

Socialist Organiser

No. 266. 10 April 1986 30p Claimants & strikers 15p

MURDOCH CAN BE BEATEN

By Cate Murphy,
SOGAT London Clerical

The massive turnout of 20,000 on Sunday's march against Rupert Murdoch's sacking of 6,000 print workers at News International, and especially the large number of print workers present, shows that the will to fight Murdoch exists and is growing stronger.

Arthur Scargill, speaking at the mass picket outside Fortress Wapping after the march spelt out the way to defeat Murdoch: trade unionists from all over the country should join the Wapping picket and stay there long enough to prevent the lorries coming out. Local pickets should be organised at distribution depots and if necessary at every single newsagent which continues to sell News International's scab papers.

Scargill, to thunderous applause, then went on to argue that the TUC has to put itself on the line and help build such action. "The TUC has to show that it does not merely represent on paper 10 million men and women. It has got to put that representation into action."

Many rank and file printers at the picket obviously agreed with Scargill. What is needed now is to turn the will to fight that does exist amongst the best, most determined print militants, into a living force in the dispute.

We need:

*Regular, properly organised mass pickets at Wapping, organised so that people can stay there long enough to shut the place down.

*A renewed campaign amongst SOGAT members in newspaper distribution to enforce the union's policy of refusing to handle the scab papers.

*Delegations of rank and file print-



The power of thousands of trade unionists, like those on Sunday's march, can defeat Murdoch. Photo: Ian Swindale

ers to visit every workplace, to explain the printers' case, to develop contacts, raise funds and most important of all to get commitments to mobilise for the mass pickets.

*Target key groups of workers who in one way or another can put the pressure on Murdoch by denying him

the vital supplies or services needed to run Wapping. So far AUEW members have refused to mend machinery, Telecom engineers have boycotted Wapping and some dockers have refused to move newsprint. The potential for solidarity action is great, it just has to be built for.

Turn to
page 2.

Help bring the news

As part of our £15,000 appeal fund we ask all our readers who value the news coverage and analysis provided by Socialist Organiser to give us £1 for every copy.

The left,
Israel and
anti-semitism.
Pages 4, 5, 8.

STUDENTS
page 2.

MORE ON
THE PRINT
pages 2-3



IRELAND
AFTER THE
ACCORD
Centre pages

INDUSTRIAL
REPORTS
page 11.



Women
against
apartheid.
page 9

Join the Wapping picket

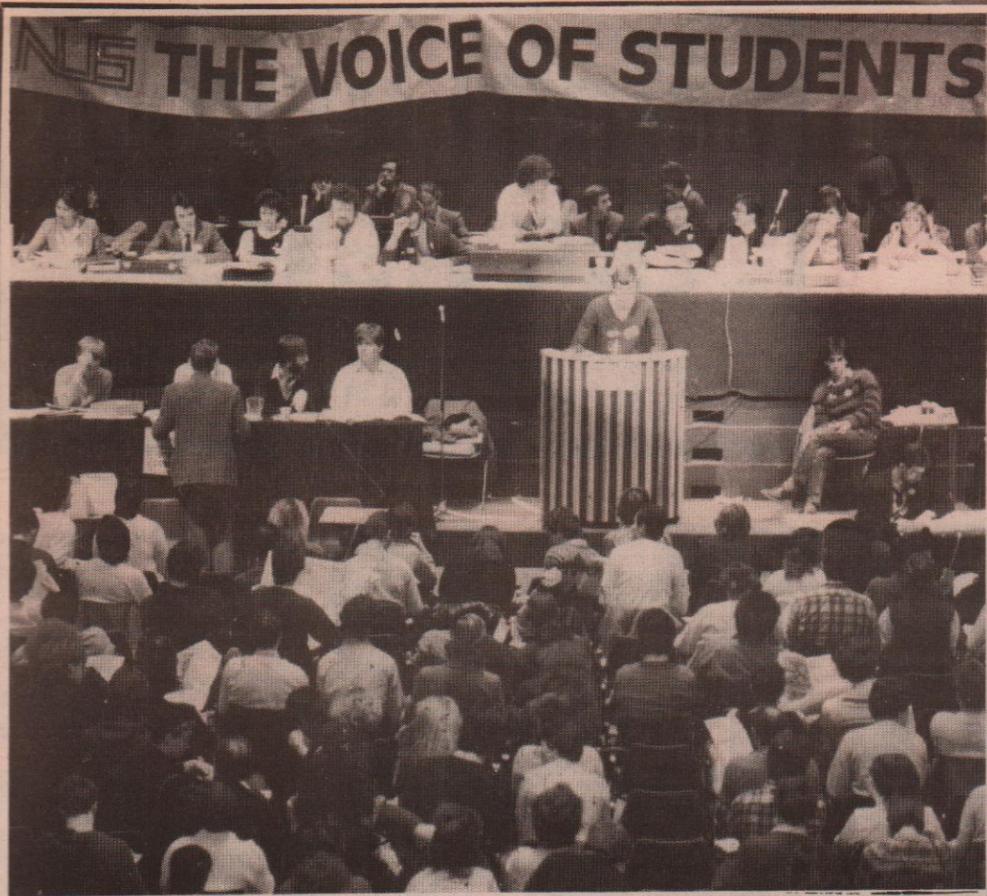


Photo: Stefano Cagnoni

Sick of the leadership

Matthew Davies reports from NUS conference

The election for NUS President was billed as a decisive moment in NUS's history. Vicky Phillips, the NOLS candidate, was pitted against Andy Whyte, candidate for the so-called Left Alliance (LA), a dated conglomerate of hacks, Liberals, independents and assorted careerists.

NUS activists are sick of the present leadership for its inability to build a real mass campaigning union, and it was this dissatisfaction that gave the LA the impression that they were the people to fill the vacuum. They were wrong. Despite the flaws of the present NOLS, and hence Democratic Left (DL), leadership of NUS, conference delegates were not coned by the 'talk left, act right' posturing of the Left Alliance. Vicky was elected by a large majority: the Left Alliance is dead.

NOLS will most probably see this as a vote of confidence in their low key, glossy mag and helium balloon style of leadership. Not so.

In the first debate of conference, on health, delegates voted for a Socialist Students in NOLS (SSiN) motion on fighting cuts in the health service, which based its strategy on an orientation to the health sector workers and their struggles as opposed to a compre-



hensive but pretty unimaginative motion from the national executive.

The policy debate on Ireland marked a significant break for NUS. Prior to the debate, NUS had no policy on Ireland; prior to that NUS had supported a peace, jobs and progress position — against a united Ireland.

The policy passed condemned the Anglo-Irish Accord; and called for the unconditional (though not immediate) withdrawal of British troops. It is clearly a position to be welcomed.

Moses Mayekiso, the secretary of Transvaal MAWU came second in the guest speaker ballot, showing that students are keen to hear representatives from South African workers in struggle. Red Ken came first, thanks to his adoring NOLS fans.

It looks likely that there will be a major debate on South Bank Polytechnic, where Jewish students have suffered some of the worst anti-semitism for some time. The Students Union passed a policy requiring a declaration by election candidates, staff and union societies condemning Zionism and placing it in the same category as racism and sexism.

Furthermore, it empowers the executive to expel students from the union if found 'guilty' of, or being sympathetic to Zionism.

The policy is the culmination of a wider anti-semitic campaign in the college which included the propagation of Louis Farrakhan's anti-semitic views. We should defend the rights of Jewish people to organise among themselves and we condemn the anti-semitic actions at South Bank.

SSiN is growing. Over 90 people attended a meeting after the first day of conference. More and more activists are finding the answer in what we say and more importantly, in what we do. The need for students to orientate themselves to the labour movement in order to build a strong, effective and campaigning national union is now recognised by a large number of activists. It is also widely recognised that NOLS, with its present Democratic Left leadership will not achieve this.

SSiN is now the left opposition within NUS. Neither the SWP nor Militant offer a serious alternative for student activists apart from a supporter's card.

Islington Council has adopted 'doublespeak' as the borough's official language, and a new campaign slogan "support trade union rights — if the unions support us".

Last month Islington Council decided to set up its own 'company' to become a managing agency for the Tories' 'Community Programme' scheme, designed to replace real jobs by slave labour. Knowing the council unions wouldn't agree to the plan, the councillors approached ASTMS — which doesn't have a single member working for the borough — and got their endorsement for the scheme to prove it had 'union backing'.

Last week councillors met the council unions' Joint Trades Union Committee — who attack-

ed the move. Leading councillors, including Islington's leader Margaret Hodge, wrung their hands and said it's been a mistake but after all ASTMS is a real union.

When the arguments got tough the councillors suddenly decided that the JTUC's main spokeswoman, Virginia Haywood, from NUPE, couldn't be at the meeting. Why? Because, though a delegate from NUPE (which has over 1,000 members working for Islington Council) Virginia only works for a 'voluntary' group directly funded by Islington.

Islington Councillors decided they "wouldn't flout trade union principles" by negotiating with someone who wasn't a direct employee!

A touch of Orwell

MURDOCH CAN BE BEATEN

From page 1.

*Start preparing now to pull out Fleet Street in solidarity with the News International strikers. That means challenging the idea that the best way to beat Murdoch is to let the other print bosses gobble up his market. Dean's and Dubbins' attempt to prevent a second front opening up in

the national newspaper industry has led to them signing away jobs, conditions and union rights at the Mirror and the Express in Fleet Street and the Daily Record in Scotland. It is time to stop the rot, the united offensive of the print bosses calls for a united response. There is no other way to defend jobs and union rights.



On the march to Wapping. Photo: Ian Swindale.

DAILY RECORD: NO VICTORY

By Stan Crooke

Back to work with their heads held high. Peace with honour. Another glorious chapter in the annals of the trade union movement.

Such as the interpretation of last week's "settlement" between the print unions and Robert Maxwell which SOGAT officials presented to the April meeting of Glasgow Trades Council, meeting the day of the agreement (2 April).

The agreement was born of the strenuous joint efforts of Brenda Dean (SOGAT General Secretary), Tony Dubbins (NGA), Harry Conroy (NUJ) and Robert Maxwell. If the agreement is the print union leaders' idea of vic-

tory, then they must believe that Germany and Japan won the 2nd World War.

In the nine-point agreement Maxwell guaranteed to reinstate all staff with his two new companies (set up on 1 April, one to publish and one to print the Daily Record and Sunday Mail) with continuity of employment and pension rights. Effectively, therefore, a return to the status quo ante.

The unions, on the other hand, agreed to the reintroduction of a five-day working week (save for certain areas of the plant where a nine-day fortnight will

operate), increased flexibility and staff transfers, and "voluntary" redundancies amounting to 25% of the existing workforce.

The unions also gave a commitment to achieving the redundancies by 31 April. If the target number is not achieved by then, there will be further discussions between Maxwell and the general secretaries of the three print unions. If such discussions do not provide a solution, then "management reserves the right to impose a solution and the unions reserve the right to take such action as they deem necessary to defend their members' interests".

There is nothing in the agreement which commits Maxwell to dropping the legal action pending against SOGAT, due to be heard in the High Court on 8 April.

The agreement also weakens the unions' basis for future conflicts with Maxwell, both in terms of the concessions to him contained in it, and also through endorsing Maxwell's creation of two new companies, which will make future solidarity action between printers and journalists illegal, despite their working for the same newspaper.

Many members of the NUJ are known to be unhappy about the deal. They would have preferred maintaining the strike action which has kept Maxwell's papers off the streets and attempting to negotiate with him in that context, rather than returning to work and then resuming negotiations.

The big danger now is of Maxwell driving a wedge between SOGAT and the NUJ. His ruse of setting up two separate companies will facilitate efforts in this direction. And hardly had the agreement been signed when Maxwell launched an attack on "greedy journalists" in a television interview.

The most appropriate words which SOGAT officials could therefore have used to describe the agreement at the Glasgow Trades Council would have been: "Peace in our time". And we all know what came after that.

500 PICKET KINNING PARK

Over 500 people turned up to the News International plant at Kinning Park in Glasgow last Saturday (5 April) to see off the 30 sacked London SOGAT members currently following in the footsteps of Gartcosh workers by walking from Glasgow to London.

(Or, more exactly, given the manner in which much of the Gartcosh "march" was carried out, following in their car tracks).

Attendance at the weekly demonstrations at the Kinning Park plant has now dwindled below 100. Without the presence of left paper-sellers, attendance would scarcely pass double figures. The poor attendance at these pickets might be not unconnected with the failure of SOGAT itself to produce any literature to date publicising the event.

An "official" printworkers' support group has now been set up by the Communist Party-dom-

inated Glasgow Trades Council. But involvement in it is through invitation only. This will prevent a re-run of the "official" miners' support committee, which had to resort to expelling unwelcome elements who managed to sneak into it through chinks in its bureaucratic armour.

Local printworkers' support groups are currently also being set up in different parts of Glasgow, to help put out publicity about the dispute and the weekly Thursday evening pickets in particular. Conflict between these and the "official" Trades Council committee is likely to emerge in the not too distant future.

With its boycott campaign of Murdoch publications and its staging of a Glasgow-London march, SOGAT is following a well-tested strategy which has led to defeat on a number of previous occasions.



Police smash up Wapping picket and make arrests. Photo: Andrew Moore.

SCABHERDING IN SCOTLAND

When challenged by SOGAT pickets, the most common response from EETPU members seeking to "justify" going into work at the News International plant in Kinning Park (Glasgow) has been, "but this is a green field site".

A local EETPU member told SO how these people had been recruited to work at this supposed "green field site".

