

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

For Workers' Liberty East and West

Fight the Tories! Rebuild the left!



Back Benn and Heffer!

No backtracking on the Bomb

NO RETREAT ON UNILATERALISM!



Photo: Ian Swindale

The statement made by Neil Kinnock on television is the culmination of the way the leadership has been going on the issue of nuclear weapons for some considerable time. I think we need to say quite clearly to the leadership that *it is not on*, and I hope that the Party Conference will reverse any decisions that the Party leadership is likely to make in this direction.

By Eric Heffer

I raised the whole issue over a week ago at a public meeting in Wallasey organised by the Wallasey Labour Party. I made the point there that if, as a Party, we were to continue to have the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament — getting rid of all nuclear bases on and around our shores — we would have to fight, fight and fight again, as Gaitskell had said, but in the opposite direction.

At the height of the Cold War we said that it was still necessary to get rid of nuclear weapons, because in a nuclear war there are no winners. Now that some slight advances have been made in getting rid of some nuclear weapons, it is a serious thing that the Party leadership is now saying that we are wedded to NATO and will use our nuclear weapons as a negotiating force.

We did not arrive lightly at our policy of unilateralism. There was a tremendous debate in the Party, stretching back to the Gaitskell days. The first decision for unilateralism was made during the Gaitskell period. That was reversed by Party Conference, and by the trade unions being won back again, within a year.

The leadership have been backsliding on issue after issue. Public ownership; the EEC — just about everything. Neil Kinnock's speech on unilateralism is now a further step in the total retreat from all the policies and basic concepts that the Labour Party has had. They are just chucking principles to the wind, and it is not acceptable.

But then the debate went on continuously until, overwhelmingly, it was decided we should get rid of nuclear weapons, and that has been confirmed ever since. The Party Conference has not changed its position.

It makes even clearer why Tony Benn and myself are standing in this election. And as for people like Prescott, who say they support Neil Kinnock's policies — a vote for him is a vote for those policies.

**P R E S S
G A N G**

**Insight
unsound**

By Jim Denham

As the controversy surrounding the SAS Gibraltar shootings rumbles on, it becomes increasingly obvious that much of the British press has been acting as little more than propaganda outlets for the government and the Ministry of Defence.

Press reaction to Thames TV's *Death on the Rock* was entirely predictable: near hysterical denunciations of the programme and its makers ('known IRA sympathisers' etc etc) and a vicious smear campaign against witness Carmen Proetta. Leading the baying pack was the *Sunday Times*, which (unlike the *Sun*, *Mail*, *Express* and the rest) is generally considered a 'quality' paper with a reputation for bold investigative journalism.

This reputation is largely founded on the past exploits of the 'Insight' team, who in their heyday ('60s and early '70s) notched up a series of dramatic exposes and almost single-handedly brought the Distillers Company to book over the Thalidomide scandal.

Since the Digger installed the craven Andrew Neil as editor, 'Insight' has had its wings clipped. The rich and powerful are now but rarely the subjects of 'Insights' investigations: more often it is people who have in one way or the other displeased Downing Street. Since the Gibraltar shootings the 'Insight' banner has, in effect, become a flag of convenience for the government/MoD version of events and a useful cover for government inspired smear campaigns against those with the temerity to challenge the official line.

It is a sign of the times that the ST's 'top investigative team' has itself been investigated and convincingly exposed by another (albeit Irish) newspaper — the *Sunday Tribune*. The 'Insight' hatchet-job on 'Death on the Rock' had made extensive use of 'statements' obtained from two witnesses, Stephen Bulloch and Josie Celecia, both of whom were reported as emphatically contradicting Carmen Proetta's version of events. The *Tribune* tracked down Mr Bulloch and Mrs Celecia and found that both had been totally misrepresented by the 'Insight' report.

According to *Private Eye* some of the 'Insight' team have protested about distortions to their copy. One, Rose Waterhouse, has written a personal letter of apology to Mrs Celecia. At Wapping such disloyalty can be expected to end in disciplinary action — unless the conscience stricken hack resigns first.

This sorry saga may help explain why last week's ST carried an extraordinary review by one Frank Johnson, attacking former 'Insight' stalwart Bruce Page and the 'old' (i.e. pre-Murdoch) 'Insight' team when it "tended to investigate mainly right-wing wickedness, or wickedness which, as in the case of Philby's, could be put down to the British class system. That was also when the team's prose did not bother with elitist shades of meaning and so tended to regard the words 'refute' and 'reject' as interchangeable, or at least much-of-a-muchness. The difference between 'flaunt' and 'flout' also gave trouble".

The 'old' 'Insight' team may have been guilty of the occasional malapropism, but they were at least interested in refuting cover-ups instead of merely rejecting facts that don't fit. And they took a pride in flaunting their commitment to honest journalism, not of flouting it.



Are we unfair to Gorbachev?

Socialist Organiser has come under critical fire for what we have said about Gorbachev, and about Gorbachev and Reagan.

So let's discuss the issues in question-and-answer form, so that nobody can misunderstand what we are saying.

Isn't it good if Gorbachev and Reagan make the world a safer place by military agreement, even if it is only a little safer?

Of course it is! But we should not exaggerate what has been achieved. Only a very small part of the nuclear arsenal which threatens humanity with annihilation has been destroyed.

One measure of what has been achieved is that the warheads from those US missiles which will be destroyed by agreement will simply be remounted on other rockets! The USSR will probably do the same.

Any lessening of tension and military competition is good, but let's keep our eyes on what's really going on.

But why denounce Gorbachev? He represents the best thing at the top in the Soviet Union for a long time. He has got lots of enemies who may defeat him in his drive for 'openness' (glasnost) and 'reconstruction' (perestroika).

What does he mean by 'openness' and 'reconstruction'? Openness is good. So far it has taken the form of a small eruption of truthfulness in what the Russian people get as officially permitted news.

The leading USSR papers are called *Izvestia* ('News') and *Pravda* ('Truth'). It is an old joke that there was no news in *Izvestia* and no truth in *Pravda*. So far glasnost has meant a little news and a little truth.

But only a little. *Pravda* still reported the recent strikes in Poland as an affair of wreckers

By John O'Mahony

plotting to destroy the economy. And the degree of 'openness' is still entirely decided from on high. Workers in the USSR do not have the right to make their own investigation and publish their own papers and magazines.

Yes, but Gorbachev has made a start. Why be so sour?

Because the old system served a ruling elite — the bureaucracy which runs the state and the economy — and they are still in control.

They have found that they cannot rule effectively in the dark, so they want to bring in a bit of light. They are determined to control how much light. They are tinkering with the system, not transforming it. They are making changes to keep themselves in control, not to relinquish control.

But won't Gorbachev take things further? After all, glasnost is his policy.

Gorbachev is the leader of the bureaucrats. He is committed to their system. He is a moderniser in the interests of the bureaucracy. He is the chosen Tsar of the bureaucratic elite.

How can you be sure of that?

Because Gorbachev is the second, not the first, reforming Tsar. Nikita Khrushchev was the first. He took over soon after Stalin died in 1953. He carried through what were, for the time, far more radical changes than Gorbachev even proposes now.

He opened Stalin's slave-labour camps. He allowed critical voices to be heard for the first time in a quarter of a century. He told some of the truth about Stalin's reign of terror.

He eased the tensions. But he did not change the system basically. All

power remained in the hands of the ruling 'party'. Opposition parties were still illegal — especially working-class socialist opposition parties. Trade unions, to organise workers to defend themselves against the bureaucratic management, remained illegal, and the workers were still forced into pseudo-unions modelled on the 'labour fronts' with which the Nazis replaced the German labour movement in the 1930s.

Khrushchev was a great improvement on Stalin, to be sure. But after Khrushchev came a relapse. The USSR did not go all the way back to Stalin's system of terror, but it went quite a long way back.

And it was under the reforming Stalinist Tsar Khrushchev that the Russians reconquered Hungary, destroying the general strike with which the workers of Hungary contested control of the means of production with the bureaucrats in late 1956.

Maybe. But Gorbachev is the best so far.

He certainly has not eased the condition of the workers of the USSR as much as Khrushchev did. In any case, we can't scale down the socialist programme for the USSR to suit Good King Mikhail Gorbachev. We need:

- An end to the political monopoly of the bureaucracy (the so-called 'Communist Party')
- Freedom to organise for opposition parties
- An end to censorship and the bureaucrats' monopoly over the media
- Free self-determination for the nationalities of the USSR
- Workers' control of industry
- Free elections
- The revival of the workers' councils from which the regime takes its name ('soviets')
- Free trade unions
- The replacement of bureaucratic

rule by working-class rule. If Gorbachev helps the workers of the USSR to realise this programme, then it will be because he has stirred things up so the workers move both against his conservative opponents and against Gorbachev himself.

But, after all, Gorbachev is getting Russian troops out of Afghanistan.

Good! Now let him withdraw the Russian army from Eastern Europe. Let him leave Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, in peace.

He won't. He is withdrawing from Afghanistan because of the military setbacks over eight years and because he wants to channel resources away from the war and towards 'perestroika'. That does not mean he will give up Eastern Europe.

Well, isn't perestroika a good thing?

It depends. What the staid economy in the USSR really needs is workers' control and political democracy. Gorbachev won't have that. So instead he is bringing in wasteful market mechanisms under state control. This hybrid offers no real solution.

The rulers of the USSR tried it over 20 years ago, and the experiment died at birth because of opposition to it from lower-level bureaucrats. The rulers of Hungary have been trying it for many years, and they are deep in an economic crisis.

There will be opposition from the workers, too — for perestroika means a shake-up and the risk of unemployment for the workers.

Yes. But Gorbachev does represent an improvement.

Maybe. But Gorbachev is a reforming monarch *within* the system of social and national oppression. We need a revolution in the USSR, not mild, tinkering, insecure moves towards reform from above.

France

Le Pen: 'We'll go to the streets'

In the first round of France's parliamentary elections, on 5 June, the fascist National Front fell back to 9.8% of the vote.

In the presidential elections last month, it got 14.4%. Its parliamentary vote is no lower than when the present National Assembly was elected in 1986; but because the electoral system has been changed since then, from proportional representation to first-past-the-post, the NF could lose all its 32 parliamentary seats.

It would be wrong to silence the alarm bells about the rise of fascism in France, however. A chunk of the NF score in May was a one-off protest vote. But the years since 1984 have shown a stable, consistent score of around three million votes — or 10% — for these Nazis.

The threat of losing all their parliamentary seats may in fact push the NF forward in one or other of two ways. They may get a formal alliance with a section of the

By Martin Thomas

mainstream Right. Or they may take to the streets.

In France's two-round electoral system, a lot depends on candidates withdrawing in favour of each other between rounds. In the first round the Left got 48.8% and the Right 50.2%. The Communist Party and the Socialist Party have already agreed to withdraw in favour of each other for the second round. The Right's chances of winning the second round depend on whether it gets a deal with the NF.

The NF claims it is already in discussions with Charles Pasqua, a leader of the Gaullist RPR who said during the presidential elections that he shared the basic ideals of the NF. The Socialist Party is seeking an umbrella alliance with the more moderate elements of the UDF, the umbrella group for the non-Gaullist mainstream Right. Such an SP-centrist coalition would free the RPR and the right-wing of the UDF

to do deals with the NF.

The real prize from those deals for the NF would be not so much parliamentary seats, but gains in the forthcoming municipal elections.

If the NF fails to get the deals it wants with the mainstream Right, and ends up with no parliamentary seats, then, according to its leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, it will take to the streets.

Over the last five years, the NF has stressed respectability and vote-winning, and downplayed street politics — so much so that some Marxists in France, like the *Lutte Ouvriere* group, deny that the NF is properly speaking fascist. Individual NF members and groups have attacked immigrants and workers' picket lines, but the NF leadership has consistently repudiated them.

Now Le Pen may reckon that the time has come for bolder tactics. The NF has built a base through its electioneering. It can justify street violence to timid supporters by de-

nouncing the unfairness of the electoral system — introduced by mainstream Right and manipulated by the mainstream Left — which has excluded it.

With a coalition government of the Socialist Party and centrists, social decay will continue to give fuel to the fascists — or, if last October's stock market crash is reflected in a big slump, get worse.

