

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST



Kinnock

DEFEND THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

THE LABOUR Party leaders want trade unions to accept 'new rights and new responsibilities'. Instead of a clean sweep of all the Tory anti-union laws, Neil Kinnock wants new laws that will interfere with union rights.

He wants it to remain unlawful to have a strike without a ballot according to government-prescribed procedures. But sometimes ballots can make effective action difficult or impossible. Often a very quick response by the union is needed, for example to victimisation.

Democracy

A law enforcing ballots doesn't help democracy, despite what Kinnock and the Tories say.

It looked as if Kinnock had it sewn up when a TUC/Labour joint committee endorsed his idea on pre-strike ballots. But big unions — TGWU, NALGO, NUPE, NUM, TASS — are against this new attempt to keep the lid on workers' militancy. It could be defeated at the TUC congress early in September. *It should be defeated.*

We do need democracy in the trade unions and in the Labour Party. But real democracy must come from the active involvement of the rank and file — not from the law courts. Neil Kinnock, who last year announced his intention to defy Labour Party conference democracy over an amnesty for the miners, should not try to impose 'democracy' on the unions in alliance with Tory judges.

Laws interfering in trade unions' internal affairs can only result in less democracy, not more. We have seen time and time again how the courts will rule *against* the labour movement. Our unions' democracy is our business.

The TUC Congress must kick out Kinnock's proposals. The trade unions

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Police thugs go unpunished

Licensed to riot



Andrew Wiard, Report

By Lol Duffy, former jailed Cammell Lairds striker and prospective Parliamentary candidate for Wallasey

The police can beat you up, abuse you, and injure you, as they wish and escape unpunished.

The official Police Complaints Authority has found the police guilty of assaulting and abusing pickets during the miners' strike. But they shrug it off. They can't identify the individual cops responsible, so nothing can be done.

The same escape clause has been used often before — most notoriously when police beat anti-fascist demonstrator Blair Peach to death in Southall in 1979.

Imagine angry pickets attacking a scab — let alone beating one to death — in the midst of a crowd of police. They would be clapped in jail immediately, with the press baying for their blood.

Terry French

Miner Terry French is still serving a five-year jail sentence on charges of violence during the 1984-5 strike.

But cops can beat you up in the midst of a mob of 'law enforcers', and get off scott free. Laws, according to the police, are for other people. The thugs in blue can make it up as they go along.

The police assaults took place on 21 August 1984, at the height of the miners' strike. Two miners had decided to scab at Hatfield Main colliery and local miners were picketing.

The police "did overreact and... a few officers did assault prisoners after arrest and... others were abusive and uncivil" according to the Complaints Authority.

These complaints have taken nearly two years to be dealt with. The investigations were carried out not by any independent body, but by the Nottinghamshire police.

Complaints

Out of the 268 complaints brought against the police because of incidents during the miners' strike, only 17 have resulted in disciplinary charges and only one in criminal charges. Just square that with what everyone has seen on TV, let alone with the miners' direct experience! Compare it with the 12,000 miners and supporters arrested during the strike!

The Tory government poured millions of pounds into breaking the strike. Thatcher said she would introduce any new laws necessary to give the police the powers they wanted. Now

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SPAIN '36

How 'Communists' strangled the revolution in Spain. See centre pages.

□ Another of Thatcher's lawless thugs in blue goes in for the kill.



Tamils

Victims of violence

The 'boat people' cast adrift off Canada — though as it turned out brought from West Germany — have highlighted the plight of Sri Lanka's Tamils.

The 'boat people' themselves have been the victims of terrible exploitation. Their German 'benefactors' were charged them £14 for a can of Coca Cola and keeping them couped up

like galley slaves.

There are 4,000 Tamil refugees in Canada, and 30,000 in West Germany, which last week forbade them political asylum.

The British government has allowed hardly any refugees in, although there is a large Tamil community in England.

140,000 Sri Lankan Tamils are in refugee

camp in the Tamil area of India. They live on about £20 a month per family.

The refugees are fleeing the brutal Sri Lankan regime of Junius Jaywardene. In Sri Lanka Tamils are a persecuted minority — the victims of terrible state-sponsored violence, especially in the north east of the country.

OPEC

Alive

The obituaries for OPEC — the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries — may have been premature.

On 5 August, the 13 members of OPEC agreed to call a ceasefire in their war for the glutted oil market, and jointly to cut oil production. It is a triumph for the policy of the Saudi ruling class, long the most cautious of the oil producers.

Oil prices by the end of July were as low as \$7 or \$8 a barrel, falling from a high point a few years ago of \$40. Within 24 hours of the deal, in Geneva, 'spot' prices leapt up by 50%. OPEC is to work out a new quota system that will allow, they calculate, for prices to rise to \$19 a barrel.

But they're not off slippery ground yet. The new-found unity is extremely fragile. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, who will have to make the biggest cuts, have



sworn to switch the pumps back on as soon as one of its rivals breaks the agreement.

And the oil producers have all been hit very hard by falling prices. Saudi revenues over the past year were down by 24%; Nigerian and Libyan by 50%; Iran's revenues fell by 60%.

Non-OPEC oil producers have suffered even

more. Mexico, counting on oil sales to help service its \$93 billion debts to foreign banks, is in dire straits. A rise in prices will help, but not much.

And for the Third World countries which import oil, a price rise will be a new blow.

In the merry-go-round of the oil industry, it is always the poor who lose out.

Poland's economic crisis

Stalin in eldorado

"A true eldorado", Ignacy Soszynski called it when he spoke to the Financial Times (19 August).

He was talking about Stalinist, but crisis-racked, Poland. The chaos of the state sector has led to big profits for private business people like Soszynski, and he is now a zloty billionaire — worth over £3 million.

The 'Polonian' capitalists, of whom Soszynski is one, have become a by-word for conspicuous wealth among Polish workers. They are citizens of Western states, but of Polish descent.

They have been allowed to set up private businesses in Poland since the late '70s: Soszynski's, with a turn-

over of £27 million a year, is the biggest of the 685 'Polonian' companies.

Smaller-scale private enterprise and black-marketeering is also rife in Poland today. The Financial Times quotes

the editor of an official magazine as saying that it is "not unusual for a moneyed Pole to have three million zlotys on deposit at the bank, with an annual yield equal to nearly twice the average yearly Polish income."

Hungarian miners' strike

700 Hungarian miners have taken industrial action in opposition to government plans to close 14 pits.

300 miners at Tata-banya colliery and 400 at Borsod colliery have "resigned" in protest at the planned closures.

The Hungarian government, which has closed all but 39 of the country's 156 pits in the last ten years, sugges-

ted that there had been a 'misunderstanding' because it intended to close the pits only very slowly.

With the state 'trade unions' policing the Hungarian working class rather than defending their interests, the miners have had to act on their own by 'resigning' their jobs in order to fight this latest round of closures.

S.AFRICA

Revolt against Botha

ANOTHER PILLAR of apartheid policy crumbled in the face of mass revolt last week. The 'independence' of KwaNdebele was rejected by the homeland's Legislative Assembly, following an uprising in protest at the plan.

'Independence' for South Africa's Bantustans or 'homelands' is a central part of the apartheid strategy of divide and rule. The white rulers hope to form South Africa's black people into separate little 'nations', and to perpetuate old tribal loyalties.