"O'Hanlon (a local EETPU full-timer) has claimed that up to 1,000 people are working at Kinning Park. But it's highly unlikely that the real figure is anywhere near that amount, which is probably just an attempt by O'Hanlon to justify himself — a thousand jobs coming to Scotland, and so on. We calculate that O'Hanlon has recruited about 150 people.

O'Hanlon's line has been that he is doing people a good turn by getting them a job. He has also attempted to recruit left-wing EETPU members to work in there, but again probably to justify his own position. If left-wingers had taken jobs, he could use this fact to ward off criticism of his activities from the Left.

When O'Hanlon was offering people work at Kinning Park, he had the recruitment forms with him. They did not specify particular jobs and O'Hanlon was quite blatant that those picked to work there would have to do different jobs, including printers' jobs and loading up the newspapers for distribution.

He has claimed that it was all done through the Magnassina employment agency, that the agency

came to him, and that he did not know for whom the agency was recruiting people.

But this is complete fiction — O'Hanlon, it later turned out, set in on the interview panels.

Glasgow EETPU has sent a letter to the union's Executive Council asking if it is satisfied that O'Hanlon was doing this in his own time, not the union's, asking whether O'Hanlon was paid for this recruitment work, and asking whether O'Hanlon stopped this recruitment work in December. (The EETPU's official position is that he did. But he was still sitting on interview panels at the end of January).

O'Hanlon is also claiming that there is no agreement with News Scotland (Kinning Park is run by News Scotland, the Scottish subsidiary of News International) about union recognition. But News Scotland's position is that they will recognise only one union, and since it is the EETPU which has been recruiting people to work there, it is obvious that the EETPU would get the recognition.

So far, there has not been much opposition to all this from within the EETPU to date.

"Flashlight" (one of the Broad Lefts in the EETPU) organised a picket of Kinning Park at the beginning of March. There was the one picket, but then it fell flat. "Flashlight" is also planning to hold a rally in Glasgow in a week or so, hopefully with someone coming up from Fleet Street to speak. Another picket might be organised from that, but more regular meetings and work are needed than just a one-off picket.

The general attitude amongst EETPU members is that they are fairly disgusted but not all that surprised. They don't condone what's been going on, but they're used to it with the EETPU leadership."

No deal, Mr Murdoch!

Rupert Murdoch's offer to hand over News International's Gray's Inn Road printing plant to the labour movement with no compensation for those sacked, as a solution to the Wapping dispute must be rejected.

In addition, Neil Kinnock's idea, echoed by Norman Willis and not decisively ruled out by Brenda Dean, that the offer of the plant could form part of a "package" should also be rejected.

This "package" — a modified version of Murdoch's proposal, which Dean is said to be "looking into" would only add up to a few hundred jobs at Gray's Inn Road on a labour movement paper, and "compensation" for the vast bulk of the 6,000 sacked News International printers — many of whom would probably never work again and certainly not in the print. This would mean that Murdoch had got away with completely de-unionising News International.

Activists in the print unions should be aware that behind the scenes Kinnock and Willis are putt-

PICKET WAPPING

Wednesday 9 April
Assemble Tower Hill, 8.30 p.m.

Saturday 12 April
Assemble Tower Hill, 8.30 p.m.

ing the pressure on Dubbins and Dean to go for such a deal. Willis has set up a secret meeting with Murdoch to discuss "the package" and is trying to involve Clive Thornton's 'News on Sunday' consortium who have plans to launch a 'radical left of centre' Sunday paper in the autumn. And Dean now concentrates on the issue of compensation, not on reinstatement and union rights in her public speeches.

Disaster

If this 'deal' was actually pushed through, then it would be a disaster.

It would be even worse than the print union leadership's final offer to Murdoch before the strike which proposed to throw away union rights that had been established over the years in Fleet Street, like Chapel and FoC/MoC recognition.

Dean and Dubbins even promised to do away with unofficial strikes! Now the pressure is on them to drop the question of union representation and just concentrate on redundancy payments.

Rank and file printers must organise to defeat this attempt by Murdoch aided and abetted by Kinnock and Willis to end the strike and deny them a chance of ever getting their jobs back.

Murdoch is not getting everything his own way in this battle. Circulation of the Sun is down drastically and the machinery at Wapping is under pressure, so to give in now would be giving him a victory on a plate.

It would pave the way for the complete destruction of effective trade unionism in the print.

Union organisation can be defended, reinstatement can be won, but not through Dean's and Dubbins' 'new realism'. The rank and file must take control of this strike and link it to a print industry wide fight to defend jobs and union organisation.

SUPPORT GROUP MEETS

On Thursday 3 April, the second meeting of the Union of Printworkers Support Groups took place.

There were 60 delegates from groups set up since the strike began.

The USPG has been set up to link and coordinate local and national activities of rank and file based support groups.

At the meeting itself, Lawrence Jenkins, Larry Hyatt and John Brown, all print union activists, were the main platform speakers.

They attacked the Dean-Dubbins leadership, arguing that what we need now is for the rank and file of all the print unions to organise and campaign to pull out the whole of Fleet Street.

All the platform speakers drew the right conclusions but much of the meeting's time was wasted by various left groups rising to give us lecture on the state, the union bureaucracy, and the anti-union laws.

By the time the lecture was over, the important organisational and policy questions agreed and a committee elected, no time was

left over to hear reports from the different groups represented at the meeting. This was a great disappointment for a lot of activists who had come to discuss practical ways of developing and coordinating their own practical action.

The point was made that local reports should be given priority at the next meeting.

Socialist Organiser supporter and Basingstoke Trades Council printworkers support group delegate Alan Fraser pointed out the need to initiate workplace connections; for rank and file strikers to turn outwards to the labour movement for the necessary solidarity action; to develop local bulletins; and to build pickets of local newspaper wholesalers.

What is needed now is for the USPG to begin to unite all rank and file print support groups around a positive programme of action.

The USPG could, given the right direction, play a vital role in helping to develop much needed links between support groups and utilise the tremendous depth of experience gained by many activists during the miners' strike.

YOUR LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP

Barking & Dagenham
Basingstoke
Bedford
Brighton
Brent
Camden
City of London Poly
Coventry
Deptford
Ealing
Greenwich
Hackney
Harrow
Islington
Kensington

(01) 517 5519
(0256) 28460
(0234) 851844/211079
(0273) 605552
(01) 968 3952/624 1323
(01) 328 7372
(01) 247 1441
415046/310146
(01) 791 2573
(01) 574 7461
(01) 310 5451
(01) 249 8086
(01) 427 5909
(01) 281 0552/607 6383
(01) 960 5961

Lambeth
Leicester
Lesbian & Gay PSG
Lewisham
Liverpool
LSE
Middlesex Poly
Oxford
Portsmouth
Reading
Richmond & Twickenham
Southwark
Waltham Forest
Strike Graphics

(01)733 5670/670 4647
707730
(01) 737 2495
(01) 690 9841/691 2897
(01) 709 3995
(01) 226 5969
(01) 805 4250/807 6538
(0865) 724707
(0705) 819141
(0734) 861284/868614/584558
(01) 755 3237/876 6715
(01) 582 0996
(01) 555 6093
(01) 582 0996

Get organised

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

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

Name

Address

..... Phone no.

Send to Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4 NA, or phone 01-639 7965.

THE LEFT, ISRAEL

Anti-semitism and the left, part 2, by John O'Mahony

WRITING soon after World War 2 (in one of the essays collected in 'The Non-Jewish Jew') Isaac Deutscher reported that he had found rampant anti-semitism and open hostility and contempt for the Jews among British army officers guarding Jews in the displaced persons camps of Europe.

The DPs had survived Hitler and now - Britain having forbidden Jewish migration to Palestine, and the doors being closed elsewhere too - they were told that they had to stay in or return to 'their countries of origin'. For most of them that meant return to virulently anti-semitic Poland. Their wish was to get to Palestine.

Deutscher commented that it was the tragic fate of the Jews, even after the holocaust that engulfed almost six million of them, to exist still in popular consciousness as the embodiment and personification of lucre and dirty money.

Not only in popular speech, where a mean or tight person may be called (and not necessarily with conscious malice) a 'Jew', will you find the Jew used as a symbol of money and capital in their dirtiest functions. You will find that even in the writings of Karl Marx, who spoke often in the brutal language of 19th century national and racial stereotypes but was surely free of anything we would call racism.

Before Hitler sections of the socialist movement too identified the Jews with money and capital, and accepted Jews - rich, poor and destitute alike - as a representative and symbol of the things they were fighting against in capitalism.

A 'socialist', anti-capitalist, anti-semitism was a living current in or on the fringes of most European socialist and labour movements. 'Rothschild baiting' merged with popular Christian anti-semitism, which was often, as in Central Europe, quite fierce.

For example, faced with a Christian anti-semitic crusade, the Austrian Social Democrats - whose leader Victor Adler was a Jewish atheist - ostentatiously declared that they were neither

anti-nor philo-semitic. Prominent British Labour leaders supported the 1905 Aliens Act passed in Britain to keep out Russian and Polish Jews. In the published correspondence of Frederick Engels with Karl Marx's son in law Paul Lafargue you will find Lafargue expressing enthusiasm for the socialist 'potential' of the quasi-fascist and anti-semitic Boulangist movement of the late 1880s and Engels reprimanding him, affectionately but sharply.

Against this once quite important current in socialism, Engels (or was it the German socialist leader August Bebel) launched the slogan: 'Anti-semitism is the socialism of idiots'.

Today this sort of anti-semitism exists widely in the far left, slightly transformed - now the Jew in his guise of 'the Zionist' has come to symbolise racism and imperialism.

Zionism

'Zionism' - which though the precise meaning of the word is no longer clear must include most Jews - has entered the consciousness of large parts of the left as another word for the worst form of imperialism and racism. Our attitude to it should be little different from our attitude to fascism. The prevalent programme on the left for dealing with it is 'destroy Zionism', that is, destroy Israel.

Is this accurate? Is this reasonable? The Israeli state has committed and commits great wrongs against the Palestinian people. Israel could only come into existence at all by displacing the Palestinian Arabs and then by defeating the various Arab armies which tried to conquer and overrun the Jews of Palestine in 1948. In the course of the 1948 war vast numbers of Palestinian Arabs fled the Jewish-occupied territory or were driven out.

Israel wound up with more of Palestine than the UN had allotted as the Jewish portion, and the UN was already generous, giving the Jewish one-third of Palestine's people much more than half its resources. And in 1949 Israel joined together with the Arab state of Transjordan (now Jordan) to divide up what was left of the territory allotted by the UN to the Palestinian Arabs.

After 1948 the Israeli state systematically robbed Palestinian Arabs within Israel of their land. Israel is a regional sub-imperialism allied to US imper-

From 'Socialist Organiser' to Thatcher & Reagan

The Zionist connection

A POWERFUL Zionist connection runs from the so-called left of the Labour Party right into the centre of Thatcher's government in Downing Street. There is no difficulty whatsoever in proving this.

Top of the list, we have the most recent appointment of Mr Stuart Young, a director of the Jewish Chronicle, as youngest-ever chairman of the BBC, having been a governor only since 1981. He is the brother of Mr David Young, another Thatcher appointee who is chairman of the Manpower Services Commission.

This is the key organisation which the Tories are transforming into a 'corporate front', behind which they seek to mobilise Jewish youth from 14 years onwards into a 'slave' labour force to break trade union wages, safety procedures and working conditions. Thatcher has rolled out these appointments with managerial arrogance while the Labour Party and TUC chiefs have accepted them without a murmur of protest. News Line, March 28, 1983.

The Tories know they can rely totally on Zionist imperialism to provide the most hated reinforcements in order to transform the situation at a later date into a pro-fascist, anti-Semitic project against all the Jews in general.

Zionism made it possible for a number of rich Jews to leave Nazi Germany with the agreement of the Führer provided they agreed to become Zionists. The Tories know too they have a powerful anti-Semitic trump card on their sleeve, to replay once again as the most reactionary manifestation of racism, which is anti-Semitism.

From the support and advance publicity which the Jewish Chronicle gave the BBC's 'Money Programme' on March 20, the reactionary Zionist link was clear for all to see. But it also stretches through Downing Street channels right into the White House and President Reagan.

The latest Reagan military provocation against Libya was in March 1983, in its sharpest form the neo-reactionaries in the Tory government defended the Libyan regime of Gaddafi against US imperialism as a matter of principle, or so they

This morning...

The movement must fight back as one

KEN LIVINGSTONE, leader of the Greater London Council, and one of the most vocal Labour MPs, said...

An attack on the party

Some people are attacking the Labour Party...

Readers reply to the BBC witch-hunt on 'The Money Programme'

An attempt to silence the left

Two objectives in the slander

DAVID KEENE, editor of the Socialist Organiser, said...

What you can do

CALL MARCH 28 ON THE BBC 'Money Programme'...

Bitter about lies

I read the article in the Socialist Organiser...

It is a mistake to dismiss the blatant anti-semitism of Gerry Healy's WRP as just the ravings of a crazy sect (see last week's SO). This page from the Newline of 9 April 1983 shows that the then GLC leader and present-day Kinnockite Ken Livingstone sang in chorus with Healy's paranoid denunciations.

ialism. Since the 1967 war Israel has occupied the West Bank and Gaza, acting as a brutal colonial power there. Israel recently invaded Lebanon.

Israel

There is much for socialists to criticise and condemn in Israel, and indeed most far left socialists are outspoken in their criticism and condemnation.