The Communist Party got 11.3% on 5 June. It was a big improvement on its 6.8% in the presidential election. Only part of the improvement can be put down to far-left and dissident Communist voters, who totalled 4.5% in the presidential election and will mostly have transferred to the CP on 5 June. (Only 55 candidates were organised by the far left for 5 June. They were presented by the loose alliance which campaigned for dissident ex-CPer Pierre Juquin for President).

However, 11.3% is still a terrible decline from the consistent 20%-plus which the CP used to get.

Fight Kinnock on home ground!

EDITORIAL

Richard Kuper and Michael Ball are understandably dissatisfied and disillusioned with the response of the left to 9 years of Tory rule. They reject Kinnock's New Model Labour Party and the sectarianism of much of the revolutionary left.

But then they throw in the towel and opt for a new party based on the Socialist Conference network.

It is true that the labour movement is demoralised and weakened after defeats and betrayals. The Labour left which was vigorous and optimistic in the early '80s is now more tired and cowed.

Meanwhile a lot of manufacturing industry has collapsed and the service sector has grown. Many more women are now in waged work. We clearly cannot operate any longer on a conception of the labour movement as composed of car workers and dockers.

The world has changed, but the Labour Party is still the party of the working class. The ability of the Labour leadership to demoralise and sell out rests on the support it has in the working class. The campaigns that Kuper and Ball point to as creating an 'independent left' all come up against the question of the Labour Party.

The NHS workers very much wanted Labour Party support for their strikes. The anti-Alton campaign demanded that the Labour Party should honour party policy

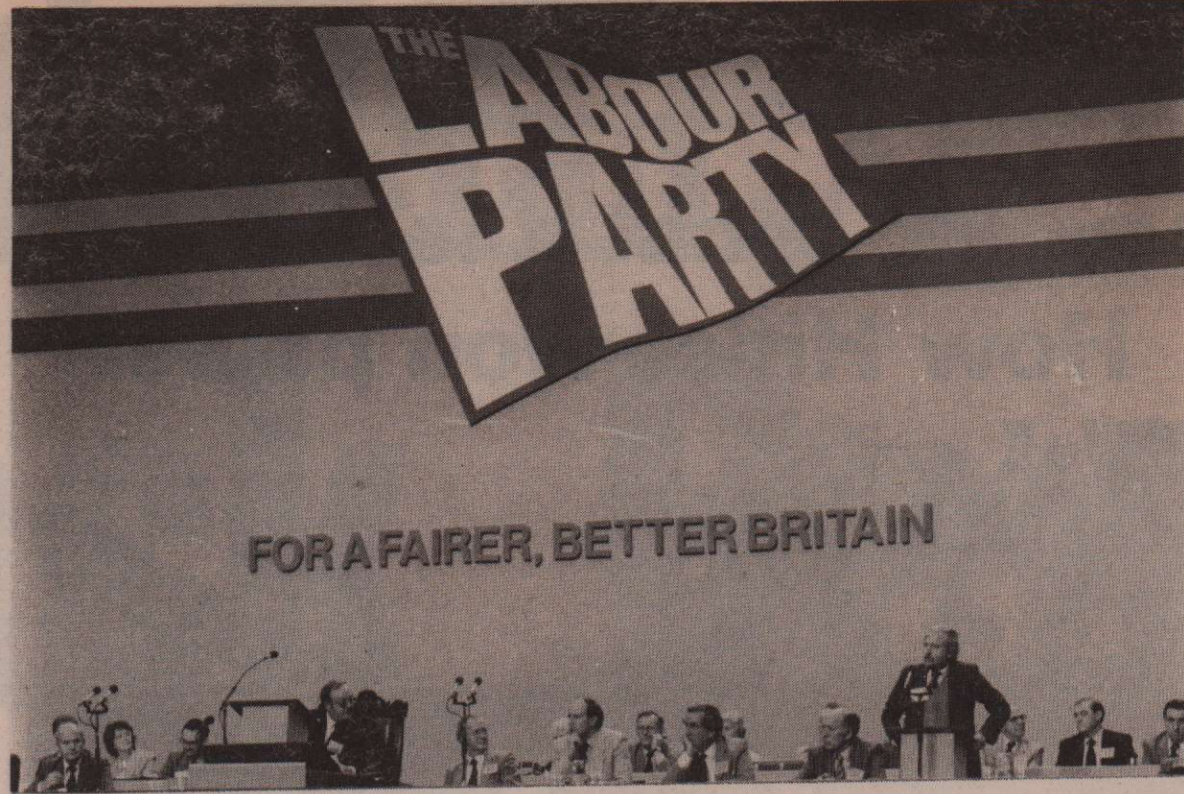


Photo: John Harris

and impose a three-line whip. If another left party existed it would have to work with and pressurise the Labour Party on these issues. Even the SWP has ended up selling papers outside Labour Party meetings. Since it is possible for the left to work in the Labour Party we must work there — or artificially limit our struggle.

Kuper and Ball would side-step this fight. But abandoning the

Labour Party to the right wing won't do anything for the working class.

Kuper and Ball look to the Greater London Council for their inspiration. Their rose-tinted view of the left in local government is its early class-struggle commitment to the debacle of 1985.

But it was after all a Labour GLC!

Kuper and Ball draw their in-

similar to Hilary Wainwright's in her recent book "Labour a tale of two parties". Wainwright sees the local government left, linked up with the famous 'new social forces' as a new Labour Party growing in the womb of the old. Inspiration not from the struggles inside the labour movement which created a radical GLC — but from the souped-up US-style pressure group/client group politics which the GLC turned to as it moved from

Our movement hasn't represented oppressed groups, hasn't taken up their needs. We must fight to make it do so. That is straightforward although very hard work.

But what Kuper and Ball are talking about is something very different. What underlies their article is a feeling that the working class is dead or hopelessly disunited and so we have to build a new movement out of disparate "new social forces".

The working class is far from dead. It is changing both in composition and in the sort of work people do. We have to understand that. But the working class and the labour movement is still the force for change within society.

We have to fight to make that movement representative, democratic, to politically re-arm our movement, and to throw out all the old reactionary semi-stalinist ideological baggage that clogs it up. The last thing we should do is abandon ship.

Kuper and Ball's project is a recipe for going nowhere. Instead, we need to reclaim our movement. We need to fight Neil Kinnock on his home ground.

We need to organise the biggest possible campaign in support of Tony Benn and Eric Heffer. To take the socialists, the supporters of Benn and Heffer, out of the Labour Party, will help no-one except those who want to convert Labour to pale-pink neo-Thatcherism.

Richard Kuper's and Mike Ball's article is reprinted below

A call for a new left wing party

The 'traditional left' in or out of the Labour Party, sees the eclipse of the old labour movement as temporary — and maintains it is the only effective framework in which the new social movements can pursue their aims. Like many others, we would argue the converse: that separate identities and differentiation within the working class will become more, not less, important. Partly these are the product of the process whereby capital ceaselessly disorganises subordinated classes; but partly they are a response on a new basis to capital's disorganising processes.

So rather than accepting the traditional hierarchies of the labour movement our aim should be to forge a new alliance between the new social forces and a transformed trade-union movement.

Process

Where are we in that process?

There has been a growing number of independent socialists since the late 1960s, mainly ex-members of the revolutionary groups, inhabiting what their former comrades generally call 'the wilderness'.

Richard Kuper and Mike Ball argue for a new left party. (Article abridged from 'Interlink').

What they share in common is a rejection of the old party-building approach with its focus on the moment of seizing state power: from it all other events and struggles derive their meaning and were ultimately significant only insofar as they served as recruiting grounds for the party. Too many people, working-class militants and shop stewards among them, have experienced this as manipulative, and party discipline as arbitrary. Its success in maintaining influence in any significant working class campaign is limited (though its role in defensive struggle and solidarity work should not be underestimated).

There is another more-or-less independent left, much of it oriented around the Labour Party. It is in many respects a new left with a relatively high proportion of younger members, including many women and Blacks, especially those whose outlook has been formed by the experiences of community and social movement struggles, often derisively called 'single issue' campaigns.

Crucial to pulling it together were two experiences. First was that of labour local government at the GLC and elsewhere. Second was the 1984-5 miners' strike. In the process the Tories' true colours were, of course, displayed. More surprising to some was the mealy-mouthed, grudging attitude of Kinnock & Co. They more or less disowned the two most important national leaders (Ken Livingstone and Arthur Scargill) and the aspirations of all those they represented, helping to send those struggles down to defeat.

A whole layer has been politicised in a non-Labourist way by these events. Current struggles around abortion, Clause 28, the poll tax,

the education reforms, and the NHS are certain to reinforce that process. The possibility of reforging an independent left is stronger than at any time since the early 1970s.

What is necessary to realise this possibility?

1) Active extra-parliamentary resistance must be encouraged. The role of sympathetic MPs (whether they acknowledge it publicly or not) is to use parliament as a forum to aid struggles outside it. It is not to subordinate those struggles to the supposed electoral needs of Labour.

2) There must be an ongoing re-evaluation of the ideas of the left; we can't afford to respond to Labour's policy review by reassert-

Layer

ing old truths. Some central issues have got to be thought through afresh, to take account of changes in the international scene, the impasse of social democracy etc. For instance, what are the possibilities of national economic planning today, given Britain's peculiar place in the world economy? What possibilities are there of democratic control of publicly provided services given the pressure to remain 'competitive' and the failure of previous models?

3) In the later 1980s there are very few independent left organisations. The Socialist Conference, which has yet to prove itself, is one of them. If it is to play an important part in rebuilding the left it must demonstrate its ability to develop new ideas and mobilise people around them. As an essential step, it must be democratised and rooted locally and regionally.

4) The central importance of 'democratisation' must be recognised. It provides the key to 'empowering' all the diverse groups thrown into opposition by the realities of Thatcher's Britain. These now include social forces which have traditionally shown some hostility to Labour but who have been aroused

if not mobilised by their concern for the defence and extension of civil rights and/or welfare provision.

5) There is a need to recognise the urgency of building an independent socialist party to give expression to the spirit of opposition, of resentment — and also of openness to new ideas — which is widespread on the left. At the same time there is the need to experiment with new forms of party organisation which transcend both the dead hand of bureaucratic control so typical of Labour and the centralist throttling of Leninist-inspired forms.

6) Finally there is a need to recognise that this party is not immediately on the agenda. It will not be built until the suspicions which exist among its constituent elements have been overcome. There are three aspects to this process.

First the recognition that the question of whether the Labour Party can be transformed into such a party does not have to be resolved in advance. We don't believe the Labour Party can be so transform-

ed but we recognise we cannot prove this beyond reasonable doubt. At the same time, there is nothing to prevent non-Labour Party members on many aspects of the socialist project.

Second, the demonstration in practice that differences in people's experiences and needs can be recognised and accepted while working together for common causes. In other words, developing new ways of bringing together distinct social forces is a precondition for the emergence of a political movement claiming hegemony over large sections of the left.

Finally, the shared elaboration of a political programme not as a sum of all sectional demands but as a unification of the shared interest in a new and forceful opposition both to Thatcherism and to any revival of the old-style corporate social democracy which has been tried and found wanting. In this process, no section can afford to regard itself as the 'natural leadership', around which everyone else must orbit.



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FASCISM

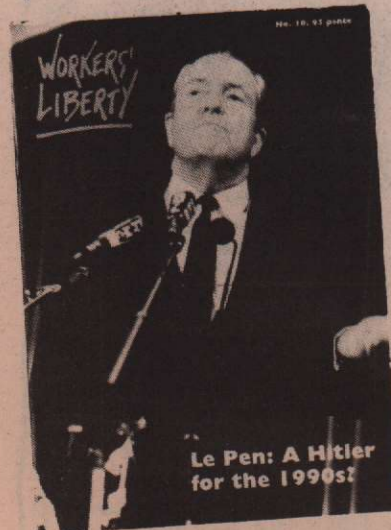
The start of the slump and the Nazis' first triumph

In September 1930 the Nazis won 6.4 million votes — 18%. The official Communist Party minimised this. Trotsky called for a workers' united front against the Nazis.

The official press of the Comintern is now depicting the results of the German elections as a prodigious victory of Communism, which places the slogan of a Soviet Germany on the order of the day. The bureaucratic optimists do not want to reflect upon the meaning of the relationship of forces which is disclosed by the election statistics. They examine the figure of Communist votes gained independently of the revolutionary tasks created by the situation and the obstacles it sets up.

