

Kick out the Tories in '87!

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

For Workers' Liberty East and West



Why Gramsci is ours

See centre pages

NUCLEAR BOMBS: SCRAP THE LOT!

Even if the Reagan-Gorbachev talks do lead to the removal of all short and medium range nuclear missiles from Europe, there will still be quite enough long-range nuclear weapons to blow us all to bits.

Any serious reversal of the arms race is a victory — but only if we keep up the pressure to disarm the nuclear warmongers completely. And even for the Reagan-Gorbachev talks to produce results, it is vital to keep up the pressure. We cannot afford to trust the superpower leaders.

Joy Hurcombe (chair, Labour CND, writing in a personal capacity) explains:

The European members of NATO, led by Thatcher, are now scraping the bottom of the barrel to find ways out of their dilemma — that there is now a chance of disarmament, which of course, they don't want and have never wanted.

The Tories regard nuclear weapons as a national symbol of power, and of lost empire, and a tool of the oppressor, so they have never intended to give them up.

But how can they justify their position now that Gorbachev has offered concession after concession, and the zero option is now accepted? Now it looks like the USSR and the USA want some measures of disarmament more than the Europeans in NATO do.

They tried to sabotage the Reykjavik talks. But today, their backs are against the wall. Gorbachev has



Don't trust the superpowers

outmanoeuvred them, by offering an end to short-range missiles in Europe.

So the Tories have retreated into the hoary old lies about Russian superiority in conventional weapons. Gorbachev will no doubt find ways round this obstacle.

It is essential that we continue our pressure for disarmament in the face of these talks which may — or may not — lead to some measures of disarmament.

It is wrong to assume that unilateral nuclear disarmament has been upstaged by super-power talks.

The demand for no nuclear weapons has come from the popular movement that created the possibility for these talks. And this is despite recent low-levels of street activity.

Not prepared

We should keep up the demand for no nuclear weapons, and as Labour Party members, not be prepared to set aside our conference decisions as our leaders have suggested. In fact, if there is a strong movement for no nuclear weapons, there is more likelihood of talks proving suc-

cessful.

I am appalled that the Labour leadership has compromised on the question of nuclear weapons. In fact they've set political traps for themselves. When they said that instead of Trident we should have conventional weapons, they compromised with Tory flagwaving. Now when there's a chance of nuclear disarmament, they have no arguments to use against the Tories who say we need to keep nuclear weapons because of the USSR's conventional superiority.

Meanwhile, Thatcher has made no compromises.



Alfonsín

Argentina: the coup may have failed but the crisis remains

For now, Argentina's coup-hungry soldiers have been deterred. But the underlying crisis of Argentine society continues.

First, the rebellion led by Major Ernesto Barreiro in Cordoba — scene of many coups — fizzled out, due to mass opposition and lack of united military support. Huge demonstrations continued to 'defend democracy' and demand that those responsible for the 'dirty war' under past dictatorships be brought to justice. A second rebellion, at Campo de Mayo army school near Buenos Aires, led by Lt.-Col. Aldo Rico, has also been thwarted.

President Alfonsín has promised that democracy is 'not negotiable', and his success in averting a coup will have boosted his popularity. But it is not clear what concessions Alfonsín has made to the 'golpistas'. It is possible that he has at least conceded their demand for the sacking of General Rios Erenu, the army chief of staff, who has been vocal in pressing for trials of 'dirty war' criminals.

In addition the rebels have demanded the release of convicted military leaders, and a general amnesty.

It was opposition to the Alfonsín government's trials of military personnel that prompted the army mutiny. Ironically, Alfonsín has in fact done his utmost to conciliate the army while at the same time trying to satisfy popular demands for justice.

At the end of 1986, the 'Punto final' law set a deadline for legal action against those accused of torture and brutal repression. It was intended to call a halt to the trials, and let many soldiers off the hook. But human rights activists pushed hard for faster justice. This intensified campaign eventually forced the hand of those sections of the army with most blood on their hands — and most to fear.

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Texaco goes bust

In the US, the world's biggest court order of damages has led to the world's biggest-ever bankruptcy, with the giant Texaco oil corporation declaring itself broke.

In Britain, Guinness has won a continuation of the court order freezing the UK assets of its former boss Ernest Saunders while Guinness pursues its claim that £5.2 million received by Saunders and his associate Thomas Ward was paid illegally and should be returned.

The amounts of money involved are huge. Saunders' case is that the £5.2 million was proper and regular payment to Ward for two months' assistance in Guinness's takeover bid for Distillers. A total of £25 million was paid out by Guinness for (often illegal) 'services' in support of that takeover.

Texaco has declared itself bankrupt because it has had \$11 billion damages awarded against it in court. Texaco is appealing, but the Supreme Court ruled last week that Texaco must put the \$11 billion cash on the table before proceeding with the appeal.

Credit

Even for Texaco, with \$35 billion assets, finding \$11 billion cash is a tall order. Its banks and its suppliers had been withdrawing credit.

The bankruptcy is, initially at least, a legal manoeuvre, making it more difficult for Pennzoil (the company which won the damages) to seize Texaco's assets. Texaco is not ceasing operations, but only trying to force Pennzoil into a compromise. But if no compromise is reached, Texaco could genuinely collapse.

The Texaco case, like the Guinness case, arises from a takeover. Pennzoil had made an agreement to take over Getty Oil. Texaco went behind Pennzoil's back and successfully offered Getty's big shareholders a better deal. Pennzoil sued Texaco.

It all goes to show how the rich get rich. The free-enterprise theory is that profiteers make profits only by supplying something the public wants — so, however selfish their intentions, their actions must serve the common good. The 'hidden hand' of the market transforms the pursuit of private profit by individuals into the advancement of all.

But no-one ever makes £5.2 million, let alone \$11 billion, from a couple of months' work on making things. Still less from inventing useful things — even if the brilliant inventor has the cash to start out in business marketing his invention, before long he or she will be taken over by some giant corporation.

Most big fortunes are made not in the factories or the high streets, but in the Stock Exchanges and banks. Guinness made more money by its takeover of Distillers, and Texaco more by its takeover of Getty Oil, than either could make by improving the quality of their drinks or their oil.

Correspondingly, production managers are the little-regarded backroom staff of the capitalist class. The best and most brilliant brains of the profit-grabbing class devote themselves to financial juggling, takeovers and stock-market deals. The 'hidden hand' that they are concerned with is the one reaching behind a competitor's back to pull off a fast deal.

Capitalism is a system where the swindler is king and the spiv is hero.

Argentina still in crisis

Continued from page 1

In the 'dirty war' under the military dictatorships from 1976 to 1983, thousands of Argentinians — especially those on the broad left — were arrested, tortured and killed. Thousands simply 'disappeared', never to be seen again. The protests of the 'mothers of the Plaza de Mayo' — mothers of the disappeared — became a symbol of opposition to the military regime. Their demands for justice have still not been met.

Alfonsín's peace with the army is not a stable one. The Argentinian army is highly politicised — and used to power. It was forced to step down and call elections in 1983 after the fiasco of the Falklands/Malvinas war, and growing opposition.

Everyone in Argentina knows that the army would move into power again if it felt the need had arisen.

For Alfonsín has not acted seriously against the army chiefs. There have been a few symbolic sacrifices to popular anger — like the imprisonment of the discredited General Galtieri. But the army tops are still in place.

And Alfonsín is unable to act against the economic crisis that gives force to the generals' ambitions.



Argentinian women protest against the 'disappearance' of their children

Argentina owes £50 billion in foreign debt — less than Brazil or Mexico, but an immense sum. As elsewhere,

debt brings with it inflation. Unemployment and falling real wage levels are major problems facing workers.

Alfonsín has introduced various austerity packages to deal with the economic crisis. The 'Anstral plan' in June 1985 set limits on prices and wages, and put an end to hyperinflation. But new inflationary pressures were released last year.

Growth of per capita income in Argentina has been far behind that in neighbouring Brazil — rising from only \$2,425 to \$2,617 between 1964 and 1985, compared to a rise from \$1,148 to \$2,568 over the same period in Brazil. After the 1976 coup, real wages in Argentina were cut by half.

Alfonsín was elected in 1983. His Radical Party defeated the powerful 'Justicialist' or 'Peronist' movement, named after the charismatic populist politician Juan Peron, who ruled Argentina from 1945 to 1955, and briefly again in the early 1970s. After his death, his second wife 'Isabelita' Peron took over the leadership of the movement.

The major base of Peronism is Argentina's powerful labour movement, which was coopted by Peron's populist style and has been largely kept tied to populist politics since. Labour politics are mainly posed in terms of different types of Peronism, although there are small groups who stand outside of this tradition. Thus the labour movement is politically weak and very heavily bureaucratised: the big Peronist union bosses run their unions in gangster-like fashion. At the same time it is organisationally very strong, and the working class is extremely militant. There have been many general strikes since 1983.

Alongside the official union struc-

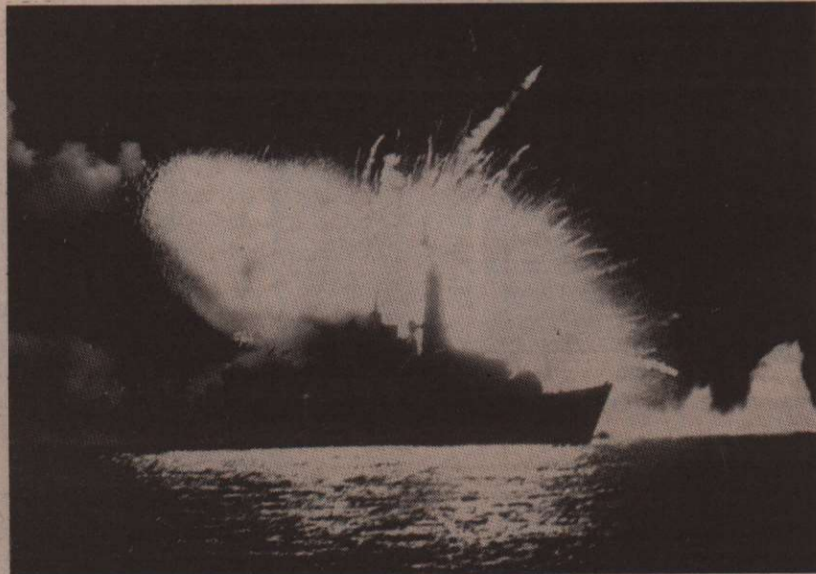
tures, there have traditionally been more democratic, rank and file bodies — factory committees and other bodies — where the left tends to be stronger. The left itself, however, has been heavily influenced by Peronism. Even the biggest would-be Trotskyist group, the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) makes propaganda that is essentially nationalist and populist, with only the phraseology of 'orthodox Trotskyism'. (They took a firmly pro-war position over the Falkland/Malvinas, for example). Recently the MAS have grown, and even the staunchly anti-Trotskyist Communist Party have entered an electoral alliance with them.

A solution to Argentina's crisis — a socialist solution — depends upon whether independent working class politics can be developed that match the present militancy of the working class. Peronism is a terrible weight bearing down upon worker militants, and it needs to be definitively thrown off if a socialist road is to be found.

The threat of a coup remains. The workers need to mobilise in full strength to prevent it. The army must be thoroughly purged of all those responsible for the dirty war. Indeed the army must be dismantled and replaced by a popular militia.

The bosses should be made to pay for the economic crisis. Democratic working class committees could work out a plan to fight the crisis, pursuing further links that have been made with other workers' movements in Latin America, who face similar problems.

Capitalism itself should be overthrown and replaced by workers' democracies across the continent.



Who lost the war?

The war between Britain and Argentina in 1982 was a turning point in Argentinian politics. When the Galtieri junta invaded the Falklands (which are known as the Malvinas in Argentina), they hoped to divert growing working-class opposition into a nationalistic campaign in their support.

The Galtieri gambit didn't work. The junta lost, and was forced to stand aside for elections — the first since 1976.

Britain's victory was no victory for British workers: in fact it was a defeat, as it helped strengthen the British ruling class and put Thatcher back into office on the strength of the 'Falklands Factor'.

But nor was Galtieri's defeat a defeat for Argentinian workers. It forced the military to quit.

Many socialists at the time, both in and out of Argentina, argued for positive support for Argentina in the war, as well as firm opposition to Britain. Socialist Organiser argued against support for either. Every week during the war we carried on our masthead the slogan: "The enemy is at home". Both sides, we said, were reactionary.

We argued instead that Argentinian workers should continue their struggle against the regime and denounce the war as a nationalistic adventure. We said that British and Argentinian workers should link up against both Galtieri and Thatcher and refuse to kill and maim each other on the orders of the Argentine and British ruling classes.

In Argentina there was a lot of support for the war from both the nationalist Peronist movement which is very strong in the trade unions, and even from the 'Marxist' left. There

was also widespread criticism. As the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo put it: "The Malvinas are Argentina's — but so are the disappeared" — the murdered victims of the junta.