Even as he was declaring, once again, that South Africa had 'outgrown the outdated concept of apartheid', P.W. Botha, addressing the ruling National Party, reiterated the importance of the 'independence' policy.

He compared the 'independent' homelands to small European states like Andorra, Liechtenstein and Monaco. He also raised again the prospect of creating black 'city states' in the townships.

'If a state such as Luxemburg can be independent', Botha pleaded, 'why can black urban commu-

ities close to our metropolitan area not receive full autonomy as city states?'

Four homelands have 'independence' — Transkei, Bophutswana, Venda and Ciskei. KwaNdebele was to be next. But its inhabitants had other ideas.

An uprising began on 12 May which, despite repression that left 160 people dead, successfully forced the homeland's government to reject independence.

'Independence' would mean forfeiting South African citizenship. KwaNdebele is described aptly as the South African 'Weekly Mail' as 'one of apartheid's most squalid fictions: a few northeastern Transvaal farms turned into shanty slums'.

Rent strikes spread

Meanwhile, 300,000 households in 38 townships are currently on rent strike. According to the Community Research Group, it is costing the state 30 million rand a month.

AUSTRALIA

Hawke's accord

In the first of an occasional series, Janet Burstall tells the story of Australia's 'Social Contract'

THE 'ACCORD' between the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Australian Congress of Trade Unions (ACTU) came into existence on the eve of the March 1983 Federal elections in Australia. It was the labour movement's alternative after 7½ years of the Fraser Liberal (read Tory) government.

The election was called by Fraser when widespread strikes threatened to break up his wage freeze. Newly elected ALP leader Bob Hawke called on the unions to lift their strikes and get Labour elected. Hawke then maintained Fraser's wage freeze for the remainder of its one year term.

This didn't stop the leaders of the ACTU from promoting the Accord as the means of maintaining real wages. It was also supposed to commit the government to increasing the "social wage" e.g. health, welfare, education, transport expenditure, and to involve unions in economic planning.

The Accord would never have got off the ground if it hadn't been for the so-called left union officials. Many of them are from either the Communist Party of Australia (similar views to the Italian CP) or a grouping which split from the Socialist Party of Australia (Moscow line) because of SPA opposition to the Accord.



Hawke and Reagan

ded a commitment by the unions not to make wage claims above those awarded by the Arbitration Commission. The Arbitration Commission is supposed to hold six monthly hearings on union claims for a wage rise to compensate for increases in the Consumer Price Index, maintained by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. All sorts of ways have been used to award the unions less than the full CPI adjustment (not that a full CPI adjustment would maintain real wages in any case). The left also pointed out that the Accord made the union movement police any struggles, for the government and the bosses, and demobilised workers.

The anti-Accord left anticipated at nearly every national wage case, that the Accord might break down, that it could not be made to stick. That it has lasted so long is indicative of the hold of Labor politics in the labour movement. To destabilise Labor, the Accord's left supporters warn, will only get a Liberal government elected, and that would be more vicious. And then the anti-Accord left will be sorry!

Fragmenting

In the meantime the pro-Accord left is fragmenting. Some of them say it was a good idea, which unfortunately didn't work. The "maintenance of real wages" has added up to a drop of nearly 20% over 3½ years. Union participation in "economic planning" has resulted in deregulation of the finance industry, rising home loan interest rates, a sinking Australian dollar, and increased foreign investment (which is opposed by the pro-Accord left). The "increase in the

Police began to evict rent-boycotters in the Vaal area last week.

8,501 names of people detained since the declaration of the State of Emergency have been collected by the liberal, pro-capitalist Progressive Federal Party.

At least 344 elected leaders and officials of trade unions were known to be in detention at the beginning of last week. 2,735 trade unionists have been detained. The hardest hit unions have been FAWU, CCAWUSA and MAWU.

Over 600 detainees began a hunger strike on 14 August to protest at the State of Emergency, timed to coincide with the reopening of Parliament and the National Party Congress.

Recent legal successes have been overturned in the High Court. A court decision reported in last week's SO that could have meant the release of thousands of prisoners was contradicted by the Natal Supreme Court on 14 August. Which decision takes priority is as yet unclear, but no prisoners are being freed.

Wages

As the bosses' demands for wage reduction intensify, the government is starting to talk about abandoning the Accord, saying that they can't see a way to make any more deals with the ACTU leaders for discounting the CPI wage adjustment due next March.

The September case has been cancelled, the March 1986 case was not completed until late June. One union had voted not to sign the most recent wage agreement, and to campaign for a \$67 a week rise. This is the Plumbers and Gasfitters union. This is the first union to openly state that it is breaking the Accord. It represents the beginning of the end.

The left must continue to campaign for the unions to take up claims outside the Accord, and for solidarity with unions under attack. It must also prepare to explain the real reasons for the end of the Accord, and the election of a Liberal government, because the main forces on the fake left will be harking back to the halcyon days, and blaming the serious left for the problems the working class will face under the next Liberal government.

LETTER from AUSTRALIA

These currents, among others, gave the Accord a radical sounding cover — because of the Accord's emphasis on the social wage, and union participation in tripartite planning, it was a means of politicising the working class and overcoming the traditional economist obsession with wages and conditions. They even quoted Lenin at the anti-Accord left.

All the smaller left groups opposed the Accord. They pointed out that the Accord wouldn't even provide the minimum conditions that its supporters said it guaranteed. Primarily they presented the Accord as a wage-cutting mechanism, because it inclu-

IRELAND

Is unity possible?

THE Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), a flag of convenience for the big legal Protestant paramilitary group, the Ulster Defence Association, has threatened death for all Catholic workers in Protestant areas in Northern Ireland.

At the Shorts aircraft factory in Belfast, nine Catholic workers' clock-cards have been destroyed. Posters have been put up in the factory threatening violence against nationalist workers. Catholics are a 5% minority in the workforce of 7,000.

In Lisburn, Co. Antrim, the housing authorities reported on 15 August that 124 Catholic and mixed households had put in applications for re-housing from the mainly Protestant town. "Petrol bomb attacks in the early hours of the morning", said the Irish Times, "have become a pattern of life for Catholics in the town".

IRA

On the other side of the communal divide, the IRA has repeated warnings that it will regard anyone doing work for the security forces — builders, refuse collectors, utility workers, other suppliers, cleaners — as fair military targets. A quarry owner was shot dead on 30 July because he was supplying materials for the construction of an RUC police station. The UFF threat was a response to this IRA policy.

Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams has toned down the IRA warning by saying that the Republicans intend to strike only at the 'fat cats', not at ordinary workers. Nevertheless, the warning cannot do anything but increase sectarian tension.

Northern Ireland has 20% unemployment and a decimated manufacturing sector. A large proportion of the remaining jobs — especially for Protestants — are connected in some way or other with the army or the RUC. Catholic workers will also be hit since they dominate the building industry.

Polarisation between the communities is increasing. On 14 August Protestant politician Peter Robinson appeared in court in the southern border town of Dundalk on charges arising from the Orange 'invasion' of the southern village of Clontibret. Local nationalists threw jeers and petrol bombs at the band of Loyalists who accompanied Robinson, turning Dundalk into a microcosm of the sectarian civil war being brewed up in Northern Ireland today.

Full civil war is still a good way off. But the Northern Ireland state has been visibly unviable since 1969.

The Protestant majority want nothing less than their old 'Protestant state for a Protestant people'. The 35% Catholic minority, who see no reason why they should be trapped in such a Protestant-dominated state rather than united with the Irish majority, will not accept it.

