

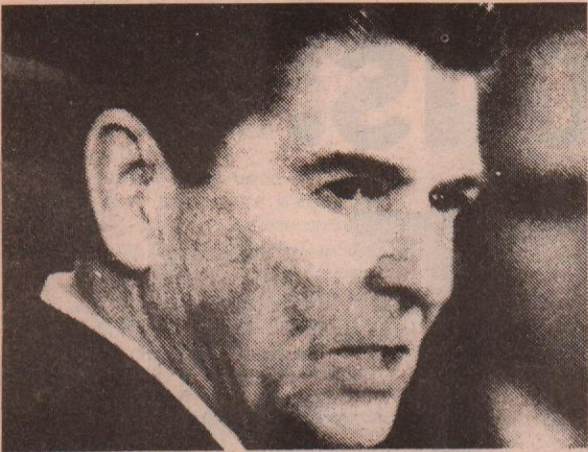
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US SHIPS THREATEN LIBYA



REAGAN'S TERROR GANG

As US Navy ships steam towards the Libyan coast Ronald Reagan has demonstrated yet again his contempt for world opinion, utterly sickened by his continued unapologetic support for acts of terrorism around the globe.

The latest outburst from this unstable political leader whose very sanity is questioned by many, came at the weekend at a stage-managed press conference. Dressed from head to toe as a romantic "Billy the Kid" figure and mucking out the stables on his Californian ranch, this ruthless butcher of children told those members of the international press corp courageous enough to brave the stench and the dozens of fiery-eyed, gun-toting "security men" that he would not tolerate attempts to overthrow unpopular governments around the world that he had spent a great deal of time and money installing. Undeterred by previous heavy losses he stressed that he was prepared to send suicide battalions of American soldiers to strike at the heart of any resistance to his plans. Beirut, he claimed, was proof enough of that.

Life comes cheap for this international terrorist, be it the lives of young Americans herded into cinemas, where they are fed on a diet of anti-Russian propaganda and whipped into a frenzy of anti-communist hatred before being despatched on their terror

missions, or the many victims around the world of this Reagan inspired and financed terrorism.

In recent years the Reagan terror gang have been particularly active in Central America, nurturing native terrorist outfits like the contras in Nicaragua and a variety of death squads in El Salvador. But when he is unable to operate through local bands, Reagan does not hesitate to unleash his own murderous attacks against popularly supported governments, of which Grenada is only the most recent example.

Ballot Box

Rejecting the ballot box in favour of the gun, at least until he can guarantee the election result he wants, this man of violence finances and arms some of the most ruthless and personally ambitious criminal elements in the world. From South Korea to the Philippines, Israel, South Africa and Chile, there are no depths to which this man will not sink as he tries to draw the veil of political principle over his brutal and violent deeds. In all these countries, weapons supplied and paid for by this purveyor of death have cut down countless thousands of unarmed and innocent victims.

Latest victim of the Reagan terror gang may well be Libya as Reagan finally seizes the chance offered by recent events to



Across the world the US marines are prepared to spread death and destruction

extend his reign of terror there at a cost of who knows how many lives.

Oblivious — or indifferent — to the rising tide of revulsion

around the world at his criminal acts, it is time for Reagan to be taught a lesson. It is time for the kid gloves to come off in the fight against the Reagan terror

gang. Reagan must be made to understand that wherever he goes in the world to perpetrate his acts of carnage, a response will be forthcoming from the

people. The Reagan terror gang will not go unchallenged and when they pull out from the scene of their carnage they will not be able to hide.

Poland's marxist underground

See
pages
6-8



And Labour Herald?

IN WAR, says the well-known cliché, truth is the first casualty that gets buried under the official lies, excoriated by the censor's blue pencil, or frightened into hiding its inconvenient head.

But war is also a servant of truth, because it rips away false fronts. It undermines and collapses things which are hollow and rotten but might nevertheless have stood undisturbed for a long time yet.

War can demolish overnight a mountain of lies built up over decades, as those on the left know who have had their eyes opened about the WRP in the course of the vicious factional war between the Banda and Healy factions that erupted in public last October and has been raging in the pages of their rival newspapers since.

One of the casualties of that factional war has been Labour Herald, the weekly paper founded four years ago by Ken Livingstone and Ted Knight. Labour Herald has collapsed.

Exposed

Whether it resumes publication or not, the WRP's factional war has rudely ripped away the false facade from Labour Herald. What has been exposed is Labour Herald's dependence on the WRP — which in turn, by all evidence, financially depended on various Arab bourgeois governments and political factions. On their behalf the WRP went so far as to justify the killing of would-be communists by the butcherous Ba'athist government of Iraq.

Labour Herald ceased publication because the group which published it suffered rupture and division exactly paralleling that which shattered the WRP. The factional struggle within Labour Herald came to a head in late November, one month after the WRP split.

What follows is the account of the split put out by the anti-Knight grouping. Their story will appear in detail in the February issue of Labour Briefing.

On 23 November six of the eight full or part-time staff declared themselves in dispute with the paper's editors and management. They objected to the 'undemocratic and dictatorial' way Labour Herald was run, with the political line coming down from on high. In the well-known Healyite fashion, it could not be questioned or discussed.

As an example of the undemocratic way Labour Herald was run the six cite the Herald's call for hard left regroupment last year — with Labour Herald announcing that it and it alone was the vehicle for regroupment. As SO said at the time, it was just a 'build Labour Herald' stunt, not a serious attempt to regroup and unite the left.

Now the six point out that neither the rank and file supporters of Labour Herald nor even the paper's staff ever had a chance to discuss this statement or to amend it. Some of the six had disagreed with it as sectarian and hypocritical.

The six also objected to the Healyite behaviour of day-to-day editor Steven Miller, accusing him of using physical violence and verbal abuse against them.

They demanded to have a meeting with the three 'editors' — John McDonnell, Ted Knight, and Matthew Warburton — but even this was refused. Management brought out what the six describe as a 'scab' paper, so they occupied the Labour Herald office on 24 November, saying that they would not leave until the mighty trio agreed to meet them.

Nothing doing: the trio had the electricity and phone cut off. But the Banda faction controlled the WRP Runcorn printworks where Labour Herald was printed and they refused to print the paper 'out of solidarity with the occupation in London'.

The big three still would not even meet them, and after a week the six abandoned the occupation. They say they then convened a national Labour Herald readers' meeting and that the 'overwhelming majority' supported them, only the Lambeth group staying with Ted Knight.

The six insist that the various stories fed to the bourgeois press by 'management' are lies, particularly the reports that have appeared saying that the occupation was ended by an agreement. It wasn't. These events plainly parallel the WRP split. Ted Knight's associate, councillor Bill Bowring, spoke from the platform of the Healy-Redgrave public meeting in Lambeth in December.

Ted Knight and other Lambeth councillors are threatened with surcharge and disqualification from office when they go to court on 14 January for being too slow to comply with government demands for cuts. Every serious socialist in Britain will, of course, back Ted Knight and his associates against the government and the courts.

Those like SO who back Ted Knight despite our differences with him will by implication be condemning those who are political friends whose own politics are now so corrupt that they justified — and according to the Bandaites Healy helped arrange — the execution by the Iraqi regime of would-be communists in 1979.

Against the government Ted Knight should be supported, but for their politics all the big and little, official and unofficial members and associates of the Healy group should be treated with appropriate hostility.

It remains to be seen what effect all this will have on the broad range of labour movement dignitaries who have collaborated with Labour Herald. One of the ironies of recent labour movement history was the sight of Arthur Scargill on Labour Herald's platform at the Labour Party conference — the same Arthur Scargill who was deliberately set up by the mercenary leaders of the WRP for a press witch-hunting stunt at the 1983 TUC, on the eve of the miners' strike.

We'll see.

Behind the Tory split

The Tory party leadership could be split wide open by a seemingly obscure dispute about the helicopter firm Westland.

Westland is failing. Industry minister Leon Brittan, and Margaret Thatcher, want it to be taken over by the US firm Sikorsky and the Italian firm Fiat. Defence minister Michael Heseltine prefers a bid from a consortium of French, German, Italian and British firms.

Westland's board of directors has supported the Sikorsky offer, and has turned down an appeal from the European con-

sortium to postpone the decisive shareholders' meeting on 14 January.

The dispute runs along two lines of tension within Tory policy: alignment with the EEC versus alignment with the US, and arguments over state spending.

The arms industry is big business. World-wide governments spend nearly \$1000 billion a year on the military — roughly \$250 for every child, woman and man in the world, or an amount similar to the total average income per head of the citizens of India.

West European countries are

not resigned to accepting US domination in the weapons market. The non-US NATO powers — in the first place France, West Germany and the UK — between them export only slightly less weaponry than the US, though their combined domestic military spending is only half the US's.

Heseltine argues that the Sikorsky deal would eliminate Britain from the helicopter industry, and prejudice European joint ventures in other areas.

There is a wider US/EEC tension. The EEC is committed

to developing a joint foreign policy. On several issues it differs widely from the US.

Just recently US talk of economic sanctions against Libya got a brusque no from West Germany's conservative government, and a cold welcome from other EEC countries.

Domestically, the Tories want to cut state spending to free resources for private profit. But many Tories have doubts and reservations about the cuts: they want ever-higher military expenditure, and they want a good supply of government contracts for business.

No expulsions!

Jeremy Corbyn MP

ONE OF the problems in the whole Westland business is why Westland Helicopters was not taken into British Aerospace when the aircraft industry was nationalised in 1976.

It was a serious weakness then, which some of us pointed out at the time, and it is now shown to be a weakness in that Westland is separate from British Aerospace, which could be renationalised if a Labour government wished to do that — in fact I believe it should do that.

The dispute between Leon Brittan and Michael Heseltine is essentially a cosmetic dispute designed to boost Michael Heseltine. His real motive is to put across a 'patriotic' image in order to improve his chances of replacing Thatcher when she finally decides to relinquish the Tory party leadership.

The Labour Party's response has been in a completely opportunist way to support Heseltine against Leon Brittan, and in fact we should be consulting with the workers in Westland as to what future they want for the company, and talking about public ownership of the company to retain an effective manufacturing capability in this country.

Kinnock's statements about renationalisation not being a priority have been disgraceful, but they are a logical extension of the sort of economic policy that Roy Hattersley was putting before the Labour Party conference in October. If we pursue an economic policy which is designed to appease the bankers and the City of London, then we're certainly not going to include in that renationalisation of publicly-owned industries.

But I think it makes a mockery of our opposition to privatisation of gas or British Airways or any of the other publicly-owned corporations unless we say now that we are going to renationalise them and see it to that no-one makes any profits out of it.

The Campaign Group is sponsoring a conference on economic policy organised by the Socialist Society for 21-22 February. It's around 'A Million Jobs A Year', the pamphlet by Andrew Glyn.

It is intended to be a forum for an intensive discussion about the content of



'A Million Jobs A Year', areas in which 'A Million Jobs A Year' can be amended or expanded. There will be a series of regional conferences all through this coming summer.

I feel that there are areas in which 'A Million Jobs A Year' could be expanded, one of them being an analysis of the current level of unemployment and the way that women's unemployment and black unemployment are much higher than white male unemployment.

I also think there should be a greater analysis of the problems of youth unemployment. But the general thrust of 'A Million Jobs A Year' is quite correct. It opposes current ideas that we should

be accepting high levels of unemployment, and it calls for a strong Labour government to introduce the necessary exchange controls and controls on the City so that more jobs can be created, rather than continuing the casino economy we have at the moment.

Stopped

Some people seem to imagine that the witch-hunt stopped a few years ago and is now re-starting, whereas in fact from the time that Peter Tatchell was hounded, the Militant editorial board were expelled, and Tariq Ali was refused admission to the party, we have seen a growing atmosphere of witch-hunting against the left in the party.

I think the most serious mistake after the witch-hunting attacks against the Militant editorial board and Hornsey Labour Party was not to have a single campaign against the witch-hunt, but two campaigns. I hope that mistake is not going to be repeated this time.

The Labour Left Coordination last week agreed to sponsor a rally against the witch-hunt, and also to ensure that at that rally all the people who are affected by the witch-hunt are represented.

It is essential that we do this now. It is essential that we point out to people the dangers of expelling any socialist from the Labour Party.

I see that a lot of Labour NEC members who voted for the inquiry into Liverpool DLP voted against the expulsion of a pro-Militant councillor in Sheffield, and that David Blunkett has written an article in Tribune opposing expulsions.

I wish those comrades had never voted for the inquiry in the first place, but obviously we welcome their opposition to the witch-hunt.

What is quite clear to me about Liverpool is that if we are allowing inquiries to take place on the basis of press allegations and press 'investigations', then we'll end up with the results the press wanted — which will be a split in the Labour Party in Liverpool and the expulsion of people from the party.

I'm opposed to this inquiry, and I'm opposed to any expulsion of socialists from the party.