There was also (despite what many on the left said at the time) internationalist opposition to the junta's war from some socialist groups. In the end, their refusal to bow down to nationalism was vindicated. It was the junta that lost the war, not the Argentinian workers.

Substituting fantasy for reality

By Jean Lane

If you demand that the pin-ups come off the walls of your workplace, the first thing you tend to be accused of by the men who put them up is prudery.

Yet, when your demands have been laughed out of the office and you resort to putting up full-frontal pin-ups of naked men, the reaction from those same accusers of prudery will be shock, disgust, embarrassment and anger, followed by vehement demands that they be removed.

They don't like the idea of having to compare their own bodies with what is today considered the ideal any more than we do. And nor should they have to. They know damn well that very often they would not and could not live up to the "ideal".

Puny shoulders, skinny legs and beer guts don't often get shown on male pin-ups. And female ones don't

tend to show small breasts, knock-knees, fat hips or pregnant bellies.

If we do happen to have any of these attributes, unlike the men, we are expected to hide them to the best of our ability. If your face isn't "pretty" — paint it. If you haven't the legs for it, never wear a mini-skirt. Strap your breasts up — lift and separate. Whatever you do, never show your body for what it really is. Only the so-called beauties can be allowed to do that.

I remember, one summer, lying on a beach with my friend's mother who, despite her age, had managed to maintain a figure to be proud of, and had, no doubt, worked hard at it all her life.

Another woman strolled by, kids in tow, who either had not been so fortunate or perhaps had not

bothered to try. Her breasts, belly and buttocks hung freely around the confines of her bikini which covered the parts that protocol says we should never show in public (unless they are perfectly formed and pinned up on a wall). My companion tutted and muttered how disgusting it was that this woman had the bare-faced cheek to flaunt her body in such a way when, according to her, it was imperfect and something to be ashamed of.

In other words, only the women with the nicest bodies can enjoy the sea air and the heat. The rest of us must strap ourselves up and suffer.

So who are the prudes? Is it those of us who refuse to have fantastical versions of our bodies portrayed in various stages of undress and varying degrees of bondage? Or is it those who cannot bear to see the human body for what it really is, and can only get their pleasure by substituting a fantasy for the reality.

EDITORIAL



The reality of Tory rule. 19-year old Mark has been unemployed for 4 years. He lives with his partner and they see their child, who lives with foster parents, twice a week. Mark and his partner get £42.50 per week social security. Photo: Nigel Clapp.

Do you want to win, Mr Kinnock?

HAVE LABOUR'S leaders thrown in the towel already? Have they decided that the coming general election is a lost cause, and that the best they can do is to turn the defeat to their own advantage by blaming the left for it?

Prisoner

Either Neil Kinnock has given up on the election, or he is a prisoner of the vengeful right wing. Even Kinnock's own closest allies among trade union leaders, like Ron Todd, are calling for an end to Labour's internal blood-letting.

Roy Hattersley provoked the pre-

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sent crisis over Black Sections. Now, whatever the National Executive decides to do about Sharon Atkin, the Labour candidate for Nottingham East, they have *already* made it unlikely that she will win the seat (a Tory marginal).

By now Labour's leaders should be able to see the whites of the Tories' eyes. But instead of opening fire on Thatcher, they bay louder and louder against Labour's left wing and against the left-wing policies decided by Labour Party conference.

Unilateral nuclear disarmament and the national minimum wage have been relegated to the distant future. Birmingham District Labour Party has been suspended. The idea that Labour MPs should be monitored by their constituency parties, reaffirmed by Vladimir Derer of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy in *Workers' Liberty* magazine, was described by a Labour front-bencher (speaking to *Today* newspaper) as "worthy of Stalin or Hitler".

Labour's right-wing leaders seem incapable of learning. Remember Greenwich. Labour right-wingers triggered the press attack on Deirdre Wood's alleged 'hard left' politics, and then ran scared from the press.

Minded

Deirdre Wood, a respected local councillor, was treated as a dangerous eccentric, needing to be 'minded' by Frank Dobson. The result: defeat snatched from the jaws of victory.

Remember Bermondsey. Michael Foot used the House of Commons to

ensure the defeat of Labour candidate Peter Tatchell.

There were rumours that Tatchell was some sort of anti-parliamentary revolutionary. (He wasn't, and isn't). Foot denounced him, the official Labour candidate, before the grinning ranks of Tories at Westminster. After that Tatchell never had a chance.

The press was in full cry, and a vile gay-baiting campaign helped the Liberals win the seat.

The lesson from Bermondsey and from Greenwich is that the Tory press wants Labour's destruction. Throw it sops, and it will come back for more. The only way to stop it coming after us is to stop retreating!

Disruptive

Labour *can* still win the election. But we won't win anything if the saboteurs at Westminster are not called to order. If Labour loses the election, it will not be because of the left wing. The right wing will be to blame — and so will Neil Kinnock.

This time round Thatcher does not have a 'Falklands Factor'. No-one believes the Tories' claims about rosy economic prospects. They can be defeated — if Labour's leaders campaign as a coherent, confident alternative, not as a demoralised bunch of losers ashamed of their own policies and their own party activists.

Labour's leaders must stop the disruptive heresy hunts. They must stop interfering with the rights of local Labour Parties and candidates. They must stop running before the baying hounds of the Tory press, and stand and fight on Labour policy.

Israeli hypocrisy

By Adam Keller

At an early morning hour on March 13, 1987, Israeli soldiers arrived at the house of Muhammad and Raja Rabiah in Gaza. The wife, Raja, aged nineteen, and her two children — aged, respectively, sixteen months and three weeks — were loaded into a car and deported over the Egyptian border. Thus ended, in failure, the long struggle which the Rabiah family had waged for the right to live together in Gaza.

Raja Rabiah is a member of a Palestinian refugee family, originally from the Gaza Strip, which after long wanderings settled in the Gulf Emirate of Abu-Dhabi. After marrying a relative who had stayed in Gaza, Raja Rabiah applied to the military authorities for permission to reside in the Gaza Strip. Permission was denied; she was issued only a short-term, non-renewable, visitor's visa. An appeal to the Israeli Supreme Court failed, and the "foreign" wife was expelled with her children, who were born in Gaza.

The Rabiah case is but one out of thousands of cases which occur every year. The military authorities have taken the position that marriage to a resident of the occupied territories does not confer a right of residence. Family reunification is not considered an inherent right, but a special privilege; the military governor has complete discretion, and in most cases decides not to grant it.

In an affidavit presented to the Supreme Court it was stated that "clemency was misused for the purpose of importing foreigners into the area". The Supreme Court accepted the government's position, and ruled that the authorities have the right to refuse residence permits to any "foreigner", even if the "foreigner" is married to a resident.

The authorities justify this attitude by numerous excuses, such as "limited economic capacity". The brutal truth is that the Israeli government regards the presence of Palestinians as an undesirable hindrance; while it does not resort to the mass expulsions advocated by the extreme right, it does use every opportunity to reduce their number.

In the Rabiah case, as in many others, the government succeeded: the husband, Muhammad Rabiah, himself a legal resident of Gaza, voluntarily chose to follow his wife and children into exile.

Some planner in some obscure office can now chalk up one more success, one more Palestinian disposed of.

At the very time that the Israeli government callously tramples on the right of Palestinians to "family reunification", it stridently demands the same right for Soviet Jews. Ministers and Knesset Members enthusiastically sponsor the demonstrations of Jewish women

The Other Israel



In the last two or three years we have carried a lot of material arguing against the view so common on the left that the Israeli Jewish state is an irretrievably 'bad' state, incapable of reform and meriting only destruction by the Arabs.

We have argued in favour of the right of self-determination for both the Palestinian Jewish and Palestinian Arab nations — that is, for a two state solution to the tragic conflict between Jews and Arabs.

In this issue *Socialist Organiser* begins an occasional column, "The Other Israel", which will carry material by or about those in Israel and the occupied territories who are struggling in different ways against the chauvinist and oppressive policies of the Israeli government.

The following article was the editorial in the March-April issue of "The Other Israel", a magazine published by the Israeli peace movement, a loose movement advocating compromise and peace between Israel and the Arabs.

demanding to be reunified with sons or husbands who are not allowed to leave the Soviet Union.

However, regarding the Soviet Jews, too, there are very questionable motives behind Israeli official policies. The government does not regard Soviet Jews as free agents, who have the right to decide their own fate. In its view, Soviet Jews should go to Israel, and to Israel only. Since the majority of Jews who leave the Soviet Union prefer to go to the United States, Israel is ready to use coercion.

The government has officially asked the US authorities to deny Soviet Jews the refugee status which they now enjoy and turn them away. Behind the scenes, secret negotiations appear to be going on between the Israeli and Soviet governments, aimed at arranging direct flights of Jews from Moscow to Tel-Aviv, thus cutting out the Vienna stop-over which gives Soviet Jews the chance to "escape" to America.

According to some accounts, the institution of such direct flights is one of Israel's conditions for agreeing to Soviet participation in a Middle East peace conference.

Regarding both Palestinians and Soviet Jews, the Israeli official policies are guided by cold and inhuman considerations; human beings are transformed into mere figures in a demographic ledger, with Jews entered on the "credit" and Palestinians on the "debit" side. The wishes and desires of human beings, Jews or Palestinians, count for nothing in comparison with the need to redress the demographic balance.

To these sordid calculations we, in the Israeli peace movement, counterpose our vision of The Other Israel — an Israel whose policies will be based on respect for the rights and aspirations, personal and national, of all human beings.

The Other Israel, POB 956, Tel-Aviv 61008, Israel.

Why is the working class going out of fashion on the left?

Workers' Liberty No. 6 provides an answer. Plus Bob Fine on the Freedom Charter, Vladimir Derer on the Labour Party, Martin Thomas on the Third World and much, much more. Workers' Liberty No. 6 is available from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. 90p plus 20p p&p.



"For almost forty years we have stressed the class struggle as the most immediate driving power in history and, in particular, the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as the great lever of the modern social upheaval. Therefore it is impossible for us to ally ourselves with people who want to eliminate this class struggle from the movement. The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself." Marx and Engels in *Manifesto*, 1848

The retreat from class

GRAFFITI

Mining industry

Stealing coal

According to the *Financial Times* thefts from coal trains have become a real problem for British Coal in South Wales.

Coal trains have been ambushed and coal grabbed from them some 12

times; doors on the coal trucks have been unhooked so that coal falls beside the track where it can later be collected. Some of the coal thus gained has been handed out free to the

poor, and some has been sold.

If British Coal bosses are feeling angry about this, they might look at the unemployment figures for South Wales to find out something about the causes.

Poland

According to a recent interview given by a Polish colonel who defected to the US just before martial law was declared on 13 December 1981, the USSR planned to invade Poland on 8 December 1980.

The Kremlin was dissuaded only by strong pleas from General Jaruzelski that he should instead be allowed to pursue his plans for martial law, already formulated at that stage. Jaruzelski believed that Moscow underestimated the strength of the workers' movement Solidarnosc.

The colonel who defected, Ryszard Kuklinski, also says that the US government intervened in the 1980 argument on Jaruzelski's side. For sure the US knew about the plans for martial law well in advance and decided to say nothing about them to Solidarnosc.



Russian tanks in Czechoslovakia, 1968.

Labour's city slicker

Does Roy Hattersley still think that he can convince the City to cooperate with a Labour government? For many months past he has concerned himself with little else, but if he still thinks it is worthwhile it will be a great triumph of class-collaboration dogma over experience.

Not just historical, but

also personal experience. Last week Hattersley was with a local right-wing Labour bigwig in an expensive Birmingham hotel, no doubt discussing what new moves they could make against the Labour left to make Labour more presentable to City folk. A group of men from a City 'Bankers' and Brokers'

Club' who were in Birmingham for a football match came into the bar.

Noticing Hattersley, they started chanting 'Tax relief! Tax relief!' When the hotel management intervened, they started throwing things. Hattersley's companion had to have seven stitches in the wounds he received.

Equal opportunities

Sex discrimination and unequal pay are illegal, and you can go to a tribunal to correct them.

But then what happens? The Equal Opportunities Commission has found that only 11% of sex-discrimination or equal-pay cases succeeded at tribunals between 1976 and 1983. And three-quarters of the lucky 11% are dissatisfied with the

redress they get, according to a new report from researcher Alice Leonard.

Half of those who won their tribunal cases found difficulty or delays in getting the employer to pay compensation or increase their pay. Many others found the compensation ordered by the tribunal inadequate or even an 'insult'. Some suffered harassment or victimisation

at work after winning their cases.

Laws aren't useless. But their value is very limited unless women workers themselves organise to enforce them.

Low pay

43% of Britain's adult workers are paid below the poverty level, or would be if it were not for overtime.

The proportion has increased from 36% in 1979, according to a new report from the Low Pay Unit. They define the poverty line as £123 a week, or pro-rata for part-timers — a threshold slightly lower than the £127 set by the Council of Europe. When the effect of loss of means-tested benefits is taken into account, people on such wages are barely better off than on the dole.

Nearly six million of the 8.8 million low paid are women.