If the breakdown of the state were allowed to run its own course freely,



Loyalists flee Dundalk. Photo Derek Speirs, Report

the result would be civil war: the Protestants would seize what they could and make it a through-and-through Orange state; Catholics in the Protestant heartland areas would be massacred or driven out; and the Catholic border areas would join the south, with Protestants there suffering the same fate as Catholics in Antrim and Down.

The British government does not want that. So it has frozen the situation, reduced it to a simmering conflict, by means of an army presence and a mass of repressive legislation. And from time to time it has made attempts to reform the underlying structures.

The Anglo-Irish deal is the latest of those — introducing a sort of Dublin-London power-sharing in the Six Counties, with provision for internal Catholic-Protestant power-sharing to grow up within it.

It antagonises the Protestants, because it was done over their heads. They rebel against it with a fair degree of confidence, because in the past their inbuilt greater weight within the existing Northern Ireland structure has enabled them to push Britain their way, and ensure that the Catholics get the brunt of the 'peace-keeping'. At

the same time, the deal shows no great signs of producing big improvements for the Catholics in the North.

In short, the deal is another attempt to tinker with an inherently sectarian structure which cannot be reformed. The only democratic programme is one which recognises both the right of the Irish people as a whole to have self-determination and an end to British interference, and the minority rights of the Irish minority, the Protestants. That must be some sort of federal united Ireland.

Just

In the meantime, the conflict in Northern Ireland is not just six of one and half a dozen of the other. The Catholics have long been oppressed and discriminated against. Their cause is just. The IRA are their militia.

But socialists need to do more than just side with the oppressed. For the Northern Ireland Catholics — a 35% minority in the Six Counties, and less than 10% in all Ireland — are caught in an impasse. They cannot possibly overpower the Protestants (even if that were desirable); at most they can 'detonate' them into full-scale civil war in which the Catholics themselves will suffer worst.

While we support the Catholics, and advocate troops out, we must also argue for a programme to counter the threat of civil war: a federal united Ireland.

Even the minimal workers' political unity that existed in Northern Ireland in the early '60s on issues like unemployment has long since disappeared. It is foolish when some socialists pretend that a blind eye to the national question and a stress on trade union unity will create a new political unity.

The 'Militant' tendency has long made the idea of a trade union defence force against the sectarians' a cure-all for Northern Ireland. It is an idea with no grip on reality, since — as the powerful Loyalist strikes have shown — many of the trade unionists are the sectarians.

Perhaps, however, it is not impossible now that some trade unionists will organise for self-protection against both the parallel threats of the UFF and the IRA. If they do, that should be supported.

The creation of some beginnings of workers' unity — North/South, Catholic/Protestant — must be paramount for us. Little progress on the national/communal issues — let alone towards socialism — is possible without it.

Fighting scab leaders

The TUC have ruled out of order a motion to force the EETPU to observe picket lines in the print dispute, or else face suspension.

The National Graphical Association (NGA) wants the TUC to tell the EETPU to instruct its members not to cross picket lines. But the NGA's motion has been disallowed on the grounds that it is a matter for the general council, not the congress.

The ruling by the general purposes committee is an attempt to keep the issue from being debated on the floor of Congress. This is completely undemocratic.

Whatever the constitutional details, Congress has the right to discuss an issue of such importance.

But the News International dispute has surely proved that angry noises against Eric Hammond, general secretary of the EETPU, do not add up to a policy to win. The union leaderships who have beaten their breasts

about the EETPU's role have not actually done anything themselves, and have meekly submitted to the courts.

Suspension or expulsion of the EETPU from the TUC is not the answer. The EETPU leaders are right wing scabs. So are many other leaders of many other unions. All the union leaders failed the NUM very badly during the year-long miners' strike. We can't suspend or expel all of them.

But the members of the EETPU are not all right wing scabs. And throwing the EETPU out of the TUC means throwing them into Hammond's hands. Threats to expel the EETPU have been used as a substitute for any campaign among the EETPU rank and file.

Weaken

In the present conditions, the expulsion of the EETPU would weaken, not strengthen, a trade union movement already weakened by recession and

successive defeats. There is a real danger of an alternative trade union centre: the EETPU could regroup with the UDM, and pull perhaps the AEU out of the TUC. That would be dangerous.

Open war on the TUC by a scab federation would not be to the advantage of militant workers. A membership war would be bad news. All evidence suggests that where different unions compete with one another, trade union membership as a whole declines.

The answer is to reach out to rank and file electricians. If the TUC leaders were serious, they would go over Hammond's head and organise the rank and file.

And if the TUC fails to act, it is up to the rank and file militants to appeal to the EETPU members.

The only answer to scab leaders with scab policies is to organise the rank and file across the unions more effectively, to build a militant rank and file movement, and fight for new leaders.

Press
GANG

News and newsak

There is news and there is Newsak. Newsak occupies a world in which whistling dogs and glamorous grannies are as important as a Middle East war or the miners' strike.

Breakfast TV and Regional 'News' programmes on both BBC and ITV specialise in Newsak. The late and unlamented Nationwide turned Newsak into an art form.

Today is the printed equivalent of such programmes. It never descends into the journalistic gutter inhabited by the Sun and the Star — its coverage of the 'tragic lesbian love triangle' for instance was relatively sensitive and unsensational, while its editorial on the Tamil castaways reminded us that many immigrants are victims of starvation and oppression.

"We should remember this when we see a strange face in town. It may... belong to someone who has fled his homeland in fear and deserves our compassion."

By Jim Denham

But this kind of thing is not what Today is really concerned about, worthy as its sentiments may be. Today devotes most of its space to stories about soap opera actors (Hilda: 'I've been a virgin for life'); pop stars ('Prince: Born to be King') and such fascinating people as Texan Carolyn Farb, who won a \$28 million divorce settlement from her third husband and seems to own a large number of Rolls Royces and Mercedes coupes.

Selina Scott (surely the queen of Newsak) seems to feature quite regularly, and Derek Jameson (who, as Radio 2 listeners will know, has recently branched out from Newsak to Musak) even has his own cheeky, chatty column.

You occasionally learn something from Today. Like the fact that the new James Bond, Timothy Dalton, is a long-standing friend of Vanessa Redgrave — thus opening up the terrifying possibility that 007 could become an agent for the Healyite WRP. Personally, I thought Robert Kilroy-Silk should have landed the part.

Then of course there are the royals. They're in there just about every day with each twisted ligament, strained ankle and fishbone reported in graphic detail by hardworking 'Royal Correspondent' Stephen Lynas.

Purveyors of Newsak will always tell you that they're only providing the punters with what they want. How then do they explain the lack of enthusiasm for Today among the Great British Public?

With circulation languishing at around 400,000 (only 250,000 for the Sunday Today) and rumours of big financial problems looming (the paper has only survived so far because Lonrho bailed it out) Eddie Shah looks like he may have become unstuck. It is even rumoured that he plans to cut his losses and high-tail it back to Warrington.

It seems that the colour photos and thinly disguised SDP politics just don't have the appeal that Eddie thought they would. Even by the standards of Fleet Street (and Wapping) Today is... well, just plain boring.

It doesn't even make you angry like the Mail or the Express. Reading it every day for a whole week is not an experience I would care to repeat.

The title of one of Today's regular features about sums it up: Trial by Trivia.