Move this motion

Move this resolution now, either as an amendment to Regional Labour Party Conference resolutions or as an emergency resolution to the NEC:

The latest information is that the result of the Liverpool inquiry will not be heard until the February NEC so there is still time to get this taken as an emergency resolution.

"This CLP/Annual Meeting believes that if the forthcoming local elections, as well as the next general election, are to be won, the Party must remain united.

"This CLP/Annual Meet-

ing therefore deplures the national party leadership's current divisive campaign against local councils, district, Labour Parties, and pressure groups within the Party.

"In no case should internal political differences be used as a pretext for the expulsion of individuals and the suspension of pressure groups within the Party holding views which do not find favour with the present Party leadership.

"We therefore deplore the recent expulsion of members of the Labour Committee on Ireland, Labour Party Black Sections, supporters of Mili-

tant, and other socialists within the Party.

"This CLP/Annual Meeting is also concerned at the inquiry into Liverpool District Party which appears to be being conducted through the media so as to find the District Party guilty in advance.

"This CLP/Annual Meeting calls on the NEC for an end to expulsions in the Party."

If you get this resolution or one based on it through your Party, please inform CLPD, (01-458 1501), Socialist Organiser, or the Secretary of Labour Left Coordination (01-607 9729).

Workers' Ireland

No.1 on the Anglo-Irish deal: briefing and analysis. Order at 40p per copy plus postage from 214 Sicket Court, London N1 2SY.

20,000 BLACK MINERS SACKED!

Against the witch-hunt!

20,000 striking black workers at Impala platinum mine in Bophathatswana Homeland, have been sacked by Gencor mining company. As we go to press, there is a threat that 10,000 more might be sacked.

Socialist Organiser spoke to a representative of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) about the strike this morning (January 7). NUM welcome any support from the international workers' movement.

The workers had been on strike for five days for better wages and conditions, and for union recognition. Due to the fake 'independent' character of the so-called 'Homelands', different labour laws apply, and NUM is not legally recognised.

Gencor say that the twenty thousand workers so far sacked will not be re-employed. That amounts to nearly two-thirds of the Impala workforce.

Impala is South Africa's second largest platinum mine, producing about 40% of the country's output. South Africa is the largest producer of platinum in the world, and the strike could threaten platinum-related industries, many of them military.

Gencor is the second largest mining house in South Africa. During the miners' strike it attempted to recruit miners in the Nottingham area to work in South Africa, but was not very successful due to a counter-campaign by the British NUM and Anti-Apartheid.

The labour and anti-apartheid movements must mobilise in support of the sacked workers. Although NUM is not recognised at Impala, money and messages of support should be sent to NUM, 5th Floor, Lekton House, 5 Wandiren Street, Johannesburg, 2001; or to the Anti Apartheid Movement, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW.



South African miners face brutal racist bosses.

Neil Kinnock has made it clear beyond doubt what his witch-hunt against Militant is about.

Speaking on television on 15 December, he effectively junked Labour's conference commitment to renationalisation of enterprises and services hived off by the Tories. Renationalisation was desirable "ultimately", he said, but it was a low priority.

He backed up this attack on policy by repeating his attack on Labour democracy. "I am the leader of the Labour Party", he said, "I am in charge of the Labour Party".

The actual sins committed by Liverpool councillors — not very different from those committed by Labour councillors elsewhere — are incidental to Kinnock's "investigation" of Liverpool. Kinnock wants to beat down Militant and the Liverpool Labour Party because they made some attempt to fight the Tories.

Some people on the soft left seem to be drawing back from the implications of the witch-hunt. Only five members of Labour's NEC voted against the inquiry into Liverpool, but 13 voted at the December NEC against the expulsion of a pro-Militant Labour councillor in Sheffield.

Sheffield city council leader David Blunkett has come out against expulsions in the columns of Tribune.

The chief need now is for a broad, united and active Labour campaign against the witch-hunt.

Labour Left Coordination has produced a model motion against the witch-hunt and this should be promoted as the first step in a broad campaign.

'Communist' labour undercuts union labour

West Germany's stodgy trade union leaders are slow to protest about anything. But they are complaining about East German contract workers.

Why? Is it that workers from 'communist' East Germany will introduce an unruly spirit of militancy among their West German comrades?

Nothing of the sort. The unions complain that the East Germans work a 60-hour week for low wages and thus undercut West German trade-union labour.

The employers and West Germany's conservative government want to keep the contract workers: it's all quite legal and it cuts costs, they say.

The East German government is happy too. They receive the workers' wages in the form of precious foreign exchange, and then pass them on (minus deductions) in East German currency.

What do the East German contract workers themselves think? No-one knows, because of all the parties involved they're the only one with no right to express an opinion. They don't even have a trade union as slow-moving and sluggish as the West German ones.

Whatever East Germany's 'socialism' means for the ruling bureaucrats, it means nothing for the workers — except conditions so bad that even the most reformist Western trade union would reject them.

—Labour left

Prepare for the election!

By John Bloxam and John O'Mahony

The attention of the labour movement is now focused increasingly on the next general election, which is only about two years away. There is a powerful mood in the Labour Party that everything should be subordinated to the job of winning that election.

Now anyone in the labour movement who does not consider winning a Labour victory in the next general election to be our task number one in the period ahead is politically disoriented. Severely disoriented. The problem for the serious left is that the proper concern of Labour Party members to win the next election is being seized upon and exploited by the right wing and the soft left who dominate the party. Under the leadership of Kinnock and Hattersley, concern to win the next election is used to justify putting an end to discussion in the Labour Party about what the next Labour government will do — and also to stop discussion about what the rank and file must do if we are to avoid the next Labour government being as disappointing as the last.

In 1979 and after large numbers of Labour's rank and file said 'Never again' to a Wilson/Callaghan-type Labour government. But this was six and a half years ago, before Thatcherism and slump had wreaked such social havoc in Britain. Today, the right wing and the soft left use the widespread hatred of Thatcherism in the labour movement to

urge us to forget about such questions as Labour's record in government during the 1970s and the prospects for a new Labour government under Neil Kinnock.

Now many on the broad left seem to be saying "Yes, again, please" to the prospect of a Wilson/Callaghan-style Labour government. And that's all they have to say. Everything else has been forgotten about.

Kinnock's policies — he won't even commit the next Labour government to restore Tory cuts or release the jailed miners — leave us with little reason to doubt that a Kinnock Labour government would at best be a government in the Wilson/Callaghan tradition. Given the problems the next Labour government will face, it could well be worse.

Kinnock's behaviour — his putting the boot in on the heroic striking miners; his shameless joining in with the Tories to bludgeon the ineptly led Liverpool council into submission — leave no reason for anyone to have illusions in his socialist credentials. Tragically, the main result of the upsurge of political self-reappraisal in the Labour Party after 1979 has been the strengthening of Labour's old establishment by way of the cooption of a sizeable chunk of the soft left. The serious left must face up to the implications of that fact.

Of course it is true that even a new Wilson/Callaghan-type Labour govern-

ment would be better than the present government, if only because it would be more responsive to the pressures of the labour movement. All serious militants will do everything they can to get Kinnock elected and Thatcher defeated in the next election.

Flag

But we need to do more than that. The serious left must find ways of keeping its own flag flying in the period ahead. We must find ways of continuing to fight for our own politics within the broad movement's drive to defeat Thatcher in the upcoming election. We must continue to prepare the labour movement to defend itself and our class under the next Labour government.

And nobody should be in any doubt that the working class will indeed have to defend itself with class struggle methods under a Kinnock-Hattersley government.

For that reason the authors of this article decided to invite the members of the steering committee of the old Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory to meet on 20 December 1985 for a preliminary discussion of the situation the serious left faces and what we should be doing in the period ahead.

As a result of that discussion it was decided to revive the SCLV.

In the year before the 1979 election the

SCLV conducted a vigorous left wing campaign which focused on the fight to keep the Tories out but combined that with advocacy of left wing politics. Initiated by the paper Workers' Action (which eventually merged in with Socialist Organiser) the SCLV united broad forces on the left around class struggle politics. The SCLV started publishing Socialist Organiser in October 1978.

An attempt to set up a new SCLV for the 1983 general election proved abortive, leading to the Socialists for a Labour Victory, whose politics were minimal — little more than a repetition of established Labour policies on issues like nuclear disarmament, and no clear socialist line on central economic issues — and which did very little.

Of course, for a section of the old steering committee to decide to revive the SCLV will not recreate the SCLV of 1979. We will have to build towards that. The SCLV will initiate discussions with others on the left about what is to be done.

It may turn out that a much broader body of the left can be put together for the next election and in that case the revived SCLV will probably merge into it. If such a broad functioning body cannot be created then the SCLV will do what it can on a more limited basis.

For now the revival of the SCLV is an important step towards preparing the serious left for the next general election.

Churchill planned Irish 'Hiroshima'

By Paddy Dollard

WINSTON Churchill's government in 1940 approved an RAF plan to meet the expected German invasion of Ireland by saturating large parts of the country with murderous poison gas.

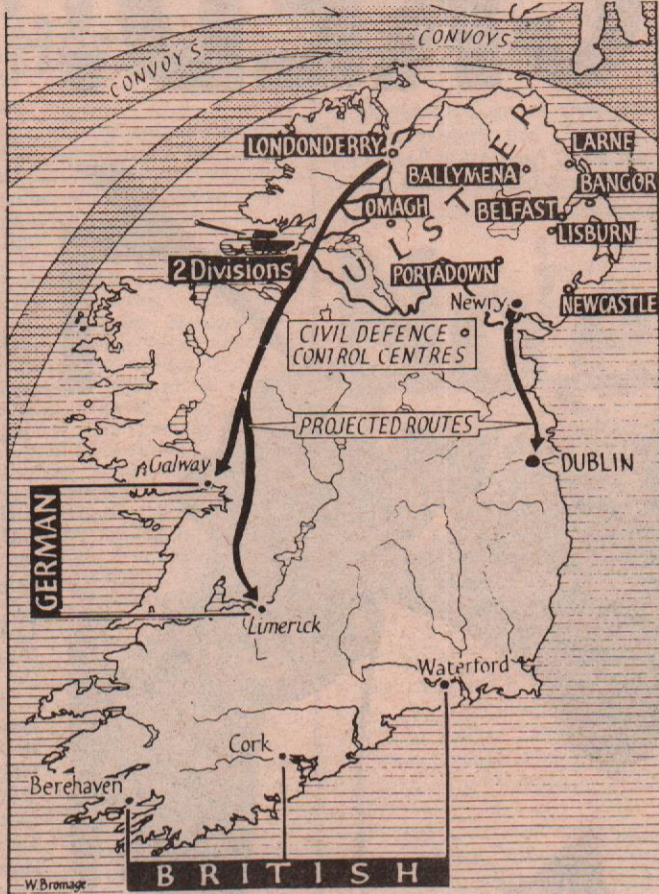
Had the Germans invaded the RAF plan would have led Britain to inflict war atrocities on neutral Ireland far worse than the 1945 atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or the fire-bombing of the almost defenceless city of Dresden.

The poison gas would have destroyed people and livestock indiscriminately and rendered parts — perhaps very large parts — of the country uninhabitable for decades or generations. A Scottish island used in the 30s to test poison gas is still uninhabitable. Experts in the Irish press have calculated that as many as one million civilians would have been affected by the gas.

Until now the official story about Britain's wartime contingency planning has been that Britain would have come to Ireland's aid if Germany had invaded. The horrible and scarcely believable truth has now been revealed in a new book, 'Neutral Ireland and the Third Reich', by John P Duggan.

Duggan says that a bomber squadron at Feltwell in East Anglia was equipped with mustard and phosgene gas in October 1940 and put on alert to be ready to make Ireland a very unhealthy place — for both German and Irish alike.

Where did 'loyal Northern Ireland' fit into the RAF plan? Nobody in Northern Ireland was allowed to know anything about the plans and no poison gas was stored there because if Britain had laid down vast clouds of poison gas against the Germans the wind would



certainly have blown some of it across the border. More than that.

There was a good chance that any German invasion would have centred on the Catholic areas of the Six Counties. Of the different possible scenarios for a German invasion the one most feared by both De Valera's Irish government and the British government was that the Germans would land in the Six Counties, proclaim themselves Ireland's liberators, and appeal for nationalist support on that basis.

This course was being urged on the Germans by the more boneheaded IRA leaders. (The IRA as a whole was actively allied with Germany on the very

doubtful principle that England's enemy had to be Ireland's friend).

De Valera's constitutional nationalists, Fianna Fail, in the South were divided about what they would do if the 'liberating' Germans landed. Go to the aid of the Northerners fighting the Germans — perhaps mainly the Six County Unionists and British troops? Or what?

It was never put to the test. When the Germans bombed Belfast streams of fire engines drove north to help.

Throughout the Second World War — in contrast with the First — poison gas was not used by either side for fear of the terrible retaliation each side was capable

of wreaking on the other. (No such inhibitions with the atom bomb, which in 1945 was a US monopoly). If the Germans had invaded the Six Counties would Britain have used the gas?