Refugee problem

The experience of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka is typical. Figures published in the *Economist* magazine show that Britain is, by a big margin, the most illiberal country in Western Europe to refugees.

Long past are the days when London was the haven for Karl Marx and other revolutionaries fighting despotism on the continent. In 1986 Britain admitted only 4,500 refugees while West Ger-

many admitted 100,000 and France 26,000.

The most liberal asylum laws, and the highest proportions of refugees to population, are in Sweden and Denmark. In the three years 1984-6, Sweden admitted 5,000 refugees per million of its population; Britain, 240. Britain's ratio of refugees to population is far below even that of the second-worst country, Norway (1945).



Fascists on the cenotaph demonstration in 1985

Fighting racist attacks

After two serious racist attacks in the last few months, a public meeting was held by the Southampton West Indian Association last February to discuss what action should be taken.

In the second attack, National Front skinheads from Portsmouth, armed with cut-throat razors, were responsible for terrorising a party at a new youth arts centre, and caused the

hospitalisation of three black youths. One of these black youths had his neck slashed and leaped from a first-floor window in fear of his life.

Present at the meeting itself were representatives from all the ethnic groupings in Southampton and sympathetic individuals from the white community — altogether well over a hundred people.

In the first few minutes of the meeting, two police officers brought along by Labour County Councillor Parmi Bahia, were asked to leave.

The meeting began with a local West Indian community leader, Saleem Gillings, giving a brief history of the black community in Britain. He concluded that Thatcher had made racism "acceptable" once again.

When the meeting was thrown open to the floor there was at first some criticism of the decision to exclude the police, but this was a minority view.

Later there were some accounts of people's experience of racial prejudice.

There was only one practical result of the meeting — the setting up of their own group to monitor all future racial attacks in Southampton. This is necessary if only to disprove the common belief (reinforced by the police and media) that such attacks are "rare events".

The whole meeting has to be set against the general lack of commitment in the local Labour Party — especially on the Labour City Council — to meet the needs of the black community.

Policy

The Council's race policy on housing is a case in point. The policy seems to have consisted of the issuing to all tenants of a questionnaire for the purposes of "ethnic monitoring" and two bureaucratically-written and threatening letters promising eviction in the event of any tenant being found guilty in the courts of racial intimidation or violence.

This uniquely crass policy — supposedly part of the council's overall "sympathetic race relations" policy — is in danger of offending a lot of ordinary tenants, i.e. those that are at least not overtly racist, and there is even a danger of provoking a racist backlash, without seriously advancing the conditions of the black community.

ROB EVANS,
Southampton
Labour Party

What is your programme on Ireland?

Having just read your editorial, 'Our Programme for Ireland', I'm left wondering what exactly this programme is.

You presumably will campaign for Irish self-determination as the only democratic solution but since for you federalism is the only self-determination which is democratic and no movement in Ireland is fighting for it, it might appear that this demand is not unconditional.

You propose a prior political settlement (like what?) before the British army leaves but what does your democratic programme have to say about them before they leave? Presumably on balance they must play a positive role in the democratic solution of yours or you would have demanded that they leave now, wouldn't you?

Central to your programme would appear to be workers' unity but since this demand must be for the class as a whole — all 32 counties of it — and since this perspective will undoubtedly offend those Protestant workers you see as the special target of this unity, this unity of yours must necessarily be circumscribed as well.

Your programme seems to be derived from 'the attitudes of the one million Protestants' and since we all know (don't we?) that these attitudes are not the most progressive in the world, I shudder to think what this programme of unity actually is.

Perhaps however these difficulties are the product of the real situation brought to light by your real class analysis.

So it seems Irish history has not been dominated by British imperialism but by the contradiction between the majority demands for unity and independence.

The central problem is not imperialism but the attempt of both sectarian camps to dominate each other. The British have been right. The Catholic revolt of the last 20 years is objectively sectarian. Finally it appears that Britain is not the main actor in the events taking place in Ireland but merely a backdrop.

Comrades, the programme you are putting forward has nothing to do with socialism — it is the programme of a left wing imperialism. You should drop it and ask yourselves how you got there in the first place.

JOE CRAIG,
Belfast

Is the Soviet Union a CIA front?

I would be most grateful if Socialist Organiser could answer the following query of mine, which has already cost me many sleepless nights.

The Morning Star et al have assured us that expressions of admiration by leading members of Solidarnosc for Tories such as Margaret Thatcher are proof that Solidarnosc is a CIA front.

In view of the rapturous reception of our Prime Minister in Tblisi and elsewhere in the Soviet Union, I am driven to ask myself the question: is Tblisi — and perhaps the USSR as a whole — populated by CIA agents?

If there are ten million CIA operatives in Poland, why could

there not be several hundred million of them in the Soviet Union, which is, after all, a much bigger country?

Moreover given that all demonstrations in the Soviet Union are controlled by the state authorities and the KGB, does it not follow from the above that the CIA has control of the state apparatus in the Soviet Union, just as in this country — as Peter Wright's memoirs clearly prove — the secret service and the entire state apparatus are in the hands of the KGB?

(This would explain why one has pro-Thatcher demonstrations in the USSR and anti-Thatcher demonstrations in Britain).

Am I therefore correct in concluding that what we have in this

country is a state characterised by private property relations but ruled by a Stalinist bureaucracy based on the nationalised property relations of the Soviet Union, whereas in the Soviet Union you have a state characterised by nationalised property relations but ruled by a bourgeois state machinery based on the private property relations of the West?

Does any of the above strengthen the case for a Scottish Assembly?

ALEX GLASGOW

Send letters to PO Box 823,
London SE15 4NA. No more
than 300 words, please, or we
may have to make cuts.

Justice for miners campaign meets

Last Sunday we had the National Justice for Mineworkers (NJMC) annual general meeting in Nottingham, and this was followed by a public rally in Kirkby-in-Ashfield in the evening.

I was encouraged to see that the NJMC is still ploughing ahead. I thought a number of the ideas put forward at the AGM would be useful.

In particular, there were Tony Benn's ideas for making the issue of the victimised miners a major point in the general election and afterwards — writing to all Constituency Labour Parties, MPs and Prospective

By Paul Whetton

Parliamentary Candidates to get a public commitment to support the Justice for Mineworkers Bill; and holding a meeting of all those MPs supporting it immediately after the election.

It was also good that the NJMC agreed to throw its weight behind the idea of a conference for all the sacked miners.

At the evening rally, Sharon Atkins (PPC, Nottingham East) spoke. She is under attack at the moment from

the Labour Party leadership for her commitment to black people.

I have got strong feelings about the rights and wrongs of black sections. I endorse the decision to form black sections, which means the right of black people to organise and campaign among black people for the socialist cause.

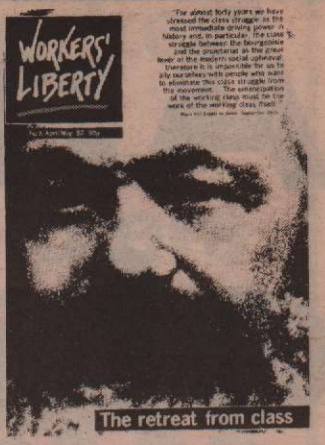
That is not so different from my own position of talking to sacked mineworkers and mineworkers in general to persuade them to follow the socialist cause.

Sharon Atkins was quite clear in throwing her support behind sacked miners. As a sacked miner I thought I

had every right and justification for throwing my weight behind her.

Of the other speakers at the rally, Tony Benn was his usual straightforward self. No hedging, no waffling. There must be a coming together of people like black people, lesbians and gays, mineworkers, printworkers, Silentnight workers, Hangars, and others to get a commitment for the return of a Labour government.

Peter Heathfield was absolutely brilliant, outlining the problems that the national union has got, and tying that all together with the issue of the sacked miners, the NUM in Notts, and pointing out that it is one fight.



Why is the working class going out of fashion on the left?

Workers' Liberty No. 6 provides an answer. Plus Bob Fine on the Freedom Charter, Vladimir Derer on the Labour Party, Martin Thomas on the Third World and much, much more. Workers' Liberty No. 6 is available from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. 90p plus 20p p&p.

Woman in a "man's job"

EXPERIENCES OF A WOMAN BUILDING WORKER

By Jean Lane. Price 50p.

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The debate on Palestine, Zionism and Anti-Semitism (including Trotsky on Zionism) Price 90p

Is the SWP an alternative?

By Clive Bradley, Martin Thomas, John Bloxam and Paddy Dollard. The sectarians tested against South Africa, the socialist struggle in the Labour Party, Ireland and the miners' strike.

Hobsbawm and SDP Communism

By John McIlroy

A Workers' Liberty pamphlet

Eric Hobsbawm and SDP Communism

By John McIlroy. Price 50p

Workers' Ireland series

No. 1: After the Anglo-Irish accord by John O'Mahony, and debate with Sinn Fein. Price £1

All pamphlets available from: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. Please include 20p p&p.

By Stan Crooke

Tory Secretary of State for Scotland Malcolm Rifkind has called for the break-up of the major council housing estates on the outskirts of Glasgow.

Glasgow's housing, especially in the council sector, is the worst in the country. 44% of Glasgow housing is in need of repairs costing £3,230 or more per unit.

In terms of "housing indicators", Glasgow tops the British league of urban areas of social deprivation, as it does in terms of all indicators taken together, not just housing.

The present crisis is largely the result of post-war housing policies pursued at both national and local level. At the close of the war Glasgow had fewer rooms to the house and more people to the room than any other British city, resulting in an overall density of 400 persons per acre. (By way of comparison, an acre of high-rise flats has a density of 180 persons).

But the solution pursued merely reproduced, and even made worse, the existing problems: four giant peripheral housing estates were built on the cheap. Encouraged by central government, and also limited in its expenditure by central government restrictions, the Council compromised on housing standards and social facilities on the new estates. On a range of criteria (lay-out, insulation, heating, density, etc) the new estates fell well below the recognised standards of the day.

Subsequent developments exacerbated further the situation — the emergence of a centralised and inefficient housing management structure; an inadequate repair and maintenance system; an allocation system which resulted in the segregation of social and economic grounds; and, more recently, savage cutbacks in local authority subsidies by the Tories, the blight of mass unemployment on the housing schemes and the collapse of tenants' spending power through cuts in social security.

Results

Such ill-thought-out housing policies and continuous under-financing have now led to:

*40,000 households on the waiting list for a council house, plus 19,000 new entrants every year;

*42,000 houses (15%) are below tolerable standards, including 22,000 council houses;

*Overcrowding on some of the peripheral council estates is seven times the national average, and infant mortality almost five times the national rate;

*14,000 council houses are acknowledged to suffer from dampness (though the real figure is a lot higher, as "condensation" is regarded as something different from dampness);

*8,700 properties lack a bath or shower;

*Mobility from less popular to more popular council housing is virtually nil — out of 8,230 applicants for a transfer in 1984, only 27 managed to obtain lets in the most popular



Decay in Glasgow, Maryhill. Photo: John Sturrock, Report.

Housing crisis in Glasgow

areas of council housing;

*Poverty overlaps with bad housing to make living conditions even worse; unemployment on some estates is running at 40%, 83% of council tenants have gross incomes below £5,200 and 74% of council tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit.

*The city also suffers from a shortage of sheltered housing units (6,000), wheelchair units (600), units for the mentally ill (400) and units for the mentally handicapped (200).

This is the reality of Glasgow, behind the Labour-controlled council's long-standing public relations exercise of trying to con people into believing that "Glasgow's Miles Better" and "Glasgow — A Great Place to Live (!) and Work (!)".

Needless to say, Rifkind's strategy for "solving" the housing problem is geared to benefit private sector profiteers rather than council house tenants. Despite government cuts of £48 million in the Housing Support Grant and of £20 million in the Rate Fund Contribution to Glasgow over the last five years, Rifkind claimed that vast sums of government money for council housing were already available, that the government could not afford to spend any more, and that those who called for a doubling

of government financial aid were living in "cloud cuckoo land".

Instead, Rifkind advocated the break-up of the large housing estates by transferring 50% of the housing stock out of council tenure, increasing council house rents to a "realistic" level, more involvement of the private sector in housing development in Glasgow, and a bigger say for tenants in the running of council housing. The inevitable outcome of such an approach would be that the private sector would snap up the most profitable sites for private development, while council tenants were left paying massively increased rents for the worst housing.

Sell-off

Glasgow District Council responded to Rifkind's proposals by claiming — not unjustifiably — that they were already being carried out! Large chunks of council housing and council land have already been sold off in recent years. Rent increases of an average of £2.04 per week for council tenants have just been announced. And the Council actively promotes a "social mix" philosophy in housing, involving opening up council estates to the private sector (but certainly not

making inroads into the private sector to the benefit of council housing).

Rifkind's response will, of course, be that this is not enough. Thus the framework for debate will be in terms of how much council land and housing should be sold off and how high rent increases should be, instead of why they council should collaborate with building cowboys and why tenants should pay more for continually deteriorating housing.