The Communist Party received around 4,600,000 votes as against 3,300,000 in 1928. From the viewpoint of "normal" parliamentary mechanics, the gain of 1,300,000 votes is considerable even if we take into consideration the rise in the total number of voters. But the gain of the party pales completely beside the leap of fascism from 800,000 to 6,400,000 votes. Of no less significance for evaluating the elections is the fact that the Social Democracy, in spite of substantial losses, retained its basic cadres and still received a considerably greater number of workers' votes than the Communist Party.

The gigantic growth of National Socialism is an expression of two factors: a deep social crisis, throwing the petty-bourgeois masses off balance and the lack of a revolutionary party that would today be regarded by the popular masses as the acknowledged revolutionary leader. If the Communist Party is the party of revolutionary hope, then fascism, as a mass movement, is the party of counter-revolutionary despair. When revolutionary hope embraces the whole proletarian mass, it inevitably pulls behind it on the road of revolution considerable and growing sections of the petty bourgeoisie. Precisely in this sphere, the election revealed the opposite picture: counter-



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What it is How Hitler won power



'Volunteer' women workers start the day

revolutionary despair embraced the petty-bourgeois mass with such force that it drew behind it many sections of the proletariat.

How is this explained? In the past we have observed (Italy, Germany) a sharp strengthening of fascism, victorious, or at least threatening, as the result of a spent or missed revolutionary situation, at the conclusion of a revolutionary crisis in which the proletarian vanguard revealed its inability to put itself at the head of the nation and change the fate of all its classes, the petty bourgeoisie included. This is precisely what gave fascism its peculiar strength in Italy. But at present, the problem in Germany does not arise at the conclusion of a revolutionary crisis, but just at its approach. From this, the leading Communist Party officials, optimists *ex officio*, draw the conclusion that fascism, having come "too late", is doomed to inevitable and speedy defeat. (*Die Rote Fahne*). These people do not want to learn anything. Fascism comes "too late" in relation to old revolutionary crises. But it appears sufficiently early — at dawn — in relation to the new revolutionary crisis. The fact that it gained the possibility of taking up such a powerful starting position on the eve of a revolutionary period and not at its conclusion, is not the weak side of fascism but the weak side of Communism.

Fascism in Germany has become a real danger, as an acute expression of the helplessness position of the bourgeois regime, the conservative role of the Social Democracy in this regime, and the accumulated powerlessness of the Communist Party to abolish it.

If the Communist Party, in spite of the exceptionally favorable circumstances, has proved powerless seriously to shake the structure of

the Social Democracy with the aid of the formula of "social fascism", then real fascism now threatens this structure, no longer with wordy formulas of explosives. Not matter how true it is that the Social Democracy prepared the blossoming of fascism by its whole policy, it is no less true that fascism comes forward as a deadly threat primarily to that same Social Democracy, all of whose magnificence is inextricably bound up with parliamentary-democratic-pacifist forms and methods of government.

The policy of a united front of the workers against fascism flows from this whole situation.

The social crisis will inevitably produce deep cleavages within the Social Democracy. The radicalisation of the masses will affect the Social Democratic workers long before they cease to be Social Democrats. We will inevitably have to make agreements against fascism with the various Social Democratic organisations and factions, putting definite conditions to the leaders in full view of the masses.

How ultra-radical demagoguery helped the fascists

In July 1931 the CP made a "united front" — with the Nazis, by supporting their referendum campaign against the Social Democratic state government of Prussia.

To come out into the streets with the slogan "Down with the Brüning-Braun government!" at a

time when, according to the relationship of forces, it can only be replaced by a government of Hitler-Hugenberg, is the sheerest adventurism. The same slogan, however, assumes an altogether different meaning if it becomes an introduction to the direct struggle of the proletariat itself for power. In the first instance, the Communists would appear in the eyes of the masses as the aids of reaction; but in the second instance the question of how the fascists voted before they were crushed by the proletariat would have lost all political significance.

Consequently, we consider the coincidence of voting with the fascists not from the point of view of some abstract principle, but from the point of view of the actual struggle of the classes for power and the relationship of forces at a given stage of this struggle.

Such a "sudden", at first sight zigzag (of July 21) did not at all fall like a thunderbolt from the clear sky, but was prepared by the whole course of the past period. That the German Communist Party is governed by a sincere and burning aspiration to conquer the fascists, to break the masses away from their influence, to overthrow fascism and to crush it — of this, it is understood, there can be no doubt. But the trouble is that, as time goes on, the Stalinist bureaucracy strives more and more and more to act against fascism with its own weapon, borrowing the colours of its political palette, and trying to outshout it at the auction of patriotism. These are not the methods of principled class politics but the methods of petty-bourgeois competition.

It is difficult for one to imagine a more shameful capitulation in prin-

Why Trotsky's warnings were not heard

The economic crash which began in 1929 destroyed the basis for Germany's democratic Weimar Republic. By 1930 there were three million unemployed, rising to over four million in 1931. Banks collapsed. Small businesses went to the wall. Foreign loans were lost.

The fascists again began to grow, as the depressed small shopkeepers and other parts of the middle class, and sections of big business, began to look for a radical solution to the crisis.

In the Reichstag elections of 1930 the Nazi vote shot up by 700% — from 800,000 in 1928 to 6,400,000 — 18%. The KPD vote also rose to 4,600,000 as against 3,300,000 in 1928 — proportionately much less than the Nazis.

Disastrously for the German working class, in 1928 the Comintern had adopted its so-called "third period" analysis. The world, according to this view, had entered a period in which only economic crises and proletarian revolutions were on the agenda. This led to the taking of a fantastically sectarian attitude towards reformist workers' organisations which were denounced as "social fascist".

Workers' disunity let the Nazis grow. In 1933 Hitler took power. In February the boot-boys of the SA and the SS were made 'auxiliary police'. The March Reichstag elections saw a victory for the Nazis — gaining 280 seats against 120 for the SPD and 81 for the KPD (there were warrants out for the arrest of all the KPD deputies). Stalinist policy had brought about the greatest tragedy in history for German workers.

There is no greater betrayal in the history of humanity than the betrayal of their own workers and of workers everywhere — indeed, of decent human beings everywhere — committed in January and February 1933 by both the Stalinised Communist Party and the German reformists. They let Hitler take and consolidate power peacefully. Both the reformists and Stalinists had their own powerful militias, as well as millions of voters, yet they allowed the fascists to destroy the German labour movement and to herd militants into concentration camps. The leader of the socialists, Otto Wels, stood up in the Reichstag in February 1933 and offered his party's loyal collaboration with the new regime. But Hitler wanted their bones not their collaboration.

Trotsky knew what might come and warned the German workers about it in good time. Like a mythical eagle soaring high up in the sky, he could see towards what horrors the Stalinists and reformists were leading the German workers, and he screamed out his frantic warnings.

But he was unable to make contact with the German workers. The reformists denounced him as a Communist, the Stalinists as a fascist.

The short excerpts reprinted here can only give the reader a small idea of Trotsky's writings on Germany. The full collection should be read.

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NALGO ORGANISER

10p if sold separately

Fight the Tories! Rebuild the left!



Back Benn and Heffer!

What is the Benn-Heffer bid for leadership of the Labour Party about?

It is about fighting the Tories.

For years the leaders of the labour movement have failed to mobilise our forces for a serious fight back against Thatcher. Because Kinnock and Hattersley won't fight, they must be pushed aside to make way for those who will — Benn and Heffer.

Why does it matter to NALGO members?

Crusade

Because there is now in British politics a whole series of big political issues around which it would be possible for a serious leadership of the labour movement to organise a powerful crusade to drive the Tories from office. The biggest indictment of the Kinnock-Hattersley 'leadership' lies in the fact that they have failed to seize on those issues and use them.

NALGO's leadership has failed in the same way — have followed Kinnock and Hattersley's lead. Even while they've been 'left' on the TUC opposing the worst of MSC schemes and opposing single-union deals the NEC have ditched major issues affecting all workers in the public services.

Registration for the poll tax is now under way in Scotland. About half the population of Britain — including many Tory voters — say they would support a campaign of refusing to pay this tax.

The NEC has run no national campaign.

Despite the attempts by union leaders to let the campaign peter out after 14 March agitation against Health Service cuts is continuing. A poll before the Budget showed that only 6 per cent of voters wanted tax cuts rather than more money for the NHS, and some 92 per cent wanted more money for the Health Service.

Another poll showed a majority of the population supporting the striking nurses.

NALGO health branches striking on March 14th were refused authorisation for action.



The Education Reform Bill is going through Parliament. A poll last June showed 55 per cent in favour of its plan for schools to opt out of local authority control. By this January, only 18 per cent supported this idea. 62 per cent were against a national written test for seven year old schoolchildren.

NALGO branches in the London boroughs had to force the Met District into action on March 9th to defend ILEA by all-London action against strong opposition from the district leadership.

The huge waiting list for council housing — in many areas, the waiting list means waiting forever — are proof that the Tories' plans to cut back council housing run counter to the needs and wishes of millions. Where Tory councils have tried to push through Government policy in advance — as in

Westminster, where they plan to sell off half the council's housing stock as quick as they can — they have aroused fierce opposition.

Opposition

Previous Tory attempts to revive the private landlord, in the late '50s led to a mass outcry against 'Rachmanism' (profiteering slum landlords) and the ignominious end of 13 years in office for the Tories.

Clause 28 of the Local Government Bill, which threatens all facilities for lesbians and gays under the pretext of a ban on 'promoting homosexuality' has aroused the biggest demonstrations ever in this country for lesbian and gay rights. There is widespread opposition to the Tories' attacks on civil liberties on many other fronts.

The Ford workers' victory, the tenacious battle by the P&O seafarers and the strikes by and in support of the health workers (effectively defying Tory anti-union laws) show that trade union power is not finished.

Strikes and trade unionism have declined. But closer analysis shows that this decline is more or less entirely a product of manufacturing business closing down or moving to new areas. In the public services, strikes and trade unionism have on average increased.

Much has been written and said about the ideological grip of 'Thatcherism'. Many people on the left argue that socialist ideas in the British working class have been swamped by the tide of market

economics and dog-eat-dog consumerism.

Workers' confidence has been sapped by unemployment, by successive defeats and by the feebleness of the labour movement's leadership. That lack of confidence explains the Tories' triumphs. But it is something that can change — and change quite rapidly in the right circumstances.

There is plenty of inflammable material to raise a fire of protest against the Tories — given leadership.

That is why everyone in the labour movement who wants to fight the Tories must back Benn and Heffer. NALGO members have as big a role to play as other trade unionists in re-shaping the labour movement.

The Broad Left we need

Moves to build a real Broad Left in NALGO have been very slow — we're still stuck with 'Broad Left' groupings that are more about putting up slates for NALGO elections than organising members on the ground.

The national Broad Left — as far as most members see it, exists to hold one or two fringe meetings at conference and then it's down to the odd leaflet sent to branch offices.

District Broad Lefts usually last as long — a get-together of activists from different political tendencies to carve-up a slate for the NEC elections...plans for more meetings that

never happen and 'see you next year'.

The only good news is that in some branches there are real Broad Left organisations developing — arguing for a fight back against cuts and privatisation, and for democratic accountability in branches to make sure that policies are carried out.

NALGO activists have to argue for that approach to be carried out at a national level — for a left that is serious about the union putting up a fight against Tory attacks — and for extending democracy in NALGO to make sure policies aren't ditched, 'revised' or 'developed' by the service committees or the NEC.

The Road to Socialism

Campaign Group of MPs meeting

Wednesday, 6pm, Conference Centre

Speakers: Tony Benn MP, and speakers from the National Union of Seamen, women's group, and an international speaker

**SOCIALIST
ORGANISER**

**NALGO
CONFERENCE
SPECIAL**

DEFENDING PUBLIC

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Fighting the cuts

When NALGO's National Local Government Committee (NLGC) circulated proposals in February to 'review' the national strategy against the cuts, their ideas sounded pretty familiar — and pretty stupid.

Why familiar? Our national leadership was putting forward the same arguments as the leaders of councils who are cutting thousands of jobs: "the simplistic reaction of 'no cuts' may no longer be appropriate", "develop longer term strategies", "appropriate reassurances about compulsory redundancies...redeployments are necessitated", "agreements on enhanced voluntary retirement schemes", "increased co-operation with sympathetic local authority employers".