There is also much to condemn in all the other states of the Middle East, such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, etc. Both Iran and Iraq continue to wage barbaric war on the Kurdish nation. Jordan in 1970 and Syria in 1976 subjected the Palestinian Arabs under their rule to mass slaughter. The Christian Arabs in Lebanon have done likewise. In addition much of the Arab world which

surrounds Israel is in the grip of a resurgent Islamic fundamentalism which threatens to throw its society and culture back to the Middle Ages. The religious barbarians who rule Iran leave socialist observers little room for pretence about the consequences of resurgent Islam when it has the whip hand.

Yet socialists - or at any rate most 'orthodox' Trotskyists - are surprisingly reluctant even to fundamentally criticise the Islamic states and brand them as reactionary. Some of them - and not only Healy's WRP - sometimes accept some of their bourgeoisies into 'our class camp'. Much of Ernest Mandel's 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' continues to see something 'progressive' in Khomeini's Islamic revolution. Where the Iranian oppression of the Kurds is objected to, for example, the press of the section of the USFI led by the US SWP talks about 'errors' and 'mistakes' of the revolutionary regime.

The contrast with the left's attitude to Israel could not be sharper. It is, as we shall see, often wrapped up in seemingly reasonable proposals like creating a secular democratic state in Palestine, but, put starkly, the far left's programme for Palestine is that 'Israel must be destroyed'.

Now this is a unique programme: the destruction of a state and the radical alteration of the population of that state's core area (the pre-1967 Israeli borders). From this everything else follows.

S.Africa

The programme is made to appear not unique by identifying Israel with South Africa. But that is an utterly false comparison of an organic society, made up of all classes and not essentially dependent on exploiting a submerged population, on one side, and on the other a society in which the white population are an exploiting caste dependent for what they have on the submergence and helotry of a numerically much bigger black population.

Whatever similarity in political-military techniques there may be between South Africa and Israel they are radically different societies. Israel was given its character by the Zionists' resolute refusal to exploit Arab labour and their drive instead to replace it. Whatever one thinks of the left Zionist colonists' 'Jewish labour only' policy it was the opposite of that mass exploitation on which modern South Africa was built. The exploitation of Arab labour from the occupied territories since 1967 has not fundamentally altered the character of Israel in this

respect. But, whatever about the comparison with South Africa, don't the crimes of Israel brand it as something specially abhorrent and therefore justify the programme of destroying the Zionist state? Doesn't the fate of the dispossessed Palestinian Arabs make any other programme than the destruction of the Jewish state inadequate if justice is to be done?

Chauvinism

The proper socialist answer is no. To answer yes is to take up the goals of Arab nationalism and chauvinism, but most of the left does answer yes. This is the dominant, all-shaping fact on the far left: that the left supports the destruction of the state of Israel - not merely its defeat in this or that battle where such defeat might be desirable on the issues, but the destruction of the core pre-1967 Jewish area as a territory where the Palestinian Jews can congregate as a compact national mass.

From that everything else follows. It only takes a twist of Gerry Healy's paranoia or the touch of the petrodollar to bring up the anti-semitic logic.

Uniquely in the whole world; the left thinks that in the Israeli Jews it confronts a 'bad nation' which cannot be reformed or modified, not even by its own proletariat - unless they abandon their national identity and the national territory where most of them were born - and which must be destroyed. In this unique case, unlike all the others created by the complicated and immensely tragic events of the last 40, 60, or even 80 years (and for what people were those years more tragic than for the Jews?) the left takes its stand on a historical-revisionist, roll-history-backwards position. The position is inseparable from Arab revanchism and Arab chauvinism.

In part one of this article I proved that Gerry Healy's WRP was rabidly anti-semitic. I asserted that the basic reason for this - to which Healy added paranoia and the mercenary desire to earn Arab petrodollars - was the WRP's support for the destruction of the Jewish state of Israel by its Arab neighbour states, a position which the Healyite WRP and the present one share with much of the left.

It follows, therefore, that much of the left is - though repudiating the paranoid ravings of a Gerry Healy - implicitly anti-semitic. I will now substantiate and justify what I said about the broader 'Marxist' and 'Trotskyist' left.



Unemployed Jewish workers in Tel Aviv. A socialist programme for Palestine can hope to unite Jewish and Arab workers on a programme of allowing the Palestinian Arabs their own state, giving self-determination to the Arabs in those areas of Israel where they are a majority, and combatting chauvinism on both sides - but it can never unite them on a programme of dissolving the Israeli-Jewish nation.

AND ANTI-SEMITISM

Israeli chauvinism once rejected, the Middle East reality allows of only two possible or imaginable solutions to the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine.

Either drive the Jews out; or accept that a Jewish nation has, despite the understandable Arab resistance, come into existence, and must be accepted as having rights, in the first place the right to exist as a nation in Palestine.

The programme of driving out the Jews means continuing to try to do what much of the Arab feudalists, bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and working class have been united in trying to do for at least five decades. The latter option must mean compromise over the disputed territory, recompense for the Palestinian Arabs, and a comprehensive peace in which Israel's right to exist with agreed borders (not necessarily the present ones) is not challenged militarily.

Third

At a later stage in the peaceful development of the region the integration of the Jewish state into a Middle East federation would be posed. Exclusivism would break down as the barriers between the formerly warring nations have partly broken down in Europe over the last four decades.

It seems to me to be no part of a socialist solution to national conflicts like that of the Jews and Arabs in Palestine to advocate the destruction of one of the warring nations. The socialist programme in such a situation is for compromise, compensation, reconciliation.

But isn't there a third alternative — the secular democratic state? No, there isn't, because — as we shall see — it is unrealisable in reality and the slogan functions in politics as a propaganda auxiliary for the 'drive out the Jews' position.

Of course the idea of solving the terrible national conflict by simply enfolding, intermeshing and merging, as equal citizens, the hostile nations who compete for the disputed Palestinian territory is an attractive one, and all the more seductive because there is no other solution that even appears to do justice to both sides.

But it is nonsense. The idea that you could integrate any other two nations — say France and Germany — in the territory occupied by one of them would be dismissed as ludicrous, even given the fading in the last decades of much of their old animosity. In Palestine the proposal for a secular democratic state amounts to a proposal to so enfold two nations, peoples who have related to each other with the most bitter and merciless war for half a century and more. As a practical proposal it is a utopian absurdity. National identities and conflicts will not be overcome or superseded historically in anything like that way.

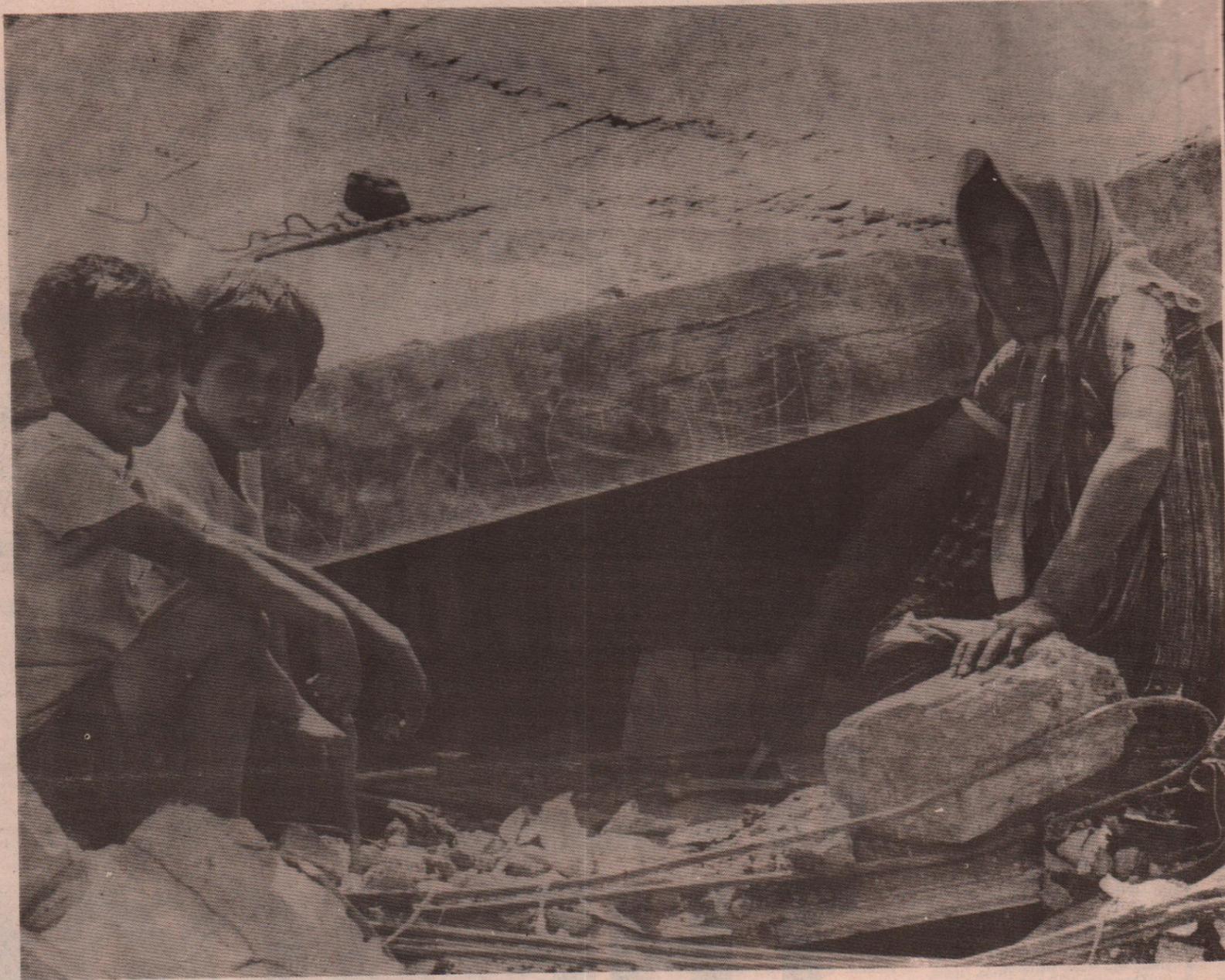
Road

More than that. It is inconceivable that the Jews would agree to dismantle their state in return for a promise of equal citizenship. So the road to the secular democratic state lies inescapably through war and full-scale conquest of the Jews — after which the victorious armies (of Iraq, Syria, Iran?) will gallantly establish and protect the democratic rights of the Jews as individuals (rights their own citizens do not have now) in a Palestinian Arab state.

In reality such a conquest would be resisted to the death by the Jews, and the idea of such a conquest is in practice inseparable from a proposal to drive out the Jews or massacre them.

The secular democratic state is far more attractive and internationally 'saleable' than the programme of 'driving the Jews into the sea' that Yasser Arafat's predecessor Ahmed Shukhairi used to advocate in the 1960s. For many people the 'secular democratic state' slogan also represents a different intention and aspiration. But in practice it comes down to the same thing. It cannot but come down to the same thing, because it cannot be done by agreement. It differs essentially in being a more useful propaganda tool.

So the 'secular democratic state' is in fact a proposal to destroy the existing Jewish nation and at best to grant equal citizenship rights to those Jews who survived being conquered and



THE SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC STATE

wanted to remain in an Arab state.

But — so many say — if the Jews reject this proposal of equal citizenship in a secular democratic state, then they are demanding to retain intolerable privileges and therefore they deserve what they will get. The choice will be theirs, and the responsibility for what happens theirs.

But this is a-historical moralism; moreover it takes as its premise, as something to be taken for granted and beyond discussion, a stark denial of any national rights for the Jews in Palestine. It demands of them that they do what no other nation has ever done, and what no people extant will ever do — submit to the forced dissolution of their own national community and surrender the protection of their own state.

For the Jews this would involve additionally putting themselves into the hands of those they have been fighting for 40 years and more — people in whose own states minorities like the Kurds (or Palestinian Arabs) are habitually repressed and routinely butchered. Yet if one questions the sense of proposing to the Jews that they agree to secular-democratic-state individual citizenship status when in fact none of the Arab states are fully secular or at all democratic, then no doubt that is anti-Arab racism.

That, I think, is a fair account of the reasoning one finds on much of the 'Marxist' left. It is a series of moralistic demands cut loose from any consideration of how the world works, and addressed as an unique ultimatum to the Palestinian Jews — a series of demands that it would be impossible for serious people to make without the prior unquestionable assumption that the Jewish nation does not have the

right to exist — still less the right to defend itself.

In short, in its superficially attractive 'up-front' version the idea of a secular democratic state is simply a delusion. The slogan could not ever help deliver the solution it seems to promise — conciliation and equality of Jews and Arabs in a common state.

It could not unless the way politics and the relationships between peoples 'work' everywhere else in the world could somehow be replaced in Palestine — 40 years after the Israeli war of independence — by a different set of ways of functioning.

Agreement

A common democratic state could only be realised by agreement. So to believe that the 'secular democratic state' could be realised, you have to believe that the Jews can be persuaded that the way things are between conflicting peoples and interests throughout the rest of the world can be superseded and dispensed with in Palestine. You have to believe it possible to persuade people who know themselves surrounded and who are motivated in part in their notorious ruthlessness by the living memory of what happened to them when they were disarmed and helpless minorities in other states to surrender all their defences, first, as an act of faith in this new way of doing things. And this new way would at best make them one more minority in the Arab world, and a minority that had agreed to surrender national rights of the sort that the Kurds have spent decades fighting to establish.