The high proportion of council housing in Glasgow (58%, as against a national average of 28%) and the relatively low council rents in Glasgow as compared with the rest of the country make Glasgow a natural target for a government ideologically committed to attacks on the public sector and to support for the "free play" of market forces. Rifkind's proposals fit naturally into such an approach.

The choice before Labour-controlled Glasgow District Council is therefore the same as that before any other Labour-controlled authority: either it can continue to implement the Tories' policies as it has done in the past, or it can line up with council tenants, Labour branches and trade union branches in order to mount a campaign of active opposition to the Tories' attacks.

Antonio Gramsci of a revolutionary

Fifty years ago on April 27 1937 the Italian revolutionary Marxist Antonio Gramsci died of a brain haemorrhage in the Clinica Quisisana in Rome. He had arrived there in August 1935, still a prisoner, suffering from arteriosclerosis, Pott's disease, pulmonary tuberculosis, angina, gout and severe gastric disorders.

Several weeks ago, on Saturday 11 April, the yuppy 'SDP-Communist' magazine *Marxism Today* sponsored a daylong event marking Gramsci's death. One of the workshops held — entitled 'Gramsci, the Left and the Popular' — promised gushingly to reveal the 'links between Gramsci's cultural writings and today's designer socialism.'

Now perhaps I'm just an inattentive reader but I can't say I've ever noticed any mention in Gramsci's work of 'the pleasure of purchase' or the wonders of filofax.

The unfortunate victim of this ludicrous misappropriation was born of Albanian extraction in the village of Ales in Sardinia on January 22 1891. A childhood accident left Antonio hunchbacked — and thus an object of revilement on this superstitious island. In contrast with other major figures within Marxism, Gramsci endured great hardship and poverty both as a child and in adulthood.

Sheer determination won him a scholarship to the University in Turin and it was to that most proletarian of Italian cities that he travelled in 1911. However tremendous ill-health, culminating in a nervous breakdown in 1913 put paid to his degree in linguistics. Instead, together with fellow students Angelo Tasca, Umberto Terracini and Palmiro Togliatti he became involved in political activity in the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), writing for *Il Grido del Popolo* and *Avanti*.

Like many others on the left of European socialism Gramsci hailed the Russian Revolution as a heroic break with the clockwork Marxism of the old Second International — as a 'Revolution against Capital'. In April

At the trial of Antonio Gramsci the Fascist prosecutor demanded that the court must "stop this brain functioning for 20 years." Brian McKenna examines the ideas produced by that brain and their relevance for socialists today.

1919 Gramsci collaborated in the founding of *L'Ordine Nuovo*, a journal which became the voice of the Turin 'Factory Council' movement; a movement which Gramsci saw as translating the Russian 'soviet' experience into an Italian context.

1920 saw (in April) a general strike in Piedmont and, in September, widespread factory occupations initiated by the metalworkers' union, the FIOM.

The PSI proved itself to be utterly inadequate during this crucial year, demonstrating the need for a new politically clearer and harder formation — namely the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) which was formed at Livorno in March 1921, and was initially led by Amadeo Bordiga.

L'Ordine Nuovo now became a daily paper of the Party. In its columns Gramsci analysed the rising Fascist movement, among other things. When Mussolini actually marched on Rome in 1922 Gramsci was in Moscow working for the Communist International. While there he was married to Julia Shucht with whom he was to have two sons.



The occupation of the factories

Gramsci courageously returned to Italy — as an MP — in 1924 and became General Secretary of the PCI in 1926. In November of that year he was arrested and two years later was sentenced to twenty years in prison. He informed his sister-in-law Tatiana that he intended to produce something that would last. Incarcerated first on the island of Turi and then in Rome he poured his heart and soul into notebook after notebook. The Party meanwhile had

abandoned him since in 1931 he opposed the ultraleftism of the 'Third Period' policy dictated by Stalin.

As the thirties tragically wore on, Gramsci's health deteriorated drastically; when his ten year calvary came to an end in 1937 he was only 46.

Within weeks of Gramsci's death the *Prison Notebooks* were in the hands of his former comrade Palmiro Togliatti, the PCI leader known to Spanish Anarchist workers as the Butcher of Bilbao.

When, in 1947, he finally allowed the notebooks to see the light of day, Togliatti ensured that they were ruthlessly censored. Within Italy until the mid-sixties Gramsci was falsely portrayed as a loyal Stalinist; from 1965 onwards as a 'Eurocommunist' reformist.

The latter falsified version of Gramsci has been imbibed in Britain by the *Marxism Today* wing of the Communist Party and its fellow-travellers on the Labour Left. The definitive critique of this bowdlerised Gramsci is Perry Anderson's 1977 article in *New Left Review* no. 100; it remains well worth reading if you can get hold of it.

If the Stalinist and Eurocommunist versions of Gramsci are not worth a bean, what of the revolutionary version? Is there anything of specific value to be gleaned from Gramsci that cannot be got from Marx, Lenin or Trotsky? I think there is.

Gramsci tried to think through a distinction between rule based on coercion and 'moral and intellectual leadership' based on consent. The word he uses to define the latter — 'hegemony' — tends to be overworked throughout the *Notebooks* (moreover the distinction in reality is

never very clear). However, the areas it opens up are important ones.

As early as the first years of *L'Ordine Nuovo*, Gramsci was denoting by 'hegemony' a whole cultural dimension of class struggle less well registered by Lenin and Trotsky. Revolutionaries were to compete for hegemony within the working class which would in turn seek to forge a hegemonic alliance with the Southern Italian peasantry.

Hegemony

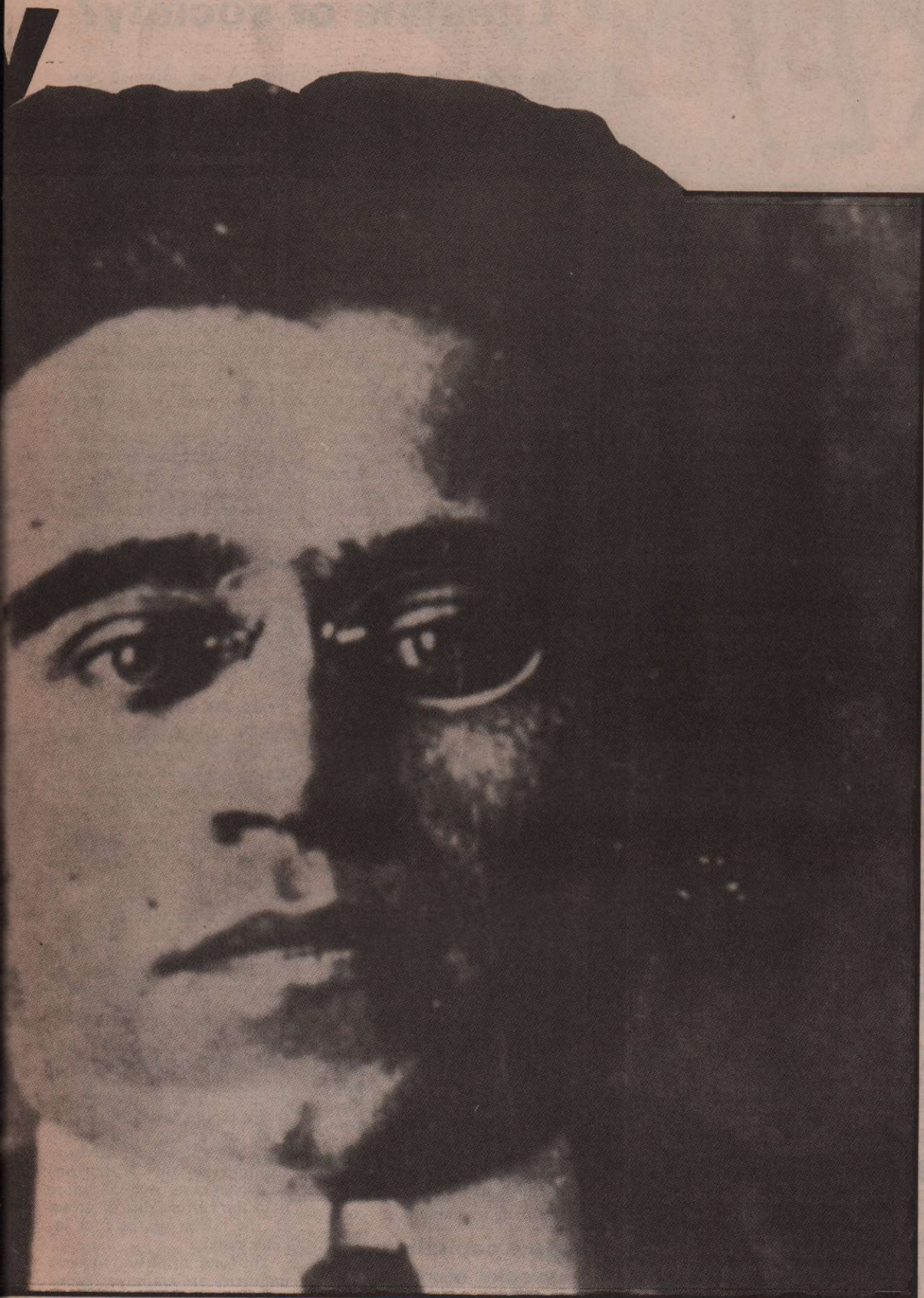
More interestingly, however, Gramsci also used 'hegemony' to understand the complexity of bourgeois ideological influence throughout society. His starting point was the inherently 'contradictory consciousness' of the 'active wo/man-in-the-mass'.

He held that implicit in the daily practice of the popular classes was a subversive view of the world that contradicted the 'superficially explicit' one. Thus the ideological dominance achieved by those intellectuals wedded to bourgeois society can never be final; instead it is a



Gramsci at the trial, 1935. Photo: Soviet

Afterlife



Gramsci

constantly contested' outcome. Gramsci's analysis of how ideologies are constituted enables us to break with a view of bourgeois ideology as a super-efficient mechanism whereby capitalism produces itself as if by magic. It also enables us to examine the combination within specific popular ideologies of bourgeois hegemonic elements and working class values. The main potential source for a working class hegemony Gramsci located at the point of production itself. In the 'red years' of 1919 and 1920 Gramsci developed an understanding of the link between factory-level struggle and the creation of elements of a working class party that was second to none.

Party

Later, both in and out of prison, Gramsci developed a sophisticated understanding of the interrelationship between the 'spontaneous' struggles of the workers and the intervention of an organisation based on a broad overall understanding of society and the revolutionary party, the

'Modern Prince'. The Notebooks can be usefully mined for anti-defeatist quotes which indicate how things can be different if revolutionaries act intelligently, cohesively and decisively.

Limits

All the above, and more, granted however there are real limits to the value of Gramsci's work for socialists operating in a country like Britain today. For example his analysis of popular cultural resistance is perhaps more relevant to a country similar to the Italy of 1926 (like Brazil or Mexico).

Moreover, although reformist readings of Gramsci are to some extent made possible by the coded language he was compelled to use to avoid prison censorship, they are also made possible by a persistent tendency to equate workers' revolution with bourgeois revolution.

This constitutes a flaw because of the contrast in position of the capitalist class within feudalism and that of the working class within capitalism. The opportunity afforded to the bourgeoisie by virtue of its wealth to develop its own culture

prior to its assumption of state power is not available in the same way to the working class.

Working class socialism cannot conquer 'civil society' simply by way of propaganda for its ideas and values (important though such propaganda may be); nor can it triumph by way of living example (important though a 'right on' lifestyle may be!). No, the struggles imposed on the working class by capitalism remain the key to socialist advance today in 1987 as they were in 1937.

Courage

Readers of Socialist Organiser new to Gramsci himself could do worse than begin with the 'Lyons Theses' available in *Selections from the Political Writings 1921-6* and with his essay on the intellectuals in *Selections from Prison Writings*. No matter what you come to think about Gramsci's ideas, however, if his courage and fortitude do not help to deepen your hatred of capitalist society then you are reading the wrong newspaper.

Wednesday 5 April

Kornilov, commander of the Petrograd regional garrison, arrives in Kronstadt to demand support for the Provisional Government from the sailors. He condemns their "impudent response" to the government's appeal to them to take the new oath of allegiance. A sailor, Pavlov, responds by demanding that Kornilov take an oath of allegiance to the revolution.

In Helsingfors 20,000 sailors, soldiers and Finnish workers demonstrate to demand the 8-hour working day. In Samara the Executive Committee of the Soviet calls for the establishment of industrial trade unions, and for better pay and rations for soldiers.

Sailors in Revel set up tribunals on each ship, consisting of two members elected by the crew and one by the officers, to examine disputes between sailors and officers. Members of the Rostov-on-Don garrison refuse to take the oath of allegiance to the Provisional Government.

Thursday 6 April

The first all-Russian conference of railway workers is held in Petrograd, with the goal of creating an all-Russian trade union of railway workers. 201 representatives attend, from 32 railways and 25 other organisations.