It looked like the union had just asked the employers to write our policy. And they'd done it on the back of a fag-packet at the headquarters of the Association of London Authorities!

Then the NLGC document called for "industrial action...in order to force councils to agree their strategies". Industrial action to force them to do something they're already doing?

Branches and Districts round the country — and particularly in the areas where Labour councils are crumbling under the Tory pressure to make sweeping cuts — gave this nonsense a thumbs down. The arguments are quite clear:

The crisis in local government has been far more drawn-out than was thought in 1982 when the current national strategy was agreed. Some councils were hit badly but most of the rate-capped councils managed to survive without major cuts by limiting growth and creative accounting.

The national strategy — calling for indefinite strike action in Boroughs where severe cuts are

**By Nik Barstow,
Assistant
Secretary,
Islington NALGO**

made, for immediate all-out action against compulsory redundancy, and for strike action to be financed by a compulsory levy — has never been tested.

The scale of cuts foreseen in 1982 has not happened — until this year. Obviously we have to look at our strategy to decide how it works in 1988, but the will to resist the attack on jobs and services is nothing like as weak as the document claims, even after a third Thatcher victory. The actions in the NHS, the Ford strike and the P&O strike show there is a real build-up of morale and confidence in the working class.

Some of the arguments have got through. A new NLGC document, produced in May, has replaced the 'revised' strategy with a 'developing' strategy.

But the 'developing strategy' is a strange animal: a "push-me-pull-you" mascot to replace the cart-horse as a trade union symbol for the '80s. "Branches resisting cuts in services are encouraged to engage in all-out strike action", "Branches

should adhere strictly to all current NALGO policies which relate to cuts in jobs and services", but "local circumstances may dictate that it is appropriate that discussions are entered into with local employers which may assist in...ensuring that voluntary early retirements, redeployments and retraining, where they occur, do so on the basis of providing job and service protection."

This hodge-podge of a strategy provides nothing practical to support 'Branches resisting cuts', nothing that matches the 1982 proposals for a national fighting fund financed by a levy and all branches donating 20% of their balances.

A democratic union that fights for its members' interests can't operate as a federation. The Local Government Group meeting at NALGO Conference has a duty to decide on how we fight the cuts, and that is what we should do.

Islington NALGO's motion at that meeting on "Attacks on Council Spending" proposes a clear way forward in developing our strategy, and a clear alternative to the muddled thinking behind the NLGC's policies. And four London branches who are in the front line of the fight against cuts have called a meeting to agree amendments to the 'strategy' we are being offered. We should support both moves.

DEFENDING A NATIONAL ANTI-CUTS STRATEGY

Sunday 12 June, 8.00 p.m.

Old Ship Hotel, Brighton

To discuss the National Local Government Committee report and draft appropriate amendments.

Organised by: Newham, Camden, Islington and Ealing branches.

FRINGE MEETINGS

TUESDAY

7.30 pm. The Tory onslaught and the tasks for the left — followed by disco.

Madeira Hotel, 19 Marine Parade (access — two steps at rear — internally OK). Speakers: Harry Cohen MP, Campaign Group and NALGO member; Martha Osamor, esc deputy leader Haringey Council; Paul Holmes, Broad Left NEC member; P&O speaker.

7.30 pm: Beyond the Clause — campaigning for lesbian and gay rights. Melbourne Centre. Speakers from NALGO, NUT and Association of London Authorities.

WEDNESDAY

5.30 pm: The Library Campaign. Cricketers Pub, 15 Black Lion Street. Will discuss green paper and various conference amendments. Organised by Islington NALGO.

8.00 pm: Deportations. Zap Club, 17 Tichbourne Street. Speakers to include Marion Gaima and Lisa Huen — NALGO members facing deportation.



Accountability

Last year's Local Government Group meeting at NALGO conference saw a big revolt against the annual pay deal. Over a third of the delegates rejected the final offer from the employers.

The vote was surprisingly high given that most of us knew that the 1987 pay campaign was over and that there was little chance of building action to keep up the fight for the 12% or £900 claim.

We registered our protest because the National Local Government Committee was presenting the deal as 'a victory' before the members had had a chance to decide.

NALGO has a reputation as a

democratic union — and by the standards of many unions in Britain it certainly is. But democracy has to be thoroughgoing, and has to be real in the most important decisions we make — and pay is pretty important!

The first most members heard about that pay deal wasn't through the union but in the papers. When we had a chance to vote on whether to accept or not, it was too late.

That was a disgrace — and we have to make sure it doesn't happen again. Five branches from four districts are putting forward a motion on accountability to the Group meeting this year.

That motion, and Hackney's motion on the way that pay claims are determined are vital to NALGO's future.

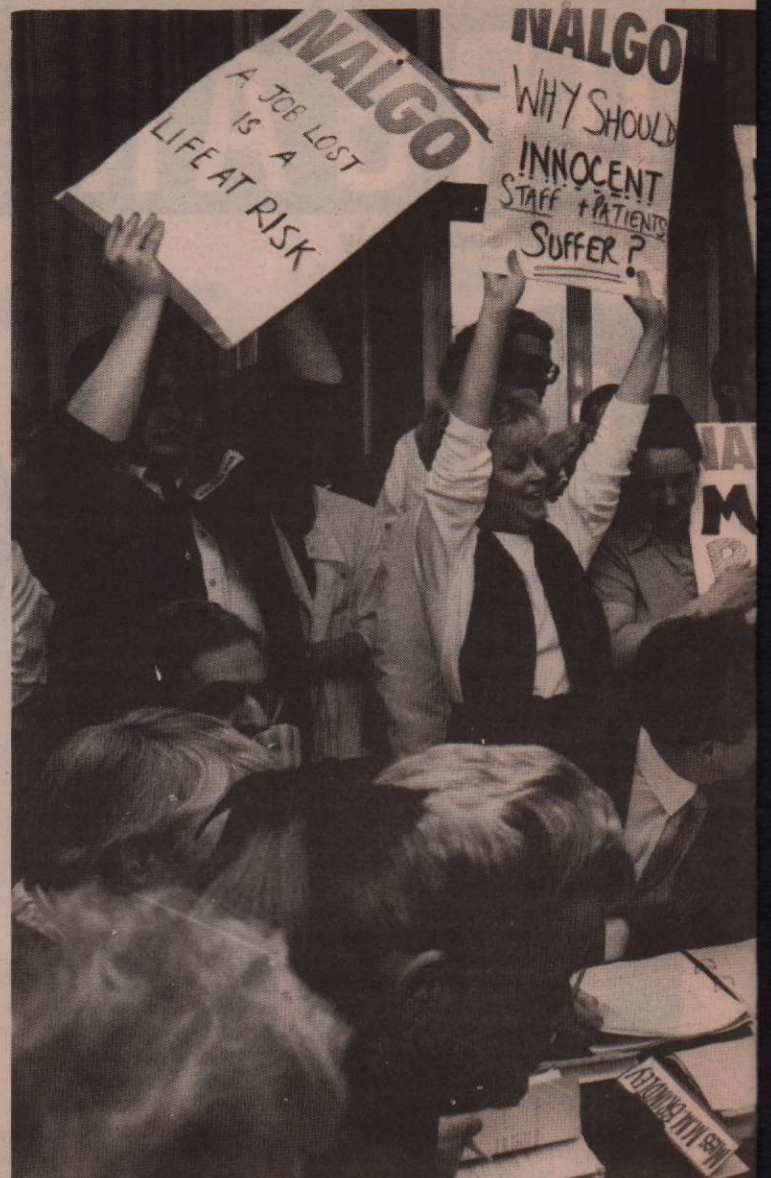


Photo: Peter Walsh, Profile

Towards a na

**By Paul Woolley
(Steward, NWRHA
NALGO).**

NALGO's 70,000 members in the NHS face a bleak future if the Tories get their way.

With help from Edwina 'Morticia' Currie and Mad John Moore, they are redoubling their efforts for a two-tier health service.

The rich will pay for good (private) health care, and the rest of us will be forced to pay or wait years for treatment by a rag-and-bone NHS. Tory 'options' include: introducing health vouchers, tax relief on private health insurance, and 'opting out' for individual hospitals. All options include destroying the NHS trade unions.

More and more NALGO members in the NHS face privatisation — now being extended to areas like finance staff, works departments, switchboards and other administrative and clerical workers. This is often done selectively, so

that the bosses pick off one group at a time.

NALGO's national executive seem oblivious. Their conference motion on the NHS is a glib token. It completely ignores the health workers' strikes between January and March this year. It condemns the Tories' butchery of the NHS and goes on to "welcome the next 40 years of the NHS"! The union's health service 'campaign' since the 100,000-strong TUC demonstration on 5 March has been almost laughable — a couple of leaflets and letters urging branches urging branches to bake "giant birthday cakes" for the NHS's 40th birthday!

The NEC should be brought to book. Along with COHSE and NUPE leaders, they failed to organise a serious campaign of strikes that could have forced the Tories to back down over the NHS. While COHSE and NUPE squabbled over Budget Day action, NALGO leaders were silent.

We still need a plan of industrial action with other health unions building up to an all-out strike with emergency cover.

Continued from page 8

ferent positions and shadings of positions. Unfortunately "Working for Freedom" fails to give any real picture of this debate. Instead it is concerned to prove that the viewpoint it supports is the view of COSATU and of the South African working class.

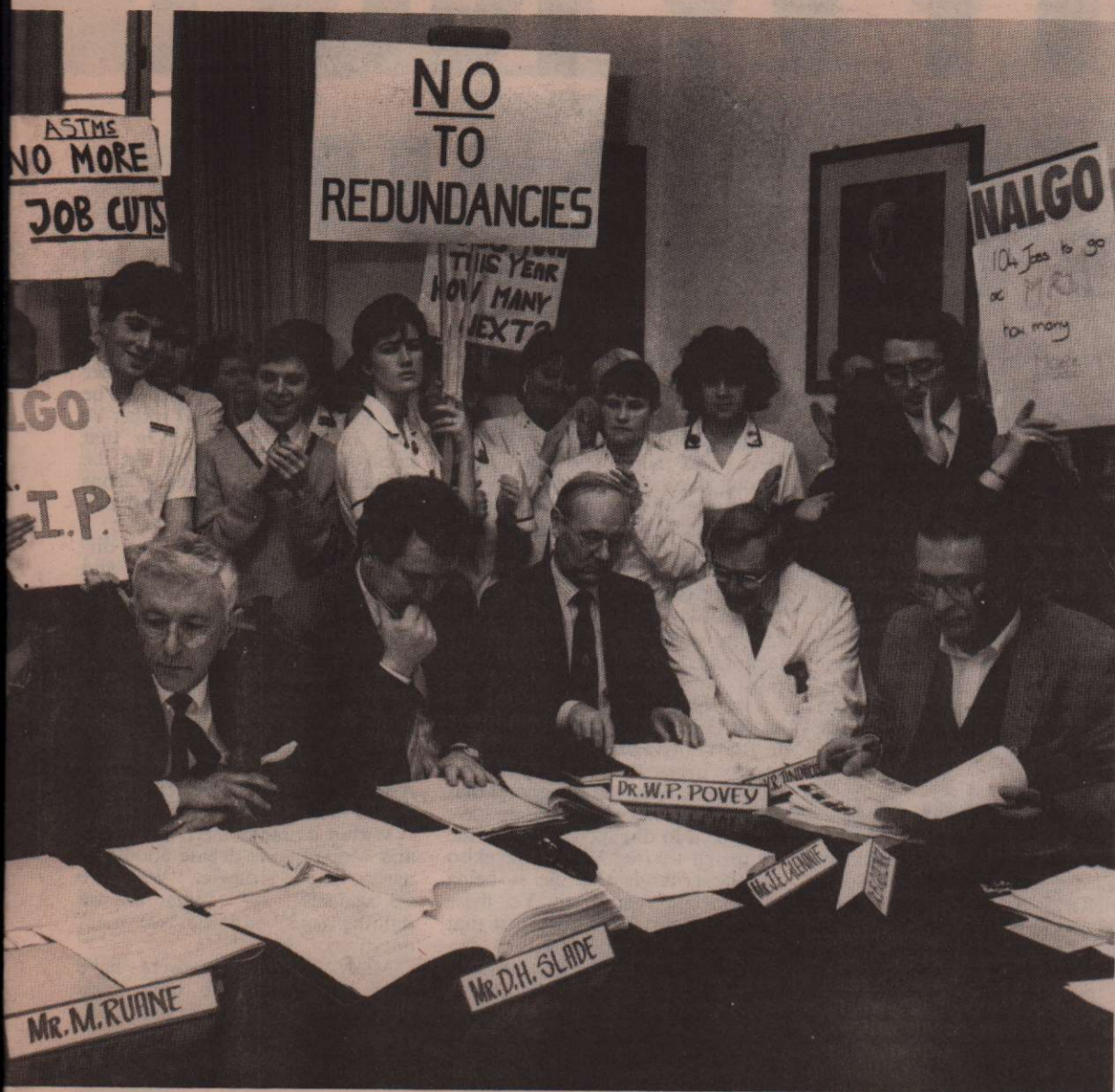
Yes, it is true that COSATU has adopted the programme of the ANC, the Freedom Charter. But inside COSATU there is an important and wide-ranging debate about the significance of the Charter.