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GRAFFITI

MI5 in court

Not so smiley

There's one comfort from the current MI5 scandal. If Britain's secret police are as ham-handed about their operations as they are about covering up their blunders, then we're relatively safe.

Former MI5 officer Peter Wright has written a book alleging that MI5 plotted against Labour prime minister Harold Wilson in 1974-6; that it has bugged the French and West German embassies; that it planned to assassinate President Nasser of

Egypt; and its former chief, Roger Hollis, was a Russian agent.

It has also been alleged by MI5 ex-employee Cathy Massiter that MI5 has been spying on CND.

The British government is trying to stop Wright's book being published in Australia. It has put forward the following case.

1. Wright's allegations are true 'for the purposes of the court proceedings' (i.e. they don't want to be questioned in court about

them).

2. Actually they're not true.

3. They shouldn't be published because that will discredit MI5.

The Australian judge, a former security officer himself, has been unimpressed. "Everyone knows", he says, "that MI5 leaks like a sieve". And since Hollis set up the Australian secret police, "if Hollis was a Russian spy it sticks in my craw that the Australian public cannot be told about it".

Strike figures

Low

STRIKE figures are still low in the aftermath of the miners' defeat. In the 12 months from June 1985 to May 1986, strikes totalled only 2.4 million striker-days — lower than any year since 1967.

The Department of Employment recorded 903 stoppages in the year 1985, the lowest total since 1938 and about half the average figure in 1975-84.

The decline in strikes is, however, far from a complete collapse. The number of strikers in 1985, at 790,000, was higher than in previous low years like 1976.

Labour left:

Statesmanlike

John Lloyd's arrival as new editor of the weekly magazine 'New Statesman' raised hopes among those of us who appreciated his coverage in the Financial Times of the miners' strike — about as good as coverage in a capitalist paper of a major workers' struggle can ever be.

The first Lloyd 'Statesman' (15 August) has however dashed those hopes a bit. The major article is an account of Labour's hard left — written in a voyeuristic 'we reveal the inside story' style, though the sectarian tittle-tattle is scanty and not even very accurate.

The author, Sarah Benton, condemns the Labour left with a quote from Nigel Stanley of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee. "It has no theory". (Well, Nigel would be an authority on that, wouldn't he?).

Benton's own 'theory' has to be deduced from her condemnation of our politics as "of permanent opposition, of continuous reproach of

compromisers and betrayers" and our rejection of alliances except where there is agreement on "basic and fundamental goals".

Confusingly she also attacks the left for "cynical tactical alliances" — so what sort of alliances does she want? (Answer, probably: with the SDP).

And isn't it possible that the present system of society deserves permanent opposition, and that "compromisers and betrayers" should be "continuously" condemned? Why is the "continuous" opposition of compromisers to the hard Left better than the "continuous" opposition of the hard Left to compromisers?

China's new economics

Shares sale

MORE indicators of China's radical shift towards market economics.

Following the recent bankruptcy of a factory in Shenyang, two factories in Wuhan have been told that they will be left to sink if they do not stop losing money. A bicycle factory in Tintuan is selling £1.8 million worth of shares to private investors, promising an 8% dividend rate.

A state insurance scheme is being set up for pensions and sick pay, replacing the pre-

sent provision for urban workers by their employers. The aim is to increase labour mobility, and some 3.5 million workers have been put on fixed-term contracts (rather than jobs for life) in the last year.

Meanwhile the Chinese state has made its biggest-ever foreign capital investment, buying a 10% share in an aluminium smelter in Australia. Chinese investment abroad is estimated to exceed foreign investment in China.

LETTERS

Boycott Silentnight!

Our Trades Council recently decided to campaign for the Co-op to boycott scab beds from Silentnight, and I and another Trades Council member, Andy Day, were arrested while picketing the Co-op.

Now Labour Party branches and CLPs have withdrawn or threatened to withdraw accounts from the

Co-op Bank and the NGA have written to the Co-op saying they will do the same unless Andy Day and I get an apology.

In addition, the role of the police in the affair has now been taken up by the Police Committee. The police have now withdrawn their charges, and a senior police officer has been appointed to

investigate the complaint we have registered. Shortly we will be considering suing for wrongful arrest.

We have also won the support of the County Association of Trades Councils for any financial support we need in taking legal action.

ARTHUR BOUGH
Stoke-on-Trent

Bolsheviks and Kronstadt

However hypocritical the Tribune leader-writers may be in their use of the incidents at Kronstadt where in 1921 the Bolshevik government suppressed an insurrection, SO cannot expect to get away with such dismissive remarks about Kronstadt without a reply.

50 years ago Trotsky's reply to critics on the left wing of his own movement was that while it was not impossible that he had been wrong, other political issues were too pressing to allow him to reexamine the facts.

You fail to mention the heroic role of Kronstadt:

*during the 1905 revolution;

*during both the February and October revolutions of 1917 and during the defence of Petrograd against the white guard generals.

The sailors of Kronstadt stood out in their heroism for the revolution, heroism matched only by the workers of the Vyborg quarter of Petrograd. In consequence — so as to ensure the safety of the revolutionary government — the Soviet supreme council decreed that no serviceman should be moved from Kronstadt to any other sphere of military activity.

Rebels

So the rebels the Bolsheviks suppressed in 1921 had been the heroes of the revolution.

You say "some of the rebels raised anarchist slogans" "but they had taken the key fortress at Kronstadt" "presented themselves as wanting something better" "a naive anarchist". This asserts and implies a number of falsities.

It is suggested that only a minority supported the revolutionary platform of the Kronstadt Soviet; that there was a putschist attempt which had resulted in the seizure of a fortress in which they had no right to be; that the programme was opportunist and adventurist, advanced by newcomers to the revolutionary scene rather than by tried and tested revolutionaries; that all the Kronstadt Soviet revolutionaries — and all anarchists — are merely naive. The facts are:

The Kronstadt Soviet platform was passed unanimously and was endorsed by all organised groups on the island fortress and among the sailors, including the vast majority of the Kronstadt section of the Bolshevik Party.

The platform reiterated the original aims of the October Revolution, listed various obvious departures from the letter and spirit of this programme. Taking full account of the lack of resources it demanded the rectification of various government measures which were in conflict with the October programme. It advocated policies which



Red sailors

would carry on in the original spirit of the revolution.

In point of fact the anarchists among the Kronstadt sailors had been killed: some just prior to the 1917 Revolution, some died in the October revolution, some were later killed by white guard forces. So though anarchists conditionally support the Kronstadt programme, it was not an anarchist programme and we had no direct or indirect impact on it. The left in Kronstadt — at the time of the Kronstadt rising — was represented by the "Maximalist Socialists" and the Kronstadt Programme was certainly in line with that party's policies.

Resistance

Kronstadt was not an isolated rising, but part of a nationwide resistance to policies that Lenin himself acknowledged were a retreat to state capitalism.

Trotskyism is always anxious to pretend that the degeneration of the Soviet Revolution began with Stalin, and refuses to discuss the fact (admitted by Lenin) that bureaucratic degeneracy had begun before Lenin's death. It is really no use your branding Stalin the grave-digger of the revolution, without acknowledging that when he came on the scene there was already a corpse to be buried.