In the "News of the Petrograd Soviet" paper (Izvestia), a report is carried outlining the situation in local factories: in a number of them workers' control over production has been established and productivity levels increased; where production has fallen, it is the result of a lack of raw materials or the fault of management. A 6,000 strong meeting in Kronstadt condemns the decision of the Provisional Government to allow former officials of the Tsarist police to join the militia. The Rostov-on-Don Soviet demands introduction of the 8-hour working day by factory-owners by 11 April; if they fail to do so, then it will be introduced by the workers themselves.

An all-Kiev meeting of members of the Russian Social Democratic and Labour Party (Bolshevik) rejects the possibility of a socialist revolution in Russia; the optimum to be achieved would be fulfillment of the demands of the 1905 revolution.

Friday 7 April

Provisional Government minister Guchkov calls for an end to desertions in the army and a redoubling of efforts for victory; 8,000 soldiers have deserted from the Northern and Western fronts in that week alone.

In Novgorod a congress of representatives of local military units begins. It supports the decision of the all-Russian meeting of Soviets, rejects any entry of socialist parties into the Provisional Government, and expresses its confidence in the soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies. In Minsk the first congress of military and workers' deputies of the army and rear of the Western front opens, attended by 850 delegates with full voting rights, 350 delegates with consultative voting rights, and 100 guests. Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries have the majority.

In Irkutsk the congress of Eastern Siberian Soviets opens, attended by 132 delegates (32 workers, 51 soldiers, and 49 peasants). Under the influence of the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, it supports the Provisional Government and the war.

Saturday 8 April

The Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet resolves to telegram all local Soviets advocating the establishment of regional congresses of Soviets and the creation of regional committees of Soviet representatives. The Executive Committee also condemns the seizure of the "Christian Fiord" steamer by the British authorities.

At the Putilov works in Petrograd a 10,000 strong meeting resolves to boycott bourgeois papers falsely accusing workers of responsibility for falling levels of production.

A 4,000-strong meeting of railway workers in Samara opposes the immediate introduction of the 8-hour working-day and calls for support for the Provisional Government, but control over the former by the soviets.

Sunday 9 April

A meeting of the Petrograd Soviet resolves that 18 April (1 May in the Western calendar) should be a public holiday and that workers should work on the preceding Sunday (16 April) instead. 100,000 soldiers' wives demonstrate in Petrograd demanding an improvement of 13 roubles in government monthly allowances. Soldiers in the 192nd reserve infantry regiment stationed in Moscow refuse to go to the front on the grounds that "they are needed here for defence of the freedom which has been gained." On the Rumanian front a general complains that army chiefs "lack the strength to

Workers and soldiers

1917

YEAR OF REVOLUTION

cope with the armed soldier mob" after a general is arrested by soldiers for attempting to ban the wearing of armbands.

A regional meeting of delegates from Soviets of peasants' deputies in Moscow calls for complete unity with the workers' and soldiers' soviets, and for workers' and soldiers' representatives to attend meetings of the Presidium of the soviet of peasant deputies. In Kiev a general meeting of the union of woodworkers criticises the Kiev Soviet for weakness and calls on it to pursue more energetically the question of the eight-hour working day.

Monday 10 April

The women workers' bureau of the Bolshevik Petrograd committee issues a protest against the decision of the Petrograd Soviet that workers should work on 16 April in lieu of 18 April, on the grounds that it is dictated by support for the imperialist war-effort. A 700-strong meeting of workers from three Petrograd factories condemns any granting of pensions to Tsarist dignitaries and ministers; instead they should be pensioned off for life to the Schluselburg prison. Desertion rates among soldiers of the Western front are running at 17% and amongst soldiers in Western reserve regiments at 36%.

Tuesday 11 April

The Executive of the Petrograd Bolsheviks condemns the decision that workers should work on 16 April. 15,000 soldiers' wives demonstrate in Petrograd at the building of the Petrograd Soviet, demanding the speediest possible end to the war and an improvement of 13 roubles a month in government allowances. A general meeting of all apprentices in factories in the Vyborg region of Petrograd sets up an agitation-commission in preparation for May Day.

The Executive Committee of the Tiflis Soviet of Workers' Deputies declares its support for workers working on 16 April in lieu of 18 April. The first congress of workers' and soldiers' deputies of the Turkestan region is held in Tashkent. It calls for continuation of the war until victory, and for freedom of speech for soldiers.

Wednesday 12 April

The principal organisation committee of the All-Russian Peasant Union meets in Petrograd to prepare the convening of an all-Russian congress of peasant deputies; it appeals to all peasants to join the peasant union, and to all peasant-soldiers to defend Russia from the enemy within. A meeting of printworkers' representatives in Petrograd condemns overtime as a cause of unemployment and a threat to workers' health; henceforth it will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances and with the permission of the Central Committee of Printworkers. Under the influence of Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, the first regional congress of Soviets in the Turkestan region calls for "social control" over production, to be implemented by officials of the Provisional Government, not by workers.

Thursday 13 April

A mass meeting of metal workers in Petrograd demands that the Petrograd Soviet Executive Committee orders the immediate imprisonment of the former Tsar, his wife, and accomplices in the Peter-and-Paul Fortress. The organisation commission of the Soviet of workers' deputies of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk region demands immediate introduction of the 8-hour working day and improved rates of pay. In an attempt to prevent fraternisation, General Gutor (South-west front) orders: periodic use of light artillery, constant cross-fire, and the opening of fire on German 'peace envoys'. Pravda launches an appeal for donations totalling 75,000 roubles in five days to enable it to buy a printing press.

Turn to page 10.

Labour Youth

A very average conference

By Mark Osborn

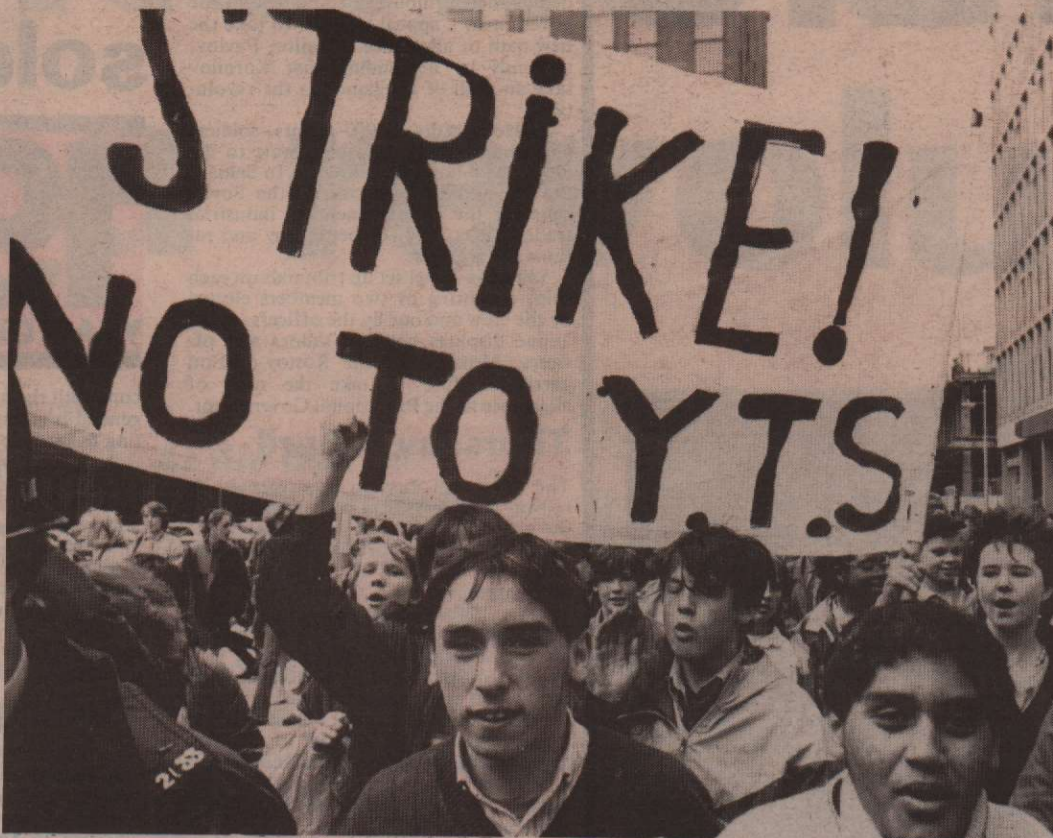
The Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) annual national conference, held in Blackpool over the Easter weekend continued in the tradition of British Marxism — sectarian, demagogic, and really average.

Conference had been held in the same hall in 1985, when most of the seats had been filled — but this year many were empty. 40 fewer delegates were present to vote in the election for the LPYS place on the Labour Party's National Executive Committee, in which Youth Fightback candidate Rosie Sibley, got 13 votes. The Militant won, predictably, with 169 votes.

Interestingly, Steve Jomoa, the Black Sections candidate got 17 votes — far fewer than he had expected. Hopefully, after this hiccup, Steve, who throughout the conference avoided taking a clear stand on political issues, will find a council seat somewhere and leave working class youth to their own devices.

On the conference floor there were the usual carve-outs. For instance, opposition motions on South Africa simply disappeared. The National Committee were forced to back down over the decision not to discuss lesbian and gay rights (although football was on the agenda!).

Youth Fightback supporters



Manchester school students' strike in 1985. Photo: John Smith, IFL.

were clearly the opposition, giving the platform deserved stick in a year when an election is looming and the Sawyer proposals are threatening to destroy the LPYS. The Militant have done nothing but talk about both.

Youth Fightback took on the Militant's sectarian reformism out of conference too — for instance our fringe meeting, "Liverpool: What Went Right?" drew a number

of the tendency into "fraternal discussion".

On the subject of Merseyside, well-off Derek Hatton continued to annoy his own supporters when he failed to turn up to the Militant rally. A sizeable minority of Militant supporters are now openly admitting that they should cut links with this disgusting, picket-line crossing 'Marxist'.

Conference was capped by an apparent concerted attempt

to add petrol to the witch-burning, when drunken idiots filled in a couple of right-wingers... Very bright.

A number of new YS branches and individuals signed up to Youth Fightback making our tendency better able to take on the Tories (and, inside the YS, the Militant) over the next year. We will be out on the streets in the next months organising for a Labour victory.

ACTIVISTS' DIARY

Wapping: public meeting on the anniversary of the brutal police attack on the picket line in May 1986. 7pm, Thursday 7 May, at the John Marshall Hall, Blackfriars Rd.

LESBIAN and Gay Pride March '87: contact Solidarity Working Group, Mary Harper, London Lesbian and Gay Centre, Cowcross St, London EC1.

WALLASEY SOCIALIST ORGANISER PUBLIC FORUMS.

'Woman in a man's job' — Wallasey Socialist Organiser forum with Jean Lane. 7.45, Monday 11 May, at Wallasey Unemployed Centre, Seaview Road.

Wednesday June 17, 'Can Kinnock deliver socialism?' All meetings: Wallasey Unemployed Centre, Seaview Road, 7.45 p.m.

Re-elect Labour in Liverpool! Support the Liverpool 47! Rally, 7pm Friday 1 May at Transport House, Islington, Liverpool 3.

Printed T-shirts designed to order, or from a wide range of popular prints. Contact ABS, 0782 84170.

How will Ireland be united? — debate between Socialist Organiser and International. 7.30, Friday 24 April, at Priory St Community Centre, York.

The Middle East: how to achieve workers' unity and socialism? London Socialist Organiser forum with John O'Mahony. 7.30, Thursday 21 May, at the Plough, Museum St, London WC1.

Hangers: support the locked-out limbfitters. Assemble 10.30am, Saturday 2 May, at Roehampton Lane, London SW15, and march to Bishops Park, Putney, for rally at 1pm. Contact: 01-646 0260.

WHERE WE STAND

Socialist Organiser stands for workers' liberty, East and

West. We aim to help organise the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions to fight to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

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

end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles world-wide, including the struggle of workers, and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist

states against their own anti-socialist bureaucracies.

We stand: For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working class based women's movement.

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

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

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

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

We want Labour Party and trade union members who support our basic ideas to become supporters of the paper — to take a bundle of papers to sell each week and pay a small 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

Lifestyle or society?

This week's column is contributed by SO supporter Dr. George Davey Smith. It is a version of an article that originally appeared in *Needle*, a socialist magazine for students and workers in the health service.

Last autumn I was interested to see that the local diet had become a national news story. The new health minister, Edwina Currie, lectured us Northerners on our disgraceful dietary habits. Apparently the north of England is a less advanced society than the south, this being proven by the fact that fewer vegetables are eaten. We were told that the poor health experienced in the north is nothing to do with poverty or unemployment and could best be tackled by "impressing on people the need to look after themselves better".

What is striking about Currie's outburst is that, shorn of its characteristic tactlessness, it corresponds to the mainstream of health education practice. Her predecessor, Ray Whitney, opened a recent Health Education Council exhibition with the following speech:

"As a nation we must improve our record in reducing the number of deaths from coronary heart disease. Certainly the government has an important role to play — which it is already playing — but real success can only come from the efforts of each of us as individuals. The sort of life we lead very often has a direct link with our life expectancy and, for the great majority of us, lifestyle is by far the most important factor in maintaining good health".