The 'secular democratic state' is either disingenuous or it is absurd. And

it is worse.

If you take it at its face value the 'secular democratic state' idea is an attractive utopian proposal. But we have seen that it cannot be taken at its face value. It is a political ultimatum behind which is posed a fearsome 'or else'. Immediately it is refused by Israel and the 'Zionists' it translates into a moralistic-political denunciation of those who refuse. They are 'exposed'. That 'exposure' and denunciation then become a warrant for the military destruction of the Israeli state, the subjugation and if necessary killing of the citizens of Israel, and the forcible removal from them of national rights.

What happens if the Israeli Jews don't accept the 'secular democratic state' formula and fight? Conquer them and remove from them all powers of resistance, or of self-defence. What if they don't trust a promise that the conqueror will give them equal personal citizenship and absolve and protect them from the charge of being or having been agents or spies for the 'Great Satan' US imperialism, or of 'Zionist imperialism' — why, that's proof beyond dispute that they are unreasonable in rejecting 'secular democratic state' citizenship and deserve what they get.

1948 again

What they would get would be expulsion or the right to emigrate. It is to be 1948 again, and worse — only this time the 'right' people do the uprooting and expelling.

The raising of the 'utopian' secular democratic state demand as the opening political/ideological gambit produces a political and moral opiate for the

left about what must inevitably follow from and is implied in the proposal to destroy the Jewish state and deprive the Palestinian Jews of national rights. Under the influence of this opiate, the most horrendous things are then proposed to be done to the Jews of Palestine — things no socialist would advocate or tolerate for any comparable grouping.

It is surrender and dissolve, or resist and deserve to be forcibly dissolved.

So the secular democratic state is not an alternative to driving the Jews out; it is treacherously barbed facet of that programme to drive the Jews out or reduce them to a vastly depleted territorial minority.

What might possibly be an attractive idea, and is certainly in the minds of many of its advocates a respectable ideal, has to be judged by how it fits into the whole picture, and by what function it performs in the mechanics and ideological swordplay of Middle East politics.

We have seen what role it does play. In the circumstances it could play no other role. Those who seek to avoid the real choice and try to settle for the unrealisable ideal wind up nevertheless tied to the war chariot of Arab chauvinism.

They flee from the real choices into a fantasy, and wind up nevertheless having a choice imposed on them by the logic of circumstances.

All the 'secular democratic state' evasion does it act as camouflage for the chauvinist position and, for the left, introduce a deep measure of mystification, confusion and sometimes hysteria.

Part 3 on page 8.

SINCE THE signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement at Hillsborough Castle on 11 November 1985 a radically new situation has developed in Northern Ireland.

In response to the assumption by the Dublin government of a share of the political (though not the executive) responsibility for running the Six Counties, the majority Protestant community is now alienated from the British government.

A sizeable part – perhaps the majority – of that community says it has withdrawn its consent to be governed and will not accept what it insists on describing as joint Dublin/London rule in Northern Ireland.

The Orange opposition to the Anglo-Irish agreement developed from the mass rally of over 100,000 people in Belfast immediately after the agreement was signed to the armed clashes between Orange paramilitaries and the RUC on 3 March in less than four months. In that same period the Orange politicians have exhausted all their legal resources and now a sizeable section of the Orange population is moving headlong towards armed resistance to 'Dublin rule' – which in practice means to British rule, since Britain has exclusive control of the executive in Northern Ireland.

First the Orange parliamentarians took the Anglo-Irish agreement to the High Court alleging it was illegal. The High Court said it was legal.

Then they took it to the electorate in 15 by-elections on 23 January 1986. Predictably the Orange electorate condemned the deal – but the Orange MPs are a feeble minority in a House of Commons that voted overwhelmingly for the Anglo-Irish agreement. Mrs Thatcher said the Orange election could not decide.

The Orange Northern Ireland majority are in a hopeless minority within the UK, like the Catholics are within the Six Counties. They either accept majority rule, on an issue they consider fundamental to their identity, or they revolt against that majority rule (as the Catholics did) in the name of something they hold higher than that majority.

The Orange politicians started a series of local government protests all across the province in which Orange-controlled local councils refused to make rates, as the first step in a civil disobedience campaign. The Northern Ireland Office went ahead and made the rates.

Then the Orangeists organised the one-day general strike on 3 March. Before it was over the RUC – which is over 90% Protestant and has long deservedly been denounced as a sectarian police force – had come under fire in the Orange heartland of the Shankill Road.

None of the legal weapons of the Orangeists have proved of any avail. The British and Dublin governments say that the Anglo-Irish agreement holds. The result has been a greatly accelerated deterioration of relations between Britain and at least a sizeable section of the Orange population.

A mass campaign of intimidation and coercion of the RUC has been under way for over a month. The homes of over 100 RUC have been attacked, some firebombed. At Portadown on 31 March British troops were used for the first time since 1969 against Protestants and the RUC fired over 100 plastic bullets at Protestants – one of whom is expected to die from a blow to the head.

The parliamentary political leaders are being visibly by-passed. At the end of February Ian Paisley and James Molyneux agreed with Margaret Thatcher to start talks on restoring Belfast government, only to be forced by their supporters immediately to repudiate their agreement and to back the 3 March strikes.

The Orange paramilitary forces are recruiting and rebuilding their organisations rapidly. Andy Tyrre now talks openly about the UDA perhaps having to develop IRA-style operations in the Six Counties and also in raids into the 26 Counties.

Thus in a brief period Northern Ireland has again been stirred up and the spectre of sectarian civil war – laid since the mid-'70s – is again abroad in Northern Ireland.

1. What is the Anglo-Irish agreement?

The Anglo-Irish agreement sets up an intergovernmental conference – backed up by a permanent secretariat stationed in Belfast – between the London and Dublin governments which will jointly run Northern Ireland. The executive



IRELAND AFTER THE ACCORD

power stays exclusively in British hands, but the political control of the executive is normally to reside in the intergovernmental conference.

The Anglo-Irish agreement is an international treaty registered with the UN, according to which the British government obligates itself to run Northern Ireland in agreement with the 26 County government and when disagreements emerge earnestly to seek agreement and a common policy.

Britain declared itself to have no opposition to a united Ireland if the Six County majority wanted it, and promised to legislate for a united Ireland if a Six County majority decided for it; the 26 County government promised to respect the separateness of the 6 Counties so long as a majority there wanted to be separate.

This is power-sharing between Dublin and London. Because it proved impossible to establish power-sharing between Northern Ireland political forces in Belfast, the two governments have established a radically new framework over their heads.

If some form of mutually acceptable power-sharing in Belfast is agreed, then most of the powers of the intergovernmental conference will devolve to the Belfast government.

The agreement contrasts with the Sunningdale agreement of 1973 in not being dependent on any local agreement. Sunningdale started with agreement for power-sharing in Belfast, and proposed to build upwards on this towards a Council of Ireland. Hillsborough starts with a Council of Britain and Ireland and wants to build downwards. The Sunningdale agreement was vulnerable to the Orange general strike of 1974 because that strike could bring down the power-sharing executive. No local action in Northern Ireland can bring down Hillsborough, if the nerves of the London and Dublin governments hold.

Clashes between the Northern Ireland Protestants and the British administration in the Six Counties are becoming more and more violent. What are the prospects? What is the socialist answer? John O'Mahony examines these questions in a discussion article written in preparation for Socialist Organiser's AGM later this month.

The Orangeists are – from their own point of view – quite right that the Anglo-Irish agreement marks a big new involvement of the 26 Counties in the administration of Northern Ireland.

2. Why the Hillsborough agreement

Northern Ireland broke down as a political entity in August 1969. Catholic revolt against their second-class citizenship and a Protestant backlash against the Catholics led to the British Army being put on the streets to stop sectarian fighting (after over 500 Catholic families had been burned out in Belfast).

That Northern Ireland had indeed broken down was recognised by Britain in March 1972 when the IRA military campaign forced Britain to abolish the Protestant-controlled Belfast home-rule

government. Britain attempted radically to restructure Northern Ireland politics by replacing majority – Protestant – rule with institutionalised power-sharing.

It won the majority of Catholics to support the power-sharing, but only a minority of Protestants. When an executive based on the Catholic majority and a Protestant minority was nevertheless set up, a powerful Orange general strike brought it down in May 1974.

After that British direct rule became semi-permanent and the chief task Britain set itself was to defeat the insurgent Catholic IRA. But the IRA remained in the field and after ten Republicans died on hunger strike in 1981 the Republican movement achieved a degree of Catholic political support that convinced the rulers of London and Dublin that things were getting out of their control.

The Southern Irish nationalist parties

and the Six County constitutional nationalist party, the SDLP – which had been the mainstay of the power-sharing experiment in 1974 – spent a year in the 'New Ireland Forum' discussing constitutional rearrangements in Ireland that would end the IRA's revolt and bring about reconciliation between Catholics and Protestant.

They prepared a number of possible options, all of which were immediately rejected by Mrs Thatcher. One of the options was joint rule in the Six Counties by Dublin and London, London representing the Protestants and Dublin the Catholics. That was rejected in 1984 by Mrs Thatcher.

But after over a year of negotiations, what the London and Dublin governments came up with was a variant of power-sharing – political power-sharing while the executive power remained in British hands. As well as that, it is proposed to create a strong Dublin Westminster joint parliamentary committee, thus drawing Britain and the 26 Counties closer together than they have been since Southern Ireland seceded from the UK in 1922. The Anglo-Irish agreement is thus a framework within which British/Irish collaboration can evolve and develop on a closer level than for 65 years – if it holds.

3. The Anglo-Irish agreement and a united Ireland

Most of the left, following the Republicans, denounces the Anglo-Irish deal for 'copper-fastening' partition. But this is false. Every 26 County government since 1922 has in fact recognised partition, and some have declared that there can be no united Ireland without the consent of a sizeable section of the Six County Protestants.

The Anglo-Irish deal would only copper-fasten partition if there was some way of removing partition that the deal hinders. There is no way to remove parti-

TER

tion unless the Northern Ireland majority wants it. To try to conquer the Protestants would not bring Irish unity. Almost certainly it would lead to sectarian civil war and bloody repartition. In fact the alternative to the Anglo Irish agreement was the status quo - i.e. deepening integration with the UK under prolonged direct rule.

If the Anglo-Irish agreement works against a united Ireland, it will be by way of the embitterment it has caused.

4. Socialists and the Anglo-Irish deal

Anything that would bring about reconciliation between the two communities in Northern Ireland, and thus create the preconditions for working class unity, should be welcomed by socialists. But the Anglo-Irish agreement does nothing of the sort.

While alienating the Protestants more profoundly than they have ever been alienated from Britain, it gives little to the Catholics other than the participation of the Dublin government as their champion. It is a profoundly undemocratic agreement, made over the heads of all the people in the Six Counties and resulting in structures that fall a great deal short of democracy.

The Anglo-Irish agreement does not solve the problem that has to be solved in Ireland; it exacerbates and inflames it.

The basic problem is that there is a natural Irish minority - the Protestants - which according to democratic norms would have every right to special treatment as a minority by way of having autonomy in its own heartland areas. But Ireland as a whole was ruled by Britain, and the minority - partly for reasons for protecting itself against the Irish majority - allied with a powerful section of the British ruling class against the Irish majority. As a result of that alliance Ireland was partitioned, with the Protestants having their own home-rule



Protestant bigots. Photo: Derek Speirs, IFL.

state within which there was a Catholic minority bigger as a proportion of the Protestant state's population than the Protestants of all Ireland would have been in a united Ireland.

The Catholic minority in the North was some 35%, and they were in the majority in a sizeable part of the Six Counties - so they were felt to be a permanent threat to the Protestant majority. They were treated as second-class citizens, discriminated against and rigorously excluded from any say in ruling the Six Counties, even in local government where they were the local majority (e.g. Derry).

They suffered for decades and then revolted with a strength and determination that the British government has found impossible to quell.

The problem is to find a democratic framework which:

a) takes account of the legitimate concerns of the two communities in Northern Ireland, of the wish of the Protestants not to be incorporated as an oppressed minority in a Catholic-majority Ireland as well as the wish of the Six County Catholics not to be an artificial minority in the Six County state;

and b) allows for reconciliation and the development of normal class politics

in Ireland.

That framework can only be a federal united Ireland - in which the minority areas will have autonomy - combined with the closest link between Ireland and Britain acceptable to the Irish majority.

The fundamental criticism of the Anglo-Irish agreement from this point of view is that though it provokes the Orangeists about as much as a united Ireland would, it does not move any way towards providing a workable democratic framework.

The majority of the Orange population want a restoration of Orange majority rule. They will resist anything short of that and anything other than it. There would be resistance to any attempt to create a democratic federal structure. But resistance to structures that actually do take account of Orange interests could eventually dissipate. By contrast the Anglo-Irish agreement does not offer structures within which the Orangeists can be reconciled.

It puts them forever under the joint ultimate control of Britain and Britain's intergovernmental conference partner, the Fenian government which they believe schemes and plots endlessly to take out the Six Counties and incorporate its people as a helpless minority in the Catholic state.

5. Prospects

The Orangeists seemed almost unanimous in their opposition to the Anglo-Irish agreement. Their unity has begun to shatter in face of the intransigence of Thatcher.

As a section of the Orangeists go all the way to outright illegality, the process of differentiation within the Orange ranks will accelerate. Already the Official Unionist Party leader James Molyneux has said 'Never again' after the violence of the 3 March strike, and the OUP officially kept away from the illegal demonstration at Portadown on 31 March.

