

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

NO STRIKE DEALS ^{EEF}_U

Jim Denham looks at no-strike deals — see centre pages



TORIES ARE RACIST SCUM!

This child's crime? Being black!



A LETTER from the Home Office warned last week that if Khuram Azad does not leave Britain immediately, then this highly undesirable and potentially dangerous immigrant is liable to be 'detained' and deported.

As everyone who has been reading the papers knows, Khuram Azad is two years old, a Pakistani child adopted at birth and brought to Britain by his aunt and uncle. His crime appears to be that he is

black.

Now the Home Office has climbed down in the face of the outcry against its inhumanity, and says that Khuram won't be seized and forcibly deported. But it is still insisting that he should leave Britain.

The Tory minister, David Waddington, says he is concerned that if Khuram Azad's parents are allowed to 'get away with it', then other black British citizens, from India,

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Khuram Azad

A STAR CHAMBER?

Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) has made proposals for a new Labour Party disciplinary apparatus.

Until now Party members could be disciplined by either their local Party (CLP) or the NEC. If they were expelled by the NEC, as were Derek Hatton and others recently, then they might have the chance to appeal to Annual Conference.

Now the NEC wants discipline, including expulsions, to be dealt with by a new National Constitutional Committee (NCC), made up of 11 members to be elected every three years by Party conference. Five will be elected by the trade unions; three by the CLPs; one by the socialist societies and two women to be elected by the whole conference.

Out goes the right to appeal to conference; in comes the new offence of engaging 'in a sustained course of conduct prejudicial to the Party'.

CLPD

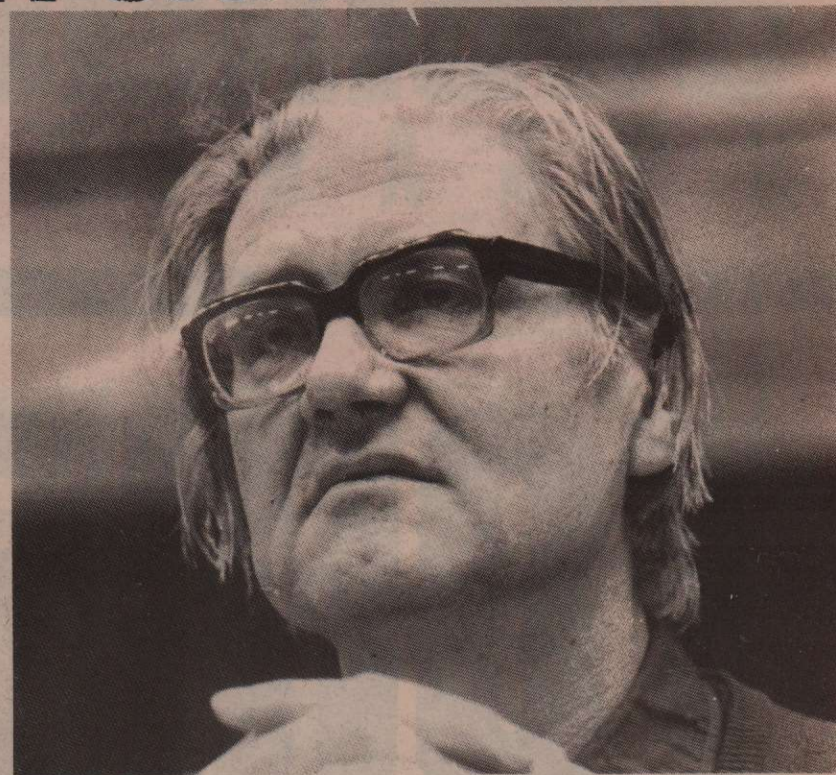
Socialist Organiser asked Vladimir Derer, secretary of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD), for his views on the new changes:

"While welcoming the attempt to rid the NEC of its quasi-judicial powers the NEC's actual proposals fall hopelessly short of establishing a really independent body performing judicial functions. In the event, the NEC's proposals seem to aim to do no more than to make expulsions easier.

The main deficiency of the NEC proposals relate to 1) the composition of the proposed body and, 2) the limitations of its functions.

The members of the so-called National Constitutional Committee will be elected in the same proportions as the NEC: the two women who are to serve on it will be elected by conference as a whole. As a result the trade unions will have an absolute majority on the body.

The CLPD proposed equal numbers from the trade unions and the constituencies. Election is open to only those members of the Party who happen to be serving as delegates to Party Conference, and this will limit the number of qualified personnel and



Vladimir Derer Photo: John Harris.

amount of expertise.

My main objection is to the suggested powers of the NCC. The NEC can either refer matters to the NCC or deal with them itself, but there appears to be no provision to appeal against an NEC decision. Organisations cannot appeal to the NCC — either Party bodies, such as CLPs or groups of Labour Party members such as press

sure groups.

So the NEC can still expel, but the person expelled cannot appeal to the NCC.

The NCC does not have the powers to interpret the Constitution, and this is the most severe deficiency of the proposals. The NEC retains the right to interpret any ambiguities or conflicting interpretations, so they can continue to impose their own interpretations in order to proceed with disciplinary measures against individuals or groups or other Party bodies.

Finally, the NEC is putting its proposals before Conference without any prior consultation with its affiliated organisations, on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. Instead, the NEC should have presented several options for the most important aspects of its proposals — both on the powers and the composition of the NCC

It also means that if they get it through, no amendment will be possible until four years time.

Finally, there's this idiocy about "no member of the Labour Party shall engage in a sustained course of conduct prejudicial to the Party".

In practice it won't make a difference because they've been expelling people under all sorts of pretexts. But it gives legal formula that covers all sorts of cases, and the catch-all avoids going into details. Anything can 'bring the Party into disrepute'.



Korean fence

Some capitalist governments can outdo even Stalinist East Germany with its Berlin Wall.

The South Korean dictatorship is building a 2,000-mile barbed-wire fence, ten feet high, all round the country. The border with North Korea is already heavily guarded, but now the coasts will be fenced in too. The fence is not, like the Berlin Wall, designed to stop people leaving. There are no reliable statistics, but it seems that average living standards in South Korea are substantially higher than in North Korea.

Both Korean econ-

omies have grown at an astounding pace since World War 2, but the South faster than the North, at least since the 1960s. The huge flow of US money into South Korea during the Vietnam War was a big factor in this.

South Korea may also have a more equal income distribution than the North. A revolutionary land reform in the South, implemented by the US military occupation after World War 2 to forestall left-wing revolt, destroyed the landlord class there and created a relatively prosperous small peasantry, thus

putting a floor under wage levels.

South Korea's rulers are putting up their fence in a ludicrous attempt to stop "terrorist attacks" from the North in the run-up to the 1988 Olympic Games. In fact, the main threat to the South Korean government comes not from the North but from the people of the South.

Despite the fierce repression by one of the most efficiently ruthless and well-equipped police states in the world, dissent — especially among students — has become more vocal in recent months.

The Palestinians

93% solid against

93% for one option, 0% for another. No, not an Albanian election, but an opinion poll among Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The poll, co-sponsored by Australian TV and a US newspaper, was carried out with professional care, and showed solid hostility to Israeli rule.

Israel's 'reform' proposal for greater local autonomy under Israeli rule got 0% support. The programme of a confederation linked to Jordan got 1%. 93% saw the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the 'sole and legitimate' representative of Palestinians. 78% consider violence legitimate in pursuit of the Palestinian national cause.

The drop in oil prices over recent years has meant more than Middle East princes and sheikhs cancelling the order for their third Cadillac or drawing on their savings. At the peak, in the

early '80s, there were about four million migrant workers in the Middle East. In Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, they were the majority of the workforce — the

people who did all the basic jobs, while the local people became a new privileged class.

Now around one million, or maybe more, of those migrant workers have had to go home. Gadaffi's Libya has expelled thousands of migrant workers, and in other countries the jobs have just dried up. The wages of those who remain have been halved.

In many poor countries, this is a severe blow: the oilfields represent workers' one chance of reasonably well-paid work. North Yemen, Pakistan and Syria have suffered specially big drops in migrant workers' remittances home; Egypt, another big exporter of labour, has kept its inflow of remittances surprisingly stable.

and China, have already dismantled their state monopolies of foreign trade. This has caused the governments problems through increased imports, but the rulers' view is that the increase in efficiency outweighs those problems.

Iran/Iraq war

100,000 killed

It's six years now since the beginning of the Iran/Iraq war in September 1980.

About 100,000 people have been killed and 150,000 wounded or taken prisoner. The cost of the war to Iraq is estimated at \$180 billion, and to Iran, \$220 billion. The war is still at a

stalemate. Both countries have powerful supporters — Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have bankrolled Iraq, while China and Israel supply arms to Iran — and the big powers, the US and the USSR, are determined to avoid the destabilising results of a clear victory for either side.



Reagan's diplomatic style as seen by The Philadelphia Inquirer

Soviet trade

With a whimper

Not with a ban, but with a whimper. In the early 1920s, a proposal by Stalin to relax the USSR's state monopoly of foreign trade was fiercely, and successfully, opposed by Trotsky on the grounds that it would give a decisive reviving boost to capitalism and fatally undermine the workers' government.

Last week, quietly, a Moscow government which long ago abandoned revolutionary opposition to world capitalism announced the scrapping of that state monopoly of foreign trade.

From 1 January 1987 individual ministries and some large manufacturing enterprises will be able to trade independently.

Other economies based on the model of the USSR, like Poland

BRENT TEACHERS' STRIKE

FALSE 'ANTI RACISM'

By John Hogan

Teachers went on strike last Thursday at the 375 pupil Sudbury Infants School in Brent to demand the reinstatement of headmistress Maureen McGoldrick. She was suspended by the Labour-controlled council for allegedly making a racist remark to Brent Education Officer Shelagh Szulc, during a telephone conversation about replacement staff at the end of the summer term.

Six-hour

Since then a six-hour meeting of the school governors has investigated the allegation and found "no substance" in it. Nevertheless, on Friday, 29 August, a secret council meeting decided that Maureen McGoldrick should face a full council appeal scheduled for next Friday.

Parents and pupils at the school have thrown their weight behind the teachers' strike.

A statement by the Sudbury Parents Action Group declared "We are affronted that our governors, who spent over six hours hearing written and oral evidence and cross-examination, and who came to an unanimous decision on that evidence, have been totally ignored. It appears to us that the council are now determined to get the result it wants, to ignore the findings of a lawfully constituted governing body and any opinion contrary to its own".

A spokeswoman for Brent council said they could not yet comment on their position before the appeal was

heard on Friday, but felt they would be vindicated afterwards when they could publish the full details of their case and their "concern about the running of the school". For the moment "we are operating the procedures for discipline that have been agreed with the NUT".

But whatever the details about "the running of the school", certain points are clear from existing reports. Maureen McGoldrick is a most unlikely racist. Her school is predominantly black and she clearly has wide support among the parents. Reports say she regularly wears a sari to work, and encourages other teachers to do the same; and that she helped get a child suffering racial harassment transferred to her school.

Five of the school's teachers are black, and they are on strike in her support. The black teacher who appears to have been the subject of the original phone call in which the allegedly racist remark was supposed to have been made now works at Sudbury Infants and she is also on strike.

Denies

McGoldrick vehemently denies the charge, and says that the phone call was about getting properly qualified and permanent staff at the school.

According to one view in Brent, the reason the council has singled her out for disciplinary action is not because of an alleged remark, but because she is seen by the Labour-run council as a 'troublemaker', demanding proper resources and qualified staff for her school.

There is another element in the background. One of the local Labour Parties, Brent North, has recently experienced the use of wild accusations of racism to blackmail political people and substitute for political discussion. Spread to the Labour council, such an attitude and atmosphere would be calculated to blow up the incident of a phone call and possible misunderstanding into a case of straightforward victimisation.

The NUT leaders are negotiating with the council. They have applied for a High Court injunction to stop the new inquiry taking place.

Support the teachers' strike! Reinstate Maureen McGoldrick!

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A million jobs, but how?

"All eyes on polling day" was the motto at the Trades Union Congress in Brighton last week.

TUC president Ken Gill summed it up: "With the prospect of another term of Mrs Thatcher, I think the trade union movement is prepared to put up with almost anything, achieve any level of unity...to make sure that doesn't happen again".

But how can trade unionists work for a Labour victory? What do we do in the meantime? And how do we make sure that a new Labour government does not do what Wilson and Callaghan did in 1975-9, continuing on tracks laid down by the Tories?

Neil Kinnock's speech to the Congress on Tuesday had one positive message. He put definite figures on his plans for a Labour government creating jobs. One million new jobs, he said, would be created in two years. This would be part of a five-year medium-term plan and a ten-year longer-term plan.

But he didn't say how the new jobs would be created.