It has long been known that Britain seriously considered invading Ireland in the early war years to gain control of ports which were vital for Britain's war effort. It had been as late as 1938, under the Chamberlain government, that Britain had finally vacated the naval base on Ireland's south coast held on to when the South became independent. When Winston Churchill gained control of the British government (a coalition with Labour) in June 1940, with Britain standing alone in Western Europe against the Nazis, he bitterly regretted the surrender of the Irish 'treaty ports'.

As well as invasion plans, various diplomatic approaches, serious and half serious, were made to the South to induce it either to help Britain by giving it naval bases once again or to come in on Britain's side in return for British pressure on the Six County Unionists to end Partition (a wide range of possible deals was reviewed and discussed in mid 1940).

But De Valera insisted on a united Ireland all of which would be neutral. Essentially De Valera was not interested in a deal with Britain because he believed he could not keep his party united on any deal, and anyway Germany, which overran all of central and western Europe in mid 1940, seemed to be winning the war.

Invasion

So the 26 Counties of the Irish Free State stayed neutral through 'The Emergency' — threatened with invasion by one or another side, delicately seeking to keep the balance, and fearful of the fate of other small nations, like Norway and Denmark which had been invaded by the Germans to forestall the British.

In the event Ireland was lucky and nobody invaded — though the US as well as Britain and Germany had contingency plans to invade (in preparation for the Allied invasion of Hitler-occupied Europe, in June 1944). Ireland remained neutral, and that neutrality is generally considered to have contributed a great deal to the hardening of partition into the two distinct Irelands we have now, 65 years after Partition.

In his statement denouncing the Anglo-Irish agreement — see the last issue of Socialist Organiser — Ian Paisley bitterly denounced the South for its neutrality during Britain's struggle against Nazi Germany. Duggan's revelations of the RAF's contingency plans will only confirm Irish nationalists in their prejudices and expectations from Britain, though the sheer monstrosity of it will startle even the most bigoted Irish nationalist.

And what will Ian Paisley — and the other 'Loyalists' — say to the revelation that Mother England's rulers planned to make large parts of Ireland, and perhaps of their North-East of Ireland, uninhabitable, after having subjected her people to the indiscriminate slaughter of poison gas borne on the wind?

Robbing the poor

Stan Crooke looks at the proposals in the new social security White Paper

THE TORIES plan to cut between £750 million and £1 billion from social security.

The 'Reform of Social Security' White Paper — cynically published just before Christmas to limit response — spells it out.

3.8 million households — including 2¼ million pensioners — are to suffer a cut in benefits. One and a quarter million people will lose over £3 a week; half a million will lose over £5 a week each. The main losers will be the elderly and childless couples on the dole.

• Supplementary Benefit is to be replaced by 'Income Support', paid out at three different rates depending on age and whether you are married or not. Young single people living away from home will lose £5.50 a week.

• Social security 'Single Payments' (e.g. for furniture) are to be scrapped, and replaced by loans from a new Social Fund, awarded at the discretion of the DHSS. A loan from the Social Fund will also replace the current Death Grant.

• Family Income Supplement will be replaced by Family Credit, paid through the man's pay packet in the case of two-parent families. Free school milk, meals and vitamins for children of parents on this benefit will be scrapped, and so will be the right of local authorities to remit part of the costs of school meals for children from lower-income families.

• The Maternity Grant is to be increased, but it will be only be paid to claimants on Income Support and Family Credit. The grant will be scaled down for claimants with savings of more than £50.

• Housing Benefit is to be cut by a total of £450 million per year. All claimants will have to pay 20% of their rates themselves. A young single person at work will lose up to £13 a week, a middle-aged couple up to £7.23 a week.

• Severe inroads will be made into State Earnings Related Pensions (SERPS), saving the government £12 billion a year by 2033. Other proposed changes related to pensions are designed to encourage the growth of private pension schemes.

• Women will see their independence further reduced by the change in the payment of Family Credit. Young people will be penalised if they move away from their families by the cut in Income Support. Ethnic minorities will be hit by the new 'presence test' (a set period for which the claimant will have to prove s/he has been resident in Britain). And all claimants will suffer because there will be more means-testing.

Compared with the Green Paper on social security published in June of last year, the White Paper does show some retreats — SERPS is to be gutted rather than abolished completely, for example — but only minor ones.

The plan is still to rob the poor to pay the rich. If any claimants end up marginally better off as a result of the White Paper's proposals, it will not be at the expense of the wealthy but of those one rung ahead in the poverty ladder.

In fact, the money 'saved' by cutting benefits for the poor will be used to finance further tax cuts for the rich.

Although a campaign against these proposals has been sustained by claimants' groups and unemployed workers' centres, the TUC and Labour Party have taken a back seat.

The TUC held a national demonstration in London in October — but did little for it — and the Labour Party campaign in defence of the welfare state, due last autumn, has yet to appear.

Election

Although many of the proposed cuts are not due for implementation until after the next general election, nothing could be worse than just relying on voting the Tories out and Labour in to prevent these cuts. Neil Kinnock has already refused to promise to reverse Tory cuts, and is now trying to dump Labour Party policy on renationalisation.

An effective campaign must aim for:

• Strike action by civil service unions, built for in conjunction with claimants' groups to prevent divisions between DHSS staff and claimants.

• Local joint campaigns by claimants' groups, trade union bodies and Labour Party branches.

• Refusal by Labour-controlled local authorities to re-train staff for administering the new Housing Benefit scheme, not due for implementation until after the general election.

• A campaign by tenants' associations and claimants' groups to get claimant-tenants to refuse to pay the 20% of their rates they are due to pay out of their own money; pledges by Labour-controlled local authorities not to take retaliatory action.

• Claimants' groups and labour movement bodies to draw up alternative proposals for an improved and democratised social security system, and a campaign for these alternatives to be adopted as Labour Party policy.

Defend the jury system!

A committee led by Lord Roskill has recommended the abolition of trial by jury for fraud cases. And the government wants to cut defendants' right to challenge potential jurors from three challenges to one.

As the Sunday Times put it, "The right to challenge jurors is enshrined in statutes dating back to 1509, when the limit was set at 20 for each defendant. It was reduced from seven to three in 1977."

Trial by jury is a principle of justice or it is nothing. All sorts of special arguments are made about fraud cases — they are long, they are complicated — and shady business people accused of fiddling the books seem poor candidates for the left's sympathy.

But no-jury courts once established for fraud would spread their scope to other offences. Many other cases, after all, are long and complicated.

The government also wants to remove the right to jury trial for certain 'minor' offences like common assault and driving while disqualified. Again there are good reasons:



legal delays can be reduced. But common assault, minor offence though it is, can get you sent to prison for a year. And some magistrates' courts are practically automatic conviction machines.

Challenges

The reason given for cutting challenges to jurors is that defence lawyers are getting too clever and too many defendants get off. Jury-vetting in important cases has been introduced for the same reason.

But who says too many? In truth challenges just give defendants a good chance of getting juries with a reasonable proportion of women, of young

people, or whatever, or of getting at least a few black people onto the jury. They safeguard the basic right to trial by a 'jury of your peers'.

Behind it all the basic trouble for the Tories was the abolition of property qualifications for jurors.

In Northern Ireland the Diplock Courts operate completely without juries. Recently one High Court judge sent 27 men to jail for long periods on the uncorroborated evidence of one "supergrass". Three of them have just finished a hunger strike in protest.

Learn the lessons of Northern Ireland: resist every attack on the right to trial by jury!

Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns. We ask £5 a month minimum (£1 unwaged) contribution from supporters.

I want to become a Socialist Organiser supporter/I want more information.

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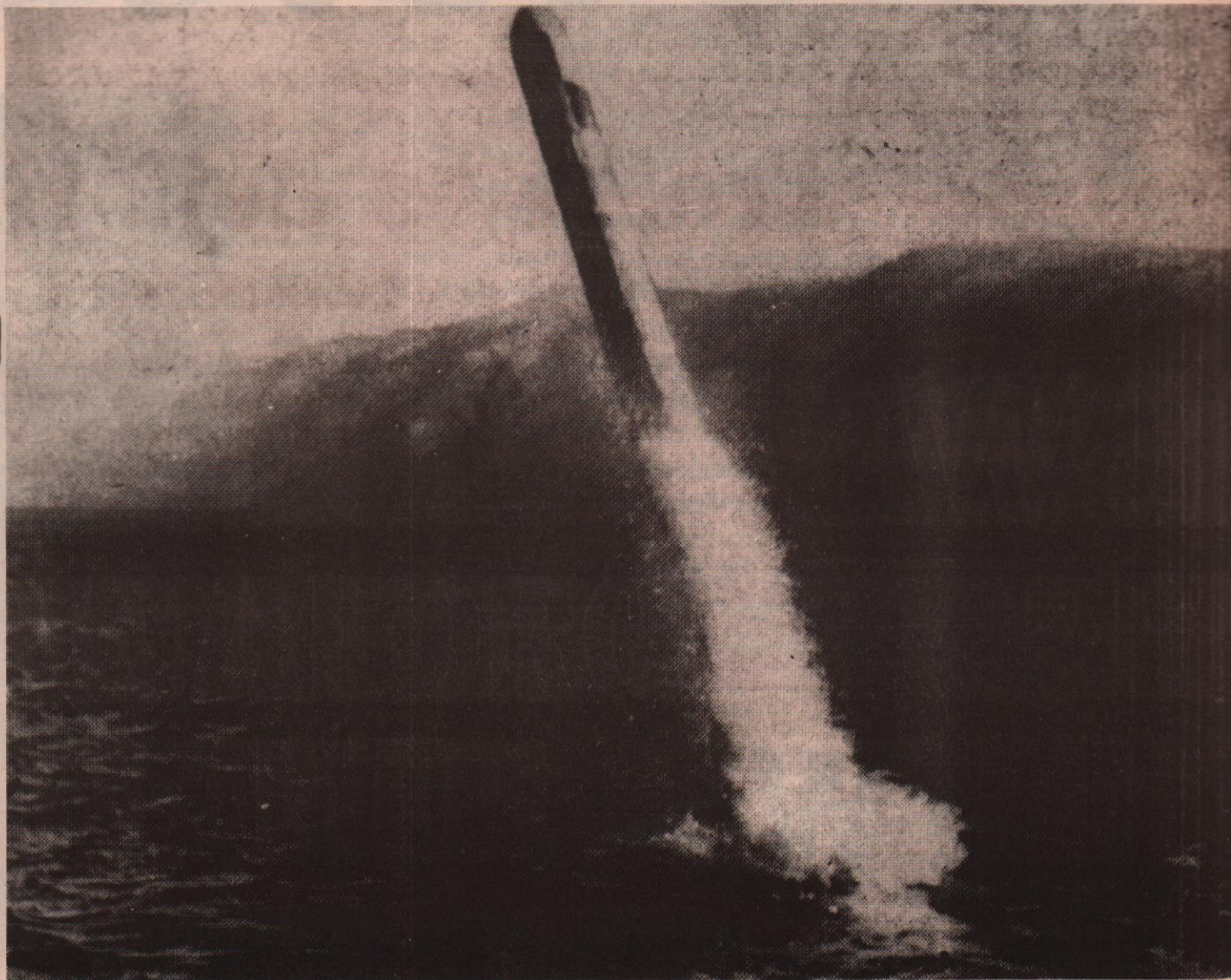
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The truth about 'Star Wars'

By Les Hearn



This week we examine the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) of Ronnie Raygun in an article that draws heavily on the pamphlet 'Star Wars: the technology and politics of space weapons'.

Since the US developed and used nuclear bombs 40 years ago, there has been a costly competition between the US and the USSR to catch up or stay ahead. The result is that enough atomic weapons exist to destroy all life several times over (Mutual Assured Destruction — MAD).

At present, there is virtually no protection against these weapons. Instead, 'Early Warning Systems' give notice of the approach of missiles (or of flocks of geese, etc.) allowing retaliation. The "balance of terror" reigns.

Attempts to develop anti-missile missiles (and anti-missile missiles, etc) were halted by a treaty in 1972 amid fears lest one side should feel it had the ability to win a "First Strike" nuclear war.

Now, the SDI threatens to upset the "balance of terror" by holding out the prospect of being able to knock out the other side's retaliation. This could lead to the US believing in a winnable nuclear war, which could have all sorts of consequences.

STAR WARS

The term "star wars" encompasses anti-satellite measures (ASAT) and ballistic missile

defence (BMD) and involves weapons in space. BMD is banned by treaty but ASAT is not. Many ASAT weapons could be used against Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) so BMD research can be "disguised" as ASAT research.

ICBMs are the main target of SDI research because the USSR has some 70% of its warheads in this category — over 6000).