A two-way separation will occur. A section of the Orange politicians will probably try to reach accommodation with Britain, as Paisley and Molyneux did in late February. Others will go into militarist opposition. The creation of a 'Protestant IRA' is most likely - an organisation striking at the South.

The majority of Catholics have been shown in opinion polls to favour the Hillsborough agreement, and the SDLP has been boosted at the expense of Sinn Fein. But the Catholics have in practical terms gained little, and the Orange backlash now threatens them with the sort of campaign of sectarian assassinations that swept across Northern Ireland between 1972 and 1976. The consequence of the Orange backlash in the Catholic community is that the IRA will be boosted as a defensive force.

In the months ahead the prospect is for a series of fierce clashes between the police and the Army and the Orange militants. The RUC will probably be eroded by the campaign against them in the Orange community (though this may provoke a revulsion which will be part of the process of polarisation in the Protestant community). In any case the RUC could hardly cope with the level of conflict that looms in the marching season ahead.

Therefore the British Army will be drawn more and more into 'police' work against the Protestants. The experience in 1969 and after when the Army did police work in the Catholic areas where the RUC had ceased to be acceptable suggests that this will further poison the already very bitter relations between the British government and the Protestant community.

The chances that Britain, caught between the two communities, will just pull out, are probably very small. The consequences, including the likely spread of Catholic/Protestant conflict to British cities like Glasgow, are far too grave for any British withdrawal in response to the new situation. Britain will try to tough it out.

6. The Republicans

If any benefit to the Catholics can be claimed from the Anglo-Irish agreement, then to the Republicans' military campaign belongs the credit.

The tragedy is that the cost of that campaign in terms of the deepening of the ancient gulf between the two communities is immense - and it has not yet been paid.

The revolt of the Catholics was a just revolt, its channelling into this sort of military campaign the product of the domination of a particular political tradition. Today the dilemma of the IRA lies in this, that if the military campaign were to stop then the pressure for change would stop; and if it goes on now then it is the pyromaniacal activity of pouring petrol on a fire that may anyway be uncontrollable.

The temptation to 'detonate the Protestants' and use them against Thatcher must be great. After all it was the Protestants who wrecked power-sharing in 1974. But no good can come of it.

Out of the sectarian civil war that is a clear possibility in this situation can come neither a united, nor a democratic, and still less a socialist Ireland.

7. Civil war

The fundamental threat in Northern Ireland is of sectarian civil war - which would lead to a bloody repartition, complete and fix the division in the Irish people for perpetuity, and probably boost clericalist reaction on both sides of the new border. Compared with that, the carnival of reaction which accompanied the 1920 partition would seem mild and moderate.

One consequence of the vicarious Irish nationalism so widespread on what might be called the organisationally inchoate but ideologically Mandeliste left is that the danger of sectarian civil war is not properly appreciated. It filters through the ideological spectacles as 'the socialist revolution', 'the permanent revolution', or as a little local difficulty which the good guys would win.

We must fight this irresponsible and light-minded attitude. In the period ahead it will otherwise isolate the left from serious and sober-minded labour movement militants who will rightly recoil from the prospect of sectarian civil war.

8. The left

Most of the so-called Marxist left is politically subservient to Sinn Fein. They relate to Ireland through romantic populist spectacles which allow them to avoid seeing the horrifying spectre of communal civil war that looms behind events there.

In their reaction to the Anglo-Irish agreement most of the left have surpassed themselves, focusing on the alleged surrender of Irish sovereignty and failing almost entirely to see anything new. The writers and readers of publications like Socialist Action and Labour and Ireland must be mightily surprised by the recent events in Northern Ireland.

On Ireland the left needs urgently to rearm itself with working-class Marxist politics.

9. Troops out

The single isolated slogan Troops Out has come to be the mark of a sizeable part of the left in the last decade. It has become something of a fetish, isolated from the rest of a socialist or democratic programme on Ireland.

We are for Irish self-determination, therefore for troops out. But SO has repeatedly criticised the slogan-mongering use of troops out as if it were a self-sufficient programme. Right now troops out without a political settlement means - for a certainty - sectarian civil war and repartition. It means not self-determination of the Irish people as a whole, but the dog-eat-dog destruction of any chance of unity of the Irish people as a whole.

Troops out is not a political programme, but only part of one - and it can be part of more than one programme. Plain troops out tomorrow means sectarian civil war - troops out with a political settlement means something radically different.

We are in favour of British withdrawal but as part of a political solution which actually allows Irish self-determination; and that can only mean a solution which leads to some form of federal Ireland within which Protestants and Catholics will not, immediately Britain goes, have to set about determining how they relate to each other by sectarian civil war, perhaps even on the pattern of Lebanon.

We do not say 'we support troops out only after a federal Ireland has been agreed'; we say 'a serious movement for troops out among the Irish working class, let alone the British working class, can only be built as part of a programme for actually realising Irish self-determination'. In a sense this is conditional support for British withdrawal - but withdrawal is not a fetish. And it does not mean that we take any responsibility for the British troops. They buttress an untenable status quo and they serve British governments - Labour and Tory alike - which over the last 17 years (and now again with the Anglo-Irish agreement) could not have acted very differently if they had been deliberately trying to make sectarian civil war inevitable.

As the Orange mobilisation develops, sections of the soft left will probably start supporting British troops against the Orangeists or advocating their use. We do not back the Orange bigots, but we do not back the troops either. We remain the party of irreconcilable opposition.

10. The Catholics

The Northern Ireland Catholics remain the chief victims of partition. They are likely now to be victims of reactivated Orange murder gangs. In the event of sectarian civil war they will be the most vulnerable, especially in Belfast.

While we advocate a democratic solution to the Protestant/Catholic conflict, and reconciliation and working-class unity as a basic immediate policy for Northern Ireland, in face of sectarian conflict we must stand with and defend the Catholics.

11. Socialism

The unspeakably bitter spectacle of the workers who live in the run-down Shankill area of Belfast in murderous conflict with their Catholic working-class neighbours in the run-down Falls area sums up what capitalism, British rule, and the activities of the Irish bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians have done to Ireland.

The massive 25% unemployment rate among people who often lack the means of life above the bare necessities is a further indictment of that system.

The Irish working class, Protestant and Catholic alike, needs socialism - that the workers should join together and take power from the capitalists.

We do not counterpose future socialism to the just struggle of the Catholics now, nor pretend that a divided Irish working class can miraculously make a sudden leap from the terrible reality of today to socialism.

But we need socialism, and a movement that fights for socialism as well as for a democratic solution to the Catholic/Protestant conflict.

By John O'Mahony

One way of putting the modern Trotskyist groups and their attitude to Israel into some sort of historical perspective is to enquire what Trotsky's opinions were or most likely would have been.

Of course Leon Trotsky died 8 years before the state of Israel was declared and consolidated. But he had watched the development of the Zionist project and commented on it over four decades.

Trotsky was a Ukrainian Jew whose life (he was born in October 1879) happened almost exactly to span the period from the beginning of systematic pogroms in Russia - 1881 - to the very eve of the holocaust, whose preparations he witnessed and understood. He had seen the migration of millions of Jews, stirred up by the Russian pogroms after 1881 to Western Europe and to the USA. He had seen the growth of Jewish self-awareness in Europe in the later 19th and early 20th centuries.

Ghetto

He had taken part as an international socialist in the debates among left-wing Jews in the Tsarist Empire between Zionists and assimilationists. He attended Zionist Congresses as a journalistic observer.

He was always an opponent of the Zionist movement that created Israel. Close to the very end of his life he warned that Palestine could turn out to be a giant ghetto in which the Jews who had fled there might be trapped and massacred. Yet it is plain from the writings in a small collection published by Pathfinder Press, 'Leon Trotsky and the Jewish Question' that the experience of anti-semitism in the 20th century, not only in Nazi Germany and Poland but also in the USSR under Stalin, had radically changed Trotsky's views.

At the end of his life he believed that the persecution of the Jews, and the effect of that persecution on the consciousness of the Jewish people, had made the creation of some sort of Jewish state an inescapable necessity. He did not support the Palestine programme of the Zionists, or anyway not as conceived by them. But - his train of thought is clear - he was for a Jewish state nonetheless.

In a January 1937 interview with journalists of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and Der Weg, a Jewish paper published in Mexico, Trotsky explained: "During my youth I rather leaned toward the prognosis that the Jews of different countries would be assimilated and that the Jewish question would thus disappear in a quasi-automatic fashion.

The historical development of the last quarter of a century has not confirmed this perspective. Decaying capitalism has everywhere swung over to an exacerbated nationalism, one part of which is anti-Semitism. The Jewish question has loomed largest in the most highly developed capitalist country of Europe, in Germany.

On the other hand the Jews of different countries have created their press and developed the Yiddish language as an instrument adapted to modern culture. One must therefore reckon with the fact that the Jewish nation will maintain itself for an entire epoch to come.

Now the nation cannot normally exist without a common territory. Zionism springs from this very idea. But the facts of every passing day demonstrate to us that Zionism is incapable of resolving the Jewish question. The conflict between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine acquires a more and more tragic and more and more menacing character.

I do not at all believe that the Jewish question can be resolved within the framework of rotting capitalism and under the control of British imperialism.

And how, you ask me, can socialism solve this question? On this point I can but offer hypotheses.

Once socialism has become master of our planet or at least of its most important sections, it will have unimaginable resources in all domains. Human history has witnessed the epoch of great migrations on the basis of barbarism. Socialism will open the possibility of great migrations on the basis of the most developed technique and culture.

It goes without saying that what is here involved is not compulsory displacements, that is, the creation of new ghettos for certain nationalities, but displacements freely consented to, or rather demanded by certain nationalities or parts of nationalities.

The dispersed Jews who would want to be reassembled in the same community will find a sufficiently extensive and rich spot under the sun.



TROTSKY ON THE JEWISH QUESTION

The same possibility will be opened for the Arabs, as for all other scattered nations.

National topography will become a part of the planned economy. This is the grand historical perspective that I envisage. To work for international socialism means also to work for the solution of the Jewish question."

He went on in that interview to discuss anti-semitism in the USSR, which had been used against the Trotskyists within the degenerating Bolshevik Party as early as the mid '20s. That experience must surely have been a big factor in the development of Trotsky's thinking on the Jewish question.

Four years earlier, in 1932-3, Trotsky had discussed the 'Jewish problem' with 'Class Struggle', an American publication. He was asked:

"What is your attitude to Palestine as a possible Jewish 'homeland' and about a land for the Jews generally? Don't you believe that the anti-Semitism of German fascism compels a different approach to the Jewish question on the part of Communists?"

Trotsky replied: "Both the fascist state in Germany, as well as the Arabian-Jewish struggle, bring forth new and very clear verifications of the principle that the Jewish question cannot be solved within the framework of capitalism.

I do not know whether Jewry will be built up again as a nation. However, there can be no doubt that the material conditions for the existence of Jewry as an independent nation could be brought about only by the proletarian revolution. There is no such thing on our planet as the idea that one has more claim to land than another.

The establishment of a territorial base for Jewry in Palestine or any other country is conceivable only with the migrations of large human masses. Only a triumphant socialism can take upon itself such tasks. It can be foreseen that it may take place either on the basis of a mutual understanding, or with the aid of a kind of international proletarian tribunal which should take up this question and solve it.

The blind alley in which German Jewry finds itself as well as the blind alley in which Zionism finds itself is inseparably bound up with the blind alley of world capitalism, as a whole. Only when the Jewish workers clearly see this interrelationship will they be forewarned against pessimism and despair."

Tragic

The tragic conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine would not be adjudicated by a proletarian tribunal but by the United Nations set up by the victors of World War 2 - those who had not gone out of their way to save the Jews, who had refused all but a trickle of Jews the right to enter (the USA) or ran anti-semitic regimes (the USSR) - who were, above all,

concerned to secure their own interests in Palestine.

In the same interview Trotsky showed how far he was from the 'anti-imperialism of idiots' when he answered this question.

"The official Communist Party characterised, without question, the Jewish-Arab events in 1929 in Palestine as the revolutionary uprising of the oppressed Arabian masses. What is your opinion of this policy?"

Trotsky replied: "Unfortunately, I am not thoroughly familiar with the facts to venture a definite opinion. I am now studying the question. Then it will be easier to see in what proportion and in what degree there were present those elements such as national liberationists (anti-imperialists) and reactionary Mohammedans and anti-Semitic pogromists. On the surface, it seems to me that all these elements were there."

In an article on anti-Semitism in Stalin's USSR (22 February 1937) Trotsky developed his reappraisal of the Jewish question in the light of early 20th century experience. He speaks of a future socialist version of the Zionist "methods of solving the Jewish question", methods "which under decaying capitalism have a utopian and reactionary character".

Shrug

Trotsky had commented on the evidence of USSR anti-semitism which appeared in the official USSR press, and this had provoked the wrath of various 'Friends of the Soviet Union'. Trotsky responded:

"Some would-be 'pundits' have even accused me of 'suddenly' raising the 'Jewish question' and of intending to create some kind of ghetto for the Jews. I can only shrug my shoulders in pity.

I have lived my whole life outside of Jewish circles. I have always worked in the Russian workers' movement. My native tongue is Russian. Unfortunately, I have not even learned to read Jewish. The Jewish question therefore has never occupied the centre of my attention.

But that does not mean that I have the right to be blind to the Jewish problem which exists and demands solution.