You really need to explain why within four years of hailing Vyborg and Kronstadt as the power houses of the revolution, Lenin and Trotsky sent the Red Army, led by ex-Tsarist officers, in to crush both. You cannot gloss over the fact that the Democratic Centralist Opposition (1919 vintage) within the army, liquidated by Trotsky, largely consisted of revolutionaries who had frequently risked their lives working

with Trotsky, bringing his paper from exile, into Russia, and distributing it there.

Within your own little circle of acquaintances no doubt you can get away with cheap jibes such as those in your editorial; no doubt when you sell your paper to the politically naive and inexperienced, and when you refuse to print the facts in response, you will get away with it. But you will not break out of that isolation or keep those you influence once they shed their inexperience, if you continue to ignore the facts.

Fraternally,
LAURENS OTTER,
Wellington, Salop.

Tribune

The editorial on 'Tribune and Trotskyism', SO 278, said that Tribune's recent front page article by Andrew Wilson, protesting about expulsions, showed that the message may be getting through to the soft lefts that even they may be witch-hunted.

It should be pointed out that just because Andy Wilson wrote in to Tribune does not make him a soft left Tribuneite. But it looks as if Tribune has cynically used Andy's satirical piece, which commented on his own case. They've done this to give themselves a left face, while at the same time going along with Kinnock's attack on Militant and other 'ultra lefts'.

ALAN THEASBY,
Middlesbrough.

Hatton

The editorial on Labour's Youth (issue 277, 24 July), attacks Derek Hatton. I find this absolutely despicable, especially as it comes from supposed 'socialists'.

How dare you attack this comrade. And personally, too!! A comrade who has put everything on the line — his house, job, possessions — he could even go to prison as a bankrupt — for his socialist beliefs. And you have the audacity to criticise!

In disgust,
Steve Revins,
Stafford LPYS

Cyprus lessons

Neophitos 'Tofias' article on Cyprus (SO 14 August) points to some interesting sidelights on the recent discussions in SO concerning Ireland.

EOKA was the radical anti-imperialist movement in Cyprus. It was right wing (like the Provos were in their early years), but in the '50s at least it must have had some members who saw their struggle in left-wing terms of colonial revolution (like the Provos now).

More militant anti-imperialism did not, however, lead to socialism (as some on the left think it automatically will in Ireland). It led to communal

slaughter. The Greeks, long the subject people, turned on the Turks, the colonialists up to 1878 and (some of them) the allies of British imperialism after that. The Turkish army thus got the chance to invade. Compare Catholics and Protestants in Ireland.

Of course there are many differences. But it seems that Cyprus since 1974 shows us a mild version of what could happen in Ireland if civil war is unleashed — even if that is done under the banner of anti-imperialism.

RHODRI EVANS,
Hammersmith

Letters are welcome: send to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. 300 words or less, please, or we may have to cut them.

Irish prisoners tortured

Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer were moved to Durham prison from Brixton at 4 a.m. on 31 July. They are now serving life sentences.

While on remand for a year in Brixton jail, i.e. while still 'innocent until proved guilty' — they suffered:

- *Two strip searches a day each.
- *Two cell searches a day each.
- *Four body searches a day each.

At the weekend the rate of strip-searches went up to four a day, and the body searches up to six a day.

Martina and Ella — together with Gerry McDonnell, Peter Sherry and Patrick Magee — have now been found guilty of 'conspiracy to cause explosions' for the bombing of the Tory party conference hotel in Brighton.

Although the attack on the Tory leaders was certainly a political act — whatever you may think of it tactically.

It was an act of war in the battle which Irish republicans are fighting against partition and the British military presence in Ireland — the defendants had to suffer exceptional punishment even before conviction.

The Irish Prisoners' Appeal, set up to support the defendants, is asking for letters to be sent to them:

Gerry McDonnell B75882 and Peter Sherry B75880 are both in HM Prison, Parkhurst, Isle of Wight, Hamps.

Pat Magee B75881 is in HM Prison Leicester, Wellford Rd., Leicester LE2 7HA.

Ella O'Dwyer D25135 and Martina Anderson D25134 are at HMP Durham, Old Elvet, Durham.

Republicans are also campaigning against strip searches in Maghaberry Women's Prison, Northern Ireland, and Portlaoise prison in southern Ireland.

Boost for fight

By Jim Denham

The campaign to reinstate Kevin Scally and Amir Khan to the Labour Party received a tremendous boost last week.

The General Committee of Birmingham Sparkbrook Labour Party, which expelled the two left-wingers in November 1985, reversed its position and voted by 16 to 9 for their reinstatement. The vote was on an amendment to an Annual Conference resolution from another Birmingham constituency, which "calls upon" the National Executive to reinstate the two.

Sparkbrook voted to back an amendment which substitutes the word "instructs", thus strengthening the resolution. The NEC rejected Scally and Khan's appeals by 13 votes to 12 at its June meeting.

This latest twist in the bizarre saga of the Sparkbrook witch-hunt will have come as a nasty shock to Deputy Leader (and Sparkbrook MP) Roy Hattersley. It was his local supporters who initiated the expulsions, charging Scally and Khan with "bringing the Party into disrepute."

Scally had appeared on a television programme alleging membership irregularities in the constituency, and Khan had organised a meeting to discuss setting up a Black Section in Sparkbrook.

Unions

Kevin Scally told SO: "The crucial matter now is to secure trade union support for our reinstatement at the Annual Conference. NUPE and TASS seem fairly sure to back us, and I imagine that the AEU and the Electricians will oppose us."

"The TGWU could be decisive: their representative on the NEC backed us in June, but I understand pressure has since been brought to bear on him to distance himself from our campaign."

"I'm hoping that rank and file TGWU members will mandate their delegation to support our reinstatement at the Conference."

But the Sparkbrook witch-hunters have lost no time in hitting back, using characteristically dishonest methods. An article in Thursday's Guardian, obviously "fed" to the paper by the right wing, claimed that the vote to support Scally and Khan was taken at "an ill-attended meeting of the executive committee", and quoted CLP chair Elizabeth Keene as saying the decision was out of order because "you cannot reverse the GC decision last November without giving 14 days notice and circulating every GC member".

This is nonsense: the vote was taken at a special GC meeting constitutionally called at the regular GC meeting two weeks previously; written notices of the special meeting (to discuss amendments to conference resolutions) were sent to all GC members; even if a rule did exist preventing the reversal of a GC decision within a three or six month period (as in some GCs), it would still make no difference, as the original expulsion vote took place eight months ago.

But it all goes to show that Roy Hattersley's supporters will fight all the way, and fight dirty.



Hattersley

LESBIAN/GAY LIBERATION

Will Labour fight for lesbian and gay rights?

By Matthew Davies

The issue of sexuality and the oppression of lesbians and gay men hasn't always been the favourite subject of the Labour Party leadership. Like most people, they would rather forget it, pretend it does not exist, or claim that what people do in bed is not a political issue.

Kinnock

Unfortunately for Kinnock and his fellow travellers, gay rights was put on the party agenda at last year's conference, thanks to the work of the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR), some local councils and unions such as the NUM, following lesbian and gay support during the year-long miners' strike.

The policy passed last year called for very basic measures from the NEC

such as campaigning publicly amongst the gay community, producing educational material for trade unions and CLPs, and setting up a gay rights sub-committee of the NEC to prepare relevant legislation for a future Labour government.

Not surprisingly, little has been done. As a result, the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR) wrote to all the NEC members and MPs in the North West asking for their views on the policy passed.

