June over the company's refusal to honour a national pay award, and were then sacked en masse on 22 July.

They won support at the TUC Congress and from delegates at the Labour Party conference. Channel 4's recently broadcast Diverse Reports programme gave national publicity to their struggle.

However, the strikers cannot continue such a fight unless pious resolutions of support are translated into finance and action. The strikers are now calling for trade union branches, Labour Parties, etc., to adopt a striker and to visit the picket lines at the Barnoldswick (Lancs) and Sutton (Yorkshire) factories of Silentnight.

As in the miners' strike, trade unionists and socialists should organise support groups to coordinate financial assistance and other action requested by the

strikers.

Please send donations to: FTAT Cravendale 82 Branch Strike Fund, c/o Mrs Ann King, 10 Rainhall Crescent, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire. Tel: 0282-813662.

Forgemasters Steel, Sheffield

700 AUEW members at the Forgemasters Steel Works Atlas Road site in Sheffield are now in the fifth week of a strike over wages, conditions and union recognition.

The strike began when management withdrew a £4 across-the-board pay offer and then started cancelling agreements.

Workers on the site have had no pay increase at all in three of the last five years. This year £4 was offered, then withdrawn and later reintroduced with so many strings that it was completely unacceptable.

In the meantime the highest paid director of the company received an £8000 pay rise in 1983-4.

Management then withdrew from a whole number of agreements made with the unions and finally made the full-time convenor redundant and refused to recog-

nise the shop stewards.

Contact: Strike headquarters, AUEW House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield, tel: 79042.

Mirror showdown put off

Confrontation at Mirror Group Newspapers has been postponed.

Robert Maxwell has suspended his dismissal notices to all 6,000 workers for three weeks, but after that he says he will still insist on cutting 2,000 jobs and getting a no-strike deal.

SOGAT will ballot its members in Mirror Group Newspapers this week on strike action, and the other print union, the NGA, is balloting its mem-

bers at 14 provincial dailies owned by Maxwell's subsidiary.

At present the Mirror crisis stands at the stage of threat and counter-threat. But meanwhile rival press magnate Rupert Murdoch has demanded a legally binding no-strike agreement from the print unions for his new Wapping site, where he will be starting production next March.

The print unions urgently need a united strategy for a fight back.

Left could win in AUEW

John Tocher, the left wing candidate, could possibly win the second round of the AUEW presidential election next March.

In the first round results, announced last week, Tocher was second behind right-winger Bill Jordan. The outcome on the second round depends on what happens to the votes of candidates eliminated in the first round.

Jordan got 72,000 votes and Tocher 51,000. Centre right candidates David Graham and Gerry Russell got 32,000 and 26,000 respectively. The WRP candidate got a freak 15,000 votes, and another left candidate got 22,000 votes.

In another election, Jimmy Airlie kept his position as the only left-winger on the AUEW executive by 11,780 votes to 11,131.

More solidarity for Morris

The strike at the Morris furniture factory in Glasgow for union recognition, better working conditions, and reinstatement of sacked workers will soon be entering its sixth month.

Ben Rubner, secretary of the strikers' union, FTAT, (Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades) visited the strikers recently to see if they wanted to continue with the strike. All but one of them voted to do so.

Following on from a recent attack on pickets by scabs at clocking off time, there has been an increase, both financially and on the picket lines, for the strikers.

Glasgow District Council has also written to all other councils in Scotland urging them not to buy Morris' furniture (local authorities are one of Morris' major outlets). Strikers have been leafleting furniture stores in Glasgow on a Saturday morning, urging customers not to buy Morris furniture.

But the strikers still face a lot of problems, in particular the lack of support from Morris' second factory in Campsie, just outside Glasgow, and the number of lorry drivers, including TGWU members, crossing their picket lines.

Donations to/further information from FTAT, 46 Carlton Place, Glasgow G5.

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The
Broad
Lefts
What
they
are and

what
they
must
become

Two pamphlets
available from SO
"The fight for
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"The Broad Lefts"
35p & p&p. From
214 Sickert Court,
London N1 2SY.

A week's wages

Representatives from local Socialist Organiser supporters' groups across the country decided on detailed plans for our fund drive for new premises at a National Editorial Board meeting last weekend, 9-10 November.

To provide a solid base for the fund drive, the NEB decided to ask every supporter for a donation of a week's wages between now and Christmas. A number of comrades have already put in this money, or part of it - some of them unemployed comrades giving a week's dole, or student comrades giving a week's grant.

Given the large amount we have to raise - £15,000 - most will however have to come from readers rather than organised sellers. The National Editorial Board deci-

ded on the following plans:

*Every local group to organise a major fund-raising event - jumble sale or whatever - over the next couple of months.

*We'll be getting collecting tins for every SO seller to take with them wherever they sell the paper, so that every reader is asked on the spot for a donation. Following a common practice of socialist papers in other countries - Spain, for example - we are putting a special "supporter's price" on the masthead of the paper for readers who want to show their appreciation by paying a little over the regular price.

*A special letter will be going out to all subscribers and regular readers.

*We'll be organising a national raffle.

The meeting recognised that for the next few months fund-raising will have to become a much more central activity for local supporters' groups than it has ever been before. It also gave a reminder to local treasurers: the regular flow of paper sales money and supporters' contributions must not flag during the fund drive or that will defeat the whole exercise.