"The Friends of the USSR' are satisfied with the creation of Birobidjan [the largely fictitious autonomous Jewish republic within the USSR]. I will not stop at this point to consider whether it was built on a sound foundation, and what type of regime exists there. (Birobidjan cannot help reflecting all the vices of bureaucratic despotism).

But not a single progressive, thinking individual will object to the USSR designating a special territory for those of its citizens who feel themselves to be Jews, who use the Jewish language in preference to all other and who wish to live as a compact mass.

Is this or is this not a ghetto? During the period of Soviet democracy, of completely voluntary migrations, there could be no talk about ghettos. But the Jewish question, by the very manner in which settlements of Jews occurred, assumes an international aspect.

Are we not correct in saying that a world socialist federation would have to make possible the creation of a 'Birobidjan' for those Jews who wish to have their own autonomous republic as the arena for their own culture?"

It may be presumed that a socialist democracy will not resort to compulsory assimilation. It may very well be that within two or three generations the boundaries of an independent Jewish republic, as of many other national regions, will be erased. I have neither time nor desire to meditate on this. Our descendants will know better than we what to do.

I have in mind a transitional historical period when the Jewish question, as such, is still acute and demands adequate measures from a world federation of workers' states. The very same methods of solving the Jewish question which under decaying capitalism have a utopian and reactionary character (Zionism), will, under the regime of a socialist federation, take on a real and salutary meaning.

This is what I wanted to point out. How could any Marxist, or even any consistent democrat, object to this?"

Trotsky was against the Zionist project, which elsewhere he refers to as a 'tragic mirage'. He calls Birobidjan 'a bureaucratic farce'. He saw the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine 'assuming tragic proportions'.

When he says (1932-3) "There is no such thing on our planet as the idea that one has more claim to land than another", in the context it seems to be directed against Zionist claims. But it has application to the Arabs too.

Of course it is impossible to know in detail what Trotsky would have said once the Jewish state was established in 1948. It is plain however that there would have been no place in his thought for the anti-Zionist demonology and international conspiracy theories that dominate the left today.

Scope

Trotsky recognises the breadth and scope of the historical forces activating and threatening the Jews. He recognises that the reasonable expectation he and others had had about the assimilation of the Jewish people, and the programme on the question that they had adopted and fought for, had already been defeated by the developments of history.

He seems to assert - speaking very loosely according to the strict Leninist/Marxist definition of what a nation is - that a Jewish nation of sorts had been created since his youth, on the

one hand by the blows of antisemitism and on the other by the striving of a minority of Jews to realise their nationhood like other nations on a national territory.

Trotsky's very loose use of the term nation to describe the Jews of the world may perhaps be explained as an unconscious by-product of his open acceptance of the need for a territorial solution to the problem of the people 'without a land' - the very idea he had scoffed at and fought for most of his life as a reactionary utopia.

He still says it is a reactionary utopia and a mirage in its bourgeois, Zionist form. But now he counterposes to it not assimilation but a socialist version of the Zionist, territorial, state-creating solution.

What makes the Zionist project utopian and reactionary? The methods which flow inescapably from doing it under capitalism and British rule in Palestine. The unpostponable international task is the overthrow of capitalism, not the utopian project of ingathering and nation-building.

Trotsky insists that only socialist revolution can save the Jews from annihilation. The Zionist project cannot. But after the international socialist revolution? An international socialist federation "would have to make possible the creation of a 'Birobidjan' for those Jews who wish to have their own autonomous republic as the arena for their own culture. It may be assumed that a socialist democracy will not resort to compulsory assimilation..." Trotsky would not be an advocate of the 'secular democratic state - or else' policy. "I have in mind a transitional historical period when the Jewish question, as such, is still acute and demands adequate measures from a world federation of workers' states".

The Jewish people need and are entitled to such a measure because it is no longer reasonable to look to assimilation as the solution or to have anything other than supportive sympathy for Jews who cannot believe in assimilation. Trotsky finishes that article:

"How could any Marxist, or even any consistent democrat, object to that?"

The objection, of course, is based on the fate of the Palestinian Arabs. But condemnation of the driving-out of the Palestinian Arabs in 1947-8 does not resolve anything about our attitude to the Jewish state that actually exists. For it does now exist. Most of the Jews within its borders were born there, and a considerable proportion of their parents too. The question is what programme we now propose for Palestinian-Jewish/Palestinian-Arab relations.

Trotsky was right that the pressure from reaction and from the anti-semites was too great to allow Zionism to be any solution to the mortal threat facing the Jews in the 1930s. The Zionist project did not and could not save the nearly six million Jews who were slaughtered in Nazi-controlled Europe. If the Nazis had got to Palestine - either temporarily or as outright victors - Palestine would have been a second, smaller-scale Poland for the Jews. Only the socialist revolution could have averted the holocaust.

Defeated

But the revolutionary workers were defeated time after time throughout the 1930s - in Germany, Austria, France, Spain. The socialist revolution did not happen - not in time to save Europe's massacred Jews, or to save the 20 million people who died in the USSR, or to prevent Germany being pulverised and partitioned and having 10 million of its people driven out of East Prussia. Not in time to stop the atom-bombing of Japan, or the expansion of Stalinist totalitarianism into an area of Eastern Europe with a population of 90 million...

And history did not stop. The Zionist project continued and carved out for itself the state of Israel in tragic conflict with the Palestinian Arabs.

The 'reactionary-utopian' solution to the Jewish question received an immense boost from the events of the world war. The need which Trotsky reluctantly came to realise for a Jewish national territory as part of the solution to the Jewish question was now felt by the overwhelming majority of Jews. And it was made reality not in a benign socialist world, after the world workers' revolution, but in a world dominated by imperialism and Stalinism, by way of bitter communal and national conflict and within the framework of a Zionist-Kremlin and then Zionist-imperialist alliance.

The Jewish state was established in a world where it was still dog eat dog. It was not the Palestinian Jews alone who decreed that in 1948 if they had not prevailed they would have gone under. That is how things work in a world dominated by capitalism and Stalinism.

Part 4 next week.

Women in South Africa

Fiercely oppressed

No-one in South Africa is more fiercely oppressed than African women. The majority are herded into the barren bantustans. They need a man's permission to travel outside. In the cities many of them are illegal residents. Hundreds of thousands work as domestic servants, without even the right to have their husbands or children visit them.

This article by Angelika Dinas is translated from the West German socialist Paper Was Tun.

AN IMPORTANT component of the strategy of the white regime in South Africa is the driving of the black population out of South Africa and their isolation in the so-called homelands.

In 1980 there lived in South Africa about 29 million people, of whom 21 million or about 73% were Africans. 4.5 million (15.5%) were whites. This white minority has the greater part of the country (87%) reserved to itself and these areas declared as 'white'.

In these areas Africans are fundamentally not allowed to settle.

That 87% of the land is however the area in which all the wealth and the mineral resources of S. Africa are concentrated. Here is the most fertile land — and this area is exclusively controlled by the white minority.

The black population, on the other hand, is forced to live in the homelands, in areas that the South African regime has chosen for the blacks.

This 13% of the land is overwhelmingly barren areas, in which there is next to no possibility of agricultural development, areas with no mineral resources and only limited industrial development. Altogether there are 10 homelands — divided up by tribes. In 1980 53% of the black population lived in such areas, and 57% of the black women.

Because of the catastrophic economic situation there, the inhabitants of the homelands are forced to seek work in the 'white' areas — as so-called migrant workers. They do contract labour without any political rights and on extremely low wages.

The fact that most male inhabitants of the homelands are migrant workers in the mines or in South African industry has led to a destruction of the family structure. Only about 15% of men live with their wives. 50% visit them only once a year.

As a result of this about 80% of the homeland dwellers are women between the ages of 30 and 50. The population of these areas is overwhelmingly made up of old people, sick people, small children, and women.

Since the supply of jobs for women there is vanishingly small, they are forced to rely on financial support from their husbands and on the few jobs in the surrounding farms and neighbouring factories to secure survival for themselves and their families.

This situation inflicts a permanent burden on women, both psychologically and materially.

* Children are as a rule not looked after, or maybe they are looked after by their older sisters.

* Women bear the responsibility for the family, for feeding, for the upbringing of children.

This is especially problematic since in various regions of South Africa women are by law permanently 'minors'.

By this law women are made not only financially but also legally dependent on their husbands. The 'Natal Code', clause 27, says that an African woman must throughout her life be under the guardianship of a man — be it a husband,



Photo: Lesley Lawson

a father, an uncle, or another relative.

Although women as a rule have sole responsibility for themselves and their children, because of their status as minors they have no right to make contracts, to bring legal actions, to travel without the permission of their guardian or to acquire property. They are put in danger of losing their residence and land rights when the 'head of the family' dies. For women have no claim to landed property.

The only way out of this position is a laborious procedure. African women who remain unmarried, or are widowed or divorced, can put in a claim for 'emancipation'. In these cases they must share the leadership of the household and any property.

If the authorities decide in the negative, then the woman remains a minor all her life.

Dependence on a guardian becomes particularly significant when an African woman wants to leave the area prescribed for her. In the pass document that all Africans over 16 have to carry there is a special section for women. It has to be marked in that section that the travel permit was approved by the relevant authorities and that the guardian has given his approval. And so since 1964 there has been a ban on women entering ('white') urban areas: they must stay only temporarily and only with a visitor's permit.

One of the few possibilities of a job for African women is in the area of farm work. Although the demand for labour in South African agriculture is constantly decreasing through mechanisation, farm workers are about 24% of the black female workforce.

Significant for the situation of women farm workers is their complete lack of rights. They have no legal guarantees on a minimum wage, on working time, on work conditions or on social insurance. Wages in this sector have only increased slightly over a period of nine years. In 1973 a farm worker would typically get 11.5 Rand a month. In 1982 she would be paid 20 Rand.

Mostly the pay is not in the form of cash but in kind, and the goods are mostly of minimum quality. In many cases the African women farm workers

are employed only as seasonal workers or day-labourers. These often get even lower wages and must put up with even worse work conditions.

An important source of exploitation is child labour. Many women are forced by their situation to bring their children

"Every two minutes, it has been estimated, a woman is raped in South Africa — usually an African woman"

The figure of rapes in South Africa is among the highest in the world. The ANC states that in the years 1972-76 alone some 46,000 rapes were recorded — and these only the cases that were reported.

South African law has a death penalty for rape. But this ultimate punishment has long been used only against blacks who are found guilty of raping a white woman. Sexual crimes by black men against black women are normally punished by prison sentences. If a white man rapes a black woman, he usually gets only a fine, or in certain cases a suspended prison sentence.

Even the legal penalties reinforce the degradation of African women.

with them to work, because they have no other possibilities of getting them looked after.

Although the greater part of African women are employed on farms or as domestic servants, about 12% of them work in factories, mostly in the textile

and food-processing industries.

Since these are very labour-intensive industries, the government tries by various means, like financial hand-outs and tax measures, to get them established in the border areas of the 'homelands'

This government pressure is however secondary for the capitalists. They are much more interested by the fact that in these 'border industries' the black workforce, above all women, can be especially exploited. They are neither obliged to provide minimum work conditions nor to pay a minimum wage.

An example:

"In the border area of 'independent' Bophutswana in 1980 a series of firms paid black women weekly wages of between 7.5 and 10 Rand. The official subsistence minimum was then set at 40 Rand weekly"

A more recent study done by the Institute for Black Research in March 1985 confirms this and also establishes that women have to do between 8 and 10 hours in the factory, and on top of that 5 hours travelling to and from work. Fewer than half the women have sickness insurance, and only half have a claim to old-age insurance.

The study also shows:

* Maternity leave is insufficient.

* Women are without protection against the arbitrariness of the capitalists; if a woman becomes pregnant, then she is sacked or not re-employed after her confinement.

* Sick leave is only very seldom guaranteed.

* Visits to the doctor during work time are not allowed.

In general wages for women in the food and textile industries are 20% below the legal minimum wage.

African women earn as a rule 50% lower wages than African men and only 8% of the wage of a white.

Women are the majority of the population in the 'homelands', but in the cities it is the other way round.

Many women try to follow their husbands to the cities, but they need at least a work permit and a legal residence permit for the 'white' areas. The strategy of the apartheid regime is to drive every 'superfluous', economically unprofitable, person out of South Africa, and in its eyes that means especially women.

where women's unemployment is very high.

Because of the travel restrictions which mean that the urban areas are practically forbidden to women in the 'homelands', a big proportion of the women in the 'white' districts live there illegally.

The so-called 'squatter camps' on the edges of the big cities are clusters of dwellings which serve as home for thousands of people.

Mainly women live there without residence permits who have followed their men.

Unmarried women who come to the cities as migrant workers are accommodated in so-called hostels. These are prison-like buildings, with in fact prison-like conditions. The purpose of this incarceration is absolute control over the women. Visits from men or children are forbidden.

Despite all the efforts of the government to drive black women out of the labour market and out of the cities, the number of African women workers has risen in recent years.

They are a third of the black wage workforce today. The majority as in the service sector, as noted above, in domestic and farm work. These sectors are also accessible for illegal residents.

Both sectors are mostly unorganised. Labour protection laws are unknown, and so are minimum wages.

About 800,000 African women are employed as domestic servants. These women mostly have a working week of over 80 hours. The average pay is below the official subsistence minimum. The monthly wage is between 4 and 60 Rand, with an average of 22.77 Rand for the year 1978. In 1978 it was only slightly higher, at 32 Rand.

It must be noted that 50% of all women are the only bread-winner of their family, so that on average seven people depend on their income.

Only one third of all African women employed as servants to whites are allowed one week's holiday a year.