The response was disgraceful. Of 35 MPs written to, 16 refused to reply. Gerald Kaufmann, supposedly Labour's shadow home secretary, accounted for his lack of response by saying that he did not have to agree with all party policy and anyway, he does not believe the age of consent for gay men should be brought in line with that of heterosexuals. Betty Boothroyd replied that the passing of the policy at conference was adequate enough for her, implying that LCLGR had a nerve to suggest it should actually be implemented.

Neither Kinnock nor Hattersley replied to LCLGR's letter. Kinnock, of course, is the author of the infamous attack on Peter Tatchell during the Bermondsey by-election: "I am not in favour of witch-hunts, but I do not mistake bloody witches for fairies!"

Anti-gay

Such a lack of concern is worrying. What is most disturbing is the fact that a large section of the Parliamentary leadership can get away with it so easily. Kaufmann's attitudes are plainly anti-gay and he doesn't even need to hide it.

There is a very real fear that the next Labour government will do nothing for gay people. It is true that any legislation on gay rights will provoke some sort of right-wing, moralistic backlash, and a Labour government will need to be prepared to vigorously defend its policies. But gay rights can be and should be a popular issue. The failure of the labour movement to seriously take the issue on board is one reason why it is not.

If a Labour government follows the present anti-gay 'consensus' perpetrated by the media, the cost to the 'out'



Gay Pride

gay community and the millions of 'closeted' gays will be tremendous. When the moralist bigots gain the upper hand there is no stopping them.

In Queensland, Australia, the right wing government has introduced a new law banning the sale of alcohol in bars to "drug pushers, sexual perverts or deviants and child molesters". Police Minister Glasson is determined to eradicate the 'gay menace' which threatens to engulf the pure and goodly people of Queensland.

Commenting on the new legislation, Glasson said: "If they (gays) come out in public and exhibit their trends I will not condone it. Even dogs don't go on that way. If you go to Sydney and look at the homosexuals and lesbians, it would make you sick."

Put in such a situation the gay community has two options — to move out, or to fight.

In the past, the gay community has fought, erupting with anger and violence, often taking the social moralists and the labour movement by complete surprise. If a Labour government turns its back on lesbians and gay men it will find itself the victim of this anger as it will find itself the victim of black anger if it fails to take up the demands of the black community.

Because of Labour's past record in both these areas, many gay and black activists, along with sections of the women's movement, seek alliances between themselves outside and apart from the organised labour movement, to force governments, whether Labour or not, to act on their demands.

This strategy is understandable, but, by its very nature sidesteps the organised movements of the people whose attitudes they seek to change. Most of

the working class is homophobic in as much as it not only fears but does not understand gay people. But as the miners' strike showed, people can change their views if 'out' lesbians and gay men are seen to be part and parcel of workers' universal struggles against the ravages of capitalism.

The anti-gay ideas built in to society through years of bourgeois indoctrination can be driven out like all other bourgeois ideas, if lesbian and gay workers and their supporters confront those ideas within their own labour organisations, whilst not being distracted from the central task of building a mass working class movement that can achieve socialism.

To enable this challenging of ideas it is vital for the left to take lesbian and gay rights very seriously in the lead up to the next conference and onto the next election. The issues must be raised now in every trade union or constituency where there are people who support us.

A bill on gay rights has been drawn up recently by LCLGR and can be used to introduce discussion. More immediately, ensure that your delegate to conference has a mandate to support the LCLGR motion which hopefully will be discussed. We want a two-thirds commitment to ensure that we are not left out of the election manifesto.

LCLGR

Finally, to keep in touch with what is going on, join LCLGR — 'straight' comrades particularly welcome.

*For copies of the Gay Rights Bill for discussion, model resolutions, speakers, etc., contact Tobie Glenn (LCLGR secretary) 119 Riversdale Rd., London N5 2SU, tel: 01-226 1097.

A socialist view of Ireland

Socialist FORUM

Number 2



Ireland 69-85

Available from SO: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. 50p plus p&p.

BETRAYAL AND

Clive Bradley tells the story of the Spanish Civil War and the Popular Front government in France — a time when 'Communists' strangled the revolution

AT 3pm on Monday 3 May 1937, three lorry loads of Assault Guards, led by the Stalinist Rodriguez Sala, attempted to occupy the telephone exchange in Barcelona.

Fighting broke out. By evening, barricades had been set up and Barcelona was in the hands of the masses.

POUM

Thus the Spanish Stalinists and the most revolutionary workers in Spain, led by anarcho-syndicalists and members of the far-left POUM, confronted each other — from opposite sides of the barricades.

The POUM, as I explained last week, was not a consistent revolutionary party. It was formed by a fusion of the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc, led by Joaquin Maurin, a former Stalinist, and the Communist Left led by Andres Nin and Juan Andrade.

The programme of the POUM owed more to Maurin than to the ex-Trotskyists. And Maurin's politics were moulded by the Stalinism of the mid-1920s: a strategy of building a 'worker-peasant bloc' along the lines of Communist policy in China.

In China, this policy led to a terrible defeat. As early as 1931, Trotsky warned against Maurin's strategy: "The ideas and methods which the [Trotskyists] fought implacably [in China] find their most disastrous expression in the Maurin programme".

The POUM participated in the election pact of 1936, only renouncing the coalition after the elections. As late as July 17 — hours before Franco's revolt — POUM were calling for an 'authentic government of the Popular Front'.

The POUM failed to challenge the anarcho-syndicalists for the leadership of the working class in Catalonia. Instead of working inside the CNT, POUM militants went into the far smaller UGT. They failed to challenge the anarcho-syndicalist theories put forward by the CNT.

Internationally, the POUM allied itself with groups like the British ILP, turning its back on the small forces represented by Trotskyism.

Nevertheless, the POUM grew rapidly. Numbering 8000 at the beginning of the civil war, it quadrupled in size in the first few months. 10,000 militia-men fought under its banner.

POUM and the anarchists represented a major threat to the influence of the Spanish Communist Party. The Stalinists had a simple solution: murder.

In Moscow the remnants of Lenin's and Trotsky's Bolshevik party were being purged and murdered in the infamous Moscow Trials. And *Pravda* signalled that the purge should not abate outside of the USSR itself. "In Catalonia the elimination of Trotskyists and Anarcho-Syndicalists has already begun; it will be carried out with the same energy as in the USSR". In Moscow, oppositionists were shot; so too in Catalonia.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International declared that 'one of the most important prerequisites for victory over the fascist murderers and vandals' was 'the complete extermination of the Trotskyist POUM gang'.

All this was to come to a head in Barcelona in May 1937. Last week I described how, in response to Franco's uprising, the workers took control of the Catalan streets.

The Telefonica, the main telephone building in Barcelona, had been occupied by the workers in July 1936, and run by a workers' committee of CNT and UGT militants. So when Rodriguez Sala launched his attack on 3 May 1937, the workers took up the defence



A republican militia

of the telephone exchanged as a symbol of their struggle.

The CNT and the POUM were afraid of the prospect of power looming before them. There and then, they could have declared a revolutionary workers' government in Barcelona. The CNT leaders were later to repeat that had they wished to take power, they could have done so.

They did not wish to take power; neither did the POUM leaders. They argued that a workers' government in Barcelona would have been cut off from the rest of the country and inevitably gone down to defeat.

Of course there were no guarantees of victory. But a serious bid for power in Barcelona in May 1937 might have tipped the scales in the workers' favour. As an example of audacity and will to win, it could have spurred on the revolution elsewhere and led to Franco's defeat.