HEC booklets intended for the general public, like *Look After Yourself* and *Beating Heart Disease*, have an identical message. And this week, the DHSS will be launching a project called *Healthy Lifestyles* with a media campaign telling us to renounce our naughty habits!

How capitalism wrecks our coronary arteries

There are two major assumptions made in this approach to preventing ill health. The first is that disease is caused by *Looking After Yourself* factors. It seems clear that diet, physical inactivity and smoking cause disease. However, the strength of these relationships may have been overestimated. For example, smokers are more likely to work with noxious substances and have poor living conditions. These are important determinants of health in their own right. People in "lower status" jobs have been shown to be at greater risk of developing heart disease independent of "lifestyle" factors. Shift workers, for example, have double the risk of heart attacks regardless of their smoking habits.

Furthermore, in both social class and occupational studies, higher death rates in less well off groups are seen for almost every disease. Other findings inconvenient to lifestyle

theories of disease have demonstrated the health-destroying effects of unemployment, poverty and poor housing.

Concentration upon lifestyle factors is convenient politically, since tackling the structural causes of ill health would require a major reorganisation of society, probably incompatible with capitalism.

Healthy Lifestyles seems like a pre-election stunt designed to draw attention away from the health-damaging effects of general Tory economic policy and the run-down of the NHS.

In a review of studies of work stress and coronary heart disease, one scientist concluded that, as evidence mounted of disease caused by alienating and pressurised work, it had become appropriate to oppose speed-ups, forced overtime, excessive work-pace and workloads and other stressful work conditions on the grounds of occupational safety. You will not be surprised to learn that this message is not reflected in HEC and DHSS publications and campaigns.

Free to choose?

The second assumption made by lifestyle theorists is that lifestyle reflects freely made choices. But there are, of course, major constraints upon such choices. A survey in the north of England found that a quarter of unemployed respondents reported being short of money for food. A third had missed meals for lack of money. A diet recall question revealed that more than a third of unemployed respondents had eaten chips in the previous twenty-four hours, despite the knowledge that food was important for health (85% said it was fairly or very important). Clearly, ignorance is *not* the problem. A recent report has shown that a diet meeting long-term NACNE (National Advisory Committee on Nutrition) guidelines costs over 35% more than the current diet of group D, the lowest of the four income bands.

The food, drink and tobacco industries are entirely organised for profit rather than socially-useful production. To deal with the problems of poor diet and smoking requires an attack on the profits. However these industries contributed £212,600 to Tory Party funds in 1983. Clearly the Tories are not going to bite the hands that feed them.

Currie's piece of victim blaming reflects a general ideology, not just an uncaring personality. Social factors are excluded from discussions of disease causation, reducing it to purely 'lifestyle' factors. Such behaviours are said to reflect individual choice only, and not to be determined by the drive for profit. The ritual rhetoric of Tory politicians against drug pushers sits sourly with their grateful acceptance of money from the biggest drug pushers of them all, the tobacco industry.

Problems in society are represented as problems in individuals. Overcoming this illusion might bring nearer the day when we get rid of the real cause of ill health.

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Young Iranian fundamentalist

Big Bad Ian

By Alex Glasgow

'Labour and Ireland' carries a review by Geoff Bell of Moloney and Pollak's important book 'Paisley'.

Half of the review ignores the book entirely and is instead given over to Geoff Bell's ruminations about Rhonda Paisley's TV chat show on Dublin's RTE, the nature of Loyalism, and the role of the individual in history.

Bell's ruminations are notable for the violence of the language employed, rather than for their accuracy.

Bell concludes by suggesting that "the book does tend to the view that a bullet in Big Ian's head could solve everything. Well, if it were that easy, someone would surely have lodged one there long ago." But the book does not tend to such a view.

Bell is equally inaccurate in claiming that there is "little new" in Moloney's and Pollak's interpretation of Paisley's career. He further compounds the error by reducing Moloney's and Pollak's work to being merely "a useful job (which) re-emphasises just what a nasty political animal Ian Paisley is."

Moloney and Pollak certainly do show what a 'nasty political animal' Ian Paisley is. But they also go well beyond that and successfully undermine many of the ignorant assumptions current on the British Left about Paisley and the Protestant community.



To list just some of the basic points made in this 456-page book:

*Paisley's rise to power is based on his ability to articulate the fears of the Protestant community.

*Paisley is a populist who has successfully tapped the anti-Establishment and anti-fur coat brigade tradition in the Protestant community.

*Like all populists, Paisley is adept at parish pump politics and is an efficient constituency MP.

*Paisley has played a central role in helping break up the Unionist monolith by founding the Free Presbyterian Church and the Democratic Unionist Party.

*Paisley uses violent imagery in his rhetoric, but is careful to keep his distance from the real thing, and is held in contempt by Loyalist paramilitaries.

*Paisley has vacillated wildly on the constitutional question, even briefly flirting with the idea of a united Ireland.

*In the final analysis, Paisley is yet another careerist politician, pragmatically ditching his positions of yesterday and adopting new ones to further his own career, chasing, rather than leading the masses.

All this is clearly far from the interpretation placed upon the book by Geoff Bell (et al). The authors have gone far beyond the simple (but accurate) notion that Paisley is a 'nasty political animal' and performed a valuable service in unravelling the complexities of the reasons for Paisley's popularity and of the motivation of those who lend him their support.

'Paisley', by Ed Moloney and Andy Pollak. Poolbeg, £5.95.

The Sword of Islam

THE MUSLIM men and boys stand around waiting for the procession to begin, some of them holding cutthroat razors.

Some of them have patches shaven on their heads already, like the tonsures of Christian monks except that the bald patches are at the front.

Then you see them take razors to each other again, this time hitting with the razor to puncture the shaven patch on the skull so that the blood spurts out and runs down their faces.

The men receive the blows willingly, and some ecstatically; the children are unwilling. One little boy starts to cry.

Then they beat themselves on the heads to make more blood flow. Eventually the procession becomes a cascade through the streets of men with their heads, faces and clothes covered in their own blood.

It was the single most startling scene in 'The Sword of Islam'. These were Shi'ite Muslim fundamentalists in Lebanon. They are only one spectacular part of a powerful wave of ultra-reactionary Muslim fundamentalism that is sweeping the Middle East.

Secular

It is a major force in Egypt, where millions of Christians are increasingly subjected to sectarian oppression. It is making itself felt even in Turkey, which has been determinedly secular

Paddy Dollard reviews 'The Sword of Islam' (ITV, 8 April)

since Kemal Ataturk stabilised the modern Turkish state in the early '20s.

The Shias are a minority Muslim creed with a bias towards politics and militarism. But fundamentalism is a force also among the Sunni Muslims. The assassination of Egyptian president Sadat was the work of Sunnis, out for revenge on Sadat for making a peace treaty with Israel.

The fundamentalists present themselves as a revolutionary force, and they appeal — with increasing success — to the poor, the oppressed, and the downtrodden. They want not only an Islamic revolution in the Middle East, but — as one man told the TV cameras — a world-wide Islamic revolution.

What that world would be like can be seen today in Khomeini's Iran.

Failure

Where, at the tail-end of the 20th century, has this popular movement of vicious medieval obscurantism and social, political, moral and intellectual regression come from?

From the failure of the so-called 'Arab Revolution' of the '50s and '60s. After the Israeli citizen army defeated the combined armies of the

Arab states in 1948, a powerful movement of Arab self-reappraisal and self-criticism developed.

It helped crystallise nationalist officers' movements within the armies which overthrew the Egyptian monarchy in 1952 and the Iraqi monarchy in 1958. When Egypt's president Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal in 1956 and then survived the combined Israeli-French-British invasion that followed (essentially because the US would not back the invasion), radical Arab nationalism was given a tremendous boost.

State capitalist regimes developed in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, calling themselves socialist. But everywhere these bureaucratic statist regimes failed to deliver a decent life to the masses.

Socialism

Israel's crushing defeat of Egypt, Syria and Jordan in the June war of 1967 shattered the mystique of Nasserism. The US-backed Saudi Arabian monarchy, the steady source of a continuous religious infection, survived and prospered on petrodollars. In the '70s, under Nasser's successor Sadat, Egypt swung back to private capitalism. Sadat hypocritically sponsored a 'return to Islam' and thereby helped seal his own doom.

But more than the debacle of radical Arab nationalism was needed to breed fundamentalism. There was also the virtual collapse of Arab socialism.

The Egyptian Communist Party accepted Nasser's state capitalism as socialism, and dissolved itself into his state 'party'. The Iraqi CP might have made a socialist revolution in the five years between the monarchy's overthrow in 1958 and the bloody Ba'ath-army coup in 1963, but failed utterly.

Together with all the smaller socialist currents, including the Trotskyists, they pander to the idea that the existence of Israel is central to the problems of the Arab countries and that a big part of the solution is the overrunning and destruction of Israel.

Operating within states which were truly and fully independent in the political sense, they yet continued to stress 'anti-imperialism'. But the only possible 'anti-imperialism' in the circumstances was working-class socialism, aimed against the native

ruling classes and military elites too.

The dominant Stalinist 'socialists' rejected this and argued that the 'bourgeois and anti-imperialist national-democratic revolution' had to be finished first. The result was that they had no answer to anything. And they talked the same classless, national-populist 'anti-imperialism' as the nationalist officers and all sorts of middle-class demagogues.

Way out

They become the mere tools of Arab populist nationalism. They become part of the roadblock to the development of the masses.

Seeing no way out, the oppressed turn increasingly to mysticism and religion. In their own way the mullahs mean business, as they show every day in Iran.

The Shia clergy is a tightly organised hierarchical force with many of the characteristics of a revolutionary party. They are against the modern world and therefore against the West. The West is imperialist, and so inchoate, classless anti-imperialism easily merges and blurs into hostility to the West and to the modern world, or to what the Iranians call the USA, 'The Great Satan'.

So instead of the ideas and programme of revolutionary socialists influencing the desperate proletarian and semi-proletarian masses, it is the ideas and programme and the quasi-medieval consciousness of priests.

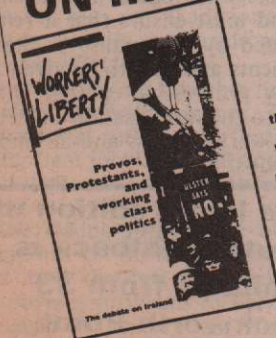
One of the most clear-cut ideas expressed by fundamentalists in 'The Sword of Islam' was the (untrue) notion that Israel has survived and triumphed because the Jews remained true to their religion while the Muslims fell away. The answer therefore is for the Arabs to return to Islam.

All the signs are that this is a movement that has far from run its course.

In 1920 Bertrand Russell said of international Bolshevism that in terms of militancy and the combination of passionate faith, the will to subvert the old order, and capacity to organise a mass movement to change the world, nothing like it had been seen since the early eruption of Islam from the 7th century onwards.

He could not have foreseen that the decline and incapacity of the degenerate successors to that Bolshevik movement would help generate a new upsurge of pure Islam.

Provos, Protestants and working class politics
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From centre pages

Friday 14 April

The Soviet of peasant deputies of the Petrograd garrison is established, consisting of 280 delegates elected on the basis of one delegate per thousand soldiers. A mass meeting of 3,000 workers and soldiers in Moscow condemns the Provisional Government as a counter-revolutionary government of capitalists and landowners; it calls for dual power to be replaced by "one power — the power united in the soviets of workers, soldiers and peasants' deputies." The Orsha Soviet of workers, soldiers and officers' deputies calls for the introduction of the 8-hour working day as of 15 April, and for a 7-hour working day on the eve of holidays. On the Rumanian front soldiers refuse orders to prepare for launching an offensive and pass from hand to hand along the trenches leaflets written by the soldiers themselves opposing the orders.

Saturday 15 April

Soldiers leaving for the front from Voronezh declare that they are going "to defend the free mother-country", not to "serve as a tool in the hands of Russian capitalists and their allies," and demand the speediest possible conclusion of peace. Baku industrialists accept the demand of the local Soviet that the 8-hour working day should be introduced on 1 May. The Soviet of workers' deputies of the Kaslinsk factory (Perm region) places the manager under house-arrest and institutes its own control over production. Pravda continues its appeal for 75,000 roubles; to date 5,670 roubles have been collected in Petrograd and 547 roubles sent in to its fighting fund.

Sunday 16 April

A 4,000-strong meeting of soldiers and sailors in the Kronstadt garrison demands: no dispatch of garrison units to the front; call-up of the police to serve in the army; freedom of access for agitators to the front; introduction of the 8-hour working day. A 5,000-strong meeting of workers and soldiers in Petrograd demands: introduction of the 8-hour working day; confiscation of land; arming of the working masses; publication of secret treaties. The Executive Committee of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Soviet demands reinstatement of all sacked workers by 24 April and payment of full wages to any workers not reinstated. In Kramatorsk the Soviet of workers' deputies dissolves the bourgeois "Public Committee"; all power is in the hands of the soviet, and workers' control over production instituted. In Sevastopol sailors on the "George the Victor" cruiser issue an appeal for continuation of the war "until victory".