We specially reminded local groups about the 'Workers' Liberty' magazine on South Africa. Although this magazine has been very favourably received by readers - especially by activists from or specially concerned with South Africa - and some comrades have sold large numbers, a lot of local groups have large scope for selling more and thus bringing in a

large amount of money at present tied up in those magazines.

As well as direct fund-raising, we're also going to need loans, as the money for the new premises will have to be spent over a shorter period than the fund drive. Supporters who have the possibility of getting credit from their banks are asked to help out.

Thanks for donations this week to: Tom Cashman, £80; John Bloxam, £30; Pete Radcliff, £30; Samantha Lloyd, £30; Stan Crooke, £28.05; Nottingham SO, £54; Nik Barstow, £17; Tony Dale, £10; Phil Maxwell, £5.10; Gordon Brewer, £5; Mark Nevill, £4; Rosemary Nicholson, £1; East London SO, £1.25; other readers, £1.

Total so far: £1996.40 (13% of the target).

* I enclose a donation of £.....

* I pledge a weekly contribution of over the next six months

* I will contribute £..... each month for the next six months by standing order

To bank branch
Please make payments to the debit of my account as follows:

Name Account no.
Payee: Socialist Organiser, account no. 50424830 at the Co-op bank, 1 Islington High St, London N1 9TR (08-90-33).

Amount: £..... Payment to be made on 1985, and thereafter monthly for six months

Date..... Signature

* I am prepared to help with fund-raising activities in my locality. Please put me in touch with the local SO group.

Delete as appropriate and send to: Socialist Organiser, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Local Group	Target	Raised so far (since June 22)
Central/General	£5000	£407
Aberdeen	£20	
Basingstoke	£560	
Birmingham	£100	
Canterbury	£90	
Cardiff	£600	£254
Colchester	£100	£23.80
Coventry	£350	£15
Durham/North-East	£200	£4
Glasgow/Edinburgh	£560	£49.05
Leeds	£60	
Manchester	£1000	£10
Merseyside	£500	£100
Nottingham	£1000	£267.97
Oxford	£40	
Sheffield	£400	£15
Southampton	£60	
Stoke North	£200	
Stoke South	£200	
York/Harrogate	£300	£145
East London	£760	£213.95
North London	£1600	£167.05
South London	£800	£155
West London	£500	£180
Total	£15000	£1996



Photo: LBTH.

Hive-off means wage cuts

By Gerry Bates

Last week London bus bosses proposed a £40-£60 cut in take-home pay for Outer London garages.

This cut, they say, is necessary to make London Buses Ltd (red buses) competitive when routes go out to tender under the Tories' bus privatisation laws, the London Regional Transport Act and the Transport Act 1985.

Nothing could make the purpose of privatisation clearer. It is to set different groups of bus-workers against each other in a Dutch auction of wages and conditions as they compete for routes.

London Buses Limited want their package agreed within six months.

But at mass meetings on Monday 11th, busworkers voted overwhelmingly to reject the package and not to enter into negotiations on it.

A conference of garage representatives was due to meet on Tuesday 12th.

The bosses' package consists of a basic one-person operation rate of £106 per week; no service pay; no receipts bonus; no London weighting; a new overtime rate of 1½ instead of 1½; cuts in sick pay and holiday pay; and unsocial hours re-defined as before 6 am and after 9 pm, rather than before 7 am and after 6 pm.

Privatisation in bus services means the same as elsewhere: dividing the workforce, setting one group against another, weakening trade union strength, and forcing down wages. Under the Tory laws, one group of routes after another is coming up for tender, and so far the Labour and trade union movement has let the salami tactic work.

The trigger for the LBL bosses' scheme was the putting out to tender of bus routes which cross the boundary from London to outside London. Some of these are at present operated by

LCBS (formerly the country bus and coach section of London Transport and now a National Bus Company subsidiary).

These routes have come up for tender earlier than they otherwise would partly because some left-wing Labour councillors on the GLC argued against subsidy going "over the border".

And bus management has co-opted workers, too, into a company-chauvinist campaign to save "our" routes and "our" company from "the cowboys".

LBL dealt with the first batches of routes going out to tender by submitting tenders which included no overhead costs. But now the books are coming out of the oven, and LBL bosses want to cut real costs - by cutting wages.

The London situation is being repeated up and down the country as members of the same union - in some cases even working for the same firm - are negotiating away wages and conditions to preserve jobs in their depot.

This is the road to disaster. United action against job losses is the only way forward. There is no local solution.

The national strike over pension arrangements on 29 October showed that bus workers can fight together if given a tenth of the leadership they deserve.

The union must develop a fighting policy:

1. No more pay cuts, either in the open or dressed up as mini-bus agreements, etc.
2. No job losses.
3. Defend existing agreements line by line.
4. No poaching agreements between unionised workers.
5. The setting up of a Region 1 TGWU passenger trade group committee to coordinate a real fight.
6. A commitment to region-wide action in response to job losses or pay cuts in any company.



Why we need £15,000

£15,000

£10,000

£5,000

Moving costs	£450	Floor covering	200
Removal of asbestos and waste	520	Office equipment	500
Re-pointing brickwork, roof repairs	300	Installing telephones	750
Carpentry (doors, windows, partitions &c)	1620	Renovation and repair of outbuilding	2000
Glazing	100	Deposit on printing press	1800
Plastering and painting (inside & out)	450	Process camera	1400
Electrical repairs and rewiring	300	Deposit on typesetting machine	1800
Plumbing work	200	Initial payment of rent	560
Installing heating and hot water	2000	Total	£15,000