Treaty

An ICBM consists of a rocket made up of several boosters and a much smaller "bus" containing the re-entry vehicles (RV's) with their warheads. There are four stages to its flight:

a) The *boost phase* gets the bus into space — 200-400 km up in three to five minutes. The exhausted boosters drop away, leaving the bus with its cargo.

b) In the *post-boost*, or "bussing" phase, the bus carries the warheads up through its momentum, making small changes to its course to keep the warheads on target. After five minutes or so, the RVs are released.

c) The RVs travel through space following the same path as a bullet or a ball (hence *ballistic*). This *mid-course phase* lasts 20-25 minutes and the RVs reach 1200 km height before starting the descent on their targets.

d) The RVs are travelling at 25,000 km per hour when they hit the atmosphere at 100 km up. They are designed to resist the

friction that causes the empty bus to burn up and they speed towards their different targets. This *terminal phase* lasts about two minutes.

Submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) have a similar path or trajectory but have less distance to travel and do not go as high.

Any Star Wars strategy has to adopt a multi-layered approach, with attempts to eliminate missiles in all phases of flight. The most successful approach would be to concentrate on the boost phase, since there are fewer, larger targets. However, this only lasts a few minutes, making it difficult to get anti-missile missiles up in time. So what could be better than a weapon travelling at the speed of light — laser beams?

LASERS

Three systems have been proposed, based on different types of light. All require colossal

amounts of energy. *Infra-red [Heat] Lasers.*

These would be powered by vigorous chemical reactions and would require bulky supplies of fuel. They would simply melt a hole in their targets. They would be mounted on a "battle station" satellite with an infra-red telescope for tracking the hot exhaust of the ICBM and a mirror for focussing the laser light.

But where should the satellites be placed?

In a low earth orbit (LEO) of 1000 km, the satellites have a limited field of view but are closer to their targets. They spend much of their time out of sight as they orbit the Earth so 10-20 LEO satellites would be needed to cover an ICBM launch site.

At an altitude of 35,600 km, a satellite takes one day to orbit the Earth and so appears stationary in the sky. One satellite in Geostationary Orbit (GEO) can cover a launch site but would need a more powerful laser and a bigger detection system. Simple calculations show they would need telescopes with mirrors of over 100 metres. This compares with the largest mirror so far built which is only 5 metres across.

This problem arises because of the *diffraction of light* which causes even the narrowest beam to spread out. The longer the wavelength, the larger the need to be the focussing mirrors...and infra-red light has a long wavelength.

In LEO, accurate and flawless mirrors of 4 metres would be required.

In GEO, mirrors of over 150 metres would be needed and even a tiny blemish would cause the mirror to be destroyed by its own laser light. We are a long way from these infra-red (chemical) lasers. Currently needed

ones are less than a tenth of the power which will be required for Star Wars.

Visible Light and Ultra-Violet Lasers

These radiations have a shorter wavelength and therefore less diffraction problems but require greater power sources. These would have to be based on the ground and would require GEO mirrors to beam their light down to "fighting" mirrors in LEO.

Turbulence

There would be great problems with dust, turbulence and clouds as the beams passed through the atmosphere. They would need between 20% and 60% of the entire US electricity output to operate. Therefore special stations would have to be built though they would only ever operate for a few minutes.

'Pop-up' X-ray Lasers

To get round the above problems, Professor Edward Teller (ET), (father of the H-bomb and virulent cold warrior) has suggested rocket-launched x-ray lasers to be sent up when an ICBM attack seems likely — in other words they "pop up".

X-rays have a very short wavelength and so their beams would not spread out so much. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to focus X-rays well. Also, they do not penetrate air and so can only be used in space. This is probably just as well as their extremely high energy means that they must be powered by a "small" nuclear explosion. They could only operate once as they are self-destroying but the X-rays could knock out a missile's electronics, even at a range of several thousand kms.

Despite ET's enthusiasm for his new brain-child, there is yet another huge obstacle. The X-ray lasers have to intercept

the ICBMs in the *boost phase*. This gives the Americans 3 to 5 minutes to *locate* the ICBMs and to get the X-ray lasers to "pop up" to a height of 200-400 km in time to intercept the ICBMs. If the ICBMs are past the boost phase, there is very little damage the X-rays can do since the electronics have done their work already and the missiles are heading for their targets.

The need for speed dictates the use of massive booster rockets thousands of times bigger than the rocket that took the astronauts to the moon!

DEFENCES

Even assuming that they are practicable, laser systems would be immensely costly. Defences against lasers, though, could be quite cheap. Here are a few of the suggested defences the Russians could deploy against the proposed US laser systems:

1) Increase the number of missiles and warheads (or pretend to by use of decoys and metal "chaff").

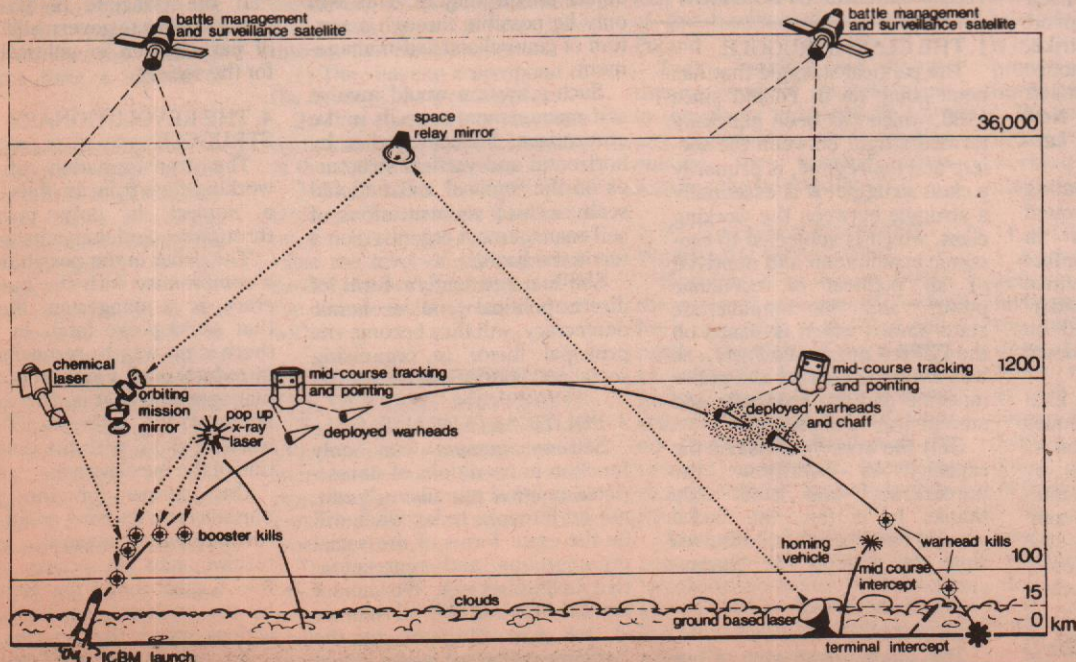
2) Attack the battle stations or the mirrors. Even a handful of sand could wreck a mirror!

3). Make pop-ups useless by letting the boost phase take place in the atmosphere or use larger boosters so that boosting takes less time.

4) Increase the thickness of the missile's skin, give it a reflective coating and spin it like a bullet so as to spread out the effect of a laser.

In future articles, I will look at some of the other exotic ideas in the SDI as well as describing the turmoil into which the scientific world has been plunged by the SDI gravy train.

*By Steven French. From SANA (Scientists Against Nuclear Arms, London Production Centre, SW18 4JQ) at £1 plus postage.



The left in Solid

It is now over four years since Solidarnosc — Poland's ten million strong independent workers' movement — was driven underground by the declaration of martial law in December 1981.

Since then, Solidarnosc has not collapsed. The movement has proved itself able to sustain and organise actions against the regime such as the illegal May Day demonstrations this year.

Nor has repression destroyed debate within the movement, and a left wing current is now starting to form. It is called the Workers' Opposition.

Below we reprint some documents from the Workers' Opposition. They show that revolutionary Marxism is not dead in the Eastern bloc. On the contrary it is alive and growing, and will one day build a force that will destroy Stalinism for ever.

The Workers' Opposition

IN THE spring of 1985, a new socio-political current started to form within the Polish social movement.

The editorial boards of four underground journals set up a coordinating committee that took the name 'Alliance of the Workers' Opposition Press' (PPOR). They published a draft programme around which they are seeking to bring together those forces that have declared themselves in favour of an anti-bureaucratic revolution, waged by the working class and aimed at achieving the full liberation of the working class.

The PPOR wants to contribute to building and broadening the mass workers' struggles around partial and immediate demands and the self-organisation of the workers themselves.

The following journals have joined the PPOR: Front Robotniczy (Workers' Front), Sprawa Robotnicza (Workers' Cause), Glosno (Out Loud), and Wolny Robotnik (Free Worker). The first two have been published

since the summer of 1984 by groups that are working for workers' self-management and identify with the revolutionary left. In its first issue, Front Robotniczy published excerpts from the 'Open letter to the PZPR' (Polish Communist Party) written in 1964 by Jacek Kuron and Karel Modzelewski. In so doing, it demonstrated its intent to link up with the revolutionary tradition of the Polish anti-bureaucratic opposition, which, by the way, the authors of that work have today abandoned.

International

For its part, Sprawa Robotnicza announced in its first issue that it considered itself "a link in the international working-class community". It wrote, moreover, that it "has enemies with whom no accord or alliance can ever be concluded — they are the bureaucracy (that is, the social layer that exploits the workers) as well as the bourgeoisie, which guarantees the

survival of the long-bankrupt bureaucracy".

Wolny Robotnik is the organ of the Union of Workers' Councils of the Polish Resistance Movement (ZRP-PRO). This group, which is based on clandestine groups in the factories, has operated in Upper Silesia since 1982.

In a draft programme published at the start, the ZRP-PRO came out for overthrowing the bureaucratic dictatorship based on a general strike led by workers' councils formed clandestinely, and for establishing workers' power in the state in order to guarantee the building of socialism.

Glosno is the organ of the Provisional Coordination of the Mines (TKKG) of Solidarnosc. It also operates in Upper Silesia.

The TKKG has made itself known in the West by its support for the British miners' strike, which attracted important notice in the British left and far left press, in particular in the New Statesman and the London Labour Briefing.

The TKKG is a coordinating committee of the underground trade-union commissions in many mines, and is in conflict with the Regional Executive Commission (RKW) of Solidarnosc, which is represented on the underground national leadership of the union.

The PPOR has formed an Executive Commission that includes a representative of each of its components and functions by consensus in order to maintain their autonomy. This commission is responsible for the publication of a common monthly bulletin called Przelom ('Breach'), the first issue of which appeared at the end of autumn 1985.



Illegal Solidarnosc demonstration

A draft programme

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE WORKERS' OPPOSITION

1. THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The political struggle that has been going on in Poland since 1980, which has been generally termed a fight between the society and the regime, is primarily a class struggle. It is essentially a struggle between the working class, which is subjected to economic exploitation and deprived of all political or economic power, and the bureaucratic state power, which is based on the PZPR (Communist Party), as well as on the military and police machine and the economic and administrative apparatus.

Only the working class has the capacity to overthrow the bureaucracy, and it is only thanks to it that the social groups can liberate themselves from the yoke of the bureaucracy.

2. SELF-MANAGEMENT

The fundamental aim of our

struggle is to get the working class to transform itself from an object into a subject. This will only be possible through a system of generalised self-management.

Such a system would involve self-management councils in the enterprises, linked together by horizontal and vertical structures on the regional and national scale, as well as institutions of self-management organised on a territorial basis.

Self-management, a form of direct political and economic democracy, will thus become the principal factor in organising social and political life.

3. POLITICAL PLURALISM

Self-management can only function in conditions of unrestricted political pluralism. It cannot be foreseen today what will be the exact forms of the social organisations and representative bodies set up. We cannot say exactly what will be the role of the free elections to the Parliament that we would like to

see.

But it is clear from the start that the principle of political pluralism has to govern all forms of participation in political life for the society.

4. THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE

The transformation of the working class from an object into a subject is only possible through revolutionary changes.

The belief in the possibility of a compromise with the bureaucracy is a dangerous illusion that could prove fatal. In fact, there is no way to reconcile the introduction of a system of self-management, that is, the realisation of the interests of the working class, with the domination of the bureaucracy.

One course for the anti-bureaucratic uprising could be a revolutionary general strike turning into an active strike (i.e. a takeover of the factories by the workers), supported by actions outside the factories.

It is only in such revolutionary



idarnosc



rogramme

conditions that we could expect a part of the army, primarily ordinary soldiers, to join in the uprising of the working class, when they see that the working-class forces have a chance of success.

5. SELF-ORGANISATION

A revolutionary goal of the struggle requires a revolutionary strategy, that is, a strategy based on consistently advancing the self-organisation of the working class.

Such self-organisation is the common element in all the phases of the development of the workers' struggle, from the present fight for partial objectives to the future struggle for a system of self-management, in which the principle of self-management will find its fullest expression.

Every battle, even on the most limited question, bears within it an embryo of the future revolution, inasmuch as it contributes to the self-organisation of the workers.