Monday 17 April.

Representatives of the Petrograd workers' militias elect a provisional commission for the creation of Red Guards. Local Bolsheviks distribute a leaflet appealing for the establishment of Red Guards throughout Petrograd. A general meeting of the Kronstadt Soviet demands that the former Tsar be deprived of all special privileges and imprisoned in the Peter-and-Paul Fortress. On the South-west front General Brusilov issues an order banning all fraternisation.

Tuesday 18 April

In the modern calendar, this is 1 May, May Day.

Mass demonstrations and meetings are held throughout Russia in celebration of May Day. The main slogan raised is "peace without annexations and confiscations".

Workers at the Putilov works in Petrograd raise the slogans "Down with war!", "Land to the peasants!", "Long live the 8-hour working day!" and "Workers' control of production!" Young workers from the plant demonstrate under the slogans "A 6-hour working-day for young workers!" and "The right to vote at 18!"

The Bolsheviks' Kronstadt paper "The Voice of Truth" publishes the slogans "Long live the International!", "The treachery of the leaders and opportunism killed the Second International!", "Voting rights for women!", "Long live the unity of workers and the army!"

The Novgorod Soviet instructs all prisoners-of-war to be released from work for the day. Austrian prisoners-of-war join the May Day demonstration in Ivanovo-Voznesensk; German and Austrian prisoners-of-war join the demonstration in Minsk; prisoners-of-war demonstrate in Ekaterinburg under the slogans "Peace and freedom!" and "Long live the International!"; and in Krasnoyarsk social-democratic Austrian and German prisoners-of-war join the May Day demonstrations.

500,000 demonstrate in Moscow under the slogans "Long live the 8-hour working day!", "Peace and fraternity of peoples!", "Unity of workers and

1917

YEAR OF REVOLUTION

May Day in Petrograd

soldiers!" In Kiev the slogan "All power to the Soviets!" is raised. In Kursk half the city's population take part in the May Day rally. On the Western front there is a complete lull in the fighting and red flags are hoisted over Russian and German trenches.

In Rostov-on-Don the local Bolshevik party committee issues a leaflet raising the slogans "Down with the imperialist war! Long live civil war!" and "Long live socialism!" In Sevastopol sailors demonstrate under the slogans "Without total victory there can be no peace!" and "Victory over Germany is the road to the fraternity of peoples!" In Voronezh placards calling for "War until a victorious end!" are destroyed by indignant soldiers.

Wednesday 19 April

A meeting of the Central Bureau of Petrograd Trade Unions adopts a resolution protesting against the slandering of Lenin by the bourgeois press and calling on all trade union members to boycott papers which print such slanders.

In Maimaks a general meeting of the workers' committees of the twelve local saw mills unanimously agrees to introduce the 8-hour working day into all local saw mills as of 24 April. In Novo-Borisov the 8-hour working day is introduced into the local saw mill at the instructions of the local soviet of workers' deputies.

In Busuluk a railwayworkers' meeting passes a resolution protesting against the intention of paying pensions to former Tsarist ministers and dignitaries. In the village of Koval the priest is thrown out of office by his parishioners for having called for an end to land seizures by the peasantry.

Thursday 20 April

Meetings and demonstrations are held throughout Russia in protest at the "Miliukov note" of 18 April, in which Minister for Foreign Affairs Miliukov assured Russia's imperialist allies that the Provisional Government would not weaken the war-effort, and that it was confident of victory in the war.

Thousands of workers and soldiers demonstrate throughout the day in Petrograd outside the buildings of the Provisional Government, demanding the dismissal of Miliukov. At an emergency meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies the Menshevik fraction takes the lead in opposing resolutions calling for power to be transferred to the Soviets. Instead, the meeting agrees to take no decision until members of the Soviet's Executive Committee have met government ministers. At a meeting of the Provisional Government General Kornilov advocates the use of force to break up demonstrations of armed soldiers in Petrograd against the government.

A general meeting of soldiers' delegates on the Northern front resolves to permit fraternisation with the aim of revolutionary propaganda, but that fraternisation "should not affect the military capabilities of the army". In Ekaterinodar a meeting of soldiers' and Cossack deputies establishes a commission to ensure that all local police and gendarmes are sent to the front.

Friday 21 April

Demonstrations and meetings in opposition to the "Miliukov note" continue. In Petrograd mass meetings in factories pass resolutions of no confidence in the Provisional Government and call for the transference of all power to the Soviets. 100,000 workers and soldiers participate in the different demonstrations in Petrograd. One of the demonstrations is attacked by armed supporters of the government, leaving demonstrators dead and wounded. General Kornilov orders artillery batteries to be moved onto the Palace Square, but soldiers refuse to carry out the order. The Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet appeals for peace, order and discipline, and for no armed demonstrations by either soldiers or workers. It telegrams soviets throughout the country appealing to them to issue similar instructions.

By Stan Crooke



Militant Scottish miners

The left and a Scottish Assembly

Norman Tebbit has just finished an electioneering tour of Scotland during which he claimed that the Caterpillar management had decided to pull out of Scotland because of the "crazy notion" of a Scottish Assembly.

He was swiftly condemned on all sides except by the Scottish CBI who in the same week denounced the Assembly demand, referring to it as an expensive additional tier of government.

Tebbit's statement is indicative of a mood in Tory ranks that sensitivity towards the Scottish electorate is a waste of time, in the knowledge that certain defeat awaits them at the polls. Recent opinion polls suggest that, even with a recent drop in Labour support, the Tory seats in Scotland which are now down to 21 will be further decimated. Even Rifkind's seat in Pentlands is at risk.

The prospect does not necessarily fill Labour leaders with glee if it is accompanied by a trouncing at the polls in England and Wales, an eventuality which, on present trends, cannot be dismissed. That would create the conditions for what journalists have dubbed "the Domesday Scenario", with a Tory government again in power and an increased Labour representation in Scotland.

Given that eventuality, a majority of Scottish voters would favour the unilateral establishment of a Scottish Assembly, according to a poll conducted for the magazine "Radical Scotland".

In some circles, such as within the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly (CAS), an all-party body (Tories do not choose to be represented), there have already been detailed discussions on the mechanics of breaking from the framework of the British

By Ian McCalman

"Constitution" and the establishment of a Constitutional Convention to consider how best to lay the groundwork for a Scottish Assembly.

Whether any of that comes to pass depends to what extent Labour MPs, the Scottish TUC and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) are prepared to take unconstitutional, and therefore presumably illegal, action. The prospect of Bruce Millan or Donald Dewar countenancing any such goings-on is risible. A few Scottish Labour MPs, such as Dennis Canavan, may be prepared to follow that road but they are unlikely to have the backing of the Scottish Labour establishment.

Yet it is not surprising that over 70% of Scottish people favour an Assembly when they contemplate the prospect of another Tory victory, or that they cast around for some means of warding off a further Tory onslaught on jobs and services. Many in the Labour and trade union movement are also fearful of a nationalist backlash in the event of a Tory victory and already the SNP profile is rising both electorally and in terms of industrial disputes, as has been seen in the Caterpillar affair.

The Labour Party's adoption of devolutionism over recent years had taken the wind out of the nationalist sails, but fears that Labour may yet again be unable to deliver an assembly are already fuelling the nationalist cause.

One political grouping keen on promoting the assembly is the Communist Party, but their formulation of the position, as evidenced in the NUM resolution to this year's Scottish Labour Party Conference, "the unity of political and social forces",

serves to tailend the nationalist campaign. Such an approach is wholly in line with the "anti-monopoly popular alliance" so beloved by the Stalinists of whatever hue.

These are the politics which have underlain the all-party campaigns "in defence of Scottish industry" in recent years. That many workers reject such a course was shown in the boos for Tory Allan Stewart when he attempted to address a recent rally in Glasgow in support of the Caterpillar workers. Yet trade union and Labour leaders appealed for him to be heard and some of the propaganda emanating from the Caterpillar occupation suggests that some of those involved may have seen him as a possible ally.

Such politics are obviously pernicious and all those who regard the assembly demand as within a strategy for socialism must disassociate themselves from that kind of political logic.

None of the above invalidates the demand for an assembly but those socialists who regard it as a correct demand must ensure that it remains untainted by nationalist or Stalinist sentiments and that to be given a genuinely progressive content it must relate to the mobilisation in struggle of the working class and all oppressed groups.

The latest edition of Youth Fightback is available from 33 Hackworth Point, Rainhill Way, London E3 3ET, for 25p plus 18p postage.

No sell-out to Baker!

Liam Conway reports on the first two days of NUT conference

THE LEADERS of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) have once again squirmed their way out of any commitment to escalate action.

They denied the eight expelled and suspended members of the Inner London Teachers' Association the right to a hearing from conference, the supreme decision-making body of the union.

Delegates were not allowed to know the contents of guidelines secretly agreed between the NUT and the other main teachers' union, the NAS/UWT, on the implementation of the work conditions imposed on us by Tory education minister Kenneth Baker. These guidelines would force members to cover for absent colleagues, attend parents' evenings, and obey any 'reasonable' instruction from head teachers.

The executive guidelines capitulate

to Baker's slaves' charter. However, despite voting without knowledge of the guidelines, delegates representing 88,000 members supported an amendment calling for immediate 'no cover for absences' and outright opposition to Baker's conditions. The amendment was lost — but conference is not over yet.

Before the end of conference there is still a chance that ILTA's motion on 'no cover' could be passed.

Perhaps more sinister is the executive's intention to move a rule change which would make it impossible for any local association [NUT branch] to affiliate to organisations outside the union. Apart from its wider undemocratic implications, this is a direct attack on the Local Association Pay and Conditions Campaign (LAPACC), the organisation which has sought to coordinate grass-roots opposition to Baker and to the executive's defeatist strategy.

Whatever happens to those motions, the left must continue to coordinate nationwide opposition to the government at a time when members will be looking for leadership and asking the simple question: who sold our conditions of service?



Photo: Report

CPSA

Speed up action!

By Jill Feathers, CPSA MSC Merseyside, Sub-branch representative, in a personal capacity.

The CPSA and SCPS are now in dispute with the Treasury by rejecting the pay offer of 4.25% pay increase.

The members in both unions voted overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action to reject the offer. This was even in the absence of a recommendation by the CPSA NEC for action.

The method decided on has been that of the rolling programme. This means that regions in the country have been requested to take selected action week by week over a period of six weeks, starting from the beginning of this month with the North West and Wales.

For the first three days, selected offices — principally DHSS and DE offices — were pulled out on 85% wages and the last two days all civil servants were pulled out, unpaid, in solidarity.

It has been with relative ease that civil servants in the North West and Wales have responded to action. We have had 100% success with the closure of our selected offices and a great response to Thursday's and Friday's action. Obviously this reaction is due to the appalling offer which has been made, but also because civil servants have been ground down by massive staff cuts due to new technology agreements, and in the case of Jobcentres, to the transferring of traditional job-finding services to outside agencies, for example, Job Clubs.

Increasingly we find that our work revolves around schemes for the unemployed rather than finding and filling 'real jobs'. This all adds up to a depressed and demoralised workforce!

The rolling programme of strike action has left the North West 'in the cold' over the next five weeks, with the obvious problems of keeping enthusiasm for action high. We will be balloted at the end of May as to whether we should go for all-out strike action if an acceptable offer has not been made.

The planning has also meant that

London, South-East and East Midlands are required to take action in and around CPSA National Conference week.

If we have any chance of winning our claim for, among other things, a £20 per week flat rate increase for all grades up to and including Administrative Officer (old Clerical Officer grade) and a minimum wage of £115 per week, the programme for action must be increased. The South must be brought in earlier than planned. We must keep up the pressure by strictly adhering to our overtime ban and withdrawal of goodwill.

SCOTTISH TUC

Call to ban JTS

By Stan Crooke

The 1987 congress of the Scottish TUC opened in Perth on Monday 20 April.

The bulk of the 168 resolutions up for discussion condemn the evils of the current Tory administration but they fail to call for alternative policies — either from the existing Tory government or from a future Labour one. There are some extremely vague calls for the STUC General Council to campaign in opposition to the Tory attacks.

The only demands for action placed on the STUC General Council are for a "day of activity and demonstration" in support of nuclear disarmament, and for various specified acts of solidarity with the Chilean working class, in resolutions from Scelta and Kircaldy Trades Councils respectively.

Issues of controversy on the agenda are nuclear power, Youth and Job Training Schemes (YTS and JTS), Solidarnosc, and the Wapping dispute.

Resolutions from the EETPU and Thurso and Wick Trades Council advocate further development of nuclear power, while Falkirk Trades Council calls for a moratorium, and Midlothian Trades Council backs an end to any further development and the de-commissioning of existing nuclear power stations.