In the event, by 1939 the workers were exhausted and Franco triumphant.

Disgust

However, if the anarchists and the POUM can be criticised for failure of nerve faced with a revolutionary situation, the Stalinists deserve only our disgust and deepest contempt. The Stalinists, literally, went in for the kill.

As the workers were disarmed, the Stalinists led a murderous witch-hunt against their political opponents, rounding up POUMists, anarchists, working-class militants, and putting bullets through the backs of their heads.

A veteran militant, Harry Milton — who appears in George Orwell's book as 'the American' — remembers the days following the defeat of the Barcelona workers.

"Scores and scores of revolutionists were arrested and killed. The Communist Party, which controlled the police force, was concocting a giant frame-up... I anticipated I would be killed. All the Trotskyists, Anarchists and POUMists were being killed".

(*Socialist Action/US*, July 1986).

It was the culmination of the Stalinists' counter-revolutionary policy. Outside of Catalonia, every POUM paper had been closed down. 'Trotsky-fascist spies', 'mad dogs', 'wreckers', were rooted out. After June 1937, the Stalinists succeeded in wiping out the POUM. Its leaders were murdered. POUM itself was banned, having already been expelled from the Cata-

lonian government September 1936.

The weakness of anarchist leaders of fate. The CNT leadership, vacillated for calm. But the result was that of political defeat.

Condemning the class as a 'fifth column' they set about, as

Unity on

The Popular Front governments in France played their part in Franco's victory, too. When Franco revolted, the Spanish government sent an urgent request for military aid to Leon Blum's government in Paris.

Blum initially responded positively. But he backed down in the face of opposition from the right wing, including the right wing of the Popular Front, and from his British allies. While Franco was receiving guns from Hitler, the Republicans got no help at all from their 'democratic' allies.

More fundamentally, in a sense, the Popular Front helped Franco because of its own policy within France.

Revolutionary

As Blum's government took office in June 1936, a massive wave of factory occupations spread across France. The stated objectives of the strikes were better wages and conditions; but the movement had a vast revolutionary potential. The Popular Front broke the back of the movement in order to keep it in safe channels — economic on the one hand, Parliamentary on the other.

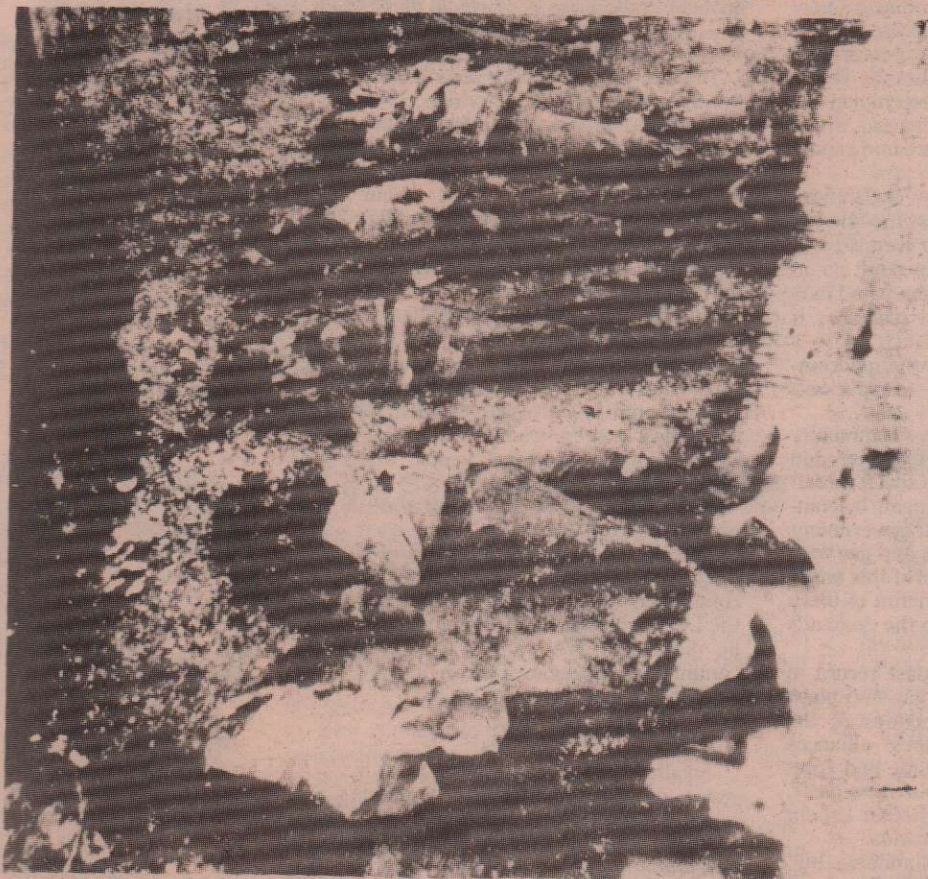
The French Communist Party's utmost to get the workers under the slogan 'Workers' Front to end a strike...'

As in Spain, a revolutionary opportunity was lost. Jean Marcel Gibelin comments: 'June '36' (now available translated by Peter Bourry, £5.95, Book

"We obviously cannot see the class struggle had developed into a scale battle for power ended with the workers' construction of a new society is one thing we cannot see the struggle was not ended by the leaders of the masses a deliberate decision to be" (p.232).

In France as in Spain the Popular Front 'experiment' was the way for the victors to survive until 1937 the shape of Hitler's occupation.

The Popular Front united the workers' class against fascism; and the strategy



Anarchist militants slaughtered by Stalinists

DEFEAT



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In this they were acting as agents of the Popular Front government, led since the previous September by the revolutionary-talking Socialist Party leader Largo Caballero.

This is the real legacy of the Popular Front that the so-called Communist Parties want us to celebrate fifty years on. The Popular Front government pitted itself against the revolutionary

actions of the workers; and in securing the defeat of the Barcelona workers they paved the way for Franco's victory.

The war dragged on until the surrender of Barcelona in January 1939. In February, while a third of Spain was still under the waning control of Republican forces, Franco was recognised by Britain and France. In March, hostilities ceased.

on their terms

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electoral pact between 'communist', 'socialist', and pro-capitalist parties — served only, in the long run, to drive the middle class into the arms of the fascists.

'Unity' with the Radicals or the Spanish Republican parties required an acceptance of their programme. 'Unity' with capitalist parties imposed capitalist limits on the Popular Front.

Working-class action — the more so action of revolutionary proportions — of course went far, far beyond those limits. The workers' leaders, besotted with the dogma of 'popular unity', could see no option but to control that action, to reimpose the limits they had set.

Barcelona

If they could not control the workers' action — as in Barcelona — then violent opposition to the workers' struggles was all they had left.

But holding back the enormously creative energies of the workers' struggle only created demoralisation. With the workers held in check, and no social alternative to the terrible decay of capitalism, the middle class turned

to fascism as an answer.

Within the Popular Fronts, the most craven, right-wing and sickening forces were the Stalinists, for whom no indignity remained too low, no outrage too unspeakable.

The victory of Stalinism in the USSR had led to the destruction of the Communist International as a revolutionary force. Trotsky had warned that the bureaucracy would transform the 'Communist' parties into instruments of their own foreign policy. So it was.