By cutting working hours? But Labour's nominal commitment to a 35 hour week has vanished from view.

Restoring

By restoring Tory cuts in public services, and expanding them? Kinnock has specifically refused to promise to restore Tory cuts, and his Brighton speech said "Our absolute commitment to combatting unemployment...has direct implications for the use of funds in every other area of public spending."

Since the Labour leaders now want an increase in military spending (supposedly to reassure voters that nuclear disarmament doesn't make Labour 'soft' on military matters), this can only mean that many Tory cuts in public services will stay, or that more will be made.

Will a Labour government support workers who occupy their workplaces to fight cuts and closures, by underwriting continued production under public ownership and workers' control? Will it launch a big programme of training and re-training at trade union rates of pay?

Neil Kinnock indicated nothing of the sort. He did not even speak about the notion of a Labour government requiring nationalised industries to restore the jobs cut under the Tories. This notion, floated in the week



Top: a message from the Bakers' Union. Above: the AEU's 'New Realist' leaders, Bill Jordan and Gavin Laird. Photos: Stefano Cagnoni, IFL.

before conference, was quickly shelved when nationalised industry bosses complained.

Instead, Kinnock based everything on the wonderful powers of "consensus" — "a Labour government that operates in concert with workers and managers". He argued that a Labour government telling managers what to do would be as bad as the government dictating to trade unions. "That partnership does not mean state control of the unions or colonisation of management. Either would be fundamentally wrong".

For a Labour government to try to

get the wealth produced by the working class used in the interests of the working class would be as wrong as that government suppressing the fundamental rights of trade unions! Or so Kinnock argued.

Yet in fact none of the measures needed to create a million new jobs in two years — let alone full employment — could be carried through without taking on the supposed "rights" of property and wealth.

Remember France! The Socialist Party government elected in 1981 promised a 35 hour week. It started by reducing the work week from 40 to 39

hours. That provoked such a storm of class struggle that the government then abandoned the rest of the programme!

In fact Neil Kinnock was not as even-handed as his phrases suggested. He is after all demanding state control of trade unions, in the form of a law requiring ballots before strikes. And as Labour Weekly put it, "His message was that jobs would come first and the price to be paid might have to be restraint by some unions in pay bargaining."

A government cannot be a neutral umpire in the class struggle — and Neil Kinnock was saying that a Kinnock Labour government would be on the side of the boss class, though it would be smoother and more accommodating than the Tories.

Repeat

This is just a repeat of the 1973-4 Social Contract, trade unionists are asked to submit to constraints in return for social improvements, while no definite measures to win those improvements against ruling class opposition are promised. Or, to take a more up-to-date example, it is like Bob Hawke's Labor/union 'Accord' in Australia.

The outcome of such attempts to manage capitalism is always the same. The social improvements are not delivered. But trade unionists are asked to submit to more and more restrictions as capitalism gets into worse trouble.

Ken Gill is right: the trade unions are in deep trouble, and ready to clutch at anything that looks like a hope. Unionisation has gone down from 51% of the workforce in 1979 to 39% today. Unions are particularly weak in areas where industry is growing. There is only 20% trade unionism in East Anglia. 63% of US electronics companies in 'Silicon Glen' in Scotland are non-union. Non-unionism is also widespread in the M4 belt, west of London.

In 1970 66% of trade unionists voted Labour; in 1983 only 39%. According to the latest opinion polls, that percentage has recovered only to 47%.

But the TUC applause for Kinnock was the politics of desperation. It's trying the same old consensus approach yet again, only this time bowing a little bit lower to the bosses. It won't work.

To defend the working class now against Thatcher; to rally and galvanise the labour movement so that it can pull out a Labour majority at a general election; and to put pressure on a Labour government to act in the interests of the working class, we need a strategy of class struggle.

RACISM FROM SPLIT-OFF UNION

The government's newly-announced visa restrictions on black people coming to Britain from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Ghana comes after months of pressure by the Immigration Service Union (ISU).

The ISU is the trade union for the majority of immigration officers. It broke away from the SCPS claiming the latter was becoming 'too political'.

Over the past year the number of 'refusals of entry' to those coming from the Indian sub-continent has risen dramatically.

Between April and July 1985 an average of 277 people a month were being refused entry.

By January-March 1986 the refusals had peaked to 672 per month.

In April 1986 new Home Office guidelines were introduced to restrict the rights of MPs to intervene. In most cases an MP's intervention is the last chance for those refused entry.

By June the Home Office admitted that it was responding to pressure on Heathrow's facilities.

In July the SCPS immigration officers invited the Daily Express to expose the terrible conditions awaiting examination and detention at Heathrow. Meanwhile ISU members had also given a story to the Express. This suggested that MPs' interventions were leading to hundreds of illegal immi-

Race & Class

grants 'sneaking into Britain'.

The final result of the Express story was a picture showing the legal immigrants sleeping on the floor — but the story was entitled the 'Scandal of the vanishing immigrants'.

An ISU member has written in the

Heathrow magazine urging an end to MPs' power to intervene. It threatened industrial action if nothing was done about the visitors. This was to be decided on September 2.

So promptly, on 1 September, the Cabinet introduced the new restriction to five countries.

What is clear in this case is that further delays, frustrations and longer queues will be the result for black visitors to the UK from these countries.

It is also clear that the ISU has acted in a way which can only be seen as racist. By using the 'gutter' Express to scandalise immigrants it has furthered anti-immigrant sentiments in the country.

A genuine trade union response would be to demand that they do away with the interrogating techniques of immigration control, set up a proper appeals procedure and step up recruitment to ease the 'pressure' on the immigration officers.

Racist scum

From page 1

Pakistan and Bangladesh, may go out and bring back other adopted black children, thus putting the whole future of Britain in jeopardy.

So two-year-old Khuram Azad has to be sent packing, cradle and all.

This nasty business should not lead us to be unfair to the Home Office minister, David Waddington, and to the Home Office permanent officials who are hounding Khuram Azad and trying to fling him back halfway across the world. You may think they have shown themselves to be insensitive, dehumanised Tory brutes. And you're probably right about that.

But those are essential qualities for those whose job it is to run Britain's perpetual racist witchhunt. And that's exactly what the Home Office minister and officials who think they have decided Khuram Azad's fate do for a living — run a never-ending witchhunt against black people.

What they are trying to do to Khuram is not merely being done because they are heartless brutes. The heartlessness of these officials is an instrument of Britain's democratically enacted racist immigration laws, which more or less frankly discriminate against black people.

Monstrous

The monstrous decision to uproot this two year old child and tear him away from the people he has learned to think of as his father and mother, and to tear these two British citizens away from the child they have reared since birth — that decision is perfectly in accord with Britain's immigration laws, which are racist to the core.

The Tory minister and the Home Office officials have got a strong case according to the letter, spirit and logic of those laws for kicking baby Khuram out. There is little place in Thatcher's Britain for people with the wrong skin colour, whether they are aged 2 or 80.

The Home Office's job is to 'protect' Britain from people such as Khuram Azad. That's what the immigration laws created since 1961 by Tory and Labour governments alike (and still supported in their fundamentals by the Labour leaders) say. Waddington and his Home Office officials are trying to treat baby Khuram accordingly. That's the job they are paid to do.

They have brought such an exceptional degree of brutal stupidity to the handling of the Khuram Azad case that it has backfired on them, and the outcry against the hounding of this child may force them to leave him and his parents alone. Good!

Suspended

But the removal order on Khuram Azad has only been suspended so far. He has not yet been granted leave to stay with his parents.

The declared intention of large numbers of Asians in Bradford is to resist the police and to refuse to let them take Khuram whatever the minister and the Home Office finally decide. This deserves the support of the labour movement.

The horrible spectacle of a baby being hounded and threatened with deportation has called forth cries of disagreement and disgust even from some of Britain's racist press. They are objecting to the logical application of the racist immigration laws they support in principle and in fact.

The fight to keep Khuram Azad with his parents is important. But even if Waddington and the Home Office bow to the outcry over Khuram, the same racist immigration laws will still be in operation, the perpetual witchhunt will go on.

The labour movement must demand that the Labour leaders break their common front with the Tories on immigration and commit themselves clearly to scrap immigration controls.

Arguing federalism

A recent debate in my Labour Party — Nottingham East — cast some light on the discussion on Ireland in recent issues of SO.

A motion was presented condemning the lack of women's rights in Northern Ireland, calling for an end to strip searching, blaming the entire situation on partition and the British occupation, and, finally, calling for self-determination.

In amending the resolution to allow for a federal structure I faced a great deal of hostility.

We cannot tell the Irish what to do, came the cry. Obviously, said I, but we can seek to influence the debate as international socialists.

Unconvinced, my opponents returned with economic arguments. Britain still has capitalist interests in Ireland. Adverts for firms to go to the North are common; cheap labour is a major incentive. In fact British imperialism controls the whole of Ireland, including

the 26 counties.

In this scenario the Republic of Ireland doesn't exist, it is dominated by British imperialism. The logic of this is that no nations exist. All nations are dominated by imperialism — not British but international.

The final argument was that federalism puts conditions on troops out and such conditions imply a progressive role for the troops. SO should avoid falling into this simple but dangerous trap.

Federalism is not so much a condition of troops out as a facilitator for troops out. It helps bring it closer because it aims to provide a possible framework for working class unity in Ireland. It has nothing to do with implying a progressive role for the troops.

In any case, self determination is a condition of troops out.

In the unlikely event of troops out being realised without a political settle-

ment, civil war would follow — prospects for socialists and the Irish working class would be set back for generations.

In demanding that the British disarm the Protestants before they, Sinn Fein themselves acknowledge this reality.

By default, therefore, Sinn Fein also acknowledge a progressive role for the troops.

Thus, our programme implies no progressive role for the troops out at any stage, whilst Socialist Action and the International group cannot fulfill their programme without the progressive involvement of British forces (to disarm the Protestants).

The amendment I proposed was defeated, but many non-aligned left wingers were partly convinced by our arguments.

LIAM CONWAY,
Nottingham



Lenin and Trotsky with soldiers who had taken part in suppression

LENIN'S COUNTER-REVOLUTION?

The claim made by Rigby — that the Kronstadt sailors of 1921 were not those of 1917 has been frequently advanced by Trotskyists, but never supported by evidence. An abundance of evidence of the contrary has been given, not least by the Kronstadt Commune itself, but also by Rosmer, Ciliga, Ida mett, Serge and Avrich.

I confined myself simply to pointing to the fact that the Bolshevik government itself decreed in 1917, that because of the importance of the Kronstadt fortress to the protection of the capital, none of the revolutionary sailors should under any pretext be moved from Kronstadt, a decree that was never rescinded and was fully implemented.

The only new troops and sailors were replacements for the dead and the 4% of the garrison that did not vote for the demands of the Kronstadt Soviet were all drawn from these replacements. The 1921 revolutionary sailors therefore had a record — pace Rigby — as tried and tested revolutionaries; and it is this that adds weight to their insistence that you do not defend a revolution by betraying its fundamental principles; they were then — as they always have been — the real defenders of the revolution.

Amalgam

Rigby should realise that his argument boils down to an amalgam: Kronstadt sailors opposed the government as did the counter-revolutionaries; therefore, given the opportunity, the sailors would have sided with the counter-revolutionaries. This is the stuff of 1920s and 1930s Stalinist arguments against Trotskyism. If it is valid in the one case it is valid in both, if it is false in one case it is false in both.

His imputation that the Kronstadt sailors were less committed than the Bolsheviks to the international revolution is either indicative of ignorance or is deliberate falsehood. This was the time when in Germany, the KPD and the Comintern Representative were turning their backs on workers' risings in order to further their collaboration

with a cross-class coalition government (i.e. a Popular Front). The sailors of Willemsshaven and those of Kronstadt sought the same objective and acted in solidarity.

The objective fact of the October Revolution was workers' power through the soviets. The Bolsheviks constituted a large part, but not the whole, of the subjective face that went with that workers' power. When Trotsky talked of a "river of blood" "separating the party of Lenin from the party of Stalin", he was right that the party was not consciously counter-revolutionary until after the death of Lenin.

But an equal river of blood separated the soviets of 1917 from those of 1924, and even the power and role of the soviets in 1917 from that of those in 1924.

Process

Objectively, that was the counter-revolution. Stalin's actions in taking the counter-revolution into the very party itself merely set the seal on a process that was already virtually complete within society as a whole.

Stalin may have made the process irreversible, that is a different matter.

Rigby again resorts to the amalgam in trying to pretend that those who admire the Kronstadters are claiming that the soviet revolution should not have been defended. Reformists deplore the October Revolution and say it should not have been defended; Leftists deplore the betrayals by Lenin of the revolution and support revolutionary action against the Bolsheviks: therefore they say the revolution should not be defended and are reformist.