On JTS, an amendment from NALGO advocates a policy of non-cooperation (which, if passed, would put the STUC at odds with the TUC position of collaboration), and a

DILLONS

Boss rats on deal

By Richard Aplin

WHEN THE 15 striking workers at Dillons Newmarket, Leasowe, Merseyside, returned to work, they had received a promise that

the bouncer would be removed from the shop, and that all future security would be subject to trade union approval.

The strike had started in protest at intimidating behaviour by the manager put in by management.

However, understood was that the handful of scabs would be made into supervisors, and the previous supervisors demoted. Shop steward Kim Murphy explained that "We couldn't take orders from scabs, so we refused to speak to them".

This caused the management to threaten to shut the shop down. The strikers recognised this as an empty threat.

After only six days back at work, the manager broke his promise about security. After a break-in on Saturday night, three bouncers paraded the shop on the Sunday, and beat up a young lad.

Unfortunately, the women returned to work with only a promise, and not a written agreement. The boss has shown that he will break his promise at the first opportunity. But this has only strengthened the women's resolve.

As Kim Murphy said: "We never demanded the sacking of the manager originally, but now he must go. We have no other weapon but to strike."

Anger at the boss and his treatment of the workers is running high on the Leasowe estate.



75p plus postage from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

What makes Japs tick

NOW THAT Gorbachev seems to be flavour of the month down at Conservative Central Office, the Tory press is having to look elsewhere for Evil Empires.

The Cable and Wireless affair, followed by Michael Howard's rebuff at the hands of Mr Nakasone, was the cue for a concerted baying for Japanese blood.

The Sun weighed in with a characteristically unpleasant editorial, 'Last Chance for the Japs'. "How much longer will we go on kow-towing to the Japs?"

The Sun concluded its racist tirade with a list of threats that 'we' should issue to 'the Japs':

- Demand that the Common Market massively increase tariffs against Japanese cars, bikes, TV and videos — but go it alone if necessary.
- Ban Japanese firms from coming here to assemble their goods cheaply.
- Set up an inspection station in the North for all Japanese goods that do manage to come in — staffed by only a couple of officers.
- Kick all Japanese money men out of the City.

"If the 'honorable' gentlemen in Tokyo want war, they can have it!"

The Daily Mail thought it best to provide its readers with a little background information before jumping to any rash conclusions. They dispatched ace reporter Ann Leslie to the land of the Rising Sun for some real in-depth analysis: "She feels", the Mail told us, "that the real problem is no one truly understands the Japanese mind. Until we begin to grasp it, she argues, we cannot begin to make them understand our viewpoint".

PRESS GANG

By Jim Denham

Ann visited the foothills of Mount Fuji to witness 'management training' at the 'Hell Camp'. It sounded more like the Burma railway: "One 'warder' mounts a rostrum and screams: 'This is your sixth day. Up until now it has been EASY! You've GOT USED TO IT! But NOW...!' His diatribe is drowned out by a group behind me bawling out vowel sounds: A! E! I! O! U!"

"To my left, another group, bowing like metronomes, veins throbbing, faces distorted in a collective scream, are also yelling... what? Kill, Kill, Kill? No, they're saying 'Good Morning! Good Morning! Good Morning!'"

Leslie witnessed "grown men sobbing like babies, laughing maniacally, collapsing to the floor in despair, enduring endless humiliations at the hands of their warders".

What chance have we Brits against this sort of thing? These fiends will stop at nothing in their business conquest of the world!

Fortunately, the Mail has a suggestion, and a damned clever, typically British one at that. "We could try some discreet and thoroughly British bloody-mindedness, the sort to which our own home-grown commentators are subjected every day when there is only booking office window manned in the rush hour.

"Due to 'staff shortage' or 'staff sickness' in Whitehall, Japanese entrepreneurs should find their prospective ventures here subject to cancellation or delay, 'until further notice'."

Well done, chaps! That'll teach the little devils. By the way, what sort of economic system is it that can produce such diabolical ruthlessness? It can't be capitalism, can it?

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Behind the trade wars

By Martin Thomas

The vast expansion of capitalism since World War 2 has been based on relatively free trade. For many years now trade has slowly, bit by bit, been becoming less free. The US tariffs imposed on Japanese goods last week could be a decisive new turn round the spiral towards trade barriers and slump.

The basis of free trade after 1945 was the overwhelming dominance of the US. The dollar was the medium of world trade, and as good as gold.

That system broke down in 1968-71, under pressure of the US's Vietnam war spending and its being overtaken by West Germany and Japan as a manufacturing exporter. For 16 years since then, ingenuity and flexibility have kept a makeshift system going.

But the makeshift system has a fundamental contradiction. The dollar is still the world's fallback currency, and no other currency is anywhere near replacing it. But the dollar is also the domestic currency of the US, a major but no longer totally dominant national economy.

Somehow or other, the dollar has to move so as both to keep world trade stable and to keep the US economy buoyant. But often it cannot do both.

Since the early 1980s the stresses and strains in the system have resulted in vast shifts in the balance of the world economy. A limited

world recovery from the recession of 1979-83 has been fuelled by vast US budget deficits and trade deficits.

Within a few years the US has gone from being the world's biggest net holder of foreign assets to being the world's biggest debtor.

Japan has risen from a position of having very few foreign investments to being the world's biggest foreign-investing power.

While trade barriers have risen, capital markets have become more open: capital has swished around from country to country at increasing speed, and stockmarkets have soared. The system has become more flexible, but also potentially more unstable.

For a long time the Reagan administration has been under pressure from US industrialists to impose heavy tariffs. Now at last it has done it. So far the Japanese government has responded quietly, appealing for international talks rather than imposing retaliatory tariffs. But the EEC is discussing tariffs against Japanese goods diverted from the US, and the pressure on Japan may mount high enough to force it to retaliate.

Once that happens, the spiral could become deadly. Production will follow trade downwards, and the whole multi-billion structure of the international financial markets could collapse.

The first countries to suffer even in a limited trade war will be the Third World economies who desperately need increased exports to the richer countries in order to service their debts. So increased protectionism could also aggravate the debt and banking crisis.



Defend Sharon Atkin!

By Reb Short and Penny Barnett (Nottingham East CLP, in a personal capacity)

The fight is on in Nottingham East to defend PPC Sharon Atkin against attacks from the Labour Party leadership, following her outspoken support for black sections at a meeting of both black and white people at a meeting in Birmingham on 7 April.

Sharon had agreed to speak at the rally before the March 25 NEC of the Labour Party passed a resolution attacking black sections and threatening to mount a witch-hunt against black people in their struggle to establish a political voice. That witch-hunt has now begun in earnest.

Before attending the Birmingham rally, Sharon Atkin contacted Neil Kinnock's office for guidance on what her position would be if she spoke. It was made clear to her that it wouldn't matter one way or the other, as she was in enough trouble already.

The issue blew up when Birmingham was declared a no-go area for black Labour Party members wishing to speak about black representation.

Roy Hattersley in particular — but also Neil Kinnock — were looking for an early bust-up with the black sections movement, regardless of the damage to the Labour Party. Prior to the Birmingham meeting, Roy Hattersley, with other Labour MPs sent an openly provocative letter to leading black activists. Released to The Times, this letter was guaranteed to maximise media surveillance of the meeting, and draw disruptive elements to it.

Sharon Atkin later said: 'I did not know I needed authority to speak to an audience of black and white people.'

By all accounts it was a difficult meeting to address. Sharon Atkin was forced to abandon her prepared notes in an attempt to calm and unify the meeting, which was becoming an increasingly heated exchange between black separatists and supporters of Labour Party black sections. Sharon stated that she did not wish to be a Labour Party candidate if she could not speak for black people.

She was selected by Nottingham East CLP, a constituency with a strong support for the black sections movement, on the basis of her vigorous support for socialist policies, including campaigning for black people. Now both Sharon's position as PPC and the constituency's status are threatened by the right-wing leadership because of our determination to defend the right of an oppressed section of the working class to organise against their oppression.

Sharon faces disciplinary action by the NEC, which could lead to her arbitrary removal as PPC, and the imposition of a Walworth Road stooge on Nottingham East, literally on the brink of a general election.

The response of the left in Nottingham East has been one of solid support for the candidate. However, within that support some worrying strands have emerged. Some comrades have not ruled out the possibility of running Sharon Atkin against an imposed Labour candidate. In the present situation this would be very divisive, splitting the Labour vote in a key marginal seat in a crucial election. Sharon Atkin does not have mass support in the constituency, and the only effect would be to marginalise the very people we are attempting to draw into the labour movement — the black community.

Calls to fight this battle in the bourgeois courts should still be resisted. The only way to fight racism both in the Labour Party and in society at large is to draw black workers into the labour movement and build a mass movement of black workers. The courts will never fight racism.

Kinnock, in attempting to be a strong leader and pander to the racist vote, will also be providing himself with a convenient scapegoat in case Labour loses the general election.

Sharon Atkin, the black sections and those who support their right to organise, must be defended.



Free Moses!

Moses Mayekiso, imprisoned general secretary of the South African Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU), is currently on trial in South Africa for high treason.

He is charged with setting up "people's courts" and "street and area committees". Moses was chair of the Alexandra Action Committee, a democratic community body. The charge of treason carries a maximum penalty of death.

Moses will be known to many British trade unionists from his visits to this country to raise solidarity for

the struggle against apartheid. During his visit last year, shortly before his arrest, he spoke to the Labour Party Young Socialists conference, for example.

Moses is being charged with four other men, including his brother. These are the first trials for treason of those allegedly involved with "people's courts".

They must be freed now! There must be an international hue and cry against what the apartheid state wants to do. Labour movement bodies should send letters of protest to the South African government.

FREE MOSES MAYEKISO!

UDM tie themselves in Notts

At Ollerton colliery, Notts, various NUM branch officials have been hauled up before management and warned about their union activities. An anonymous letter had complained of 'intimidation' and 'harassment' by the NUM.

The real reason is that the NUM at the pit is near to recruiting a majority, so management has decided yet again to take out some of the leaders — as it did with myself and others in the area — in order to intimidate others from joining the union. To justify victimisation they will pursue any trivial incident or allegation.

But in this case they have not been able to substantiate any of the charges, so it is still up in the air.

Ollerton is militant for our coalfield, and this must also be part of the bosses' thinking. In fact there was a 24 hour stoppage there last week, sparked by a number of grievances: a man being stopped money for taking a stretcher out; heat money; water money; bonus payments. Both UDM and NUM members walked out. British Coal's attempt to turn the screws on the workforce rebounded because they were forced to concede all the demands — and the NUM has gained more members and credibility.

The UDM were pathetic. Original-

WHETTON'S WEEK



ly they were urging their members to go to work instead of striking. Then when the strikers won, they tried to claim credit for the dispute!

No reinstatement

I am still waiting for the Coal Board's official response to my industrial tribunal victory. I understand that there is some kind of offer in the pipeline but that it does not include reinstatement at Bevercotes colliery. But I have not yet received anything in writing and will have to wait until I can read the details and the fine print, and from there discuss it with lawyers and within the union.

More information is coming to light about Haslam's offer to re-employ 135 of the victimised miners. We already knew it would be re-employment rather than reinstatement, so it would mean starting from square one on pension rights etc. They have also said re-employment can take place only when vacancies become available!

At Betteshanger in Kent, the Coal Board said they would re-employ 10

of the sacked lads — in fact, they put them on a waiting list pending a review of the existing workforce and the sacking of ten of the 'worst offenders' for absenteeism, or whatever they could be caught on.

It is not re-instatement; it is not re-employment; it is replacement.

So the Coal Board, having carried out its 'review', is still determined to punish the NUM and its members. It shows up the Haslam review for the sham it always was.

No six day week!

The South Wales Area leadership are now saying that they will abide by any decision on six-day working and Margam taken at this year's NUM conference in July. And the Coal Board is saying that it will not go ahead with Margam without national backing for six-day working. I am convinced that Margam will be sunk come what may because the Board's intention is to privatise it anyway.

What the South Wales miners have to do is say they will stand up and fight for their principles.

South Wales say they will take the issue to this year's annual conference. But last year's annual conference gave a firm commitment, in a resolution from Durham, that if the Board started talking about extended shifts or extended working weeks then the union would immediately

start a campaign, ending in a ballot vote, with a strong recommendation to reject.

That is a firm policy decision from the supreme decision making body of the union, and that campaign to reject should be started now, leading to a ballot vote of the individual members.

UDM farce

The UDM leadership are now saying they will recommend the Coal Board's latest pay offer in a ballot of their members next month. I have yet to see the details of this 'new' offer, but on the surface it seems to be the same as the last one, only rejigged and renamed in certain sections. The only change is the UDM's recommendation!

It is what I said from the beginning — it is a theatrical exercise for the benefit of UDM members, organised behind closed doors by the UDM leadership and the Coal Board. Lynk showed his opposition, banged the table a bit, then got his new offer, which he is recommending. He will now say he can negotiate while Scargill can't.

It is a farce.

Paul Whetton is secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.