This is why the demands put forward by the workers' movement in its programmatic documents must always take into account three elements:

- 1) They have to correspond to the needs of the working class.
- 2) They have to be in tune with the level of consciousness of the workers at the time.
- 3) They have to make possible, in the struggle itself and on the basis of its success, to raise the level of self-organisation of the working class and of the other social groups allied with it.

6. THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Today, the existence of an independent workers' movement is the main form of self-organisation and the main precondition for the struggle of the working class.

The fight against the bureaucracy entered a qualitatively new phase in 1980, when the strikes opened up the way for the formation of Solidarnosc,

the first national independent structure representing the workers that we have seen in the history of the bureaucratic system in Poland.

Today, building and strengthening workers' organisations in the plants independent from any organisation or institution outside the working class remains the principal task.

7. PLURALISM WITHIN THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Pluralism is necessary within the workers' movement in order for it to be able to develop politically. The right of the workers to organise freely in clubs, groups, currents and political organisations has to be defended. Open politicalisation of the workers' movement, based on clear principles, can only strengthen it.

Attempts to smother this process, under the pretext that it 'weakens the union', is 'factional' activity, or 'provocation' on the other hand, can only undermine the movement, or in fact

divide it, and they involve all the characteristics of provocation.

8. SELF-DETERMINATION

Understanding the class character of social relations in Poland involves rejecting the nationalist imagery that reduces our fight to a struggle against the Soviet Union for independence. The basic dividing line in our nation is not a schematic opposition between patriots and traitors but one of opposing interests among different social groups.

This is why national independence, as an effect of the struggle of the working class for social liberation, represents, from the standpoint of the working class, the full achievement of the indispensable right to self-determination.

9. INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' SOLIDARITY

The Polish working class is not isolated in the struggle. It has friends and allies abroad. They are the workers of the entire world.

The Polish workers' movement can and must draw on the strength of international solidarity. The differences between East and West cannot hide the fact that the workers of both camps are linked by common interests, by a common struggle for a common end — the transformation of the working class from object into subject — against common enemies.

The question of international solidarity is one of close cooperation of the various national contingents of the revolutionary workers' movement; it is one of interaction between the development of the class struggle, for example, in Poland, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain.

10. SOCIALISATION

The indispensable precondition for the liberation of the working class is for it to lay the economic foundations of its liberty, that is, the socialisation, outside of the state and in the framework of a system of workers' self-management, of the means of production that are today statised. It is in this way that the working class will obtain the material guarantee of realising its interests, as well as the legitimate interests of the other groups in society.

The aim of the revolutionary workers' movement, flowing from the essence of the social relations against which it rebels, is not the reprivatization of state property or giving it autonomy but to genuinely socialise it.

We regard the taking of political power as a means for the working class to assume economic power.

11. WORKERS' OPPOSITION

Joint work by radical worker activists with a view toward forming a workers' opposition to the bureaucracy is essential to draw up a programme for the Polish workers' movement and to gain support for the revolutionary struggle aimed at establishing a system of self-management, a self-managed republic in the full sense of the term.

By establishing coordination among the organisations, or in the future by building revolutionary parties, we are not



Walesa

Walesa and the miners

In Socialist Organiser of September 19 we said that T Jedrynak, a Silesian Solidarnosc leader jailed some months ago, supported the British miners' strike. We are informed by Zbigniew Kowalewski, a former Solidarnosc leader now living in France, that this is wrong. Comrade Kowalewski writes: 'This strike was supported by another Solidarnosc coordination in Silesia, the TKKG, and condemned by Jedrynak's group, the RKW, who condemned also the TKKG's support. Of course, it is necessary to defend Jedrynak, independently of his position on the NUM strike and on Scargill. I am sending you a statement on this affair by a leader of the TKKG

We are accused of whimsical independence, and reproached for not wanting to align ourselves with TKK (national leadership of Solidarnosc) and with the RKW (the clandestine regional leadership).

But it is difficult to align ourselves when the president of Solidarnosc, Lech Walesa, condemns the British miners, in an interview which has become famous with the 'Sunday Mirror' paper published in London, and when he demands that they calm down because they are ruining the economy of their country. Given that it is not surprising that the RKW has condemned the TKKG for its support for the struggle of the British miners and the Radio Zwyciezmy ('We will win'/'Venceremos') broadcast which we put out about it.

We have been dragged through the mud in RIS, the organ of the RKW, although it appears that certain trade union sections in Warsaw announced the same support for the British miners only a few days after us, and under the nose of (central

Solidarnosc leader) Bujak at that.

But the RKW declares that we are an anarchist group and that our attitude is ultra-left.

It is said that the British miners did not support our strikes and Solidarnosc in 1980. Is that a reason for us not to support their struggle?

It would be interesting to know whether, when our turn comes to go on all-out strike until victory, the comrades of the RKW will put out the same political line as presented in RIS and will bay in chorus with the regime that we are ruining the national economy and that the mines are not working through our fault.

They write that we are attacking the Conservative government of Mrs Thatcher, which apparently according to them Solidarnosc should defend, and that we are lying when we accuse Mrs Thatcher of collaborating with Jaruzelski.

Having got this far, they might as well send flowers to Jaruzelski thanking him for helping Mrs Thatcher to break the miners' strike by sending Polish coal.

Capitalism

They give it to be understood that the British miners, manipulated by Scargill, want to overthrow the Conservative government, and RIS even goes so far as to insinuate that they also want to overthrow capitalism.

And it would be very good if they did overthrow it, for socialism — but not in its eastern, Moscow version — would be welcome over there too.

If on the other hand the RKW means to say that the British miners' strike is directed by Moscow, it is an assertion of the same type as those which say that our own struggle is directed by Reagan.

OUT NOW!

Workers Liberty. 'Under whose flag?' This issue looks at the problems facing Trotskysts today.

Available from SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY, for 60p plus 18p postage.

DOCUMENTS FROM THE UNDERGROUND

From page 7

opposing ourselves to the workers' movement in the broad sense.

On the contrary, we want the revolutionary current, which is a component of this movement, to be consolidated within its own structures so that it can better contribute to building an independent mass workers' movement. From that flows the basic significance of this platform.

That is, the victory of the Polish workers depends in the first instance on adopting a

strategy for revolutionary struggle against the bureaucracy. In practice, the advance to social self-management has to be based on a revolutionary political identification by the workers. It involves the workers becoming conscious of their social and economic interests, as well as the independence of the political-organisational institutions of the working. This is why it is the responsibility of those who share the ideas expressed in this platform to unite their forces in the struggle for our common cause.

'WOLNY ROBOTNIK',
no.30, June 1985.



Unite for freedom!

APPEAL FROM THE PRESS
ALLIANCE OF THE WORKERS
OPPOSITION

In view of the deterioration in living and working conditions and the need for effective defensive actions and for unifying them, it is urgent to create, around a political platform, an alliance of various workers' groups determined to fight for the interests of the working class, for workers' self-management and the liberation of labour.

We will open up the columns of our publications to workers' groups and activists ready to take part in drawing up the platform of the Workers' Opposition, which is what we call our common bloc. The name points up our political choices and the class character of our struggle.

Unlike the 'national-independence opposition' and the 'democratic opposition', we put the fight for working-class causes first. This does not in any way mean that we underestimate the importance of democracy or national independence.

On the contrary, we think that the liberation of labour is only possible in a politically sovereign country, and not one subjected to economic exploitation. We think that democracy can only be achieved fully in a system without oppressed and exploited classes. Neither 'actually existing socialism', nor 'verbal socialism', nor any version of capitalism — American, Swedish, or perhaps Polish — represents such a system.

We refuse to keep silent in the face of the clear facts that this country — which claims that

it is 'socialist' or that it is 'building socialism' — is becoming more and more dependent politically and economically on the West, that is on monopoly capitalism, and on the Kremlin, that is, the Soviet bureaucracy.

We say no to a Poland reduced to the role of a colony, a source of raw materials and cheap labour, to a Poland where the only liberty would be to enrich oneself at the expense of the workers.

We think that the workers today have to take up a flag under which they can march united in the fight to defend workers' rights, without divisions because of ideological differences. Neither the PZPR (Communist Party) nor the opposition, in its present political configuration, in our opinion can play such a role.

Because of their attachment to conceptions of a unity of the entire society against the regime, the central structures of Solidarnosc are not playing it either.

In a situation in which the wrong policy of its leadership has led Solidarnosc into passivity and in which the preponderance of pro-capitalist tendencies in the opposition outside Solidarnosc is becoming more and more clear, when the exploitation of the workers is increasing, we decided to take up the struggle, in the conviction that victory is ours sooner or later, and that it will be won by a workers' movement that rejects both bureaucratic and capitalist exploitation.

Executive Committee of
the Workers' Opposition Press
Alliance, 'Wolny Robotnik'
no.30, June 1985.

BUILDING A FORCE IN THE PLANTS

Workers' advocates, directly representing their fellow workers and democratically elected by them, who enjoy the workers' confidence and thereby have an authority in the plant, can help to place limits on the arbitrariness of the employers.

They can also help the workers to have a greater control over the labour process, since they will be real, independently elected representatives of the workers.

Moreover, these advocates will have a greater authority, inasmuch as they will have the same problems as all the other workers, be among them every day, and be subject to their control every day.

In order for all this to be able to work, and in order for the mandate of these representatives to be clear, this institution should be based on three documents that would take the form of an independent social accord within the group of workers. These are the following.

- A written mandate limited in time for every person who assumes the function of a workers' advocate signed by the person concerned.

- A written statement from the persons elected stipulating that they accept the function entrusted to them of representing every one of their mates who voted for them, with copies for every worker in the group.

- A letter of resignation from every one of the workers, as well as a collective letter from all, with an empty space for the date, in order to assure solidarity with the persons elected if they are subjected to repression by the management or the political police.

Added to these documents should be a protocol of the electing assembly stipulating the aims of the post set up.

At an early stage, before this initiative is generalised throughout the enterprise (or group of enterprises), the workers' advocates should retain anonymity and in their action seek to set an example for the other workshops and departments in the plant. In fact, in order to be able to surmount the fear of repression, it is indispensable that workers' advocates appear throughout the plant and that the example spread to other plants.

How do you start to rebuild the basic structures of working-class organisation at the shop floor level in conditions of severe repression? This document from 'Wolny Robotnik' (Free Worker) provides an answer.

However, once it becomes a general thing, the election of workers' advocates will make it possible to create a not inconsiderable social and moral force in the plants. In fact, the various workers' advocates will be obliged by the nature of things to link up and cooperate.

In this event, they will in practice become an element of workers' control. They will be real representatives for the wage-workers confronting the state bourgeoisie at the plant level.

Limits

They will be able in an effective way to limit the arrogance and arbitrariness of the floor bosses, the foremen, etc.

The individual and common activities of the workers' advocates could include petitioning, making grievances, etc., forms of action provided for by the law. Their role would not be legal, but it would not be illegal either, since the law does not prohibit such activities.

The aim of such activities would not, obviously, be to overthrow the regime but to make the workers conscious of their rights and their situation, to present

the arguments for and against one or another modification in this system, as, for example, in the present case, the advantages and disadvantages of the new wage system.

Indeed, such a collective awareness of common interests is always the primary foundation of any collective action.

Crystallise

If it became generalised, this institution could become a decentralised means for expressing the workers' opinions and a form of crystallising the tensions within the plants. It would also be a basic component of the self-management to come, a component that can be established right now.

It would be a part of our own independence and self-management, very different from what the state bourgeoisie calls by that name, because it would grow out of the very foundations of the organisation of work, groups of workers in the brigades, workshops, departments and establishments.

If self-management develops from this level up, it will be a sign to us that we are ready for self-management. Such an institution would also enable the wage-workers to create their own social representation, which would be a potential leadership at the base.

This would certainly be important in the event, for example, of a strike.

Already today there are plants in which genuine solidarity and

militant unity on the part of workers have put the management, in particular at the bottom level, in a position where it cannot act without at least the tacit accord of the workers who enjoy the esteem and confidence of their co-workers.

Police repression is ineffective in this case, because there is no formal structure. The 'leaders' do not carry on any clandestine activity, but the workforce respects their advice and opinions. As a result, the management becomes dependent on these worker leaders.

It has to consult them before acting, to negotiate with them and get their agreement. This is already a step toward formal recognition of such structures and such leaders.

It is clear that in these conditions it becomes easier to build clandestine work, to collect union dues, to distribute leaflets and newspapers, to drive out the collaborators, etc.

Such informal leaders could play a role in the workshops similar to that played by Lech Walesa today on the national scale (although we would hope that they would do it better and more effectively). The plant management would have to fear them, and the underground union structures would have to protect them.

All the problems of the plant — work safety, hygiene, wages — would have to become the concerns of informal groups formed around a leader recognised as a workers' advocate. With time, this sphere of concern would extend naturally from immediate social questions to other problems, from the economic arena to the political one, which is an integral part of the perspective of class struggle by the workers and the intelligentsia against the state bourgeoisie.