Again this is the argument that Stalinists used against Trotsky.

Bough also claims didactically but with no evidence that the Kronstadt sailors of 1921 were not those of 1917, and also fails to note that I took the trouble to disprove the claim in my first letter.

I did not stress Trotsky's individual role in the suppression; I have not read

the Tribune article and accepted SO's claim that it was hypocritical. I was at pains to quote Lenin's insistence that there were bureaucratic deformations (and incidentally he didn't say "workers' state" he said "workers' dominated state capitalist state"). So most of Bough's letter is irrelevant.

But what makes Bough's letter classic is his claim that not until 1938 were complaints made, and that this was done by agents of Stalin. Sylvia Pankhurst in Britain, Otto Ruhle and others in Germany, the Anarchist International Working Men's Association internationally — all published the details immediately after the rising in pamphlet form. The IWMA and various other anarchist groups republishing it at frequent intervals thereafter.

It was a matter of considerable debate in Bordigist and allied circles.

What happened in 1938 was that people like Ciliga and Victor Serge, who had suffered as Trotskyists in Stalin's concentration camps and had escaped from Russia, insisted that the matter be raised in Trotskyist circles. To describe people who underwent the torture that Ciliga and Serge suffered, for their loyalty to Trotsky, as agents of Stalin is nauseous.

Fraternally,
LAURENS OTTER
Salop

Bankrupt

EVEN IF Derek Hatton does 'flaunt his lifestyle', as you claim, at least he doesn't 'flaunt' bankrupt, reformist ideas, or go in for personal, character attacks.

'Socialists' falling to the level of the Tory gutter press! You must be proud to be tail-ending the 'Sun'. And attacking him for asking the workers of Liverpool to strike to defend themselves — does this mean you attack Scargill for leading the miners?

Showing your true colours, I think.
STEVE REVINS,
Stafford LPYS.

GRAFFITI

Phone cuts

Another price rise for most phone users, and a price cut for big business.

British Telecom's new rates of charge will, they say, raise domestic phone bills by about 1.9%, and cut business bills by up to 1.4%.

Tory economic policy is the root cause. Privatised British Telecom is changing its rates so as better to compete with its rival, Mercury, which provides telephone services only on heavily-used business routes.



Hard times

Invest £100,000 in bonds or equities in the City, and in the first seven months of 1986 you would gain about £15,000.

Changes in exchange rates mean that US investors converting their money back into dollars at the end of the period would have done even better.

Investing in equities in Japan, they would have made \$60,000 on a stake of \$100,000: in bonds, \$32,000.

It's not hard times for everyone.



Tyndall

FCS

SEARCHLIGHT has also reported recently on activity within the Tory right wing by fascists — members in this case of John Tyndall's British National Party.

Stuart Milson and James Coakley Boyce, who have been active as virulent racists at Essex University, recently resigned from the Federation of Conservative Students to join the BNP.

The FCS leaders — ultra-Thatcherites but not fascists — have played down fascist influences in their ranks, and promised to expel infiltrators. However, Milson has claimed that many Tory students sympathise with him; and his story is backed up by Austin Redmond, a Tory student publicity officer at North Staffs Poly.

Searchlight also reports on "the BNP establishing contacts with a section of Young Monday Club".

Debt crisis

Remember the debt crisis? It's still there. Latin America's foreign debt outstanding is now \$368 billion — more than the \$310 billion it was in 1982 when Mexico's failure to meet payments signalled the start of the crisis.

According to the Inter-American Development Bank, Latin American countries have spent almost \$100 billion more in debt service payments than they have received in foreign finance since 1982. This wipes out the entire net inflow of capital during the bank-lending boom of the 1970s.

The wolves of bankruptcy have been kept at the door by drastic austerity measures — chopping imports by about a third, slashing wages, re-

moving price subsidies on basic goods, and boosting unemployment — but any new disturbance in the world economy could destroy even that shaky balance.

Strikes

New strike figures published by the government last week put the number of strikes in progress in the 12 months to June 1986 at 892.

It's the lowest figure for any 12 months since September 1938 to September 1939.

Remember the people who used to say that Britain would be prosperous if only we had fewer strikes?

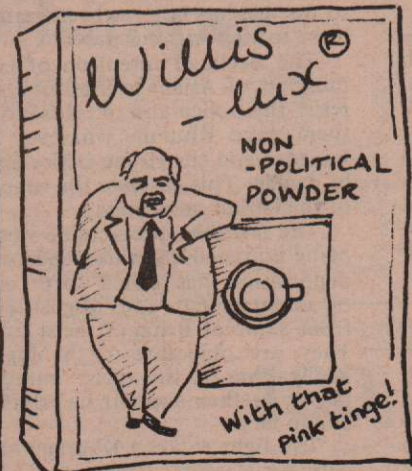
Solidarity

The right-wing, and rather secretive 'Labour Solidarity' group advised supporters in its private newsletter to put amendments to Labour Party conference resolutions demanding the banning of Socialist Organiser.

It seems they still

have few takers in the party rank and file. No such amendment appears in the final agenda. There is only one resolution, and two amendments, supporting the purge of Militant, as against dozens opposing the witch-hunt.

FOR A WHITE WASH, GET WILLIS-LUX



Willis-Lux really washes whiter than white, washing out those stubborn, grimy brains. (Especially gentle on woolly-backs) Used with Kinnockconditioner, it's guaranteed

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Two strikes: which is the future?

By Paddy Dollard

FROM ONE point of view it was the sort of workers' victory we haven't had often in Britain for some years now, but which was common in the early '70s.

Management tried to control the workers in a big factory. Over a thousand workers struck. The management backed down from the confrontation, settling for a 'compromise' that gave the workers most of what they wanted. Militancy had won.

This workers' victory was at Short Brothers engineering works in East Belfast. And to win it the workers had to risk their jobs in an area where unemployment is over 20% (it's 13% in Britain).

Here the parallels end, for the issue between bosses and workers at Shorts was the right of the Protestant 95% of Shorts workforce to display Unionist bunting inside the factory. The Catholic 5% of the workforce rightly consider the presence of this bunting to be a hostile sectarian act directed against them.

Under the combined pressure of the USA, which provides important contracts for Shorts, and the British government, Shorts management decided to try to take things in hand.

The same management has been nominally committed to employ more Catholics for years. Yet the proportion of Catholics and Protestants remains roughly what it has always been. It became urgent to deal with sectarian demonstrations when — in what looked like the prelude to an attempt to drive out the minority of Catholic workers — the clock cards of Catholic workers were removed and it was buzzed around the aircraft factory that some of them were IRA sympathisers.

Trappings

That was when management issued the ultimatum to the workers to remove the Unionist trappings from the walls of the workshops.

The workers' response was another example of the nightmarish amalgam of bigoted communal politics and working-class militancy that has been on display in Northern Ireland intermittently since the workers at Harland and Wolffs shipyard struck early in 1971 and marched through the centre of Belfast to demand the introduction of internment without trial for Republicans.

Decades of sectarian job preferment have given the Protestants an industrial predominance greater by far than their two-to-one majority over the Catholics in the whole Six County population.

The virtual collapse of the Six Counties' manufacturing industry — 40% of the jobs have gone — has hit Protestants most, since they had more of the jobs to lose, but it has not shaken their dominance in what industry remains.

Northern Ireland has also recently

Age of struggle

From page 12

against having a dust up every now and then about money — it wasn't about greed and materialism. It was about 59 year old men fighting on the picket line in order to save a job for some 15 or 16 year old down our streets.

Lost

We know why we lost — we lost because some of those at the TUC and in the labour movement failed to respond in our hour of need.



Peter Robinson with Ian Paisley and supporters, Dundalk, 14 August. Photo: Derek Speirs, Report.

seen industrial action of a better sort, when 4000 civil servants walked out in protest at sectarian threats to murder their fellow-workers. This province-wide movement was triggered when civil servants at Lisburn DHSS office walked out in response to a threat against Catholics working there from the so-called Ulster Freedom Fighters, a nom de guerre for the legal Ulster Defence Association.

What happened at Shorts is typical of the whole past of the working-class movement in Northern Ireland, a movement riddled with sectarianism and crippled by it. Does the civil servants' strike against sectarianism show us what the future will be like?

Can the working class in Northern Ireland unite across the sectarian divide?

Without a doubt the workers should unite; they should get together as a class across the sectarian divide; the trade unions should fight for equality of employment and against sectarianism. But the bitter truth is that the odds are very heavily against this happening, in the foreseeable future, on a wide enough scale to affect developments.

The civil servants' strike was one of the most hopeful signs in Northern Ireland for a long time. The other 'signs' in Northern Ireland are very grim.

The traditional Unionist marching season is over without there having been any spectacular blow-up, but that is partly because the RUC and the Army bent with the Protestant wind — as they did, for example, when they let a sectarian march go through a largely Catholic area of Portadown, as a 'compromise'. The mass Protestant opposition to the ten-month-old

Anglo-Irish agreement remains implacable.

Unionists have adjourned local councils and are planning to withdraw from them. The Ulster Clubs have declared a rates and TV licences strike.

While the Ulster Clubs and the UDA continue to grow, the Unionist parties are in disarray, especially the Official Unionist Party. The UDA claims to have 15,000 members — which, translated into British political terms, is equivalent to 900,000. The largely rural Ulster Clubs cannot be far behind it.

The constitutional nationalists of the SDLP have offered talks to the Protestants about setting up a 'devolved' government in Belfast, but the Protestants are not interested so long as it is within the framework of the Anglo-Irish agreement, which gives Dublin a major political voice in the running of Northern Ireland. And the SDLP is not interested in devolved government without the Anglo-Irish agreement...

The Provisional IRA continues its military campaign, and that campaign has taken an ugly sectarian turn with threats to kill any worker whose job includes any form of direct or indirect servicing of the British army or the RUC.

200 council workers struck in Derry after the Provisionals shot a young council electrician, Mervyn Bell, dead.

The Provisionals have for a long time extended their definition of military targets to include all state personnel, right down to former members of the Ulster Defence Regiment. Such a definition claws in thousands of Protestants who are far from being hardcore military people, and inevitably has a sectarian dimension.

The new threat means spreading the definition even further to a very large range of workers, both Catholic and Protestant, but especially Protestant. There is no way this could not lead to an intensification of sectarianism.

And so it did. The Provisional IRA's threats produced counter-threats from the specialists in naked sectarian assassination, the so-called 'Ulster Freedom Fighters' wing of the legal Ulster Defence Association.

This symmetrical dual threat helped to trigger the civil servants' strike. However, a big campaign of sectarian killings is more likely to strengthen the IRA and UDA in their respective communities because it will seem to increase the value of their protection.

It would be wrong to see the IRA and the UDA as identical movements. The IRA is based on the long-oppressed Catholic community, and a struggle for liberation by that community which is fundamentally just. The UDA defends the reactionary cause of Protestant supremacy.

But the latest IRA threat is thoroughly reactionary, implicitly sectarian, and indefensible from any socialist or working-class point of view.

Just as the affair at Shorts sums up the tragedy and the paradoxes of the divided Northern Ireland working class, the events in Dundalk a few weeks back, when Peter Robinson and a large group of militant Orangeists came to the town for Robinson's court appearance there, can be taken as representing on a small scale the terrible danger of sectarian civil war that looms as a real threat before the people of Ireland, Catholic and Protestant alike. The Orangeists clashed with Republicans and were showered with stones and petrol-bombs.

It was a commonplace scene from Northern Ireland, but something new in the South. Almost symbolically, it showed the conflict creeping south.

Justice is on the side of the Northern Ireland Catholics who rebel against the undemocratic partition of Ireland and the fact that they are trapped in a Protestant-dominated state. Yet just to side with the Catholics is not enough. Within the existing political framework, they are in a blind alley.

They cannot possibly overwhelm the Protestants, even if that were desirable; at most they can trigger the catastrophe of all-out civil war. They are isolated even from the Southern workers who, though mostly Catholic and nationalist, do not have and cannot have any wish to be dragged into a war with the Protestants.

Working-class unity is difficult to create: but the conclusion that we should instead just cheer on the nationalist struggle, in the hope that working-class unity will come after some nationalist victory, is a blueprint for disaster.

A democratic programme is needed which recognises the two basic democratic rights: the right of the people of Ireland as a whole to determine their own future, and the right of Ireland's Protestant minority not to be overrun by a Catholic-sectarian state. That means British withdrawal and a united Ireland, with some federal system to give local autonomy to the Protestant heartland area.

An empty Sunday

By Jim Denham

There used to be something very satisfying about buying a Sunday paper (usually the Observer or the Sunday Times) and strolling down for a hair of the dog and a quiet browse at the pub.

It may be my imagination but these days the Sunday press is a pretty poor show.