Some see the Charter as all that is needed to guide the struggle. Others see the Charter as a minimum programme which needs to be supplemented with another, socialist or

workers' charter. Others reject the Charter and argue that the union should not adopt the programme of any political organisation as it would divide their members. Instead the unions themselves should draw up a new socialist programme of action.

This debate is made more complex by the fact that different people see the charter in different ways. Some see the charter as linked to a broad front of many classes that would be anti-apartheid but not anti-capitalist, whilst others argue that the Charter is so radical, and big business and apartheid are so linked and intertwined, that it could only be carried out by overthrowing

C SERVICES



NALGO/NUPE

ONE BIG UNION!

There has been a lot of talk about a NALGO/NUPE merger. The problem is that most of the talking is between bureaucrats at the top, not between members on the ground.

One big union covering large numbers of workers in public services is a good idea. It could be a way to overcome many of the petty divisions that prevent effective trade union action.

But the NEC is handling the idea the wrong way. One of the first fruits of closer links with NUPE this year was a letter to Health Branches telling them there would be no authorisation for joint action with other unions on 14 March, when CoHSE had called a one-day

strike. Why? Because the NUPE leadership felt peeved at CoHSE for calling action before they did!

If we are to have unity it needs to be built from the rank and file with joint action. Unity can only really be built on the basis of members getting together on the ground, and having democratic structures to let them do it effectively.

We should support calls for unity but insist that:

- *joint action is built;
- *we fight the artificial divisions between 'officers' and 'manuals' and demand that all council workers are treated equally;

- *we insist on a democratic union structure where the rank and file decide and are not dictated to by District officers or national bureaucrats.

Secret police

The small but tightly organised group of 'Morning Star' supporters in NALGO have been making slow gains on the foreign policy issues closest to their hearts.

On Eastern Europe, however, they have a problem that most of our members support workers' organisations like Solidarity — and don't support the 'official' unions, which exist to push up productivity rather than support workers' rights.

Not that anyone would suggest that our Morning Star colleagues would operate like their friends in Eastern Europe — but some of the ways that a debate seem to have been avoided have a 1984 ring to them:

A letter from the Met District Secretary, Ivan Beavis, to Islington Branch reads:

"First of all I apologise for failing to advise the Chair of the General Purposes Committee to consider your amendment to motion 158 (Eastern Europe). This was an oversight on my part.

"The District Office has undertaken an enquiry to establish whether or not your amendment was received in time. Our enquiries appear to confirm that the motion was not received by the District Office and that therefore even if it had been considered by the General Purposes Committee it could not have been submitted.

"I am reasonably satisfied that the amendment was not received since all other amendments submitted by your branch were received in the normal way. In addition, all the amendments which we did receive were pinned together in one envelope".

NALGO scandal

NALGO Travel offers our members the 'benefit' of 9% discounts on P&O ferries crewed by scabs!

NALGO Insurance discriminates against gay men — with application forms for insurance asking questions about sexual orientation, counselling on connection with AIDS, and the sexual orientation of partners!

NALGO Travel have been advertising discounts with P&O four months into the strike at Dover, despite all the messages of support

from our union and the TUC. The discriminatory practices of NALGO Insurance are in direct contradiction to union policy.

How can services directly controlled by our union flout our policies so openly? The conference gives us a chance to challenge what is going on — there will be emergency motions on the P&O discounts scandal, and the AGM of the NALGO Insurance Association will be attended by many members putting forward motions to change its discriminatory policies.

9% DISCOUNT ON P&O EUROPEAN FERRIES

Members should complete the booking form in the P&O European Ferries brochure and send to NALGO TRAVEL together with a copy of their NALGO membership card. A remittance, less the 9% discount payable to P&O European Ferries should accompany the booking form if the member is booking within three weeks of departure. Once NALGO passes the booking form to the ferry company all correspondence is direct from the ferry company.

NALGO TRAVEL

National Health Service

There are two amendments to the NEC motion which point in the right direction, one of them calling for a TUC 24-hour General Strike. Also in the NHS debate will be Composite E, saying that we must only "take whatever constitutional action that is appropriate and lawful to resist" the Tories smashing the health unions! The amendment to this calls for a programme of industrial action, a mass lobby of parliament and branches to affiliate to defence committees, like the 'Fightback' campaigns which are local-government-based and exist in London and Manchester.

NALGO could lay the basis for a thoroughgoing fight against Tory cuts in health and local government, encouraging other unions to do the same.

Another issue for health members is pay. Around 90% of secretarial and clerical workers earn less than £120 per week. Yet the Admin and Clerical claim for a £24 a week rise, a 35 hour week and more holidays is going nowhere. A national 'pay seminar' in April was well attended but powerless to get

things moving.

Last Friday (3 June), the Joint Negotiating Committee met. Management came up with a 'final' offer of 5% or £6.25 per week, whichever is greater, backdated to April 1988. The whole point of our negotiators going into the working party was to ensure that any pay offer included a restructuring of grades to favour those members on low pay. The restructuring is supposedly going to be the subject of "continuing discussion", but management have already said that

there will not be government money to implement any new grading structure! The pay offer does nothing for our thousands of low paid members.

The National Health Committee is almost certain to recommend acceptance. We should reject the offer. Ancillary workers' leaders have just kicked out a 5.4% offer with productivity strings attached. We should argue for NALGO to link up with COHSE and NUPE and pursue our claims on a joint basis, linked to a programme of action in defence of the NHS.

GAS

The situation in British Gas continues to deteriorate for NALGO members and our customers. Staff cuts, new technology and greater workload have led to much friction between management and workers.

At the same time as it makes these cuts, British Gas has been calling on us to give greater care to the

customers. It is a call which is completely at odds with their policies.

Since privatisation, planning is geared to only one thing: profit above all else. British Gas is run by accountants who are out to please only their shareholders.

NALGO will have to combat these financial bloodsuckers at every opportunity, or it will be setting its members and the public on a long and slippery slope to a second class service.

capitalism as well as apartheid.

This debate about the relationship between the Freedom Charter and the socialist goals of the unions is very important but it is not presented in "Working for Freedom". Instead, we get a very dishonest picture of the debate in the unions being solely between the supporters of Black Consciousness and of the ANC.

The report correctly praises the non-racialism of COSATU and the argument of the Freedom Charter that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it". This is obviously a much more democratic position than the black or 'Africanist' ex-

clusivism of some of the opponents of the Freedom Charter.

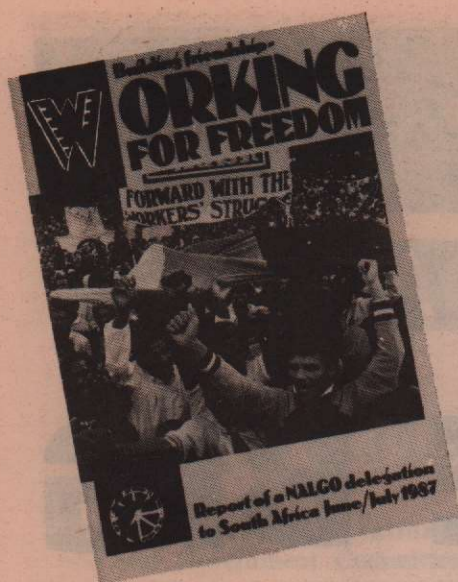
However, the report then goes on to use a typical piece of black chauvinist abuse to dismiss "intellectuals calling themselves socialist whose only experience of apartheid oppression is from the comfort and safety of a university library."

According to the logic of this argument, Neville Alexander, who is a black intellectual and the author of an alternative to the Freedom Charter, the Azanian Manifesto has every right to advance his views, but Raymond Suttner, a white university lecturer who has been jailed for membership of the South African

Communist Party and is a staunch defender and champion of the Freedom Charter has no rights to put forward his views! Surely this can't be NALGO's or NEHAWU's view!

The substance of the argument appears to be that intellectuals outside the movement have no right to tell the unions what to do.

This is quite true. But intellectuals, and anybody else for that matter, have every right to propose policies, discuss issues and criticise positions which relate to the trade unions and the political struggle. Such a broad debate can only benefit the movement.



UNITY, NOT DIVISION!

"Working for Freedom", the report from the NALGO delegation to South Africa, should be welcomed.

It is good to see a trade union in Britain building links with a sister organisation in South Africa. The report is informative and interesting. However, it is politically flawed.

There is no serious analysis of the South African workers' movement and the strategic debate inside that movement.

Let's look at some of the issues.

Union Unity

The largest trade union federation in South Africa is COSATU, with a paid-up membership of at least three-quarters of a million. There is also the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) which claims a signed-up membership of 400,000 and probably has a paid-up membership of 120,000. In addition there are several independent progressive unions outside both COSATU and NACTU.

The problems that divide the two federations and the road to unity require serious debate. Unfortunately 'Working for Freedom' provides a biased and one-sided view of the issues.

WATCH OUT

"COSATU, we were told, judges its friends by their actions. One of the cornerstones of COSATU policy is its commitment to uniting the working people of South Africa into one trade union federation. Why then, we were asked, do some organisations declare support for COSATU and its aims, while at the same time they also support and artificially prolong the existence of the smaller trade union bodies which organise in opposition to COSATU? As the determination of COSATU members grows, so does their intolerance of those who 'sit on the fence'. To take no side is seen as taking a very definite side indeed. The NEHAWU President gave this warning in his address to the launching rally: 'Watch out! We are going to shake that fence and down you will fall! You can't be neutral, either you are with us or you are against us!'"

Ultimatums of this kind can only help to further divide the movement.

The ANC has called for more unity between COSATU and NACTU. After a NACTU delegation visited the ANC in Lusaka John Nkandimeng (ANC member and general secretary of SACTU) said that "unity on the ground (between COSATU and NACTU) should be built through grassroots participation in common campaigns".

Further, Nkandimeng argued "certain people think it is a prerequisite that anyone who wants to join a new united front must support the Freedom Charter. We say that is incorrect. Support for the Freedom Charter is not essential in order to join such a front... That is exactly what the United Front stands for. It is something that brings people together to face a common enemy. They do not have to agree 100% with each other."

At the same time Nkandimeng stressed that he saw COSATU as the main trade union federation.

Many COSATU unions have taken a much less sectarian line than that contained in "Working for Freedom".

The giant metalworkers' union, NUMSA, has presented a joint series of wage demands with three NACTU unions in the metal sector. In the chemical sector, CWIU, the COSATU union, is very keen to work jointly with the NACTU chemical workers' union SACWU. During the OK Bazaars strike last year both NACTU and COSATU unions were active in solidarity and support for the strikers' union, CCAWUSA, a COSATU affiliate.

The whole trade union movement in South Africa needs to unite in the face of state repression, the employers' offensive and the new anti-labour bill. The attitude expressed in "Working for Freedom" will not help develop that unity.

NALGO should adopt the TUC policy of providing support for COSATU and NACTU unions. NACTU has a public sector affiliate, the National Union of Public Sector Workers, and NALGO should be building support for them as well as the COSATU unions.

We may believe, as Socialist Organiser does, that the best policy is for all the independent unions to unite in COSATU, but we can't refuse solidarity to those fighting oppression because we believe they are in the wrong federation. NACTU is not a tame, collaborationist federation and therefore it deserves solidarity.

Moses Mayekiso.