Wage workers, organise yourselves!

Excerpts from 'Wolny Robotnik' no.27, February 1985.

WORKERS' LIBERTY

Breaking the chains

More from SO

'Workers' Liberty' special issue on South Africa. 75p & p&p. from Socialist Organiser, 214 Sickert Court London N1 2SY.

Black workers and the struggle for liberation in South Africa

Keep this plant open!

By Stan Crooke

ON 23 January a delegation of 500 will lobby parliament to keep Gartcosh steelworks, near Glasgow, open.

This lobby will be the culmination of a 450-mile march from Gartcosh to London by nine trade unionists. The march will pass through Rotherham and Middlesbrough — both steel-making centres — as well as the steel 'ghost town' of Consett in Co. Durham.

Other current SSC initiatives include a "nationwide" petition to collect at least a million signatures, and efforts to get show-biz celebrities, sports personalities and leading businessmen into the campaign. A "steel-desk" staffed during business hours is also to be set up in the offices of Strathclyde Regional Council to take donations.

This all follows a pattern set since the closure of Gartcosh steelworks, just outside Glasgow, was first announced in August. The closure will cost 1,000 jobs straightaway, and will virtually guarantee the closure of the Ravenscraig steelworks in three years time, at the cost of a further 3,000 or more jobs.

Ravenscraig

Gartcosh is Ravenscraig's biggest single customer, taking some 500,000 tonnes of steel per year from it. If Gartcosh is closed, then the Ravenscraig order will be transferred to the Shotton finishing mill in South Wales, 200 miles away. Increased transport costs would thus make Ravenscraig "unviable" and a more likely target for closure.

The campaign in defence of Gartcosh rests on the idea of "uniting the Scottish people" against threatened closure, using "rational argument" and relying heavily on dissident Tories, rather than any sort of working class action.

The Scottish TUC has been to the fore in pushing the idea of an all-Scottish-people-together campaign. "We want to make this an all-Scotland crusade to save Gartcosh and Ravenscraig. Ravenscraig has been identified by the Scottish people as something basically essential to the Scottish economy", declared STUC General Secretary Jimmy Milne.

For the third time in as many years, the STUC immediately set about organising a "conference" in defence of the Scottish steel industry, with representation not only from the Labour and trade union movement, but also from the Tories, the SDP-Liberal Alliance, the Churches and various business organisations.

The STUC has continued



Photo: Rick Matthews, IFL

along the same path ever since.

This approach to campaigning — substituting vague talk about the interests of Scotland and general appeals for support from the Scottish nation in place of arguments based on the interests of the working class and campaigning in pursuit of labour movement mobilisation — is a product of the theories of the Communist Party (CP), which exercise a dominant influence on the leading levels of the STUC.

In a statement issued at the start of the campaign, the CP argued: "It is imperative that a united front is built up by the whole community behind the Gartcosh workers and the steelworkers of Scotland, involving the Scottish trade union movement, all sections of political opinion, the Churches, and community organisations".

But any campaign which seeks to unite such diverse and contradictory interests can

achieve "unity" only on the basis of the lowest common denominator — petitions, empty platform rhetoric, the occasional half-hearted demonstration, etc. There is no place in such campaigning for specifically working class politics. Not a few of the campaign's backers want to exclude politics altogether.

Thus, at the STUC conference held in August in support of Gartcosh a constant theme of the speakers was that the issue was "too important for party politics".

Tories

Many Tories, it is true, opposed the closure of Gartcosh: the Scottish Conservative Candidates Association, the Campaign for the Communication of Conservative Policies, the Scottish Executive of Conservative Trade Unionists, Glasgow District Council Conservative Group, Strathclyde Regional Council Conservative Group, the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Western Area Council, plus various Scottish MPs, Euro-MPs and Conservative constituency associations.

Why? Because they fear the electoral consequences (District Councillor John Thomson: "The Conservatives will be lucky to get anyone elected even as a community councillor if Gartcosh closes"; Scottish Conservative Trade Unionists: "We reckon we will be left with maybe 3 out of 21 seats at the General Election") and because they fear the knock-on effect on the rest of Scottish industry (a survey of 40 firms carried out by the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce showed that one in three of them would have to close or diversify if Ravenscraig were shut as a result of Gartcosh's closures).

There has been conflict within the Tory ranks. Sir Hector Munro was ousted from the chair of the Scottish back bench Tory MPs group because of his support for Gartcosh. There have been numerous threats of resignation from office in the Party if Gartcosh is closed. Iain Lawson, head of the Campaign for the Communication of Conservative Policies, has already resigned both from office and also from the party itself. He is now organising for putting up independent candidates in the General Election against those Scottish Tory MPs who support the closure of Ravenscraig.

A serious labour movement campaign in support of the Gartcosh workers would certainly not ignore such divisions. But it would not water down its own demands and methods of struggle in order to make them acceptable to the Tory dissidents.

But this is what the existing campaign in defence of Gartcosh has done (save for the minor detail that its approach to campaigning was so insipid from the outset that it did not need to water it down any further for Tory dissidents to be able to swallow it).

At its second attempt the Commons Select Committee on Scottish Affairs finally came up with a recommendation that Gartcosh be reprieved for a further three years. Adherents of the no-politics-please Gartcosh campaign are now appealing to Tory secretary of state George Younger to use this as a basis for raising the issue in the Tory cabinet and persuading his colleagues to support retention of Gartcosh.

But Younger has already made it clear that he will not do this. And his cabinet "colleagues" have already repeated-

ly made it clear that they have no intention of changing their minds on Gartcosh.

At Gartcosh itself, workforce resistance to closure remains remarkably strong. A campaign launched amongst the workforce at the close of November against acceptance of voluntary redundancy ("Do not let BSC benefit from your New Year spirit by giving them your job. No amount of money is worth it") has been effective to the extent that less than a hundred have volunteered for redundancy.

An attempt to replace shop stewards convenor Jack Doyle at the beginning of December was also unsuccessful. Opposed by a candidate who stood on a platform of negotiating a redundancy deal, Doyle won the election by a five-to-one majority.

Mass meeting

And a mass meeting of the workforce held just before the Christmas break unanimously voted to keep on the fight to prevent closure of the plant, undeterred by the fact that BSC management, contrary to repeated public assurances, had already begun to divert Ravenscraig steel shipments away from Gartcosh to Shotton.

But the resolution adopted by the mass meeting did not mark any break with the STUC-organised campaigning which has proved such a limitation to date. The resolution's five points were to: seek a meeting with Thatcher; seek talks with Leon Brittan; await the result of the following day's Scottish Select Committee meeting; continue the fight on a political basis with support from a wide band of Scottish public opinion; and reconvene a mass meeting in the New Year.

The fact that the Gartcosh

workforce has refused to throw in the towel and opt for voluntary redundancy shows their determination to defend their jobs. Will the campaign required to help them keep those jobs be built?

The latest initiatives from the Strathclyde Steel Campaign are only a continuation of the sorry tactics of the past, which have already failed in other jobs fights.

Secret

Steel union leaders claim to have a secret plan to keep Gartcosh open after the scheduled closure date of 31 March. Ravenscraig convenor Tommy Brennan has refused to discuss details, though occupation has not been ruled out. But a fight to save jobs is not a magician's trick in which the rabbit can suddenly be pulled out of the hat at the end of the performance.

If plans are being drawn up for an occupation, well and good. But occupying the plant will only be part of the campaign required to force the BSC and the Tories to back down. The campaign needs to be taken outside of Gartcosh, not to Tories and small businessmen, has has been the situation to date, but directly and specifically into the labour movement itself.

If Gartcosh is occupied, then the crucial factor will be what support they receive from other steelworkers, above all at Ravenscraig and at Shotton. In the final analysis, the future of Gartcosh jobs is in the hands of Gartcosh workers themselves and of fellow members of the ISTC, not the Tory dissidents, vicars and businessmen to whom the STUC and Labour Party bureaucracy are presently looking to save the plant.

SAVE GARTCOSH!

Lobby Parliament

23rd January

Called by the Scottish TUC
Details, phone 041-332 4946.

Christ stopped at Eboli

Review by Ian Swindale

One of the highlights of Christmas TV for me was Francesco Rossi's four-part adaptation for Italian TV of Carlo Levi's book 'Christ Stopped at Eboli'.

Levi was a doctor and painter from Turin and by all accounts a bourgeois liberal opponent of Fascism. When Mussolini launched his attack on Abyssinia in 1935 Levi was exiled to a remote village in the far south of Italy. 'Christ Stopped at Eboli' is his account of peasant life in the forgotten world of the South — even Christ only got as far as Eboli, some distance to the North say the local villagers.

For this Turin intellectual the real condition of the peasantry comes as a shock. Trying to scratch a living from soil which will bear hardly a thing, and that only after the most backbreaking work, the peasants are resigned to a life of graft and hardship in which national politics and political parties are beyond their comprehension. If Levi is an exile in their village it must be because someone in Rome "has it in for him". Political conflict is conceived of purely in personal terms.

Consequently, none of the peasants belong to the Fascist Party, while all the petty bourgeoisie in the village do, regardless of their grasp of politics.

The more ambitious and talented members of this class have left the village for the North or for America, and so it is only the dull-witted and indolent who remain. They engage in ruthless competition for the few positions available — mayor, police chief, local Party leader, etc., and their own impoverished existence is maintained at a level slightly higher than the peasants only by the most ruthless exploitation of the villagers.

Fascism

Fascism can, of course, offer no solution to the problems faced by the peasantry — not even in the fight against malaria which carries away so many of them, let alone anything else. Instead it offers them the "glory" of foreign conquests — something which does not interest the peasant in the slightest. War is something cooked up by "those boys in Rome" for their

own glory and in which the peasants are resigned to fight and die just as they struggle and die trying to eke out an existence in their own villages.

In fact as Levi discovers, the villages of the South have far more contact with the United States of America than they do with the industrial cities of the North. Many of the peasants have travelled to Naples to take the boat to America. They send back money and a variety of modern tools and implements for their families to use on the land.

Crash

After the 1929 Wall Street Crash, Italian government agents in the US persuaded many of these peasants to return home to their country and Levi finds a number of these "Americans" in his village. In fact, in most homes he found two pictures hanging over the bed. One was of the Madonna, the other, Franklin D. Roosevelt!

Although Levi qualified as a doctor he has never practiced. The local doctors, however, are quite hopeless and immediately the villagers turn to him for help. He is reluctant to get involved but encouraged by his sister, a qualified and practicing doctor who is allowed to visit him for a few days, he begins to give medical treatment to the villagers and in this way comes into contact with everyone in the village.

Filmed in the stark and barren landscape of Southern Italy, Rossi's film paints a very sympathetic picture of the day-to-day life of the villagers who despite their ignorance and superstition, maintain their dignity in the face of hardship and extend their friendship to the outsider from the North who is able to help them in a way that nobody else either wishes to or is able to.

The four-hour TV series was edited down into a feature film which was released in Britain a couple of years ago and still shows up occasionally at independent cinemas. It's well worth seeing, and the book makes interesting reading too, though you may, like me, find it catalogued under 'Italy — travel'!

Defended to death?

Edward Ellis reviews 'Defence of the Realm', now showing at the Odeon Haymarket.

Strong-willed, ambitious and none-too-scrupulous reporter (Gabriel Byrne) helps destroy the career of a former Labour Defence Minister (Ian Bannen), implicated in spying for the other side, as a result of sharing a prostitute with a KGB agent.

But there is more to the business than meets the eye. What is the significance of the death of a boy attempting escape from Borstal? What revelations were about to be made in the House before the scandal hit the headlines? Is the death of an alcoholic left-wing journalist (Denholm Elliot), an old friend of the ruined MP, an accident? How much does the press baron (Fulton McKay) really know?