The Sunday Times, of course, is no longer acceptable from any point of view as a result of the Dirty Digger's Wapping antics, and the Observer falls apart in your trembling hands to reveal an unreadable Business/Sport Section (what is the connection between Business and Sport?), a desperately-seeking-trendies Colour Supplement, and about three pages of anything vaguely resembling news.

Regular readers of Press Gang will know that my standard formula is to seize upon a burning issue of the day and then take a look at how one particular paper handles it. The reasons for this approach have more to do with economics than with style, but I forgot to buy the Financial Times last week so I thought I would buy the entire non-Murdoch Sunday press and see what they had to say about recent events in Brighton.

This cunning strategy rather backfired on me when I discovered that most of them didn't have anything to say about the Congress. Plenty about the sexual antics of Grace Jones and Ari Onassis (respectively, of course), a lot of sound advice about how to be an 'Incredible Hulk' (I think I fit the bill — according to the Mail on Sunday — being short, unshaven, badly dressed and ill-mannered).

Press GANG

But thoughtful analysis of the trade union bureaucrats' seaside shenanigans was decidedly thin on the ground. "And a good thing too" I can hear Norman Willis cry, remembering the less than ecstatic notices he received after last year's performances.

The reasons for the papers' apparent lack of interest is not, of course, difficult to fathom. There was no big bust-up. Eric Hammond was gently rapped over the knuckles, while Brenda and Tony carried on their vigorous campaign for an honourable hand-washing arrangement at Wapping.

Neil Kinnock promised the working class a hard time, reminded the union barons that they're not the power in the land they once were and assured the bosses that they had nothing to fear from his New Model Labour Party. Unity — of the backslapping variety — was the order of the day. Dog bites man as far as the media is concerned.

Even so the Sunday Telegraph's eccentric editor Peregrine Worsthorne (a man who sincerely believes that the devil is at large on this planet working through international communism) was not happy: "Both (the TUC and Labour) claim to want a free economy very similar to the present one, except that it would bear less heavily on those at the bottom of the heap" notes Worsthorne.

However, both Mr Kinnock and Mr Willis have misunderstood the real nature of the problem: "For what many of them (the poor and unemployed that is) need is not so much to be retrained as to be reborn".

Sundays may soon however be reinvigorated by the appearance of two new titles. A group of left-wing journalists (including John Pilger) have secured sufficient backing to go ahead with the long-awaited News on Sunday project, which may at least be worth reading.

And a man who once did time for "living off immoral earnings" and makes no secret of the fact that he made his money out of pornography has announced the imminent arrival of the Sunday Sport. This publication will apparently fill the gap left in the market when the News of the World went all high-brow and up-market.

I can't wait...

Jim Denham looks

NO STRIKE DEALS

The "New Realists" of the TUC are looking to shackle their members to binding arbitration, no strike deals. What are the implications for effective shop floor organisation to resist management's erosion of working conditions in the new industries?

"Of course there are people, sects and nuts, who actually believe that in being involved in strikes workers find out how to struggle and this leads them on for the revolution. My view is that the trade union function is to deal with matters in a way which doesn't involve workers in industrial action."

Eric Hammond

In January of this year, the workers at Bowman Webber, a firm making mirrors in Harlow, struck for two weeks over the sacking of three workers, one of whom had been elected an EETPU shop steward the night before. What was unusual about this action was that it took place in a company that was covered by a no-strike deal with the EETPU. The sacked workers were reinstated, but the story has an interesting postscript: shortly after the strike, pendulum arbitration (the EETPU's favoured form of "strike substitute") was used to resolve another dispute over pay for double-shift working, and it came down in favour of the workforce — the only occasion when this has happened in recent British history. Even the Guardian commented that, "whatever

deals are made between unions and management, workers are still going to find that collectively withdrawing their labour will from time to time be necessary".

The EETPU is, of course, the best known exponent of the single union, no-strike deal. But it is not alone: the AEU is openly emulating the electricians, and the GMB and the TGWU are tagging along as well, though the latter two unions have yet to formally endorse the "no-strike" position.

Logical

The single union, no-strike deal is the logical conclusion of "New Realism" and few union leaders would disagree with the basic philosophy behind it, as expounded by Eric Hammond in the quotation above. Where the EETPU and the AEU have broken ranks with the rest of the TUC "New Realists" is in explicitly renouncing the strike weapon and substituting binding "pendulum" arbitration in their agreements. This means that production must continue through all stages of the dispute procedure, and if no settlement can be reached "in company", leads to binding arbitration as the final stage. At this last stage of the procedure, an "independent" arbi-



EETPU rank and file at Wapping

trator (usually from ACAS) is brought in to choose between the final positions of the employer and the union — hence the "pendulum" tag. Supporters of the "pendulum" claim that it encourages moderation and "reasonableness" on both sides, with employers putting forward their most generous offers and unions their most modest claims. In practice, however, the union side's moderation is rarely matched by the employer, and the employer almost always wins.

The TGWU and the GMB currently reject the pendulum, but there are more ways of killing a pig than stuffing it with strawberries. John Edmunds at the GMB has launched a glossy single-union package deal to entice high-tech employers with arrangements designed to create "industrial relations consensus", including complete work flexibility, a comprehensive disputes procedure, and guaranteed "continuous production". Last year, the TGWU signed a single-union deal at Norsk-Hydro Fertiliser (formerly Fisons) in Immingham. This was arguably a more treacherous deal than anything yet done by the EETPU or AEU, in that it took place in an



They actually believe in selling out workers: Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report.



Residents march to Southwark council offices to present petition against sale of solvents to children.

DRUGS: ATTACK THE CAUSE, NOT EFFECTS

By Trudy Saunders

Last week two Asians were remanded in custody "for their own safety" when their newsagents shop was attacked by a gang of whites. The reason for the attack? The sale of a bottle of correction fluid to a 14 year old youth who died after inhaling the fluid.

The Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985 created "an offence in respect of supplying to a person under 18 years of age a substance which is likely to be inhaled to cause intoxication".

It is of course true that most shopkeepers will sell anything to anybody in order to make a profit and are not deterred by the law which is difficult to prove in any case. However what is disturbing about this case is that while many youths have died from the effects of solvent abuse this is the first newsagents to have been attacked. I believe it is no coincidence that it is an Asian shop in a predominantly white area.

Thatcher's campaign against drug misuse is, as we all know, nothing more than an attempt to pull votes. The posters all say "Heroin screws you up" and the Tories make a big noise about the evil pushers of smack. In reality the Tories and their police force are concentrating their attacks on the black community.

In South London recently, raids on the black community were made in Brixton and Deptford. Large numbers were arrested "on suspicion" of possessing cannabis!

Meanwhile those who wholesale in the deadly drug heroin are safe in their Dulwich mansions.

"Get the pushers" cries the bosses' press and the would-be socialist tendency Militant. Militant actively encourage the setting up of community vigilante groups to seek out heroin dealers and chase them off the housing estates of Great Britain. Fine! Good! Except that the big time heroin dealers

do not live in crummy council flats.

They are safe behind closed circuit TV in upmarket residential areas elsewhere. The vigilante groups are chasing off addicts who peddle heroin in order to finance their own addiction. These people need help more than anything else.

In any case, to emphasise the role of the pusher misses the point. The reasons for glue sniffing and heroin addiction amongst working class youth are nothing less than poverty, unemployment, poor housing and boredom — all symptoms of the grotty capitalist society in which we live.

"But", I hear you cry, "what about Olivia Channon?" What about her? Perhaps being too rich screws you up!

I neither know nor care why the upper classes take drugs — they have a choice. To a young working class youth with nothing to look forward to the choice is between poverty with glue or poverty without it.

Careful

Socialists need to look carefully at the issues surrounding hard drug and solvent abuse and draw the links between class society and the youth who dies from solvent abuse.

Socialists should demand of Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party that Labour must make these links clear and call any campaign a mockery which does not include a vastly better living standard for all and sufficient rehabilitation centres for those already hooked on heroin.

Socialists must beware of echoing the reactionary slogans of the bosses' press on this issue.

All over the country, irresponsible (usually) male doctors are prescribing tranquilisers for (mainly) women patients. These drugs are not illegal and are unlikely to kill but for those who take them life becomes in the words of one woman taker, "a living hell".

Are we then going to smash up the surgery of a GP who "peddles" in valium?

FOR A
SOCIALIST
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TO TORY
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at....



ing. Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report.

established and operating plant with a well-developed multi-union structure. There had been four main unions on the site, TGWU, AUEW (now the AEU), EETPU and ASTMS, with five convenors and a union office provided by the company. A national Fisons Joint Consultative Committee also operated. When Norsk-Hydro took over they discontinued the JCC and announced a "New Personnel Package". This involved the establishment of an advisory council made up of management and directly elected employee (not necessarily trade union) representatives, complete flexibility of labour, moves towards "harmonisation" (of staff and manual conditions), introduction of continuous production and a new disciplinary agreement. Management forced through these changes by banning membership meetings on site and balloting individual workers. The TGWU agreed to the deal in the face of opposition from the other four unions on site, and won the single union franchise.

Necessary

Philip Bassett, Labour Editor of the Financial Times, argues in his book ("Strike Free: New Industrial Relations in Britain") that no strike, single union deals are a necessary, logical response to certain fundamental changes that have taken place in the last decade or so, "which are driving unions towards adapting themselves or going under, and their current, ex-, or potential members towards refocusing the question, stressing individualism over collectivism. 'What's in it for me?'. These changes ("some...are permanent, some are too fundamental to be reversed", he says) include:

*Labour market — "Unemployment, obviously, is the key determinant...but almost as significant have been changes in employment — shifts from manufacturing to services, from men to women, from full-time to part-time."

*Work — "The collapse of old, collectivist industries like steel and shipbuilding, the growth of new, individualist ones like high-tech and services...work has moved from the old industrial citadels of the North and Midlands to the market towns and fast-food chains of the South."

*Trade unionism — "For many new employees unions — and by extension (by voting, too: witness the appalling Labour/Union performance in the 1983 general election), the Labour Party — are just not important...an irrelevance."

*Attitudes — "What all this has led

to is a fundamental shift in attitude: a rooted individualism which while not precluding collective action, insists on its being on its own terms — hence, especially, the perceived primacy of balloting as the principal means of expression".

Permanent

The changes Bassett points to are real enough, and some (like the shift from manufacturing to services) may indeed be permanent. But he massively over-estimates the erosion of trade union organisation in general (another new book, "Unions, Unemployment and Innovation" by Batstone and Gowlay, argues that "union density remains high and the formal structures of workplace union organisation appear generally to be intact") and he appears to have no understanding of just how quickly individualistic, anti-union attitudes can be transformed, given a changed economic situation, or a well-organised, imaginative and militant counter-attack by the unions.

In an article in the New Statesman, Bassett quotes a young woman worker explaining why she hasn't bothered to join the EETPU under the single-union arrangement in her factory:

"It's a couple of quid a month going to I don't know who, and I don't know what it's doing, and I don't think a union can really help me anyway. It's the first time I've worked and I don't think I will."

Bassett asks, "if the new employees find a union like the EETPU too militant, and necessary only when they've done something wrong...what hope is there for Britain's other unions?" But Bassett apparently misses the obvious point contained in the remark he quotes — that the woman can see no reason for paying money over to an organisation that she has no contact with on the shop floor, that appears to be indistinguishable from management and that does nothing to further her interests.

Model

It is the same story at Nissan in Washington New Town, where the AEU single-union, no-strike agreement is often held up as a model in "progressive" industrial relations: only 6% of the workforce have been impressed enough by the union's work on their behalf to see the need to join up.

Unconfirmed reports also say that Nissan recently locked the workforce in for six hours after supervisors stopped work over a grievance. Incidents like

that — as well as the Bowman Webber strike — point to the way forward for militant trade unionism. Fancy deals, "industrial consensus" and phony "worker participation" will never prevent disputes breaking out on the shop floor. The fundamental aim of no-strike deals is not so much to guarantee that no strike will ever take place, but to ensure that workers cannot organise an effective strike — or any other form of effective action.

At Xidex Corp's plant at Brynmawr a secret ballot of the workforce threw out a pay freeze proposed by the company. The no-strike agreement at Xidex gave the EETPU official exclusive power to reach an agreement, which he did without a further ballot.

If the unions not only reject the business-unionism of the EETPU and AEU, but go onto the offensive and prove their worth in fighting for pay and conditions, consulting the rank and file at all times (remember, most no-strike, single union deals have been created on behalf of a workforce that is not yet even in place) and — most importantly — open their doors and reform their structures to accommodate young people, women and part time workers, then the tide can be turned. It's worth bearing in mind, amid all the ballyhoo about no-strike deals, that the high-tech industry is still largely non-union. An estimated 38% of Japanese firms in the EEC are non-union, and a further 44% have company unions. That is the opening that exists for genuine trade union organisation.