"Working for Freedom" also deals with the question of adopting trade union detainees.

The NALGO leadership have shamed the union by openly opposing the international campaign to free COSATU member and NUMSA general secretary Moses Mayekiso.

One particularly disgusting episode was the NALGO international department circular which

suggested that the 'Friends of Moses Mayekiso' campaign represented an illegitimate attempt to create a "cult of the personality" around Moses.

Moses Mayekiso is significant because of what he represents. Moses is a socialist, his union NUMSA is committed to the struggle for socialism. Moses and the other comrades from Alexandra are on trial for treason because they linked the struggle of the workers to the struggle in the townships and attempted to build democratic, accountable structures in the community on the model of the workers' democracy of the trade unions.

SYMBOL

Moses is a symbol of the militant, socialist tradition inside the South African workers' movement. Workers are committed to what he stands for. That's why NUMSA stewards have made up songs calling for his release and local COSATU committees have laid plans for protest strike action should he be found guilty.

When Moses' trial started there was a real possibility that he would face the hangman's noose. The charge was treason and it carried the maximum penalty of death.

So we had a situation in which the general secretary of the second largest union in South Africa faced the death penalty for involving trade unionists in the political struggle, and the NALGO leadership opposed any specific campaigns for his release.

In this context the action of the NALGO leadership in attempting to sabotage solidarity work for Moses can only be seen as disruptive and divisive.

The question must be asked, why? Why would a union with NALGO's record of solidarity with the struggle in South Africa oppose a campaign which has received support from Moses' union NUMSA,

and other metal unions across the globe, including the AEU in Britain?

The reason is simple. The NALGO international department seem to see their role as champions of one particular viewpoint in the liberation movement in South Africa. They support the political positions of the dominant grouping inside the United Democratic Front, COSATU and the ANC. Anyone whose view of the struggle falls outside this camp is seen as illegitimate and not deserving of support.

One black worker, who was a MAWU organiser alongside Moses in the Transvaal in 1985-6 pointed out the hypocrisy of this approach:

"One is dismayed by reports that certain elements within Britain have attempted to disrupt and smash the campaign to free Moses Mayekiso on the grounds that he is being made a cult figure, etc. Yet these same elements have done just that in the past with Mandela."

The attitude of the NALGO leadership must be rejected. All those forces fighting apartheid deserve support. At the same time the solidarity movement must be

pluralist. If one group wishes to highlight Mandela and another Mayekiso then that should not be seen as divisive, it should rather be seen as a positive diversity that strengthens the movement. At the moment there are strong reasons why trade unions should support a specific campaign to free Moses.

People who cannot see the difference between diversity and divisiveness will not build a very democratic or free South Africa after apartheid.

Socialism and the Freedom Charter.

Any movement of millions of workers is not homogeneous. Not everyone will agree. The South African workers' movement is just such a movement.

Within its ranks there is a broad and wide-ranging debate about the nature of the struggle. "What are we against?" and "What are we fighting for?" are the two main questions.

Many different answers have been put forward to both these questions, and there are many dif-

Continued on centre pages

Our conference fringe meeting Building socialism Working for unity

The need for workers' unity and socialist politics in the South African trade unions.

Speaker: BOB FINE, recently returned from a visit to trade unionists in South Africa.

Monday 13 June, 7.30

Cricketers pub, 15 Black Lion St.

(Two minutes from conference centre)

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.



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FASCISM

From page 4

principle than the fact that the Stalinist bureaucracy has substituted for the slogan of the proletarian revolution the slogan of the people's revolution. No cunning stratagems, no play on quotations, no historical falsifications, will alter the fact that this is a betrayal in principle of Marxism, with the object of the very best imitation of fascist charlatanism.

Ideas have their own logic. The people's revolution is put forth as a subordinate method of "national liberation". Such a statement of the question cleared a way to the party for purely chauvinistic tendencies.

At the most important place in his conclusion, Thaelmann put the idea that "Germany is today a ball in the hands of the Entente". It is in consequence primarily a matter of national liberation. But in a certain sense, France and Italy also, and even England, are "balls" in the hands of the United States.

But all these questions nevertheless occupy second place. Our policy is determined not by the fact that Germany is a "ball" in the hands of the Entente, but primarily by the fact that the German proletariat, which is split up, powerless, and oppressed, is a ball in the hands of the German bourgeoisie. "The main enemy is at home!" Karl Liebknecht taught at one time. Or perhaps you have forgotten this, friends?

Trotsky urgently warned the workers that the CP's ultra-radical phrases covered defeatism.

In the meantime, there are among the Communist officials not a few cowardly careerists and fakers whose little posts, whose incomes, and more than that, whose hides, are dear to them. These creatures are very much inclined to spout ultraradical phrases beneath which is concealed a wretched and contemptible fatalism. "Without a victory over the Social Democracy, we cannot battle against fascism!" say such terrible revolutionists, and for this reason... they get their passports ready.

Worker-Communists, you are hundreds of thousands, millions; you cannot leave for anywhere; there are not enough passports for you. Should fascism come to power, it will ride over your skulls and spines like a terrific tank. Your salvation lies in merciless struggle. And only a fighting unity with the Social Democratic workers can bring victory. Make haste, worker-Communists, you have very little time left!

Social democracy and fascism

Trotsky denounced the legalism and pacifism of the Social Democratic Party

To rely upon a president is to rely upon "the state"! Faced with the impending clash between the proletariat and the fascist petty bourgeoisie — two camps which together comprise the crushing majority of the German nation — these Marxists from the *Vorwärts* yelp for the ninth watchman to come to their aid. They say to the state, "Help! Intervene!" (*Staat, greif zu!*). Which means "Bruening, please don't force us to defend ourselves with the might of workers' organisations, for this will only arouse the entire proletariat; and then the movement will rise above the bald pates of our party leadership: beginning as antifascist, it will end Communist."



Nazi poster: '500,000 unemployed, 400,000 Jews. A very easy way out...' Le Pen's anti-Arab politics have echoed this theme.

— but also the CP's refusal to seek a united front with the Social Democrats

The Social Democracy, which is today the chief representative of the parliamentary-bourgeois regime, derives its support from the workers. Fascism is supported by the petty bourgeoisie. The Social Democracy without mass organisations of the workers can have no influence. Fascism cannot entrench itself in power without annihilating the workers' organisations. Parliament is the main arena of the Social Democracy. The system of fascism is based upon the destruction of parliamentarism. For the monopolistic bourgeoisie, the parliamentary and fascist regimes represent only different vehicles of dominion; it has recourse to one or the other, depending upon the historical conditions. But for both the Social Democracy and fascism, the choice of one or the other vehicle has an independent significance; more than that, for them it is a question of political life or death.

At the moment that the "normal" police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium — the turn of the fascist regime arrives. Through the fascist agency, capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie, and bands of the declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat; all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy. From fascism the bourgeoisie demands a thorough job; once it has resorted to methods of civil war, it insists on having peace for a period of years. When a state turns fascist, it doesn't only mean that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance with the patterns set by Mussolini — the changes in this sphere ultimately play a minor role — but it means, primarily and above all, that the workers' organisations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and

that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallization of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of fascism.

In the course of many decades, the workers have built up within the bourgeois democracy, by utilizing it, by fighting against it, their own strongholds and bases of proletarian democracy: the trade unions, the political parties, the educational and sport clubs, the cooperatives, etc. The proletariat cannot attain power within the formal limits of bourgeois democracy, but can do so only by taking the road of revolution: this has been proved both by theory and experience. And these bulwarks of workers' democracy within the bourgeois state are absolutely essential for taking the revolutionary road. The work of the Second International consisted in creating just such bulwarks during the epoch when it was still fulfilling its progressive historic labour.

Fascism has for its basic and only task the razing to their foundations of all institutions of proletarian democracy. Has this any "class meaning" for the proletariat, or hasn't it? The lofty theoreticians had better ponder over this.

1932: on the brink of disaster

In May 1932 the president, Hindenburg, sacked the Centre Party government of Bruening and called on Franz von Papen to form a government 'above parties'.

Thanks to the Social Democracy, the Bruening government had at its disposal the support of parliament for ruling with the aid of emergency decrees. The Social Democratic leaders said: "In this manner we shall block the road of fascism to power". The Stalinist bureaucracy said: "No, fascism has already

triumphed; it is the Bruening regime which is fascism." Both were false. The Social Democrats palmed off a passive retreat before fascism as the struggle against fascism. The Stalinists presented the matter as if the victory of fascism was already behind them. The fighting power of the proletariat was sapped by both sides and the triumph of the enemy facilitated and brought closer.

However, in spite of the visibility of concentrated forces, the Papen government as such is weaker yet than its predecessor.

Through the Papen government, the barons, the magnates of capital and the bankers have made an attempt to safeguard their interests by means of the police and the regular army. The idea of giving up all power to Hitler, who supports himself upon the greedy and unbridled bands of the petty bourgeoisie, is a far from pleasant one to them. They do not, of course, doubt that in the long run Hitler will be a submissive instrument of their domination. Yet this is bound up with convulsions, with the risk of a long and weary civil war and great expense.

In January 1933 Hindenburg called Hitler to power. Within a few months the German workers' movement had been crushed — without a fight.

The most powerful proletariat of Europe, measured by its place in production, its social weight, and the strength of its organisations, has manifested no resistance since Hitler's coming to power and his first violent attacks against the workers' organisations. This is the fact from which to proceed in subsequent strategic calculations.

Since 1923, that is, since the beginning of the struggle against the Left Opposition, the Stalinist leadership, although indirectly, assisted the Social Democracy with all its strength to derail, to befuddle, to enfeeble the German proletariat: it restrained and hindered the workers when the conditions dictated a courageous revolutionary offensive; it proclaimed the ap-

proach of the revolutionary situation when it had already passed; it worked up agreements with petty-bourgeois phrasemongers and windbags; it limped impotently at the tail of the Social Democracy under cover of the policy of the united front; it proclaimed the "third period" and the struggle for the conquest of the streets under conditions of political ebb and the weakness of the Communist Party; it replaced the serious struggle by leaps, adventures or parades; it isolated the Communists from the mass trade unions; it identified the Social Democracy with fascism and rejected the united front with the mass workers' organisations in face of the aggressive bands of the National Socialists; it sabotaged the slightest initiative for the united front for local defense, at the same time it systematically deceived the workers as to the real relationship of forces, distorted the facts, passed off friends as enemies and enemies as friends — and drew the noose tighter and tighter around the neck of the party, not permitting it to breathe freely any longer, nor to speak, nor to think.

And now, already standing just short of ruin, the leadership of the Comintern fears light and criticism more than anything else. Let the world revolution perish, but long love vain prestige! The bankrupts sow confusion, bury the evidence, and cover their tracks. The fact that the Communist Party of Germany lost "only" 1,200,000 votes at the first blow — with a general rise in the number of voters of three to four millions — is proclaimed by *Pravda* as an "enormous political victory".

Yes, five million Communists still succeeded in reaching the ballot box, one by one. But in the factories and on the streets, there are none. They are disconcerted, dispersed, demoralised. They have been broken away from independence under the yoke of the apparatus. The bureaucratic terror of Stalinism paralysed their willpower before the turn came for the terror of the fascist bands.

It must be said clearly, plainly, openly: Stalinism in Germany has had its August 4. Henceforth, the advanced workers will only speak of the period of the domination of the Stalinist bureaucracy with a burning sense of shame, with words of hatred and curses. The official German Communist Party is doomed. From now on it will only decompose, crumble and melt into the void. German Communism can be reborn only on a new basis and with a new leadership.

Workers' Liberty

88



summer school

2-3 July, in London.

Tickets £9 waged, £5 unwaged, from Mark Osborn, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



Les Hearn's
SCIENCE COLUMN

LESS TREES LESS RAIN

Chopping down trees seems to affect the climate, but how? What is the connection between the loss of Ethiopia's once lush forests and the droughts, that seem to affect sub-Saharan Africa virtually every year?

I am indebted to the Guardian's Weather Page for the answer. Writing there last week, Dick File of the London Weather Centre drew readers' attention to the fact that trees like all plants except desert dwellers, transpire.

This is a bit like sweating. The leaves have little pores from which water evaporates and this does help cool plants down in very hot weather. Also, transpirations help to transport minerals from the roots to the leaves by means of a constant flow of water up the stem.