On top of that there is other discrimination — like the prohibition of family visits or violence by the employer, including rapes.

Let them eat crisps

By Les Hearn

Last week I wrote about the unbiased report prepared on behalf of the crisp manufacturers' association that found crisps to be the perfect health food. Hot on its heels came another report painting a rather different picture. This one hasn't been published, though. It is only due to a public-spirited person's braving the Official Secrets Act that we know about it at all.

Back in 1980, the Tory government pushed through an Education Act which, among others, abolished nutrition standards and price controls on school meals.

In debates on the legislation, ministers agreed to monitor the effects of the changes on school-children's diet and COMA (the DHSS Committee on Aspects of Food Policy) asked for a survey to be carried out.

DHSS

Accordingly, DHSS nutritionists looked at the eating habits of 3000 eleven-year-olds for six months of 1983.

Their findings were embarrassing to the government because they bore out the predictions of critics of the 1980 proposals.

Despite several drafts of the report having been prepared, none has been sent to COMA, which originally asked for the survey, and Thatcher and Fowler have evaded questions asking when the report would be published.

The leaked details reveal that potato products (such as high fat crisps and chips) are the most widely eaten single food. Second come biscuits and cakes. Children eat more of these by weight than they do vegetables.

Cakes and biscuits are a more concentrated source of calories than are fruit and vegetables. They contain more sugar, more fat, less unrefined carbohydrates (starch), less protein and less fibre. Crisps and chips are also high in fat (60% of the calories in crisps come from fat) and low in protein and fibre.

Therefore, children are getting a dangerous proportion of their calories in concentrated, high-fat, high-sugar, low-fibre foods. The Coronary Prevention Group warns that this puts them in danger of heart disease and diabetes in later life.

Other surveys have already shown an alarming 1 in 10 of schoolchildren to be overweight. The DHSS survey also shows



Science

that children take in 10% fewer essential nutrients than recommended. They eat too much white bread, drink vast quantities of sugary soft drinks but eat little fresh fruit. They eat too little protein, calcium and vitamin C, and get too much energy from saturated (animal) fats.

Those who eat school meals get a better diet. Since the abolition of price controls in 1980, though, fewer children take them.

Bringing back memories of Britain before the Welfare State, the survey showed that the poorest children, from families on Supplementary Benefit and Family Income Supplement, had the lowest intake of nutrients and were significantly shorter than other children.

The researchers requested computer time for further analysis of the data to show in detail why poorer children had poorer nutrition. This was rejected by the DHSS on grounds of cost!

Info: The Guardian.

AIDS HYSTERIA

New Scientist reports that a tenth of patients referred to an AIDS clinic in San Francisco were not really suffering from the disease.

Cases involved men actually suffering from such diseases as tuberculosis, angina (chest pains which are a symptom of heart disease) and Hodgkin's disease (a cancer of the lymph system).

One man who complained of pain and soreness under his right arm was suffering not from AIDS but from muscle strain from lifting heavy wine barrels.

Doctors making the referrals had assumed, sometimes incorrectly, that their patients were gay and had then jumped to the diagnosis of AIDS.



Absolute boredom

Unless you've been holidaying on Mars it's unlikely that you haven't heard about Absolute Beginners. But behind all the hype, what's it really like. Belinda Weaver is the reviewer.

Absolute Beginners is a musical which is trying to deal with big issues - the shoddy commercialism of the fashion and pop music worlds, racist attacks on black neighbourhoods, the evils of advertising and property development - but it turns them all into cartoons which can't be taken seriously.

The hero, Colin (Eddie O'Connell) is a clean-cut teenage photographer, who gets along well with everyone, from his lowlife Soho friends to the black people in his Notting Hill neighbourhood. He's high-minded about his 'act'. His girlfriend Suzette (Patsy Kensit) wants him to sell out and go for the big bucks, but he resists. She has the odd qualm about selling out, but does it anyway. Our hero's quest to win her back from corruption joins the plot. Colin bravely resists the dangers of seduction and of superficial success in the worlds of advertising, pop journalism, gossip columns and sleazy photography, to prove himself Suzette's true knight.

Nice

Exactly why Colin is so principled and so free from racist prejudices is never shown. He's a cartoon "nice guy". Scenes showing his parents' tumultuous boarding house life, and Colin's friends, both black and white, give no clues. He's a blank.

The film is like a pop video - or rather a succession of pop videos. There's lots of colour and movement to hide the fact that there's not much going on. Characters and issues are trivialised.

The film makers obviously had a formula - simple story, nostalgic sets, big stars, hit songs. But it's not enjoyable. At my session, all the outward signs of audience involvement - constant talking, rustling of lolly wrappings, crisp crunching - were missing.

The film is set in London of 1958. But it's a 1958 stylised and prettied up for the '80s retro nostalgia market. The sets aren't real '50s - there's too much neon and pastel - and the soundtrack is almost totally contemporary, featuring '80s pop icons like Sade Adu.

Lustre

Though it's filled with stars, they don't give off much lustre. But at least you can kill time by anticipating each appearance. Halfway through I consoled myself that I still had Sade and Steven Berkoff left to spot.

David Bowie, the film's supposed draw card, acts as if animation would be a sin against art, and his speaking voice is curiously muffled. James Fox just seems dead from the neck up, though his role as the fashion designer/property developer could have

had a wicked sparkle.

Ray Davies as Colin's put-upon father sings and moves with a bit more energy - the audience perked up a bit when he came on.

Tone

The film's tone keeps lurching between glossy pop video blandness and semi-realism. It's impossible to tell what the direction was trying for at the end. The final confrontations between black people and racist whites keeps veering from savage fist and knife fighting towards West Side Story dance routines - and back again.

Racism is treated as if it's all just a nasty plot cooked up by property developers and hired thugs. Colin's Notting Hill neighbourhood is presented as a model of inter-racial harmony at first. This is disrupted when property developers, intent on driving out black people so the area can be profitably redeveloped, send in hired bullies to harass black people. Racism is shown as something coming from outside - the serpent entering the Garden of Eden - rather than something already existing in working class and other communities.

The portrayal of racists as a

handful of fanatics and hired bullies is a complete distortion, but it serves its purpose in the film's terms. As the black people fight and beat back the racist whites, we can safely leave them to follow our hero and heroine. The torching of the neighbourhood and violent clashes turn into pretty fireworks as Colin and Suzette fall into bed together at last.

Novel

The film is taken from Colin MacInnes's novel of the same name, but much has been dropped from that story. MacInnes was trying for an honest portrayal of his world and trying to explain the causes of racism. This overlong musical distorts that attempt and reduces serious issues to one-dimensional simplicity. Turning the street clashes into dance routines avoids seriously dealing with the outcome of these clashes which culminated in the Notting Hill riots. Setting the film in a rosy past, and sidelining the issue of racism, is a way of hiding the fact that racism still exists, that it involves ever increasing levels of violence, even murder, against black people in Britain.

Pete Smith

Late last week Pete Smith died of a sudden heart attack. His death, coming as it did when Pete was only in his late 30s, was a dreadful shock to his family and friends.

He joined the revolutionary movement in the early 1970s - he was a member of Stoke Branch of the International Socialists (now the SWP). It was not always easy. He was a worker militant in a predominantly student movement.

His commitment to revolutionary ideas and to internationalism were always there and he felt particularly deeply about fighting against racism and for

women's rights.

Pete was one of a group of workers at the Michelin factory who joined IS/SWP just before IS expelled the Trotskyist Tendency in 1971. The IS branch leadership tried to seal the new workers off from the debate about the expulsion. But Pete insisted on finding out for himself, and made contact with the expelled tendency.

AUEW

Eventually Pete moved to London, joined Workers Fight (forerunner of Socialist Organ-

iser) and got a job at London Transport's Acton works where he was the AUEW deputy convenor, and active in building a rank and file movement.

In his last years Pete dropped out of active politics and the movement and unfortunately, like so many, became disillusioned with politics.

However, even though he became depressed politically, his basic politics did not fundamentally change.

At the time of his death Pete was planning to go to Spain and make a new start. Pete will not be forgotten by his comrades, family and friends.

Socialist Organiser

AGM
1986

Saturday and
Sunday
26/27 April
LONDON

For details contact your
local SO seller or phone
01-639 9767.

NUT LEFT MAKES GAINS

THIS YEAR the salaries campaign has really politicised the union. Although we didn't do well in the salaries debate, in virtually every other debate there were gains.

On the ACAS talks, it was put strongly by the Executive that there was no question of selling out; the point was that they could not leave it to other unions to represent the views of teachers.

The Executive still appeared to be fighting strongly and not selling out, and I think people still believed them.

On racism and a black section in the NUT it was a very close vote. An NEC amendment did go through which took on much of what we have always argued for - anti-racist policies, the right to affiliate to anti-racist organisations, more employment and promotion of black teachers (the question of recognition of overseas teaching qualifications was taken up), and repeal of the Immigration and Nationality Acts.

Not so long ago that would have been ruled out of order. The amendment also proposed greater ethnic representation on national advisory committees and a method of election which would allow that.

The motion called on associations and divisions to monitor the level of racist attacks in schools and on journeys to and from school, and to negotiate with local education authorities for arrangements to protect pupils and teachers from racist attacks.

The NUT is moving away from 'multi-cultural' to 'anti-racist' education. And it's recognising that the union is a virtually all-white organisation, and that's got to change.

But we lost the vote to stop talks between the NUT and the Police Federation. (These came after many London schools had

THE OUTCOME of the National Union of Teachers conference at Easter at first appeared to be discouraging.

The Executive remained in control of the salaries campaign and got backing for going into the ACAS talks.

However, the Left

made considerable gains, as VANESSA WISEMAN (vice-president of the Inner London division, a Lambeth delegate to NUT conference, and a member of the Socialist Teachers Alliance) explains to Socialist Organiser.



Vanessa Wiseman.

voted to ban the police).

On 'no cover' there was a tremendous feeling but also a lot of confusion. What was passed was "Teachers will not cover after the first day of absence".

Some people saw that as a strengthening of union policy, but our argument is that teachers should not and will not cover at all. The last-day speech on no cover by Mike Loseley from the Inner London Teachers' Association got a standing ovation, although we lost the card vote by 109,000 to 105,000.

The Executive is still saying that teachers should not have to cover, but for them that is a sanction in the salaries campaign.

Our motion on women was amended, but again a very large chunk of the NEC amendment was what was in ours. We have moved the union on in terms of equal opportunities.

We won opposition to fixed-term contracts (which largely affect women teachers) and that branch women's rights officers must be women. We lost our motion on five reserved women's places on the NEC. That became the hinge of the debate.

The Exec feel very threatened by our position - and others on the left misinterpreted or disagreed with it, Rank and File and the Broad Alliance.

The international debate discussed just one motion, on peace. We never reached the second motion, on South Africa, but South Africa came up during discussion on the union's investments! Opposition to Star Wars was ruled out of order. The Communist Party and Broad Alliance protested about this, yet the day before they had not supported us on our motion to widen the aims and objects of the union.

At the official international meeting the platform speakers

included an exiled South African teacher, a Dunnes striker, a Nicaraguan teacher and a delegate from the El Salvador teachers' union. An invited Palestinian teachers' union delegate was denied an exit visa by the Israeli authorities, but a petition of protest was widely supported by conference delegates.

The aims and objects of the NUT limit it narrowly to educational issues. We argued that the union was actually discussing issues which had been ruled out of order before. The union ought to be honest and avoid situations where our delegate abstains in the TUC.

The other side argued that we would go down the road of teacher trade unions in other countries, weakened by being aligned with one particular party. We lost but not badly.

There was an amendment from Leicester for a ballot to set up a political fund straight away, but people felt that was premature and it was lost.

The section of the agenda that received most votes during prioritisation was relations with the NAS/UWT and teachers' unity.

Our motion called for closer collaboration nationally and locally, discussion on means of uniting to form a single TUC-affiliated teachers' union, and preparing material for our membership outlining the case for unity. It also looked beyond this to going in with NATFHE as well.

United

After conference voted not to take the NEC amendment, none of the Exec spoke against. Speakers from the floor opposed us by raising points about the NAS/UWT's racism and sexism and about getting people to join the best union, i.e. the NUT. But the argument that a united teachers' union is what this government would most fear was decisive in winning this motion.

On the GCSE exam, people were alarmed about the executive's attitude and its insufficient

commitment to back those who refuse to participate. A motion was passed which "instructs the NEC to issue detailed guidelines on action regarding GCSE... and advising members to continue their refusal to do any GCSE work, and to continue to teach GCE and CSE syllabuses to future exam groups".

Conference did not discuss Poundswick because of time.

We made gains on the MSC/TVEI issue, where the motion came out clearly against the curriculum being governed by the narrow requirements of the 'world of work'.

This year the Broad Alliance - claiming support of half the NEC and both halves of the Communist Party - has identified itself clearly. They are going to organise in an open way. This is quite positive for us because it makes it easier to take them on in debate.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance has been strengthened by people joining all year. We're not just the voice of opposition; on some issues we represent the majority of what teachers are saying. Teachers have been much more active in campaigns with other workers, and this has really helped us. But the Exec is still under-represented in terms of women, all white, and still overwhelmingly not classroom teachers.

The weakest aspect of the conference was not being able to go beyond the Exec on the pay issue. What happens remains to be seen this year. People still believe the Exec is going to fight on.

There was an official collection at conference for the Lambeth councillors' fighting fund, which was well received. This does show a change in the mood of the conference.