Threat

Bassett estimates that 9,000 workers are presently covered by these deals in Britain. The International Labour Organisation reckons that it is 20,000. At the very most, the figure amounts to one-third of one percent of organised trade unionists in Britain. But the threat is growing, and the recent TUC Congress demonstrated that both Norman Willis' and Neil Kinnock's vision of industrial relations under a Labour government are not so very different from what Eric Hammond and Bill Jordan are doing now at Sanyo, Toshiba and Nissan.

The tide can be turned, but it will require a break with the entire "New Realism" philosophy presently in the ascendant in the TUC, and the creation of a new, militant, rank and file based current within the unions to defeat Hammond, Jordan and their more bashful counterparts at the GMB and the TGWU.

Wall of death

People in East Berlin were told that their "Anti-Fascist Wall of Protection" was necessary to prevent the imperialist Western forces from invading and plundering their "socialist fatherland". Though it has been East Berliners crossing over to the West who have been the victims of the Berlin Wall.

"Thanks comrades!" and "Be grateful, comrades!" read the slogans on the official placards distributed to the crowds in East Berlin "celebrating" the 25th anniversary of the building of the Berlin Wall last month (August 13).

The Berlin Wall — or "Anti-Fascist Wall of Protection", as it is officially called in East Germany — is a symbol and expression of Stalinist oppression. Erected in its initial primitive form on 13 August 1961 — ironically, the 90th anniversary of the birthday of the great German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht — it was an attempt to stem the flood of flight from Stalinist tyranny.

The official version of events, faithfully wheeled out this year as in previous years, is slightly different.

"Neues Deutschland", the daily paper of the East German government explained: "In the years 1960-1 the imperialist forces stepped up their aggressive preparations against the DDR (East Germany)...Border provocations increased. The attack was tested in a series of NATO manoeuvres...At the same time, there was an increase in the whipping up of unrest and acts of sabotage directed from Berlin (West)."

Plunder

Hence the building of the Berlin Wall: "The attempt to plunder and destabilise the DDR was dealt with promptly and decisively. The dream of Springer (West German press baron, now dead) and those behind him...came to nothing. The Day 'X' (date of a supposed putsch directed by the West) did not take place. Those who secured our state-border saved peace."

This too was the theme of the speech of Erich Honecker, general secretary of the SED (East German Communist Party) on the occasion of the "festivities" of 13 August: "With this historic deed was guaranteed the freedom of our people (!) and the foundation laid for the further flourishing of our state".

In mockery of those murdered trying to cross the "Anti-Fascist Wall of Pro-

tection", Honecker declared: "It is our point of view that it is better to negotiate ten times, even one hundred times, than to shoot just once."

Honecker concluded his speech with the traditional chain of argument: the Berlin Wall preserves peace; the best guarantee of peace is a strengthening of the "socialist" camp; therefore labour productivity must be increased: "On the basis of this understanding, millions of workers of our country aim for the realisation of the decisions of the 11th Congress of the SED under the slogan 'My place of work is my place of struggle for peace'".

Deterrence

Honecker's speech was followed by a military demonstration, led off by veterans of the "Deed for Peace" of 1961, and followed by various sections of the East German armed forces, whose potential for deterrence was only marginally undermined by their resemblance to "Dad's Army".

Crowds lining the route of the demonstration broke into "spontaneous applause for the workers in uniform", especially in the presence of the "Neues Deutschland" photographer.

The day's happy events concluded with an official reception for those who had participated in the action of 13 August 1961. Veterans stressed that, far from resting on their laurels, they continued to work for the consolidation of their "socialist fatherland". One proudly boasted of how his factory had faithfully met monthly production targets for the last 162 months.

Culminating point of the day's events was surely the speech of Horst Lenke, one of the officers in command in 1961: "To be honest, the full significance of 13 August 1961 was not completely apparent to me at the time. But one thing was clear to me: the party declares that the situation cannot remain as it is at present — action must be taken. With other fighters we secured the border, and we did that with joy and confidence. And you, dear comrade Erich Honecker, can appreciate that best of all, for it was you who led this action." (Applause).



Defenders of socialism and peace?

ALL OUT THIS WEEKEND

Next weekend, 13-14 September, Socialist Organiser supporters will be out on the streets in a paper sales drive. It's meant to be a kick-start for a longer-term programme to increase circulation.

They'll be offering a special cut-price introductory subscription — ten issues for £2.50, or £1.50 unwaged — and publicising the paper with a special poster printed this week.

Glasgow supporters plan to start three new door-to-door sales next weekend. Durham supporters will be doing street sales in Peterlee, Spennymoor, and Durham.

In Manchester, two existing door-to-door sales will be boosted by canvassing new addresses, and a new sale will be launched in Longsight.

Street sales will be done in Longsight, Rusholme, Stockport and Salford.

Merseyside supporters have a plan of action running from Thursday to Sunday, with five sales at rail stations or busy streets and systematic canvassing of some 40 or 50 occasional readers. In between there'll be a social on Saturday evening.

Sheffield supporters are putting a leaflet with back copies of the paper round a council estate to prepare for the launching of a door-to-door sale there on Sunday. They've also planned a street sale on Saturday.

York supporters will be extending their established street sale on Saturday, starting an estate sale on Sunday,

doing two factory-gate sales, and systematically visiting readers. In Stoke there is a similar programme: new estate sale, factory-gate sale, and sales at Further Education colleges.

Nottingham's plans are for a street sale on Saturday, a new door-to-door sale on Sunday, and visits to occasional readers. Cardiff supporters will concentrate on getting round all their readers, and sales at colleges.

North London plans to start two new door-to-door sales, expand an existing one, do two street sales, and canvass a long list of readers. There's a social on the Saturday evening.

South London supporters will be starting a door-to-door

sale and a street sale. East London sellers will be at a tube station on Saturday, at Wapping on Saturday evening, and expanding a door-to-door sale on Sunday morning.

In addition to the posters and the new subscription forms, sellers will have two other things to use on the sales. The Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory petition calling on Labour's leaders to stick to Labour Party policy for a miners' amnesty, can be used alongside the paper to increase both sales of the paper and signatures on the petition. And collecting boxes will make it easier to ask sympathetic readers to put in a donation — even if it's only 70p or so — over and above the paper price.

Activists' DIARY

Justice for Mineworkers meeting, Gateshead Town Hall (to elect a steering committee and plan a regional campaign).

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, 1-2 NOVEMBER. National Abortion Campaign Annual Conference. London Women's Centre, Wild Court, Holborn, London WC2. For details contact NAC at the London Women's Centre.

Socialist Organiser meetings

MANCHESTER. Sunday 14 September. 'The Soviet Union'. 7.30 p.m. Town Hall.

PETERLEE. Tuesday 23 September. Speaker: John Bloxam. 7.30 p.m. Eden Lane Community Centre.

THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER. Cleveland Campaign Group open meeting with Joan Maynard and Bob Clay 7.30 pm in Middlesbrough Town Hall Council Chamber.

SATURDAY 27 SEPTEMBER. 'Escape from Genocide', video about Tamil refugees. 7pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER. 'Building Worker' national meeting. Agenda: Job and Area reports; Campaign for the restoration of democracy in UCATT; sales of 'Building Worker' newspaper. 12-5pm, Union Tavern, King's Cross Road (opp. Mount Pleasant Post Office), N1.

TUESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER Redcar CLP 1986 Gordon Hodgson Lecture — guest speaker Dennis Skinner MP. 7.30 pm in the James Finnegan Hall, Fabian Rd., Eston. (For details phone Kay O'Neill on Eston Grange 455393).

SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER. El Salvador Solidarity Campaign Picket. 12 noon. US Embassy, Grosvenor Sq., London.

THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER. N.E. Region National

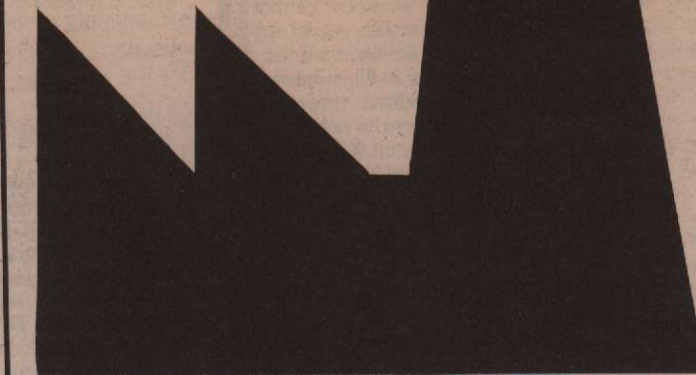
Next weekend, 13-14 September, we'll be making a drive on sales of Socialist Organiser. And it should be possible to combine that with a drive on fund-raising.

Take collecting boxes on the sales; when you visit readers, ask them for a donation; or combine the weekend sales effort with a fund-raising social.

Thanks this week to Keyvan Lajevardi-Khosh, £68 collected in sponsorship money for running a half-marathon; North London readers, £3.65; CPSA militant £6; We've also collected £3.30 more from the sale of books by Trotsky. Total so far: £12,709.74, or 85% of our £15,000 target.



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We stand:
For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working class based women's movement.
Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.
For equality for lesbians and gays.
For a free and united Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.
For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.
For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

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



Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

Red and green

There is a pressing need for a book that presents the arguments for combining socialism and environmentalism, rescuing the former from its worship of capitalist technology and the latter from its preoccupation with matters far from the experience of most working people.

Such a book would show that it is capitalism which presents the major threat to the environment in all its meanings. It would show that only a society based on socialist production could (and would?) live in harmony with its physical surroundings.

With this need in mind, I read 'Red and Green'.* Right away, there were problems. In the first chapter, Joe Weston of Friends of the Earth attempts to rescue the environment from the middle class Greens, defining it in a socialist way. The Greens see the environment as more or less identical with "nature" — to them, the enemy threatening the environment is not capitalism but "industrialism". This view actually helps capitalism, since it allows it to recruit the support of the workers it exploits in its continued destruction of the environment of those workers. The alternative, say the capitalists, would be even worse poverty if the environmentalists got their way.

Weston rightly but irrelevantly attacks this view of some Greens. After all, the problem is to win the labour movement. Weston would probably not even win over any Greens with his rubbishing of their ideas. The complacency of such misleaders as Kinnock, who claim they have always been environmentalists, is left intact.

The literary style of this and other contributions is that of an academic treatise, hardly surprising since four of the seven authors are lecturers. This does not aid understanding among ordinary readers.

Continuing the redefinition of the environment, we find chapters 2 and 3, on the struggle for peace and on information technology. Unfortunately, the first is incoherent and the second incomprehensible. A sample from its conclusion will illustrate:

"...the approach of many socialists and futurists misconceives technological change and ...the greens' insistence that we place questions of context and politics at the centre of technological change is essential to understanding its substance and significance."

The next sentence talks about beginning to "demystify" technological change!

We are on to something better with a chapter by Michael Redclift, a lecturer and writer on Third World development. He takes a penetrating look at the environmental crisis in the Third World through the example of Mexico. Is it the fault of ignorant peasants? Redclift puts the blame firmly on the outsiders

who imposed their rule: first, the unashamedly plundering conquistadores and, later, multinational capitalism.

In a striking passage, Redclift quotes from a Spanish eyewitness of 1519 who describes an ingenious and productive system of agriculture in the Valley of Mexico, supporting a far greater population than that of England. He contrasts this with a government report of 1984 describing the same area, now a barren, eroded, deforested, polluted rubbish tip. Unfortunately, Redclift later allows his argument to become enmeshed in academic jargon.

In the best (and shortest!) section, Jeremy Seabrook paints a powerful picture of the actual environment of the working class poor in the inner city, showing its effects on their lives.

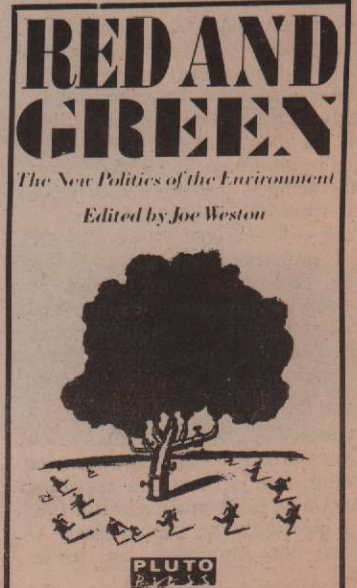
Having defined a socialist environmentalism, the book now turns to how to fight for this. David Pepper, a lecturer and member of the Labour Party and Friends of the Earth, argues for an "anarchist" (he means "decentralised") socialism, as opposed to "centralist" socialism. Many of his criticisms of the latter are really criticisms of right wing reformism — its failure to see capitalism as the enemy; its lining up with the boss class in resisting attacks on polluting technologies.