Comparison

But these functions require a fairly small amount of water loss. By comparison, transpiration, particularly on a hot summer's day in the tropics, takes on massive proportions. So much so that a square kilometre of moist tropical rain forest pours more water vapour into the atmosphere than a square kilometre of sea. This is because the total surface area of the leaves is greater than that square kilometre.

Since, according to the operation of the "water cycle", this is where the raw material for rain comes from, forests can contribute greatly to the local climate. The main water cycle sends water vapour into the clouds from the sea. The clouds are blown overland and then lose their water as rain. This then runs into the rivers and back to the sea. With large landmasses like continents, the clouds may not always reach the middle bits, so these will have less rain fall.

So if forests trap some of the rain, send it back into the air make more clouds, these may get blown further in land to boost the rain fall of the central areas.

The deforestation of sub-Saharan Africa has unleashed a vicious circle whereby less trees means less rain which means less trees...

The next tragedy looks like happening in the Amazon jungle. About 2% of the Amazon forests are being felled each year. — a colossal amount. The cleared land is less capable of turning water into vapour and so the climate is altered. Will the most productive land on Earth also become a desert?

Silent sex and noisy food

Belinda Weaver
reviews 'Tampopo'.

'Tampopo' isn't the first Japanese Western, but it's probably the first *noodle* Western.

Rather than being a struggle for 'truth, justice and the Japanese way', it's a struggle to produce the perfect soup with noodles — a quest, that after all, does have right on its side.

Why should the customers put up with tepid soup, lifeless noodles and substandard pickles when it's possible to get everything right, to achieve perfection in the form of Tampopo Spring Onion Special?

The film is a touch bizarre, being a loosely strung together series of stories, whose only common denominator is food. Not all the food is eaten, but in the interests of not telling the plot, I shall say no more than that.

Tampopo, which means dandelion, is the name of the widow who longs to achieve the perfect noodle soup. She is helped by a truck driver, Goro, whose standards are as high as hers — he has possibly the cleanest, shiniest truck in Japan.

This is a film where sex is silent and eating full of slurping, lip-smacking sounds. The final shot gives an extended view of where this all began.

There has been no film like 'Tampopo' before. There may never be another, so catch this one while you can. Check out a few Japanese noodle bars before you go, just in case the film makes you hungry.



'The master' (right) instructs a novice on the right way to eat noodles.

Using women to sell goods

I don't suppose any of you are regular readers of 'The Tatler'? No? Nor am I, but this rather up-market publication has received a lot of attention lately in the 'quality press'.

The reason? Well, it seems the Tatler has had a revamp. Previously it was rather a respectable, cosy, Jaeger-jumper type of magazine with a bit of Brideshead Revisited bright-young-thingism thrown in for good measure. But, deary me, it's gone *arty*. And, in terms of the magazine world, that means soft-porn.

Advertising features have apparently begun to go in for thinly-disguised and ever so tastefully done rape and death fantasy. Some way to sell lingerie. Such a pillar of the British establishment going for this sort of thing is obviously going to cause a bit of a stir — well, at least in the columns of 'The Independent'! But using sex to sell has been going on for quite a long time.

WOMAN'S EYE

By Kath O'Leary

The archetype is, I suppose, the Flake advert. For the past 20 years some woman or other with scarlet lips has been eating Flakes in a fantastically improbable manner. Can you do it without ending up covered in chocolaty smears? I certainly can't.

The implications of the advert don't need to be spelt out. But then Cadbury's defence, though a little disingenuous, does have a kernel of truth — how else can you eat chocolate other than by putting it in your mouth? Fair enough, I suppose.

But what about the Calvin Klein "Obsession" adverts? I suppose they're the ad. world's equivalent of "9½ Weeks". Lots of suggested

unbridled passion and power play. All to sell a bottle of scent? Really!

How many of you remember the 'Hai Karate' Aftershave adverts, around, I would imagine, 10 years ago. A dab of this truly revolting stuff would conjure up a woman in a low cut frock just dying to tear off the lucky chap's clothing. The advantage of that sort of high camp was that nobody, but nobody took it seriously. It was too Benny Hill.

But the new stuff is **terribly** tasteful, **terribly** arty and considerably more insidious. It doesn't tell you that a particular product will make you irresistible to the "opposite sex". Nothing so vulgar. But it shrouds the product in an air of sexual mystery (and sometimes danger) that works more subtly. It doesn't pounce, it *seduces*.

And they're not just using

women. The Levis advert, eagerly awaited every night by lots of women I know, shows a sultry hunk undressing in a launderette. Men can be sex-objects too? Well, same form, different content.

In a society where women are oppressed, half-naked smouldering men mean something a bit different from half-naked smouldering women. One's a threat, the other's an invitation.

What's interesting is that the IBA have received no complaints about the use of sex in adverts for 'Obsession', or 'Denim'. It seems that viewers only complain when the use of sex seems inappropriate to the product concerned — 'Citizen' watches for instance.

Sex, it seems, is all right in its place. But I still don't understand what it's got to do with chocolate.

ACTIVISTS' DIARY

Wednesday 8 June. Cardiff SO meeting: 'Lesbian and Gay Liberation'. Speaker: Liz Millward. 7.30, Gower Hotel.

Thursday 9 June. 'Women for Benn and Heffer' meeting, 7.30, Walworth Town Hall, London SE17.

Sunday 12 June South London SO meeting: "Lessons of 1968". Speaker: Martin Thomas. 7.30, 'The Station', Camberwell.

Thursday 16 June. Newcastle SO meeting, 'After Alton'. Speaker Rosey Sibley. 7.30 at Newcastle Poly.

Monday 20 June. 'Defend free comment in the left press!' A meeting to celebrate Socialist Organiser's victory over the libel cases brought by Vanessa Redgrave. 7.30, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

Tuesday 21 June. Manchester SO meeting. 'Back Benn and Heffer! Rebuild the Left!' 7.30, Manchester Town Hall.

Thursday 23 June. Sheffield SO meeting: 'Fascism in France'. Speaker: Martin Thomas. 7.30, SC-CAU, West St.

Wednesday 29 June. Northampton SO meeting: 'The Struggle in South Africa'. Speaker: Bob Fine. 7.30, Guildhall.

Justice for Ta Thu Thau

The undersigned, militants in the workers' movement and intellectuals who participated actively in the movement of solidarity with the Vietnamese people in their struggle for their independence, ask that justice should finally be done to the Vietnamese Trotskyist leaders Ta Thu Thau, Tran van Thach, Nguyen va So, Phan van Hum, Phan van Chanh, Huynh van Phuong etc.

These men, survivors of the French colonialist prison camps, had a great following in the Saigon working class through the 1930s; they played an important role in the

Text of a petition being circulated by the Groupe Trotskyiste Vietnamien

trades unions and the Indochinese Congress. At various times they were elected to the municipal councils.

They were all arrested by the Vietminh and then disappeared in 1945 — something which many official Vietnamese publications openly applauded, having heaped slanders on the Trotskyist leaders (as "Japanese agents" etc).

We demand of the Vietnamese Communist Party that they end these insults, which have been repeated again on their behalf in recent texts.

In the USSR, the accused of the

third Moscow trial, victims of Stalin, have now been rehabilitated; in Hanoi, voices are being raised for respect to be restored to members of the "Nham Van Giai-Pham" movement who were slandered in an unspeakable fashion in 1956; now is the time to fill in the blank pages, or rather to put back the ripped-out pages, of the Vietnamese communist movement's history.

We call for free access to all the documents relating to the 1930s and the 1945 revolution, and in particular the re-publication of the writings of the Trotskyist militants who disappeared.

For more information contact: Groupe Trotskyiste Vietnamien, BP 746 75532, Paris Cedex 11, France.

● The unions

New threat in Dover

TO BE a seafarer you have to have a seafarer's 'book'.

This is something deeper than having a job. You can have a job and lose it, change one job for another, be sacked by one company — say P&O — and be employed by another.

So long as you have your 'book' you are still a seafarer. Take your 'book' away, and you cease to be employable on any ship. To take away a seafarer's 'book' is therefore much more than to sack him or her.

This Thursday, 9th, Dover's 900 striking seafarers will have their 'books' taken away by the General Council of British Shipping, which is the bosses' side of the National Maritime Council — unless they give up in their battle with P&O and seek alternative employment.

This is the latest move in the bitter battle between seafarers and employers. It may be the crunch.

There is nothing worse that the bosses can do to the strikers. But the 900 seafarers remain militant. They are part of a tightly-knit, proud, and determined community.

The NUS has requested an urgent meeting of the National Maritime Council, which contains both union and bosses' representatives, to discuss the issue. Meanwhile the mass picket continues, despite court orders, and needs support.



Dover pickets Photo Andrew Ward

Scottish seafarers' offices seized

Sequestrators took over the NUS offices in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Leith last week.

Even in legal terms, the sequestrators appointed by the High Court in London in May to seize the NUS's assets have no right to move into the NUS's premises in Scotland. But NUS leader Sam MacCluskie had ordered full cooperation with the sequestrators.

NUS members in Aberdeen demonstrated against the seizure of their office. "U-Boats failed, now Maggie is trying to sink us" read an NUS placard outside the Glasgow/NUS office as the sequestrators moved in. And in Leith, where the sequestrators seized the princely sum of £5, an NUS member described the action as "another step towards wiping us out".

The seizure of the NUS's offices means that any donations to the hardship fund arriving at them will be seized by the sequestrators.

Donations in Edinburgh should therefore be sent to: Seafarers' Hardship Fund, c/o Edinburgh Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place, Edinburgh EH1 3JT. Donations in cash, or cheques payable to Edinburgh Trades Council.

Manchester bin workers score partial victory

By Sarah Cotterill

The Manchester bin strike ended last Friday, 3 June, when striking cleansing workers voted two to one to accept the council's latest offer.

The strike, which started three weeks ago, was against cuts in the cleansing section. Concessions were won, but a lot more could have been gained.

The Labour council was under pressure. Support for the strike was growing, with Labour Parties and council trade unions supporting the demands of the cleansing workers for more staff.

The GMB had voted to back the call for a one-day City-wide action by all council workers, and given their leadership a mandate to call lightning all-out action by its members in other departments.

As we go to press, the details of the settlement are not clear, but the council has agreed to transfer some drivers into the cleansing department and promised to try to find other workers who can be transferred. It has offered an increased one-off payment — about £120 to £200 — to catch up on the backlog of rubbish. And some workers on street cleaning are being offered better payments to cover for the vacancies in refuse collection.

Many questions are left unanswered. How many extra workers will cleansing get? What will happen to the vacancies left in other departments by transfers? Will the increase in staff in cleansing be permanent? Will the council use the restructuring exercise to renege on the deal and make more cuts?

All in all, considering the powerful position the cleansing workers were in, it was a mistake to return to work. The one third who voted to continue the strike were right.

The dispute was plagued by differences between the two main cleansing unions, the GMB and the TGWU. One lesson of the dispute must be the need to reduce such division. A joint shop stewards' structure is needed.



Rowntree GMB stewards are right

By Richard Bayley

Shop stewards in Rowntree's main union, the GMB, have decided to call off their campaign against the takeover bids by the Swiss firms Nestle and Suchard.

They say the union should now concentrate on defending jobs and conditions — whoever should end up owning the country.

The white-collar union MSF has condemned this move as a sell-out. But the GMB stewards are right.

Rowntree is no cosy family firm, despite its well-publicised 'community work', funding municipal parks and charitable trusts. Thousands of jobs have been cut by Rowntree over the last few years. Rowntree is an international concern. Its South African subsidiary has an appalling record on trade union rights.

A strike by Rowntree workers in South Africa for basic rights in the early '80s resulted in the victimisation of 500 workers and the imprisonment of several.

Rowntree workers in South Africa, in Britain, or anywhere else, had nothing to gain from the unholy alliance of trade union officials, Labour Party leaders, Rowntree bosses, and little-England Tories, all mounting a campaign to 'keep Rowntree British'.

A potential strike at Rowntree's Halifax plant was opposed by local GMB officials on the grounds that it would be harmful to the campaign to keep the Swiss out. Unity with Swiss workers in Nestle or Suchard will be vital for Rowntree workers: yet some Rowntree workers, worried about the effect the takeover would have on their job security, recently returned from a lobby of parliament with the slogan 'Make War on the Swiss' attached to their coach.