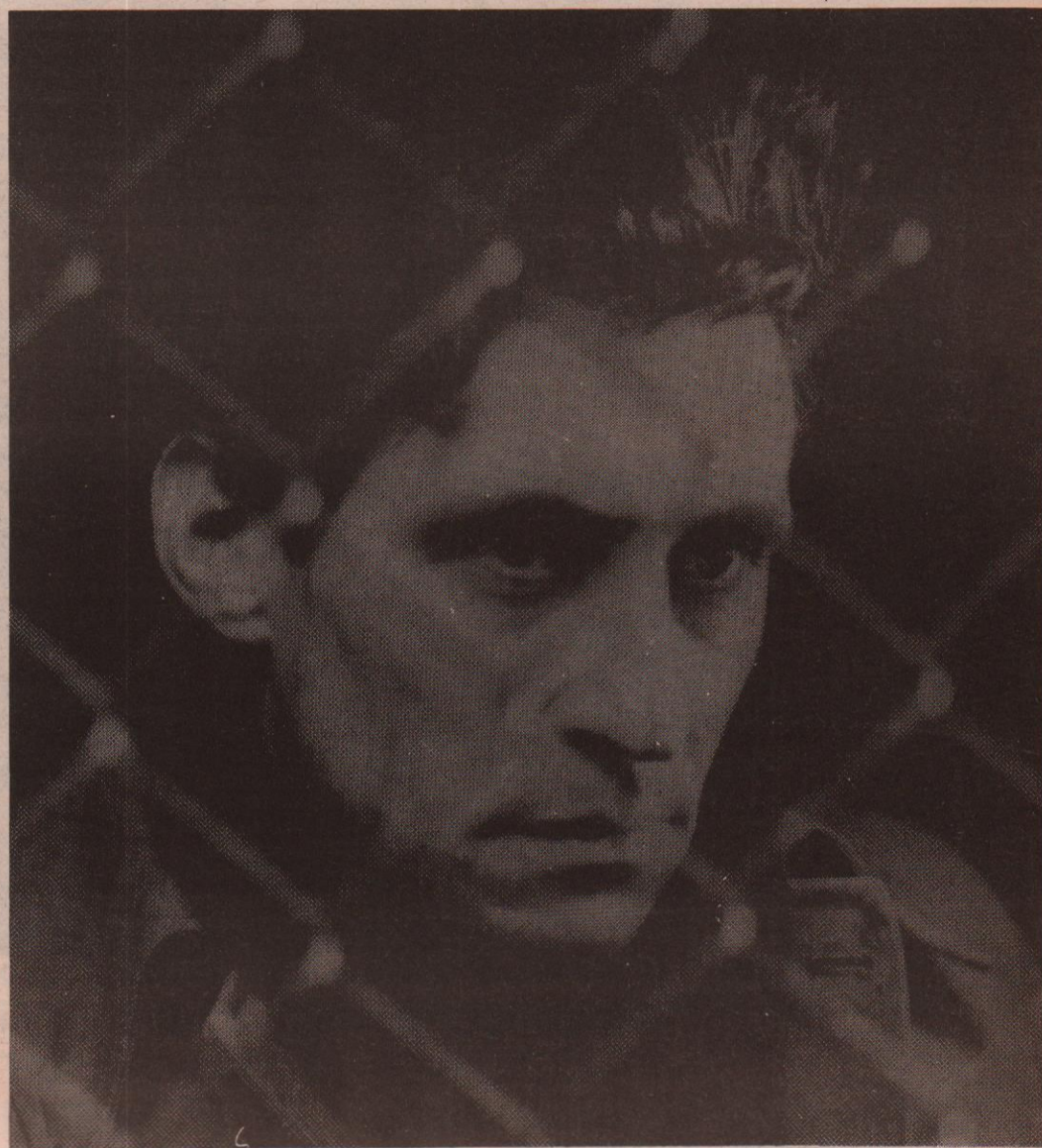
The search for the answers to these questions forms the tense plot to David Drury's 'Defence of the Realm'. It is an absorbing political thriller, which takes its central character through a discovery of his own integrity towards discoveries of a more dangerous nature, that point to a sinister government cover-up. 'Edge of Darkness' meets 'All the President's Men'.

How far would the government go, as the ads say, to defend "national security"? Pretty far, the film suggests — certainly as far as making a terrible mess of your flat, and probably as far as political assassination.

In fact the film's hypothetical nuclear-age subject matter is a vehicle for an attack on the Official Secrets Act. 'Are you in favour of freedom of information?' the starch-faced bureaucrats ask the reporter in some disbelief. 'Yes', he answers beligerently.

Politically, however, 'Defence of the Realm' is firmly Ponting-esque. 'What? All information? Free across the counter?' the bureaucrats go on. 'No, of course not' the newspaperman replies. 'Well what information?' 'I don't know...'

Therein lies the film's political message: 'I don't know'.



Gabriel Byrne in 'Defence of the Realm'.

It is a story of ordinary people who fall victim to a bureaucrat's view of national security. But the film does not question for a second that such a thing as national security exists. It is difficult to define, they story says, and the security services have defined it wrongly.

But the fundamental problem is *injustice*. The victims of bureaucratically-defined national security are *not* traitors; their fate is therefore unfair.

Yet the reality is not merely

that an ex-Defence Minister wasn't secretly a Russian spy. As a Defence Minister, he was not only not a 'traitor': he was an active creator of British imperialist policy — in fact, in history, for the last Labour government, of support for the Shah, of support for military dictatorships in Latin America, and so on.

The Official Secrets Act deserves to be attacked, and as far as it goes a liberal critique can do some good in exposing its

absurdities. The problem for the writers of 'Defence of the Realm' is that so long as the basic concepts of capitalism's 'national security' are accepted, the alternatives remain elusive. They don't know...

It's a well-made film that provides for some good performances and its portrayal of Fleet Street is more convincing than is usual. Even with a disappointing conclusion, this is a thriller worth going to see.

A workers' diary



THERE MUST BE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL IN THE FACTORIES BY THE WORKERS



Ravan Press, a South African radical publisher, has produced an excellent 'Workers' Diary' for 1986, entitled 'Organise a million workers in 1986!'

It is a tremendous record of and tribute to the South African workers' movement, for whom it is primarily intended.

It includes 'Red Diary' style entries and graphics celebrating great events in South African and international labour history — from the British 1926 strike to the formation of Solidarnosc. An appendix provides the addresses and phone numbers of the independent unions, while an introduction explains the main

themes of the diary. "Workers must build organisations that will unite them throughout the world, because all workers have the same interest", the authors note. And elsewhere: "Only a strong, united workers' movement will free South Africa", applauding the foundation of Cosatu.

"Workers of all countries must build direct links to oppose multinationals", the introduction comments.

It is a useful diary and a valuable brief guide to the South African workers' movement. £2.50 from most radical bookshops.

Watch this

Channel 4 has begun showing a three-part series on the Greek Civil War. It is being screened on Monday nights at 10.00 pm. There are two installments still to run. Not only, judging by the first episode is it a relatively objective account of the events, but it also contains interviews with many of the participants in the Greek Resistance Army who were forced into exile after the civil war and have only recently been permitted to return to Greece. This conflict has been largely ignored by the left, and Channel 4 are doing us a service by offering us the opportunity to acquaint ourselves with this episode of history.

A new miners campaign

Following NUM support for the "Justice for Mineworkers" Bill, to be presented to Parliament by the Campaign Group of MPs, the National Amnesty Campaign has changed its name to the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign. The new campaign will be based around four aims.

1. Support for the NUM resolutions to the TUC and Labour Party conferences in 1985.

2. To raise support for the sacked, victimised and imprisoned miners and their families and to raise money for the NUM National Solidarity Fund.

3. To publicise the "Justice for Mineworkers" Bill and to campaign for its enactment by the next Labour government.

4. Opposition to the UDM.

Scargill, Heathfield and a number of TUC 'lefts' including Ron Todd have agreed to act as vice-presidents, while Billy Etherington, President of the Durham Mechanics is President.

This support from the NUM leadership is crucial, since other attempts at solidarity campaigns around the sacked and jailed miners have become isolated through lack of support from the NUM nationally.

The main drawback of the campaign is the lack of commitment to a full amnesty. Unlike the "Mineworkers Amnesty" Bill presented last year, the new Bill speaks only of a free pardon for those punished for acts done in good faith for the purpose of safeguarding jobs, living standards, services or civil liberties.

However, the final interpretation of "in good faith" will depend on how well we build the campaign.

The Bill will be presented to Parliament in late February. A lobby is planned for the day. The Campaign will also be organising a march/rally/gig for March 2.

The Campaign can be contacted through the secretary, Ed Friedenburg, 49 Milner Square, London N

Lambeth court case

The case against Lambeth's Labour councillors starts in the High Court next Tuesday, January 14.

The councillors have been taken to court for failing to make a rate promptly and thus losing potential revenue for the borough.

The councillors stand to be surcharged, bankrupted and disqualified from office.

A public meeting in support of the councillors will take place in Lambeth Town Hall on Sunday night, 12 January and there will be a march from County Hall to the High Court on Tuesday morning assembling at 8.30 a.m.

It is essential that the labour movement rallies to the defence of councillors who have refused to implement Tory cuts by sacking workers and slashing services.

Wapping showdown

In the wake of Maxwell's victory over the Mirror workers, a showdown is approaching in the Murdoch empire.

According to the Financial Times, Murdoch "will fly to London later this week to take charge of efforts to bring his £100 million printing plant at Wapping, East London, into production".

He is prepared to confront heavy picketing, and the plant has been fitted with high perimeter fences, barbed wire and video cameras. Murdoch has unilaterally broken off talks with the print unions, and is seeking a single-union no-strike deal with the EETPU.

Wapping is already staffed by labour recruited on short-term

contracts through the Southampton EETPU office.

The trade union movement must not leave the print unions in the lurch this time as it did in the 1983 Warrington dispute. The TUC itself should take the responsibility of organising mass pickets at Wapping.

'Link Up'

By Pat Longman

A new rank and file newspaper 'Link Up', produced by members of all the print unions, points out that new technology is not in fact all that cheap at all. Eddie Shah himself had to lay out £20-£30 million to set up a 300,000 circulation paper with only 700 staff.

The unions are not against new technology anyway. The issue is the terms for new technology; and the bosses' real interest is in union-busting rather than technology as such.

Since when have employers been keen to put 'their' money back into the industry to provide more jobs? As for greater diversity, if Robert Maxwell's new proposed title is any guideline, things don't bode very well for that idea. Maxwell's new title, aimed at competing with Eddie Shah's new paper, is to be made up of sport, pin-ups and TV.

Indeed the end result, if the owners get their way, will be a battered and demoralised workforce and less possibility of print



ers demanding the right of reply for those ideas and struggles presently being stifled in the interest of profits.

The NGA leaders are so battered and traumatised by their defeat at Warrington in 1983 that they dare not do anything but negotiate the best terms they can get. But those

terms are getting worse and worse.

Trade unionists both in the NGA and in other unions should demand a trade union picket at Murdoch's and Shah's new works organised preferably by the TUC itself.

Contact: 'Link Up', c/o 21 St Louis Rd., London SE27.

Hypocrisy on UDM

Paul Whetton's diary

response has been very good.

The Christmas holiday was a bit of a set-back for us because up until then we were recruiting men back to the NUM every day. With the Christmas break, we are now in a position where we are starting cold again. But I've no doubt that we will start recruiting again.

I can remember a while back that there were moves in the power industry to set up a new industrial union covering all workers in the industry. The first people to scream blue murder, along with the AUEW and TGWU were the EETPU.

Stance

So how can they take that stance on breakaway organisations in their industry and then turn round and support it in the mining industry by agreeing to have talks with the UDM.

Although the EETPU launched a vicious campaign to crush the breakaway in their industry, it still exists as an underground organisation. If the EETPU are now going to support breakaway unions they may well find that it rebounds on them in their own industry.

In my Labour Party we have decided not to expel UDM members from the Party. Instead we will simply not renew their cards.

If the Labour Party wants to have an investigation into

possible breaches of the rules and constitution of the Party in Liverpool - although I personally don't agree with it - then they would do well to remember that the Labour Party rules and constitution state that you cannot be a member of the Labour Party if you are not a member of a bona fide trade union.

They can't have it both ways. If they are going to tell me that I've got to accept a member who is outside the constitution and rules then I'm not accepting that and they'd better get their investigation team together and send it to investigate Newark.

I'd also like to know who is paying for that investigation in Liverpool. I'm sick and tired of financial appeals and claims of near bankruptcy, etc., and then they spend money on an investigation into Liverpool, while at the same time allowing the rules to be ignored in areas where the UDM has got members.

We've done a lot of fund-raising during the Christmas period in our area. We have supported the Silents strikers and we raised over £2000 for sacked miners at one event we put on.

Now with a new year ahead, I think that the Executive have got to tell the Coal Board that they have had enough of sitting across the table with them when they won't even recognise NUM members in the Notts Area.

NUS conference

By Michele Carlisle

The conference of the National Union of Students in December was a success for the left in Labour Students. Socialist Students in NOLS (SSIN) emerged as the main left opposition in the national union.

As a result of campaigning by SSIN, NUS is now committed to a serious anti-cuts campaign and to a campaign around YTS trainees, despite opposition from the so-called 'Democratic Left' - the majority of NOLS, who control the NUS Executive.

Though SSIN's proposals for action around YTS were passed, more general, ideological motions were defeated. These recognised that unemployment is endemic in capitalist societies; that nationalist solutions - like import controls - are no real solution; and called for NUS to support all workers in struggle.

Lurch

But the call for a Labour vote was overwhelmingly defeated - which seems a bit odd given the policies passed were in general similar to those of the Labour Party.

In the South Africa debate SSIN argued for solidarity with all forces fighting apartheid and that NUS should respond to South African unions' calls for direct links while the sectarian National Executive argued that only the ANC should be supported.

In the days before the debate it became clear that the South Africa debate was going to be very heated. And true to form, Democratic Left supporter Jim Ward from Sheffield University did denounce SSIN as counter-revolutionaries.