Dr. Kim Howell, research officer of South Wales NUM, rightly identifies energy as the key environmental battleground, calling for greens, miners, power workers and "union bosses" to muck in together to come up with credible alternatives to present energy sources.

The book limps to a conclusion with Joe Weston's "New Priorities for Environmental Campaigning". These amount, after he has thrown up his hands at the violence of the oppressed black youth of Birmingham, to little more than a call for campaigns to improve conditions in the inner city neighbourhoods.

Though 'Red and Green' is not entirely without merit, it has too many flaws for it to fill the gap described at the start of this review.

*Ed. Joe Weston. Pluto Press, £4.95.



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Poor-girl-making-good Andie (right) with friend

Love and back chat

By Tracy Williams

It makes a change to see a woman hosting her own television show — Cilla Black is one of the few.

Our Priscilla has certainly come a long way from those "oh, you are a mucky kid" days and after her success with the awful "Surprise, Surprise", she's back on our screens again hosting "Blind Date".

For those of you who haven't watched Blind Date (and you should, vulgar though it may be, it had me in stitches) I'll explain what it's about.

Three men sit behind a screen, generally making fools of themselves and a woman they have never met before asks them questions and chooses the one she wants to go on a blind date with.

They get to spend a day together, going to Rome, or paragliding. (Not a bit like any of the dates I had. The most exciting one was with Ian Archibald when I was 14 and we snogged at the back fence — before getting caught by my mum who dragged me in by the hair).

Anyway, when the woman has chosen a man, the process is reversed and a man chooses a woman.

Clare, from South London was the first to pick her man from the fellas who fancied their changes, and, more to the point, themselves. Clare ended up with a guy from Birmingham whose answer to Clare's question, "what do you say when you stand in front of the mirror" was "I'd say 'American Express' because the girls always say that'll do nicely."

The guy is a bit like the awful bloke who comes up to you in a bar and says "Stick with me love and I'll show you the world" and then proceeds to get a pocket atlas out, only more arrogant.

on the

Box

Rob from Oxford asked the three women what sort of wine they would compare themselves to. Cilla replied "Something from Yates's" (well, she is from Scotty Road you know) but Sara, the woman he chose replied, "champagne, because I'm very expensive and you can't get enough of me".

I think it's a fair bet that most of us will at some point in our lives develop a relationship with either a member of the same sex, the opposite sex or both — but under these conditions? God forbid! Should we look to these models? Certainly not. So what do we advocate? What can we hope to achieve in a relationship?

Under capitalism it is extremely difficult to conduct a relationship free from exploitation, jealousy, possession, power, hurt.

Alexandra Kollontai wrote some moving stories about the difficulties that we face — exploring our vulnerabilities, emotional dependency, the need to love yet love oneself equally, how the sexual appetite can distort one's judgement and about people's search for friendship and equality as well as the passion we may feel for the person we love.

Of course there are no set virtues in the "dating game". Beware of the person who "chats you up" in the pub. Beware of the person who asks you if you'd like to talk about the Fourth International and maybe one day you'll find the mate who will also be your date.

Drippy in pink

'Pretty in Pink' is the purest escapism. It is a modern reworking of the old '30s and '40s chestnut of poor girl meets rich boy. The hardworking heroine wins the rich boy of her dreams by her steadfastness and virtue.

It can truly be classed as mindless entertainment — the soundtrack songs are so deafening that they drive all thoughts out of your head.

It's the story of Andie, a Chicago high school senior from the wrong side of the tracks. The rich kids in her school treat her like dirt, but she isn't beaten — she intends to make good and show them. The 'richies' are all blonde and tanned as if they spent more time on beaches and at ski resorts than at school.

Belinda Weaver reviews 'Pretty in Pink'.

Andie's friends — the other poor outcasts — are all pale and dark-haired. Andie herself is a proud, individualistic redhead.

Andie is level-headed and determined. She studies hard, works evenings in a record store to make money, makes her own clothes, and berates her long suffering father for being unshaven, lazy and workshy. Andie may be from the wrong side of the tracks, but she doesn't intend to stay there. She's a budding yuppie on the social ladder — she's only interested in climbing.

And the film applauds her. It's an enshrinement of the kind of American values beloved by Reagan — be virtu-

ous and work hard and you too can make it. In this scenario, anyone who doesn't conform must either change or be left behind. And the film shows the individualistic, eccentric characters doing just that by the end.

Andie and her friends have jeered at the 'richies' — but she has a secret crush on a rich boy, Blane, who is similarly smitten by her. She longs to be taken to the senior Prom by him, and is in seventh heaven when he asks her. But true love cannot run smoothly (or there'd be no plot), so Blane has to be a bit weak and give in to peer group pressure about going out with a poor girl for a while before the credits roll at

the end and Andie and Blane kiss beside his BMW.

The dialogue is suitably banal. Andie is agonising over whether to go to the Prom. She tells her sympathetic listener Iona that the Prom is probably just a stupid tradition. Iona replies philosophically that 'Some people might say life is just a stupid tradition.' She advises Andie to go, or always feel 'she missed out on something'.

Iona, the music store owner, and duckie, Andie's eccentric pal, both show a bit of spark. Iona's outfits veer from fifties gowns complete with beehive hair to spiky hair and leather. She's wacky and worldly wise.

Duckie is a total outcast at the school, but he expresses himself in his clothing (weird) and his caring for Andie. He fools around and dances and clowns. But both these characters' eccentricities go only skin- (or rather clothes-) deep.

By the end, Iona is proudly and conservatively dressed to impress a new boyfriend, and Duckie ends up dancing with a dazzling blonde at the Prom. Even Andie's Dad has promised to turn over a new leaf. (He's probably tired of her constant hectoring).

It's a conservative movie. Andie never questions why some are rich and some poor — her solution is to get rich. She drives around gazing longingly at the houses in rich neighbourhoods. She won't let Blane see her home at first — she's ashamed.

This might make her seem like a prize pain, but the film's producers think Andie is a positive image for young girls to copy — that Andie is true to herself, and determined not to be pushed around or used, that she has clear goals.

But Andie is ashamed of her origins, and dislikes being an outcast. She wants to be applauded for being different, not shunned.

Undoubtedly, girls go through hell at school — the pressures to conform are immense, individualism or being 'different' in any way (religion, colour, and so on) is often trampled on. Positive role models help.

But Andie's story isn't one. And to tell girls that all they need to do is be hardworking and good and they'll get Prince Charming is nonsense.

WORKERS AND THE LAW

TUC Congress last week endorsed the new joint TUC-Labour Party document on future trade union laws. The document has yet to be seen by rank and file members of most of the major unions.

The debate in the labour movement up till now has been conducted by the bureaucrats with the help of their legal beagles and with little or no information reaching the rank and file.

It is therefore encouraging in the aftermath of the TUC that a new booklet from Labour Research Department entitled "Employment Law under the Tories" has just been published.

The booklet, although not arguing an alternative, does at least give rank and file activists some understanding and information on how the Tories have used the law over the last seven years to undermine and weaken union organisation.

Employment legislation has created the framework within which judges have wide powers of interpretation, inevitably ruling in the bosses' favour.

The booklet is divided into five main sections covering industrial action and the law; organising collectively; the

Alan Fraser reviews a new pamphlet from the Labour Research Department.

union rulebook; individual employment rights; women workers and the Tories, and the privatisation of benefit rights.

It also prints brief extracts from the new TUC-Labour Party document to establish what the alternatives will be if the document is passed at Labour Party conference and a Labour government is elected and implements it.

It points out that it is the 1984 Act, which forces unions to hold secret ballots before authorising industrial action, which has brought most of the legal attacks. Enter the new TUC-Labour Party document, People At Work, imposing on unions a secret ballot on decisions relating to strikes.

Although 'People At Work' removes the employers' right to apply for injunctions where a pre-strike ballot has not been held, it now proposes that union members can sue. Of course, we saw during the miners' strike that the most damaging court cases against the NUM came from its own scab members.

Women's rights have suffered.

Up to 1979 the law gave women the right to return to work after maternity leave if they had worked for the same employer for at least two years. That right does not now exist in workplaces where five or fewer workers are employed. In addition what is left of the right to maternity pay and return to work is subject to complex conditions.

Before 1979 women returning to work had the absolute right to their own jobs back. Now the law says employers can offer alternative jobs provided they are not substantially less favourable. A woman refusing loses her right to claim unfair dismissal.

On reading the booklet it certainly reinforces for me the enormous effects that legal restrictions can have on workers' confidence and on how they organise.

But it could also work the other way. The booklet indicates that positive rights for workers could help develop consciousness and confidence. We need a working-class alternative on future trade-union law.

Employment Laws Under the Tories: 95p from LRD, 78 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 8HF.

Socialism and home

In last week's column I wrote about 'socialising housework'. What does this mean?

It means that jobs like cleaning, cooking, washing, childcare, should be taken out into society. At present they fall on each individual household — and, mostly, the individual women.

Things can be changed in two ways. Capitalist society already has laundrettes, restaurants, nurseries and schools. These facilities can be greatly expanded and run as public services.

And the structure of households can be changed. At present, housing, laws and social provision are all built round the model of the family household of one man, one woman and a couple of children.

Laws, housing design, and social provision can be changed to give people a wider choice as to the groups they live in.

We do not know how they will use that choice but probably larger, looser 'households', including several 'families', would become common.

Housework, and childcare in particular, could then be 'socialised' by being shared out in the wider 'household'.

These changes would help women win real equality. They would also benefit children.

Small children do need care and attention from adults — but it need not be from just one adult (or two adults), and their experience of growing up is likely to be happier, more secure, and richer if a number of adults share the care responsibilities.

Today, in the family everything is supposed to be decided by love. In the world outside everything is supposed to be decided by money.

This bizarre division is not natural but the product of capitalism.

In previous societies, before capitalism, housework was not socialised; but neither was most work. The basis of economic life was the labour of the peasant household on its patch of land. Housework and the care of children were part of the same home-centred world as productive work.

Capitalism changes that. Most people in most societies before capitalism made clothing, for example, within the household with the materials available. Now it is produced in big factories, often using synthetic materials made in bigger factories.

But one very important commodity does not have its 'production' revolutionised: labour-power. No capitalist could ever make a profit from 'producing' labour-power, since he or she would not own the 'product'.

So under capitalism the 'reproduction of labour-power' — that is, the process whereby the working class feeds, washes and refreshes itself to be ready for work each Monday, and brings up children to make new generations ready for work in the future — becomes a part of society markedly separate from the profit-making mainstream.

The state, with schools and hospitals, takes part of the burden, but most of it is put on to the male-dominated family structure which capitalism takes and adapts from previous societies.

Marx once remarked that the vigorous defenders of the capitalist factory system had no better argument against socialism than that it would turn society into one huge factory.

Conservatives also condemn socialism as utopian because it would rely on human solidarity and willingness to care for each other. At the same time they say the welfare of children and of women should depend entirely on disinterested family love!

Socialists argue for the socialisation of the private, 'human' sphere of life, and the 'humanisation' of the public, 'social' sphere.

Where Militant went wrong

By Colin Foster

Militant's supporters in Liverpool are in full retreat. What was once the front rank of the local government fight against the Tories is now the parade-ground for a witch-hunt which hits not only Militant but also many others on the left.

Every socialist must fight that witch-hunt. But we must also understand how the defeats took place that set it going.

The leading Militant supporters in Liverpool have been expelled from the Labour Party. Constituency Labour Parties have had to accept these expulsions on pain of being suspended — and one of them, Broadgreen CLP, has been suspended nonetheless.

When Labour's right wing expelled five members of the Militant editorial board in 1982, they had a hard time of it. This purge has been much easier, and the Labour leaders have been able to use it as a springboard for a broader attack on the left.

The Labour Party Young Socialists is under attack: the proposed restrictions on its rights and functioning will hit not only Militant, but also other socialist youth.

Militant have not even tried to stir up a wide campaign in the labour movement against the witch-hunt: instead they have relied on the courts.

In 'Militant' of 28 March they wrote: "The Labour Party rank and file (?) scored a magnificent victory last week when the witch-hunt was stopped in its tracks" (by a court ruling). Short-sighted self-delusion! The Labour leaders soon found a way round the legal difficulties. The use of the courts has boomeranged, making it easier for the witch-hunters to bring in a new streamlined procedure for expulsions.

Meanwhile Liverpool council, once the proud spearhead of the fight against the Tories, is making cuts — with Militant's support. On 28 July the council's chair of finance, Tony Byrne, told a local Labour meeting that it would be 'necessary' to cut about £12 million. £10 million of this would be 'painless', but the other £2 million would not.