The real answer to multinational

bosses and the much-vaunted 'single European market' is not to hope for a return to a cosy insular capitalism, or to complain, as Neil Kinnock did, about Thatcher putting "Britain up for sale".

The answer is a united European working class and a united European labour movement that doesn't rely on crumbs from the bosses' table, but fights for jobs and living standards.

NATFHE Progress for the left

By Martin Barclay

Delegates at the NATFHE (National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education) conference in Cardiff on 28-29 May voted for a national one-day strike in support of lecturers in Hereford and Worcester.

The local authority there (led by someone called Muffet!) has taken advantage of the new national pay deal to tear up existing conditions and impose their own. They want to extend the working week from 30 to 35 hours and cut holidays to 30 days a year. The extra work time is to be devoted to the 'service of the County Council' in the absence of any students to teach.

And the very existence of the union is threatened by the use of individual contracts imposed as a condition of the job.

The response of the union leaders has been predictably pathetic, relying on the employers nationally and the Government to bring Muffet into line. The vote for a strike marks a defeat for the recently-elected right-wing NEC, and the beginning of a fight back. This is all the more crucial, as local employers begin to interpret the new agreement in whatever way takes their fancy.

Labour-controlled South Glamorgan County Council, for example, has unilaterally announced a cut in the pay of Adult Education tutors. Their hourly rate will go down from £10 to £9.98 for

non-examinable classes such as Judo or Conversational French. As usual, the authority are attempting to put a socialist gloss on the cuts by claiming that the money is needed for 'working-class areas'.

An emergency resolution was carried at NATFHE conference, and a national dispute has since been declared.

On pay, there was a significant step forward for the union when Conference voted for a flat-rate pay claim. In the past pay offers have been weighted towards higher-grade staff, and have successfully driven the wedges in. Once again, pressure will be needed on negotiators not to drop this aspect of the future claim.

As for the other important issues facing the union: the Conference followed the TUC's lead and voted against a boycott of the new Employment Training Scheme, although only narrowly. A motion resisting the implementation of Section 28 was carried unanimously. Conference heard that the union membership had voted by 19,000 to 6,000 to set up a political fund. A speaker from the National Union of Seamen addressed the conference, and a collection was held.

On the whole the Conference was a success for the left and for the Socialist Lecturers' Association. Contact SLA c/o Barry Lovejoy or Sue Pratt, Handsworth Technical College, Soho Road, Birmingham B21. Tel: 021-551 6031 x 249.

WHETTON'S WEEK

Kinnock true to form

When Kinnock made his statement on Sunday about ditching unilateralism I think he was running true to form. He wants to change all the socialist policies and basic principles of the Labour Party. He is using the Reagan-Gorbachev talks as an excuse to change a policy that the overwhelming majority of the Party regard as a basic principle.

Kinnock sees the issue from the point of view of a Party hack politician, who is prepared to do anything to grab power. I am sure that Tony Benn and Eric Heffer, on the other hand, will argue the position as socialists and continue to put forward a principled case for unilateralism.

Much has been said about the Gorbachev-Reagan summit. I would not trust the pair of bastards! I think it is a very cosmetic affair.

Kinnock is also pushing a change in Labour's rules that will give even greater power to the Labour Party National Executive Committee to impose their people as parliamentary candidates on constituencies they regard as problems. I hope this will rebound on him. The people who do the hard work in the constituencies are not going to be happy with being told that they now have no effective right to select their parliamentary candidate.

When Benn and Heffer first threw their hats in the ring they were told that it was a distraction from the main job of fighting the Tories and winning the next election. But what are these attacks on basic policies if not an obstacle to fighting the Tories? Despite many gifts on silver trays, the present Labour Party leadership has proved singularly incapable of ramming home any attack against the Tories. Kinnock has continually let Maggie Thatcher off the hook. He has spent more time turning inwards and attacking his own organisation — and threatens to ruin the Party for a good many years to come.

The only difference that will make for him is that he sits on one side of the House of Commons rather than the other. To the working class of this country, however, it spells years more suffering at the hands of the Tories.

These are the issues that I hope will be discussed at this weekend's Chesterfield Conference. It should come out with a programme that can be taken to Party members, to convince them to get stuck in to a campaign to get Benn and Heffer elected. I hope they will come out with some basic socialist ideas that can be campaigned for in the country.

Thatcher went to the country on the basis of free-market ideas, and got elected. In York people voted Tory. Now perhaps they might be changing their minds when they see 'market forces' working themselves out over Rowntree.

I hope they can take it further and understand that capitalism does not accept national boundaries, and if jobs are now threatened then capitalism is the enemy. It does not matter whether the boss comes from York or from Switzerland. The workers should not try to choose between the two bosses. What is important is shop-floor and rank-and-file organisation to defend the workers, whoever the boss is.

Paul Whetton is a member of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

1917

How the workers made a revolution



A Socialist Organiser special 60 pence

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

CARDIFF CENTRAL CLP

Stop this witch-hunt!



Photo: IDAF

A Fight the Witch-hunt Campaign is underway in Cardiff Central Constituency Labour Party to defend the rights of long-standing socialist members of the Party.

In February, the Labour Party Wales Organiser, Anita Gale, told the Constituency Executive that it must suspend Plasnewydd ward.

What were the grounds for suspension? Last October Chris Peace, a member of Plasnewydd and delegate to the GMC was expelled by the National Constitutional Committee as a Militant supporter. He subsequently attended two ward meetings as a guest speaker to give reports on outstanding matters that only he could give. He took no other part in the meetings. At no time was the ward informed by the Party of his expulsion, and the Constituency Labour Party was only informed in mid-January after writing to the Party to seek information. The ward has consistently taken the position that it does not take its instructions from the local newspapers.

After it was discovered that the Constituency Executive meeting that suspended the Ward was unconstitutional because non-EC members were present and voting, a meeting of Constituency Officers decided that the best course of action was to reconvene the EC on a proper basis; hold a new Plasnewydd AGM and meanwhile, adjourn the Constituency AGM. The Wales Regional Organiser refused to accept this and ordered the Constituency to proceed with its AGM without Plasnewydd delegates.

Despite repeated requests for information, the Regional Organiser has failed to indicate to Ward Officers which Rule they have allegedly broken. They are being prosecuted under charges that are being kept secret from them.

This is an attempt to exclude an active, campaigning Ward from the Constituency AGM in order to give the right wing a majority. In the last few years the Ward has gained three Labour Councillors; mounted a series of campaigns around local facilities, social security cuts and the NHS; and played a part in transforming the Constituency into a key Labour marginal.

Annoyed

The right wing has been annoyed by a Ward campaign against a decision of the Labour County Council to close a local comprehensive school, Howardian High. Clearly the suspension is being used to silence the Ward.

Other Wards and delegates to the Constituency are incensed by this treatment and two attempts to hold a Constituency AGM have failed. Joyce Gould, the Party's Director of Organisation, has ordered a third AGM to take place on 23 June. Plasnewydd delegates will not be allowed to take part in this meeting.

The 'Fight the Witch-hunt Campaign' has been launched by those who are opposed to these anti-democratic manoeuvres. It already has the support of Tony Benn, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and a number of Wards, Constituencies and Trade Union Branches.

Further details can be obtained from FWHCC, c/o Martin Barclay, 22 Norwood Court, Roath, Cardiff. (0222) 462582.

South Africa's biggest strike

Between 2 and 3 million workers have responded to the call by South Africa's black trade unions for a three day protest strike against the State of Emergency and the government's new anti-union laws.

Only in the mines where there is little tradition of political action and in the Western Cape, where union organisation is weak has the stayaway been less than successful.

In the working class heartland of South Africa, the Transvaal industrial area around Pretoria and Johannesburg, the strike is 90% solid. Once again South Africa's black workers are giving us a glimpse of where the power to destroy apartheid lies.

According to the initial reports the strike has been organised in a way similar to the recent 'stayaway'

By Anne Mack

on March 21 held in commemoration of the Sharpeville massacre and in protest at the banning of 17 anti-apartheid organisations.

The call for the strike has been passed by word of mouth, in hand-written leaflets and by wall posters and graffiti. In South Africa it is a serious crime to paint political graffiti and you will face a jail sentence of at least 6 months, some black youth have even been shot by the white police for this activity.

In part the call was made in this way to avoid both legal action against the unions in terms of the State of Emergency. Technically the unions have only called for 'protest action' not strikes, nevertheless this

has not stopped employers from bringing in interdicts (writs) against union leaders for the action.

Some bosses such as Anglo American's Bobby Godsell have hinted at severe action including sackings in response to the stayaway but others seem content to enforce a policy of "no-work, no pay".

Jay Naidoo said on the first day of the stayaway:

"We are seeing a clear combination between the government and employers. The employers support the Bill and have made threats against our members. They are using apartheid legislation to block our protest... We see no alternative, the conflict will increase. The state is committed to smashing COSATU. The workers of this country have spent 15 years building COSATU and we will not give it up."

All the employers federations support the Bill. They have put a full page advertisement in the South African papers saying the new law is in line with Trade Union legislation in the western democracies. They specifically refer to Britain!

So far there have been no sackings, though the picture will be clearer when workers return to work on Thursday. Employers are saying they will be taking no further action, but this remains to be seen. Policing so far has been low profile with no real reports of violence. There have been 3 bomb explosions, all on railway lines, though no-one was hurt.

The response to the stayaway call is impressive. It's better than March 21st though not as big as the previous 1 day strike in June 1986 or the two day protest during the white election last May.

What is important is that black workers still have the confidence, defiance and determination despite nearly 3 years of increasingly repressive "Emergency" rule to take this kind of action.

The stayaway has undoubtedly been strengthened by the fact that it has been supported by both South Africa's black trade union federa-

tions the giant COSATU and also NACTU.

The government's basic strategy is to sit out forms of protest action like this week's strike and wait for a chance to implement the new Labour Bill through localised battles and test cases. This doesn't mean that Botha wouldn't cheer if Buthelezi's Inkatha thugs kill a few trade unionists in Natal. All the signs are that both the employers and the state want a confrontation with the unions in the mines and metal sector later this year. By that time the new Labour Bill should be in place and legal strike action will be very difficult indeed (nearly all the strikes in recent South African history would be illegal under the present bill).

The state's central objective is to weaken and undermine the black labour movement.

It is not yet committed to attempting to destroy or dismantle it. Though rumours abound of a possible treason trial of COSATU's leadership the state's basic strategy appears to be one of attempting to get the leaders of the black unions to police the militancy of their own members by threatening the union's funds.

It is doubtful indeed if the state has the strength to attempt to break the present action in the way the stayaways in 1960 in protest at the Sharpeville massacre were broken — by physically driving black workers back to work by herding them out of the mining companies and townships. The township based stayaways represent a significant and powerful protest against the state and the employers, but because of the relative isolation of the townships and their geographic separation, in the main, from the major centres of commerce and industry they don't on their own represent a direct challenge to state power.

After this remarkable show of defiance the black labour movement will have to work out ways of taking the struggle against the emergency and the new anti-union laws to a higher stage.

The employers' offensive

South Africa's big capitalists — many of whom are keen to present themselves as liberal and 'anti-apartheid', are clearly seeking to use the confrontation over the labour bill to seriously weaken the black labour movement.

Since the end of the miners' strike last August, Anglo-American, South Africa's largest monopoly, has taken a much harder line in industrial battles. Others have followed.

Some 50,000 workers were sacked as a result of the miners' strike, only around 10,000 have been reinstated.

At Anglo's giant High Velt steel plant — a stronghold of the metal union NUMSA, 4,000 workers were sacked before they could go on a legal strike. Following this there has been a spectacular increase in the number of lock-outs across in-

dustry. Anglo has obtained injunctions preventing the miners' union, NUM, from organising the stayaway on its Orange Free State gold mines.

The chamber of mines have made it clear that they support the new labour bill. Only one company in the whole of South Africa has clearly opposed the bill.

All this should make those who advocate 'partnership' between the 'liberal' monopolies and the black labour movement think twice.

Much of apartheid may be irrational from the point of view of maximising profits for Anglo-American and their ilk, but that doesn't stop them backing the apartheid state when it attempts to weaken the monopolies' basic enemy: the black workers' movement.

The cost of chasing after such unstable "allies" can only be the ditching of the socialist aspirations of many black workers.