But it was difficult to make that charge stick as two of the movers had seen their fathers killed by the apartheid state and they themselves had been active in solidarity work for years. Conference agreed that this was a disgusting slur and backed our challenge to the chair after he had ruled that this abuse was quite in order.

Unfortunately the SWP, summing up the debate on the amendment, gave a sectarian speech that played into the hands of the executive.

Elaine Heffernan denounced Phil Woolas, the President, and by implication everyone else who weren't sure if they agreed with us or not as "non-revolutionaries". This was really stupid as most of them never thought they were in the first place.

It implied that only revolutionaries could support the trade unions and the black consciousness movement. We lost by 63,000 votes which is the equivalent of about 70 delegates.

The SWP put their own interests - screeching their 'revolutionary credentials' and perhaps recruiting one or two people - above winning that debate.

Later on that night we discovered that the delegate from Sheffield who had denounced us had difficulty in recalling who Steve Biko was and did not even know the name of the Black Consciousness 'National Forum' let alone anything about it.

The final debate was perhaps the most important in internal NUS terms. NUS is a federation and local colleges join up to form Areas. These are self-governing; they set

their own fees and constitutions and make their own policy.

It was Manchester and Tyne Tees Areas which organised the October 10th lobby of Tory Party conference which was at least three times the size of the official NUS march in November.

Areas are the key to developing Further Education unions as local universities and polytechnics can devote time and resources to that work.

The Democratic Left tried to centralise Areas. "Political autonomy" they said, "was not useful"! Neither did they think it was too good that areas could levy their own fees. Instead they wanted the Executive to dish out money to target areas for development. Even some of the Democratic Left's own supporters were a little shame-faced at this blatant attempt to impoverish the opposition.

Our position was passed. We argued that bureaucratic manoeuvres were not a substitute for the political will to build areas; that a central 'top up' fund be created and administered through a joint committee of the Executive and Area convenors and that political autonomy was not only useful but essential.

Since Conference the Executive have met and ruled that Joint Committee 'unconstitutional'.

NUS has magnificently failed to build a united anti-cuts campaign. The leadership see NUS as a lobbying



pressure group. Consequently organising real resistance, on the ground, doesn't feature in their thinking.

We argued for a nationally co-ordinated campaign demanding that colleges refuse to pass on cuts. Focusing on budget meetings the National Executive should help student unions to draw up campaigning agreements and demands with the campus trade unions.

The joint campaign leading up to the budget would continue afterwards either to hold the management to it or to prevent cuts being made if a cuts budget is passed. Obviously we also argued that fighting education cuts has to be linked in with local authority fights against rate capping.

This term SSIN will be arguing for this to be a priority campaign, along with the fight against Fowler's planned reduction in benefits and the Government's intention to centrally control teacher training.

SSIN's fringe meeting at conference was successful - over 100 turned up to discuss South Africa with speakers from the Azania Liberation Support Committee.

At the AFA meeting over 80 people came to hear Chris Smith and 'Sparrow' from Manchester Poly and Michele Carlisle from PCL and a large number of those agreed to be part of the AFA network.

SSIN consolidated its position as the only coherent left opposition to the Democratic Left and came away confident for the new term and the Easter conference.

Socialist Organiser

Terror bred by injustice

The attack by Palestinians on Rome and Vienna airports in which 15 civilians died and

over a hundred were injured is an act which must be condemned by all socialists. El Al

check-in desks are not 'legitimate targets' for Palestinians struggling against Israel.

But the crime here was compounded by the fact that in the end the Palestinians fired their guns indiscriminately around the airport lounge.

What has the attack achieved? It will have sickened people all around the world, many of whom are not unsympathetic to the Palestinian cause.

It will almost certainly result in retaliatory measures either by the United States or Israel or both, in which more innocent people will lose their lives.

It will create a political climate in which the United States government in particular will feel freer to step up its military intervention against countries it regards as hostile or as "harbouring terrorists". (Israel has always felt free to do so).

And it will have done absolutely nothing to bring the conflict in the Middle East any nearer to a solution.

Our condemnation of this attack however has nothing in common with the hypocritical outrage of capitalist governments in Europe and North America. It may have been Palestinians whose fingers pulled the pins from the grenades and squeezed the triggers of the automatic guns, but the fundamental responsibility for the deaths and injuries they inflicted lies elsewhere and in particular with the very governments who today are denouncing in such strident tones the PLO and those Arab governments which support the Palestinian cause.

No future

Young Palestinians are growing up in refugee camps where they have no future — no jobs, no land, even their very national identity denied them. Here they grow to hate those who by their indifference to the plight of the Palestinian people condemn future generations to the same uncertain future.

Is it any wonder then that Palestinian guerillas are so willing to embrace almost certain death in what are essentially futile and deadly acts of frustration by those who do not have the power to solve the problem against those countries which they see as perpetuating the injustice suffered by the Palestinian people.

No amount of talk about airport security, no amount of air raid by Israel of by the US into neighbouring Arab countries will prevent other terrible acts like those that happened at Rome and Vienna.

Solution

Militarily, Israel is all powerful. Neither the Palestinians nor all the Arab countries together can impose a military solution to the Palestinian question on Israel. In that situation each generation of Palestinian youth will produce those who, unwilling to accept injustice but unable to end it, will strike blindly at Israeli and US targets.

Only when the rights of the Palestinians are recognised and incorporated into a settlement in the Middle East can we expect an end to armed attacks by Palestinian organisations of the kind we witnessed in Rome and Vienna.

Until that happens the blood that will be shed is as much the responsibility of the US, Israel and the European governments as the young Palestinians who actually pull the trigger.

N Ireland Now Protestants are marching

1969 was the year Northern Ireland began to take the shape we now know it by, the year when the 49 year old Northern Ireland Protestant state fell apart under the blows of the massively alienated Catholic one third of its population.

It looks very likely that 1986 will be the year in which Northern Ireland is again radically reshaped — this time by the massive alienation of its Protestant majority, who are actively hostile to the Anglo-Irish agreement.

1986 may be the Protestants' 1969. The Protestant riot outside the headquarters of the inter-government commission's secretariat at the end of the Young Unionist protest march is a sign of things to come.

The Anglo-Irish agreement is now in full operation. The inter-governmental conference has met more than once and it has passed its first test on the Catholic side — the INLA hunger strike — handsomely.

Three of the 27 men convicted and sentenced to from five years to life in December on the uncorroborated evidence of the informer Kirkpatrick went on hunger strike in protest at the system of convicting people in no-jury courts on the mere say-so of informers who gain a personal advantage out of turning state evidence.

Critics of the South's involvement had predicted that in such a situation the Dublin government would have responsibility without power and could not even criticise the Northern

administration any longer.

In fact Peter Barry, the Irish minister in the inter-governmental body, publicly criticised the 'supergrass' system and the Southern government is publicly pressing to have the one-judge-and-no-jury system replaced by a three-judges-and-no-jury system. Constitutional nationalist leader John Hume publicly supported the hunger strikers.

The result is that the hunger strike was called off on 6 January, seemingly because the prisoners will be allowed a quick appeal.

Initial

Things have been going well for the deal in 26 Counties politics too. The initial stark hostility of Charles J Haughey — which created the threat that Fianna Fail would repudiate the deal if it won the election due within two years — has been modified under pressure from within Fianna Fail and it now seems that a Haughey government will seek to renegotiate rather than repudiate the deal.

More than that, the Anglo-Irish deal has helped split Fianna Fail. A new party, the Progressive Democrats, has been set up by two former Fianna Fail TDs (MPs), Desmond O'Malley and Mary Harney, the latter expelled from Fianna Fail for voting for the Anglo-Irish deal.

The new party is economically right-wing but liberal on social questions like divorce. If the Progressive Democrats take

even a few seats in the next election, it may rule out a Fianna Fail government then.

A poll in December showed that 64% in the South supported the deal, and only about 10% opposed it.

But on the Protestant side everything has gone badly for the deal. Scarcely any Unionist voices have been raised in support of it.

The 15 Unionist Westminster MPs have resigned and will fight a January 'referendum' election in which there is sure to be a very big majority backing their stand against the agreement.

The Protestant paramilitary groups are recruiting and reorganising. In the Belfast shipyards open recruiting to the UDA is taking place.

When Thatcher ignores the vote in the 'referendum' — as she surely will — the next step for the Unionists will probably be the organisation of civil disobedience patterned on the Catholic resistance of the early '70s, when rent and rates and gas and electricity payments were withheld.

Meanwhile the IRA says that any concessions won by the constitutional nationalists have been won by IRA guns and bombs. But they insist that the decisive importance of the deal is in the 26 Counties' recognition of the Six Counties and of Britain's right to be there so long as the majority want Britain there. So the IRA's war will continue.

But the South has long recognised Partition and committed



The Loyalists are on the warpath

itself to wait for a majority in the Six Counties before a united Ireland will be possible.

What is new in Northern Ireland in 1986 is the full-scale southern involvement as Britain's partner in running the Six Counties on every level — social, economic, military and police. Britain formally retains the sovereignty but is bound by legally actionable international treaty to share the overlordship of the Six Counties with the Dublin government.

It is too soon to know whether the involvement of the South will undermine support for the IRA among Northern Catholics. The signs are however that there is a lot of Catholic support for

the deal, a support reflected in the enthusiastic support of the more green-nationalist wing of John Hume's SDLP for the deal.

But there are twice as many Protestants as Catholics in the Six Counties — and most of them are now very hostile to the British government which they believe has betrayed them.

Even comparatively balanced Official Unionist MP Harold McCusker talked in the House of Commons about protesters now having the right to resist the British Army.

Whether they will or not — or rather how many of them will — that is the most important question for Ireland in 1986.

Fund drive: one third of the way there

THIS WEEK the first fruits of one of our new purchases of equipment appear — a reprint of our 'Where We Stand' pamphlet, and the main print run of the new 'Workers' Liberty' magazine; 'Under Whose Flag?'

Both have been printed on our new A3 printing press, and more magazines and pamphlets will follow in the next few weeks.

Meanwhile work on our new offices in Peckham is slightly behind schedule, but we should be installed by the end of the month.

All this means heavy expenditure, and a quick start to fundraising in the New Year is essential. Some local groups have jumble sales, sponsored events, etc., planned, and

tickets for a national Socialist Organiser raffle will be going out this week.

Thanks for donations received to:

Basingstoke readers: £5.47. Cardiff: Martin Barclay £40. Coventry: Jean Lane £10. Durham: Gary Scott £17.80.

Glasgow readers £132; Bob Duncan £10, Gordon McNeil £10, Zamra Kootchaki £3, Richard Gamble £2, Gordon Brewer £2.

Manchester: Sally Page £15, Sarah Cotterill £30, Pete Keenlyside £40, drinks levy £17.02, Nigel Bodman £50, Paul Woolley £30, Tony Dale £60, Carol Hobbs £20, from sale of Christmas cards £20.

Merseyside: Tracy Williams sponsored swim £70.50, Lol Duffy £100, Pete Cashman £90, Tracy Williams £15, Debbie Williams £100.

Nottingham: Dave Gore £50, Liam Conway £50, Ali Asgar £22, Tim Cooper £55.75, readers £10.95, Rosie Sibley £25, Simon Lawlor £27.50, Andrew Garms £10, David Fox £10, Helen Rigby £15, flea market £17.91, social £30.64.

Sheffield: drinks levy £15.95, John Cunningham £5, sale of homebrew £5, Karen Waddington £7.45, social £12.75, Rob Dawber £12.95.

Stoke North: raffle £60.10, Arthur Bough £20, collection at meeting £10, readers £9.90.

York: Cathy Nugent £5.

East London readers £24.30, jumble sale £38, Newham reader £10, Terry Connolly £25.

North London readers £9.80, Sue Himmelweit and Simon Mohun £25, Linda Mouldsdales and Jon Gorvett £87, Martin Thomas £57.

South London: Cheung Siu Ming

£90, Cate Murphy £30, Mark Osborne £16, Tim Anderson £5, South London reader £50.

South West London reader £10, Annie Pike £10.

Tunbridge Wells supporters £18, Ian Hollingworth £10.50, Noel Hibbert £10, Tim Thomas £5.



Local group	Target	So far	Per cent
North London	1600	874.86	55%
Nottingham	1000	684.72	68%
South London	800	613.15	77%
Merseyside	500	475.50	95%
East London	760	356.84	47%
Cardiff	600	334	55%
Manchester	1000	311.35	31%
Glasgow/Edinburgh	560	240	43%
West London	500	200.00	40%
York/Harrogate	300	150.00	50%
Stoke North	200	132.75	66%
Durham/North East	200	100.80	50%
Sheffield	400	74.10	19%
Stoke South	200	50.00	25%
Birmingham	100	42.00	42%
Coventry	350	25.00	7%
Colchester	100	23.80	24%
Basingstoke	560	15.47	3%
Aberdeen	20		
Canterbury	90		
Leeds	60		
Oxford	40		
Southampton	60		
Central/general	5000	506.50	10%
Total	15000	5210.84	35%