The Labour group is still resisting pressure to exclude Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn, but it can only be a matter of time before it gives way.

And the Liverpool council workers' unions, once solidly united in determination to confront the Tories, have mostly swung behind Neil Kinnock.

Now the best leadership will sometimes suffer bad defeats. The Liverpool labour movement faced tough odds in its fight against the Tory government, because the national leaders of the labour movement were hostile to that fight.

But the setbacks in Liverpool over the last year have not just been defeats due to overwhelming opposition or understandable mistakes. They were not quite the worst sort of defeats, defeats without a shot being fired. But they were defeats in which loud preliminary cannonades, shots over the enemy's head, were followed by disorderly retreat instead of actual battle.

The story starts in May 1983. On 5 May, as in three years out of every four, one-third of Liverpool City Council's seats were up for re-election. Labour won control of the council with tremendous gains — 11 extra seats, a 40% increase in the Labour vote.

The new Labour council started well, building new houses, creating new jobs, going well over the budget prepared by the Liberals for 1983-4. By October the Tory government was already warning the council about 'overspending'. The council responded with a vigorous campaign among council workers and the local community. 20,000 people joined a march on 19 November.

By February 1984 Derek Hatton was explaining to Militant that "the crunch" would come "probably at the end of March".

A campaign committee mapped out plans to include a possible all-out strike from 29 March.

But Labour's majority in the council chamber was only three — and a num-



20,000 marched in '83. What went wrong? Photo: John Smith, IFL.

ber of Labour right-wingers declared that they would never vote for an unbalanced budget.

On budget day, 29 March — despite a one-day strike by council workers, and a huge, enthusiastic demonstration at the Town Hall — there was not a majority on the council for Labour's unbalanced budget or the Liberals' alternative budget.

The campaign continued right through to the council elections on 3 May. Labour gained another seven seats, securing a solid majority for its unbalanced budget.

Council workers were ready to strike, and many other workers to support them. The miners' strike was at its height.

Dawdled

But things started going wrong. Instead of stepping up their campaign, pushing through the unbalanced budget and going fast and hard for confrontation, the Liverpool council leaders dawdled. The campaign dwindled. The unbalanced budget was not put to the council again. Instead, the council leaders went off to talk to Tory minister Patrick Jenkin.

Early in July the council leaders announced a deal with the government. The Tories would give them a little extra money and permit various financial tricks to shift the problem into the next year. Liverpool could then get through with a 17% rate rise.

Militant hailed this as a great victory. This was a terribly short-sighted view: a chance to open a second front alongside the miners, and win a real victory, had been passed up in favour of postponing the problems.

But Militant had better luck than it had any right to expect. At the next budget-making time, in spring 1985, the miners were still on strike, and other Labour councils were talking of struggle. Liverpool would have a second chance to come to the crunch with the Tories under favourable circumstances.

And it botched it again. 'Militant' talked about struggle, but gave no specific indication of what sort of mobilisation would be needed. It did not suggest that it would be more than the demonstrations and rallies of 1984. And it gave no hint of any urgency about bringing the struggle forward so

as to give aid to the hard-pressed miners.

So until June 1985 Liverpool remained in the background. Militant believed (14 June) that the "councillors remain technically in a 'legal' position". But now the miners had been forced back to work, and the other rebel councils had backed down (all except Lambeth, which succumbed on 3 July).

All credit to Liverpool for lasting out longer than the others. But what would they do now?

Councillors proposed a 20% rate rise which with some financial juggling would allow Liverpool to scrape through the year. The unions said no. So Liverpool set an unbalanced budget — 9% rate rise, £265 million expenditure, £148 million income — on 14 June. It demanded from the government the return of £29 million grant and £88 million penalties.

So far, so good. Maybe chances had been missed, but now, as Militant put it (21 June), "After two years of shadow boxing...the gloves are off."

Instead of general calls for a "mass campaign", Militant said boldly: "Strike to defend councils".

Low-key

Despite everything, Liverpool was still potentially in a strong position.

As late as 21 September, the business magazine, the Economist, wrote:

"Suppose the Militants persist in saying no? Mr Baker's (the Tory minister's) trouble in this game of chicken is that he dare not, in the last resort, force Mr (Derek) Hatton (the council deputy leader) off the road...Yet, except by giving way himself, he has little power to avoid it, if Mr Hatton and the council labour force — not necessarily the same thing — insist."

Yet the council's campaign remained low-key compared to 1984. Instead of becoming bolder and sharper as the crunch came nearer, the coverage in Militant became vaguer and softer. The urgent calls for strike action were replaced by appeals for general 'support' in a long-term campaign.

What was happening? What were the council's plans? Workers in Liverpool and elsewhere weren't sure.

Then in the middle of September, the council said it planned to issue 90

days' redundancy notice to all employees! Workers blockaded the town hall to stop the council meeting. The council leaders retreated, and the Militant-led council shop stewards called for an all-out strike against the Tories from 25 September. Amidst confusion and resentment at the redundancy notices, the strike vote was lost 47%-53%.

With characteristic unrealism, Militant (27 September) spoke blandly of a minor setback and "the success of our campaign"! The same day, 27 September, redundancy notices started going out. NALGO struck in protest.

On 11 October the council was forced to withdraw the redundancy notices because of legal action brought by the NUT. Instead it found a new 'legal device'...to lay off the whole workforce from 1 to 28 January.

Such blunders allowed Neil Kinnock and the soft left to crucify Militant. What better proof that 'Marxists' were irresponsible posturers?

On 20 November the National Executive Committee decided to set up a kangaroo-court 'inquiry' into Liverpool District Labour Party, thus beginning the process that would lead to the expulsion of the leading Militant people on Merseyside.

Meanwhile in Liverpool council services began to wind down for lack of cash. The workers were increasingly disillusioned and resentful, and still did not know exactly what was going on above their heads.

Swiss banks

Finally, on 22 November they found out. The council backed down, with a deal which was (as Militant of 29 November puts it) "based on capitalisation of housing expenditure". It got a £30 million loan from Swiss banks. The condition was attached that the council must stay legal in the future. The package included cuts, though small ones.

And the workers soon discovered: 1) that these cuts had in fact already been made, by the partial rundown of services in the period when the council was running out of cash; 2) that the loan had been negotiated as far back as August. In other words, the retreat had already been made, under cover of blustering slogans about an offensive, before it was announced.

It is not possible to 'lead' workers like this for long without suffering the consequences.

Why did Militant make these blunders?

After July 1984 Militant substituted bluster and puffed-up self-satisfaction at the "victory" won (they said) by "the Marxist leadership" for sober assessment. In October 1984 that drove them into a stupid confrontation with Merseyside's black communities, when they tried to put a Militant supporter, Sam Bond, into the council's top race relations job.

And there was more to it.

According to Militant's addled version of Marxism, iron laws of history drive the working class ever onward towards Marxist politics. The job of the organised Marxists (i.e. Militant) in the meantime is to make general propaganda and build their own following.

Victory is inevitable in the long term; so why take risks now? If the situation is favourable now, it will certainly be more favourable in the future. And it makes no sense to risk positions, prestige and propaganda platforms for the sake of 'ephemeral' struggle.

So Militant tried to maintain a delicate balance: on the one hand giving Liverpool a profile as a fighting, socialist council; on the other trying to keep the council in office and themselves in the leadership of the council.

Contrary to all intelligent tactics, they tried again and again to postpone the crunch and extend the time in which the council stands in opposition to the government but not quite in collision with it.

When it came to the test, Militant's politics proved to be in the tradition not of Lenin and Trotsky, but of the middle-of-the-road trimmers who cover up their delays and dithering in workday class struggle by loud 'Sunday socialism'.

Coal bosses respond to S.Wales ban

In a move to head off action spreading throughout the British coalfield, new British Coal boss Sir Robert Haslam announced on Monday 'settlement' of the 1985 pay claim.

Ignoring the NUM, the Board will impose a claimed £8-a-week-rise on all miners backdated one week to September 1 this year. UDM members and those who scabbed during the strike will get preferential treatment and an additional backdating to cover when they crossed the picket line.

NUM President Arthur Scargill condemned the Board's unilateral action and discrimination against those who remained loyal to the NUM.

The Coal Board had become alarmed

By Mark Thomas, Tower Lodge NUM (in personal capacity)

at support for action in the pits, which started with an overtime ban on coal cutting in South Wales six weeks ago. The Durham Area is still balloting for an overtime ban, and in Yorkshire a number of pits have moved to follow suit. The Kent Area decided last week to implement a ban.

Mark Thomas, Tower Lodge NUM (personal capacity), explains why South Wales took the lead:

"The continued blocking of the pay deal, the tearing up of all agreements, the Board's policy on sacked miners, and their heavy-handed tactics in

South Wales were behind the decision to implement an overtime ban in July.

They talked of another 10% cut in manpower, a loss of 2000 jobs, shift pattern changes and production figures of 500 tonnes a face. The mood was one of bitterness and anger. The feeling was that it was now time to get our feet on the bottom rung of the ladder: a small step but an important one in fighting back.

The Board denounced the action as ineffectual before the second week of the annual holiday. They were soon

changing their tune after the return from holiday and the implementation of the overtime ban which prevented the production of coal in overtime. After one week they announced the coalfield had lost 5000 tonnes and that it had damaging effects on their plans for profitability.

A new twist in the tale came when the Board refused overtime to low-paid surface workers on weekends in a tit-for-tat attack because of the overtime ban. This action by the Board has aroused passion for a full overtime ban.

The South Wales NUM plan to meet soon for a review of the current overtime ban and to decide further action. This small but decisive action could and should spread nationally.

Transport workers link-up

By Ian Callaghan, TGWU.

If you want to know about bus deregulation, go to the Hope Street Renfield Street 'corridors' in Glasgow where some 300 buses an hour are expected to ply for trade and block the traffic. Then go to any isolated rural area and you won't see a bus all year.

Despite some changes, the main proposals of the Transport Act went through Parliament intact last year. The results were predictable:

*The abolition of route licensing has led to major and wasteful competition on the profitable "corridors".

*The breaking up and sale of the National Bus Company to be followed by Passenger Transport Executives and municipal operations has led to the predicted dutch auction for conditions and pay cuts across the country.

However, Devon General has been the only NBC operating company so far to be sold off, despite knock down prices. Capitalists believe there is little money to be made with a tiny bus operation in a deregulated industry.

London is exempt from the full rigours of the Act for now. But the London Region Transport Act is being used to whip the workforce into line. At present the 1986 pay claim is months overdue and management are trying to enforce pay cuts. They have also formed two wholly owned subsidiaries (Stanwell Buses Ltd and Orpington Buses Ltd) as low-wage, no recognised union scab organisations.

Outside London, London Country Bus Services has adopted a similar approach, forcing through changes in existing agreements such as kerbside meal breaks.

In response to this, the London South Transport Workers Federation was recently set up, bringing together branch officials from London Buses, London Country Bus Service, and NUR and ASLEF on British Rail Southern Region.

This should provide the basis for a genuine workers' campaign against the cuts and job losses and make a welcome break from the tradition of sectionalism which has in the last couple of years verged on company chauvinism.

KENURE

Strike against 12-hour shifts

By Dion D'Silva

On 14 May 43 Asians were sacked at the Kenure Plastics factory in Feltham. The management had attempted to force them to work twelve hour shifts without overtime pay.

The workers, who were then not in a union, tried to negotiate an increase in wages from £2.35 an hour to £3 an hour and were then sacked and replaced by scab labour.

The black workers are in the lower paid positions with little chance of training or promotion. The health and safety conditions are atrocious. Injured workers are sent home without pay.

The sacked workers have since joined the AEU and take it in turns to picket the factory all day, five days a week.

There is a lot of support in the local community and there is a weekly picket every Friday afternoon.

But products are still leaving the factory, using non-union drivers, though British Telecom engineers have refused to cross the picket lines.

The AEU are pinning their hopes on reinstatement after an industrial tribunal due within a fortnight.

Send donations to: Kenure Workers' Support Fund, c/o 18 Staines Road, Hounslow 3JS.

TEACHERS

A sell-out for teachers

By Cheung Siu Ming (Lambeth NUT)

No cover for absence has been the key theme besides pay throughout the long teachers' dispute. The past period during the dispute has been the lengthiest spell in living memory when teachers were liberated from the unwelcome, unpaid task of giving up free time in order to teach the lessons of an absent colleague. This dramatic improvement in working conditions and job satisfaction was just as important to many teachers as a pay rise.

Last Friday the National Union of Teachers National Executive sold us out on cover for absence. The vote was 28-7. The formula agreed with the employers took a mere two days to negotiate.

This follows the "Coventry" deal on a new pay structure, which was railroaded through by a majority of the NEC without consulting members just before schools returned to work.