Fred Jarvis in his final speech recognised that this conference will go down as the 'no cover' conference. There is a real movement, and teachers are seeing themselves as trade unionists taking on the government.

union does not support picketing and issues involved. We have always understood the TGWU was and is opposed to the use of anti-trade union in the blacklist, and victimisation of known trade union activists.

The letter then states "people should not be confused by the issuing of an injunction. Laings and the issues in relation to the original dispute. It must be obvious to all principled and concerned trade unionists that High Court injunctions were issued in order to stop us achieving success for the basic and original issues we were and are continuing to struggle for. The original issues and the High Court injunction are totally inter-related and there should be no confusion surrounding these matters."

The letter then goes on to emphasise the fact that we as UCATT members and implies we should not be supported because of this. This is an obvious and blatant attack on our union.

Finally we call on all principled and concerned trade unionists and labour movement people to assist us in our struggle for justice and basic democratic rights and ensure that Mr Kavanagh is taken to task for this appalling attack on the truth, and some of the most basic principles we uphold in the trade union and labour movement.

It should be ensured he never again in a position to perpetrate an attack of such an appalling nature.

Yours fraternally
John Laing Lock Out Committee

Scots steel

2000 workers in the British Steel Tube Works at the Clydesdale Imperial and Calder plants in Lanarkshire are still on strike against the BSC so-called survival plan. Steve Harvey spoke to John Sinclair, an ISTC shop steward and member of Hamilton CLP, about the progress of the dispute which has now lasted over seven weeks.

"The strike remains solid with the one exception that the 1000 so APEX members have stopped their selective strike action and returned to work. There is picketing every day, with a couple of hundred on the gate in the mornings and a light picket in the afternoons.

The ISTC are now paying strike pay of £16 per week. Money is coming in from other workplaces, notably the large Caterpillar Plant, and donations are beginning to come in from other union branches. The workers on strike are from a range of unions including the ISTC, the TGWU, the GMBU, the EETPU and the AUEW.

All have balloted and gained an overwhelming vote to continue the strike action.

The "survival plan" offers 2% on wages and a quarterly lump sum which is to be 6% in June. The other side of this however is that it seeks 412 redundancies in management's choice, which will mean victimisation of union activists, the removal of the current special payments which mean wage cuts of between £15 and £60 per week, and selective promotion.

Since the beginning of the strike the BSC have announced their intention to close the Calder Plant. They have written to every worker with what they call an improved offer, but which is in fact an even worse offer than the original.

All BSC workers have been involved in localised deals on pay and conditions since the 1981 strike, and inevitably they lead to each plant being isolated and threatened. All BSC workers should be aware of the implications of this so-called "survival plan", and that the same threat will be facing them sooner or later. Unity is needed if we are to win.

There has been a very low level of publicity about the dispute, clearly it's not seen as important enough to demand the attention of the Labour leadership. In fact they (along with all the other political parties in Scotland) are actually still focussing on Gartcosh despite the fact that it closed last week."

In Hamilton the LPYS took the initiative in mid-March to set up a steel strike support group

Paul Whetton's Diary

From page 12.

letter commenting on the high number of accidents in the pits since the end of the strike and calling on everybody to work more safely.

It's very hypocritical, because at some of the pits in Notts overtime is being used as a carrot to put the wedges between the NUM and the UDM. UDM members are getting lots of overtime, and that means they work longer hours and safety standards fall.

The Coal Board's sole priority

is more and more coal at minimum cost, and MacGregor's letter is just another indication of the two-faced attitude it has to its employees.

The sudden drop in the oil price recently has put the whole argument about 'uneconomic' pits in a new light. It shows the failure of the Tories to realise the whole economic situation. It's the easiest thing in the world to cap an oil-well and to use other readily available fuels. If the Tories had any sort of policy, they would realise that the thing to do is to save that oil for the future. But they're committed to selling that oil at any price they can get for it. They're really selling the seedcorn.

Paul Whetton is the secretary of Bevercotes NUM, victimised by the NCB.

Laing's pickets slandered

Regular readers of Socialist Organiser will be aware of the 7 month long battle by the Laings Lock Out Committee against the lump and the law in the building trade.

They are demanding the withdrawal of the High Court injunctions against them for picketing and their reinstatement as a whole bricklaying gang in Surbiton.

They have been sacked twice and transferred three times and now on top of police harassment and court injunctions, face a concerted attempt by TGWU Building Group Secretary Peter 'Judas' Kavanagh to sell out their fight and criminalise them.

We reprint below Kavanagh's letter to TGWU members and the Lock Out Committee's reply.

We urge all trade union and labour movement activists to mobilise for the daily picket of Laing's London Bridge site

Dear Colleague,

You will be aware that picketing continues on the Laings 'British Library' site by members of UCATT although the picket has never been supported by that union and the current situation is that Laings have taken the individuals to court to stop them picketing and the court decision has been ignored. The pickets are still proclaiming that they are attempting to have the Regional and National Conciliation Panel findings carried out by Laings and indeed the sub-contractor, Jonoroy.

The facts are that they were never employed by Laings and

secondly they were sacked for bad timekeeping and no other reason.

Approaches have been made to this union for financial and physical support on the picket line. I have previously told you about members of this union being threatened with violence (although there is no proof that the pickets were involved) and break-ins have taken place at ready mix depots and damage done to vehicles.

I must stress that as far as this union is concerned we do not support the picketing and the issues involved and people should not be confused with the issuing of an injunction by Laings and the issues in relation to the original dispute and I must urge that our

Picket Laings London Bridge site (opposite London Bridge railway and underground stations) daily from 7am onwards, from 14 April 1986.

Donations or messages of support to: John Laings lock-out committee, tel. 278 4444 x 2556, PO Box 551, London SE5 8JJ.

members be informed that they should not in any way support the picket at the British Library or any other contract involving these six UCATT members.

Yours fraternally,
P. Kavanagh,
Building Group Secretary

The Lock Out Committee replies:

We are deeply disturbed and dismayed by the contents of this letter. It is full of misinformation, innuendo, and deliberate falsifications. We feel it is our duty and our right to reply to this dreadful attack on the truth, our struggle, aims and principles. It is also an attack, which if it goes unheeded, can only besmirch and do serious damage to the good name of our union in particular, and trade unionism in general.

We know that it is the national policy of the TGWU, UCATT and indeed the TUC to oppose the use of the Tory anti-union laws. Yet this letter accuses us of ignoring the court decision! *Opposing* is the appropriate word, and this we intend to continue, in line with all the aforementioned unions' policies.

The letter states we were sacked for bad timekeeping and nothing else. There was an attempt to sack three out of six of us for 'alleged' bad timekeeping. But the spurious nature of these attempts were soon exposed when they were withdrawn on the intervention of Bro. A. Tatum, UCATT Regional Organiser and Bro. F. Westerman, TGWU Regional Organiser.

The next part of the letter is grossly defamatory and seeks to encourage other trade unionists not to support us based on Mr Kavanagh's innuendo that we were somehow 'connected' with violence towards TGWU members and attempting to 'connect' us with break-ins and damages done to vehicles at Ready Mixed concrete depots. We could take Mr Kavanagh to court for gross defamation by innuendo, etc. But as principled trade unionists we would not nor ever will take an internal union matter to the courts. It can, and hopefully will, only be settled within our movement, organisations and publication by the appropriate trade union and labour movement authorities.

The letter then states "this

BLOC CONFERENCE

Saturday 19 April at 11.00 a.m.
Sheffield City Hall
£3 per delegate, up to five delegates per labour movement organisation

Socialist Organiser

VOTE LABOUR In Fulham

SPONSOR A SCIENTIST!

Les Hearn, author of Socialist Organiser's much-appreciated Science Column, is cycling 60 miles to Oxford on 3 May and running 10 kms (6¼ miles) on 18 May.

Will you sponsor him? Les suggests sponsorship per mile for the cycle trip and sponsorship per minute under 1 hour for the run.

Send sponsorships to SO at PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Thanks for donations this week to a US reader, \$30, Belinda Weaver £15, and Nik Barstow £1.80.

Local Group	Target	So far	Per cent
North London	1600	1308.48	82%
Nottingham	1000	965.01	97%
South London	800	899.26	112%
Manchester	1000	778.95	78%
East London	760	648.12	85%
Merseyside	500	487.50	98%
Cardiff	600	462.50	77%
Glasgow/Edinburgh	560	394.00	70%
Durham/North East	200	291.80	146%
Sheffield	400	259.41	65%
York/Harrogate	300	230.70	71%
West London	500	200.00	40%
Coventry	350	200.00	57%
Stoke South	200	198.00	99%
Stoke North	200	172.75	86%
Basingstoke	560	127.47	22%
Colchester	100	67.80	68%
Birmingham	100	65.00	65%
Aberdeen	20	46.00	230%
Oxford	40	40.00	100%
Canterbury	90	43.00	48%
Southampton	60	16.00	27%
Leeds	60		
Central/General	5000	1573.20	31%
Total	15000	9450.43	63%



Item	Cost	Total
Moving costs	£450	£15,000
Removal of asbestos and waste	520	
Re-pointing brickwork, roof repairs	300	
Carpentry (doors, windows, partitions etc)	1620	
Glazing	100	
Plastering and painting (inside & out)	450	
Electrical repairs and rewiring	300	
Plumbing work	200	
Installing heating and hot water	2000	
Floor covering	200	
Office equipment	500	
Installing telephones	750	
Renovation and repair of outbuilding	2000	
Deposit on printing press	1500	
Process camera	1400	
Deposit on typesetting machine	1800	
Initial payment of rent	560	
Total	2000	£15,000

STRIKE DRIVES OUT UDM SCABS

By John Bloxam

A STRIKE at Thurcroft colliery in South Yorkshire has driven the UDM out of the pit.

It was a major blow to the Coal Board's and the UDM's hopes of spreading the influence of the scab organisation into the strategic Yorkshire coalfield.

To date the UDM has managed to recruit only a handful of super-scabs in Yorkshire. Just before Christmas, NUM officials at Thurcroft discovered that G.Walker was a member of the UDM. He was the pit's 'super-scab', the first one back at a pit where nearly 40% were scabbing by the end of the 1984-5 strike.

Recruit

Walker had also recruited a shaftsman to the UDM. According to NUM delegate Dave Parry this news was greeted with 'uproar' at the pit, but no immediate action was taken.

The issue came to a head on 17 March, when the heading teams were changed. An NUM militant was put in Walker's team and was told that he would have to work regularly with him. He refused. All three shifts walked out in the first-ever major strike anywhere against the UDM. They demanded that NUM members should not be forced to work with UDM men.

The strike remained 100% over three working days, although deputies crossed the strong picket lines. By the following week the NUM had won. The shaftsman rejoined the NUM and at the end of the week Walker was transferred to Cresswell colliery in Nottinghamshire.

The Coal Board first wanted to transfer Walker to nearby Shireoaks - a pit which comes under the Yorkshire Area NUM but geographically is in Notts. This was dropped when Shireoaks NUM threatened a strike.

Dave Parry told Socialist Organiser: "Thurcroft is a pit that was divided at the end of the big strike, and the action showed that the men are prepared to stand together now on an important issue."

"The tide has turned significantly against the UDM. Their usefulness to the Coal Board in areas where the NUM is strong is diminishing. The strike showed to the Coal Board that they can't just dump riff-raff and super-scabs without some reaction, even in pits where they think the workforce is a bit weak."

"The feeling at the pit is that it's a positive thing we've got rid of the UDM and we don't have that problem to face. We've got that many other issues to organise on without having that running sore permanently there".



By trying not to upset the UDM, Kinnock is attacking NUM loyalists. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, Report

THE UDM MONSTER

We've had the majority and minority reports from the Labour Party National Executive inquiry into Liverpool District Labour Party.

Quite frankly, I think the Labour Party has been making a right mess of it according to those reports. It's really putting itself through agony for what is only a small problem.

Tied to that is what is going to happen in the Notts coalfield. Obviously Kinnock does not want to upset anybody, and wants to win the marginal seats in Notts.

What he does not seem to realise is that by not taking sides, by bobbing and ducking and weaving and trying to please everybody, he is upsetting more than he's pleasing.

The UDM are considering putting up independent candidates in Sherwood and Ashfield. That should prove to Kinnock once and for all exactly who his friends

Paul Whetton's diary

are. The NUM loyalists in the Notts coalfield will stay solidly Labour in spite of what Kinnock does - and those people whom he is trying to appeal to never did vote Labour in the first place.

3000 of them withdrew the political levy right at the start of the strike.

Eat

Don Concannon and Frank Haynes have gone along with the UDM. They have helped to create a monster that is now going to turn around and eat them up.

But I think steady recruitment from the UDM to the NUM is going to continue.

We've got a big Justice for Mineworkers rally coming up in Notts. We hope to raise the issue of the sacked and imprisoned miners. The lads think that they have been forgotten - and I don't suppose that's just the

Notts lads.

We understand the difficulties that the national union has got but we have to raise the issue.

Last week there was a vote for an overtime ban in North Derbyshire in response to the Coal Board unilaterally tearing up the Area bonus scheme and replacing it by a bonus scheme pit by pit. What's happening is that the Coal Board are still labouring under some misapprehension that they have got the NUM beaten.

That's far from true. The NUM has got difficulties, but it is not beaten and finished.

I think the overtime ban is just the first shot in what could be a very significant fight in the Derbyshire coalfield. If the Coal Board insists on going ahead, I can see that action escalating.

Ian MacGregor has sent out a

Turn to page 11