The new agreement requires teachers to cover for the first day of absence. The local authority is expected to send in a supply teacher thereafter, except when:

- the local authority has a budgetary problem (which one hasn't?); or
- the local authority has problems in recruiting supply teachers, whereupon the teachers will cover all absences on an "equitable basis".

This amounts to an open invitation to the employers to attack working conditions wherever they please, except in those areas where there are local agreements, since these are not affected by the national formula.

The most significant area where no local agreement exists, and where the local authority has a massive budgetary and recruiting problem, is Inner London.

Last July the ILEA Labour Group adopted a policy of deducting up to a full day's pay from teachers who refuse to cover for absent colleagues (even if they work their own normal timetable for the day!). This policy would have been implemented from mid-September if not for a strenuous teachers' lobby.

Now, after the national sell-out on cover, the ILEA will most likely press ahead and put the policy into practice.

The ILEA's approach to its "budgetary problems" is not to fight the government politically but to engage in cost-cutting exercises, such as paying its supply teachers, who work on a daily basis, six weeks late! Other boroughs offer prompt payment and cash incentives — no wonder ILEA has a "recruitment problem"!

The pay deal should also be opposed, although it appears to represent about four times what the Tory Government was previously prepared to pay to change teachers' salary structure.

*The main union demand for a single salary scale with above-scale payments is met, and this replaces the divisive five scale structure, but the scale takes 15 years to reach £14,500!

*The structure also imposes a two-year entry grade on new teachers. Joining the main salary scale is not automatic, but subject to an "assessment" tougher than the present one year probation period.

*About 15% of teachers will receive the above-scale payments. Heads and Deputy Heads will be included in this figure, which means that no one below the present scale 4 will be included. This means that virtually no one else in a primary school will benefit.

In return, these 15% of teachers will be expected to perform a series of



Teachers demonstrate. Photo Cheung Siu Ming.

additional tasks, which would certainly include the imposing of various new work practices on their colleagues, and assessment of "efficiency".

*There is a promised review, unspecified improvements on some working conditions such as class size, and definite erosion on others, such as extending the school year to 195 days, and of course cover. Other contractually binding work practices are to be negotiated in the next few months.

Eroded

The attempt to catch up with the real value of teachers' pay of 11 years ago is finally abandoned and, instead, the unions have agreed to negotiate working conditions as a trade-off. Cover is the first trade off. When the value of pay is eroded by a few years' inflation, teachers will be saddled with contractually binding working conditions worse than the old ones as a result of the last period of industrial action.

The NAS/UWT will make the most of the NUT's sell-out and recruit mem-

KEETONS

Stop scab haulier!

By Dave Barter

Speaking to the Sheffield Campaign Group on Thursday, 4 September, Keetons deputy convenor Mark Simpson described the main problem faced by the 38 strikers in their tenth week: "The company are employing scab labour and using a haulage company to put work in transit. The name of this haulage company is JJ Shepherd of Oughtibridge".

Keetons management were forced to use the haulage company by the refusal of other delivery workers to cross picket lines. Oil is still not getting in.

The scabs used by Keetons are all new employees and they cannot do the same jobs as the striking workers.

The strike is solid and can win. But support is vital. There will be a demonstration in support of the Keetons workers on Monday 15 September at 12 noon outside the gates. Send donations and messages of support to: Keetons Strike Committee, AEU House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield S1 3HE, tel: Sheffield 769041.

Wapping sell-out

By a SOGAT clerical member

Talks are currently taking place between Rupert Murdoch and the five print union leaders aimed at finding a solution to the eight month old Wapping dispute.

It is not known at the moment how the talks are progressing, or indeed what proposals the unions are putting forward.

True to their conduct throughout the dispute Dean and Dubbins haven't bothered to let either the London leadership or the strikers know what they are negotiating away on their behalf. No doubt the strikers will find

out about this "final offer" the same way they found out last time, by reading the Financial Times.

This secrecy bodes ill for the strikers. They have no doubt that another sell-out deal is on the way — probably only a handful of jobs and a national joint negotiating committee involving the national leadership rather than rank and file printworkers.

The London SOGAT leadership is also being put to the test this week. Ann Field, the current assistant branch secretary of the clerical branch, is up for re-election. But the striking chapels, who would normally back her against the right wing, are so disillusioned with her handling of the strike that they've put up their own candidate the militant activist, Carol Hall.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

RENT BOYCOTT

The rent boycott that has been spreading across South Africa over the last three months is now in force in 49 black townships, according to reports from academics at the University of Witwatersrand.

The boycott is in protest at the high rents paid to the puppet local authorities made up of collaborators with the white racist regime and is also against the presence of police and troops in the townships under the State of Emergency.

The centre of the boycott is the Transvaal and the Eastern Cape where 22 and 19 townships respectively are affected. It is in these areas that the function of "street committees" (locally based residents action committees) is most advanced.

However the struggle has spread to one degree or another to all the other parts of the country.

According to the Witwatersrand academics the strength and size of the boycott was likely to be due to grass roots community organisation.

"Were the rent boycott the result of intimidation it is likely that severe counter-actions on the part of the authorities in the form of evictions or security force action would end the boycott". But as they put it.

"Events in White City and other parts of Soweto last week indicated quite the opposite. Press reports as well as independent information point to the involvement of residents from all sections of the community in defence actions to halt evictions".

NOTTS MINERS' GALA

The age of struggle

Dennis Skinner MP

Do you remember a few years ago when they used to talk about the 'Age of Leisure', and Clive Jenkins used to go on television with a microchip and we didn't know what he was on about, and he said we're going to have a 20 hour week with this? I thought: that's not a bad idea.

And all the newspapers and BBC pundits used to run programmes telling you how, in the age of leisure and technology, miners wouldn't have to scrape about in the bowels of the earth, and somehow or other we would do about two shifts a week. We'd all have a wonderful life.

Now these same newspaper editors are telling us that the 20 hour week is impossible, and if somebody in the left of the NUM gets up at conference and says it, they say he's a loony.

I remember going to Sports Council when I was on the local authority. They were going to build a golf course in every village for the 'Age of Leisure', and a swimming bath in every other village. The pit villages got the swimming baths and suburbia got the golf courses.

That's what they were telling us, jam tomorrow. Be quiet, keep your nose clean, listen to the management, don't get involved in any conflict, and all these wonderful things will come your way.

And some leading spokesmen will tell you that for ever. But the miners' strike destroyed a lot of those notions, because all the collaboration that had taken place for many years in this coalfield meant nothing when MacGregor, Thatcher and all the rest decided to chop this mining industry.

That's what collaboration bought. Just like it did in the print industry and everywhere else.

Certificate

I thought we were going to start today with handing out the long service certificates. For those of you who come from far and wide — we used to have a system where the branch committee men used to march to the rostrum and get their 20 year long serving certificate, sometimes for having shoved the banner up the hill. Here we are today, no long serving certificates, no one's been paid for shoving the banners up the hill — and we've got the biggest turnout we've ever had.

Who can say the spirit of the Nottinghamshire miners is low after this marvellous turnout today, and the many people from the Labour Party in the Nottinghamshire Area and beyond who have come along to support them?

So we don't want any sloppy consensus, do we. We can win without that.

The main object of the rally is to secure the jobs of the near 500 miners



who have been sacked arising out of the strike. And as a Member of Parliament covering part of this coalfield, I pledge myself that when that Labour government is returned, I will remind every single one of our ministers of it and demand full reinstatement.

I don't want to listen to any cosy arguments about retrospective legislation being hard to stomach, because I have sat in a Parliament with a Labour government in power when retrospective legislation was passed in order to let a Liberal MP keep his seat. If they can do it for a Liberal MP, retrospectively, keeping him his job — there was

only me voting against it — then we can do it for those 500 miners.

I don't think it would be a big thing for the next Secretary of State for Energy in a Labour government to tell Sir Robert Haslam — put it on the agenda, and if the management won't reinstate those miners then we will.

Their crime was to take part in an industrial dispute the like of which has not been seen before in my lifetime. It wasn't about money — not that I'm

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COSATU GROWS

According to COSATU, the paper of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the country's independent non-racial trade union federation has been growing despite the deepening economic recession and detention of trade union militants.

"Membership in the metal industry has increased by 30%, in the shops by 50%, in the mines by 80%. Unions in the food and chemical industries have gained over 10,000 members each. And about 18,000 workers have paid up in the textile, transport and paper industries."

"COSATU has grown stronger because our structures are democratic. Because we believe in democratic control. Because we fight for workers' needs."

STAY-AWAY

Thursday 4 September saw the biggest stayaway in Soweto since the massive youth revolt of 1976.

The stayaway was timed to coincide with the planned mass funeral for those killed by the security forces a week earlier.

According to the Labour Monitoring Group the strike was 78% solid.

In the retail sectors, where the shop workers union CCAWUSA has organised occupations against detentions, the action was strongest with something like 85% of workers staying away.

The level of action in Soweto last week was even higher than during the nationwide stayaways on May Day and June 16 when between 1½ and two million workers took action.

It is a clear sign to the Botha regime that the State of Emergency has not quelled the black revolt inside the country. On the contrary the last 2-3 months have seen the struggle spread to Soweto, the country's largest black township (in fact a city of over 2 million people) which had remained relatively quiet over the last two years.

Great turnout for Gala

There was a marvellous turnout on Saturday's gala in Mansfield, and it was very pleasing to see that miners in the different coalfields understand our difficulties here in Notts and were prepared to come and give the Notts NUM — and the sacked and victimised miners — all their support.

It was a magic turnout. I understand that Roy Lynk has been ill recently — when he saw that lot he must have been really sick. To see those banners being marched through the heart of UDM-land was one hell of a lift for all those concerned, and we're over the moon with it.

When I spoke at the rally, I thanked everybody for their support on behalf of all the sacked and victimised miners. I also replied to the recent press stories designed to isolate Scargill.

Scargill

Scargill enjoys the full support of the rank and file of the NUM, and if anybody wants to get to Scargill they'll have to go through us first, which they are not going to do. We've got every confidence in our national president and we will not see him interfered with by anybody, either inside the movement or outside.

We have to realise that we've got to

fight on the political front. We are prepared to work hard for the return of a Labour government — we need a Labour government, we need it like we've never needed it before. But we are not prepared to compromise our principles just for the sake of getting somebody into No. 10.

We see the Labour Party as the political party of the working class, and the working class is not prepared to accept



Paul Whetton is secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

any more anti-union legislation or any new Social Con trick — not even from a Labour government, however they dress it up.

If they want to enjoy the support of workers they have to be seen as working towards socialism. Apart from that, any attempt to use a Labour government to manage capitalism will only mean a later rejection of the Labour government and the return of the Tories. That's always been the electoral fruit of right wing policies under a Labour government.

We're not prepared to sit back and accept that. Other people might be able to afford that, but the working

class can't.

When Neil Kinnock talks about consensus it seems that he's still trying to appeal to the middle of the road voters in order to get elected. Either he's going to represent the working class and make a significant shift in favour of them or he isn't.

He shouldn't fudge about. He should tell us if he has no intentions of fulfilling conference decisions and working class politics. He should tell us where he stands rather than spouting meaningless gabble, aimed at the middle class.

I was very pleased to see Liz French on the platform. I saw her on the lobby in Brighton, and also Terry. It was tremendous to talk to him and assure him that others on the outside still think of him. Liz's message on Saturday — that her husband is still in there and still fighting and refusing to bow down to the state — I thought that was magnificent.

Terry French

Liz also said that Terry will be standing for the post of vice-president when Mick McGahey retires — I would personally like to see him involved at some level in the union.

Myself and Jimmy Lees had to leave the gala early in order to get to Skegness where the Notts sacked miners and their families are having a week's holiday. In Notts we've probably got more problems than those in other Areas, where they get some support

from the Area union.

When it was obvious we weren't going to get a holiday this year, a couple of the wives of the sacked men got together and raised an appeal for a holiday for all the sacked miners' families. They did a magnificent job — raised over £2000 and a week's holiday at the Derbyshire Miners Holiday Camp at Skegness.

Kids

The kids have been given some spending money. Everybody is really appreciating the chance to have a break and get away from the pressures in Notts.

I understand that the new Coal Board boss, Haslam, has asked to meet the NUM. I hope that the first item on the agenda is recognition of the Notts NUM, so that we can begin to represent our members at the pit, and do away with this type of guerilla warfare that is taking place in the county now. If we get that our recruitment will soar.

There's also talk that he might reinstate some of those miners who have won their tribunal cases. Any reinstatement would be welcome, but we are not prepared to accept the reinstatement of some and the rejection of others.

Our policy is that all sacked miners should be reinstated and compensated, and we will not settle for anything less. The fight will go on until everyone has got their job back.

Join now

**Join the Labour Party!
Write to 150 Walworth
Road, London SE17.**