The 'defence of the Soviet fatherland' was more important than the workers' revolution. And in the Stalinist view, that 'defence' required that the security of its capitalist allies — like France — be maintained. Revolution would threaten that 'security', thereby, they thought, helping Hitler. And so any threat to the capitalist 'democracies' had to be dealt with.

Scores of working-class militants and socialists were put to death in Spain to 'guarantee' the victory of 'democracy'. That even their murders were in vain only makes of the Popular Front the more miserable an episode.

Namibia: the forgotten colony

By Frances Kelly
(Namibia Support Committee)

Every night the map of South Africa appears on our screens, but Namibia, just to South Africa's North and West, is seldom mentioned.

The former German colony is now ruled by South Africa and its 1.5 million people are subject to one of the most intense military occupations in the world. 100,000 South African-controlled troops and the "COIN" (Koevoet) death squads maintain a regime of extreme terror against the local population. Arrests, detention, 'disappearances' and murder are daily occurrences there.

Despite the intimidation and oppression the Namibian people, led by SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation) actively oppose South African rule, both through political mobilisation and armed struggle. Its occupation condemned by the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, South Africa is waging a brutal war in north Namibia where a state of emergency has existed since the 1970s.

Families are massacred as 'examples' — or because they've refused to give a woman to the soldiers; people are beaten to death — or roasted on their fires; once in detention, beatings and electric shocks are commonplace — and if a death comes to light, "the prisoner committed suicide."

The war drains the regime of an estimated \$450,000 every day. South Africa couldn't sustain this loss without a little help from their friends, among the closest of which are the eight UK-registered companies which dominate the Namibian economy. The most famous of these companies are:

RTZ's Rossing Uranium Limited which supplies its deadly product to several Western countries, and in 1984-5 made £26.5 million profit out of it;

CDM, which mines diamonds for the London market;

Barclays Bank, which makes special facilities available for the South African Defence Force's "boys on the border". All of these pay for the occupation by their taxes — and they also do useful bits of propaganda work for the South African regime abroad as a sideline.

On the political front South Africa's close friends include, predictably, Reagan, who insists on linking freedom for Namibia with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. It is worth noting that the recent vote for "Contra dollars" was preceded by overt military aid for UNITA, the South African-trained and backed force fighting SWAPO's allies, the Angolan government.

Repeatedly the South African government has tried to concoct an internal settlement which would create an internationally acceptable "independent" government. They have foisted a succession of puppet assemblies on the Namibian people. While Reagan and Thatcher would dearly love to recognise such an assembly, the clear lack of credibility within Namibia has

ruled this out.

At the end of April a conference of 16 organisations meeting in Windhoek, Namibia's capital, rejected the latest South African attempt and called for free and fair elections in a courageous public declaration (Ai-Gams Declaration).

Labour Party activists won't be surprised at the attitude of Reagan and Thatcher. They may be surprised at Labour's record in government.

In the early 1970s the Labour Party promised to conform to international law and seek an end to the South African occupation of Namibia and to end the contracts, treaties and agreements which implied recognition of South Africa's occupation. It promised also to supply financial aid to the liberation movements, including SWAPO of Namibia.

What did Labour do in government? In 1968 the Labour government approved the contract between RTZ and the UK Atomic Energy Authority for Namibian Uranium — which made the development of the mine possible. Despite later promises to terminate the contract, Labour governments did not do so.

Embargo

Labour governments first opposed the UN arms embargo against South Africa, and, even after it agreed to comply, allowed various sales to take place. Even after the UN Decree No. 1, which banned the exploitation of Namibia's natural resources, the Wilson and Callaghan governments continued to allow Namibian fish, Karakul pelts, diamonds and uranium and other rare minerals to be imported.

They vetoed UN resolutions calling for sanctions against South Africa's military build-up in Namibia, and the last Labour government worked with Kissinger to draw up a pro-imperialist plan for Namibian independence.

Solidarity is needed — urgently. *The war is causing a large number of Namibians to flee the country to take refuge in Angola. Support the NSC's material aid campaigns for medical kits, mosquito nets, sanitary towels and for a landrover.

*Because it was never "our" colony, Namibia seldom appears on the news: press the media to cover events in Namibia.

* Campaign for sanctions. Much of Rossing's uranium is processed in Britain.

There is little manufacturing industry in Namibia, but Plessey, BP, Shell and Marconi are all involved in the sale of technology, fuel and equipment to the South African military.

* Labour Party activists should demand that the next Labour government act to end all links with South Africa's occupation, imposes sanctions and pays compensation to SWAPO for the plundered resources illegally imported into Britain.

The Namibia Support Committee is an anti-imperialist, anti-racist solidarity campaign. Contact it for further information at PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW.

More on South Africa

Workers' Liberty special on South Africa: 75p plus 18p postage from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15

WORKERS' LIBERTY

Breaking the chains



Black workers and the struggle for liberation in South Africa

Campaign to defend YS



WE NEED A LIVELY CAMPAIGNING YS

The current witch-hunting attacks on the Labour Party Young Socialists are not being adequately met by the YS's Militant leadership.

The most draconian proposal, made recently by Labour's Youth Sub-committee — lowering the YS age limit from 26 to 21 — will simply behead the LPYS.

Militant is only making low-key propaganda and passing motions which do little more than register disagreement with the sub-committee. That is not going to stop the right wing from swinging the axe.

Neil Kinnock and Tom Sawyer seem to be looking to the 1987 Labour Party conference to tread all over the LPYS. Meanwhile branches will continue to be harassed, closed down and have members expelled by witch-

hunting Labour Parties, some times aided by regional officials.

The YS leadership will not act, so we must — with a campaign which publicises and organises within unions and Labour Parties with the intention of defying the right wing.

The left in the LPYS, Youth Fightback, have begun a campaign to "Defend the LPYS". It is providing leaflets, model motions, speakers and a bulletin. We also provide an answer for those witch-hunters whose cover is that they are merely supporting proposals that will reform the LPYS.

We understand very well that the LPYS needs transforming. It is currently stale, small and undemocratic, and we suffer because of it.

So, yes, the YS needs reform; but, thanks very much, we will do it ourselves. Hands off!

Activists' DIARY

FRIDAY 22 AUGUST. Half-day school on 'The Apartheid Connection' — West Midlands companies in South Africa. 1.45-5pm, at TURC, Victoria Works, Frederick St, Birmingham B1 3HE. Tel 021-236 8323. Organised by South Africa Monitoring Services in conjunction with Birmingham Trades Council and TURC.

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST. National Justice for Mine-workers TUC Fringe Meeting, Speakers: Arthur Scargill, Billy Etherington, Eric Clarke. 6.30 p.m. Queens Hotel, Brighton.

SATURDAY 6 SEPTEMBER NOTTS NUM MINEWORKERS GALA. Assembles 10.30 am, Mansfield Leisure Centre, Chesterfield Road, Mansfield, to march to West Notts College of Further Education. Speakers include Mick McGahey and Dennis Skinner.

THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, Campaign Group News rally, 'Campaigning for

Socialism'. Speakers include Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Joan Maynard, Eddie Newman. 7.30pm, Free Trade Hall, Peter St., Manchester.

Socialist Organiser meetings

NORTHAMPTON. Thursday 4 September. 'Where We Stand'. 7.30 p.m. Northampton Centre Against Unemployment, 3-7 Hazelwood Road.

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

JARROW 86. March from Jarrow to London (Trafalgar Sq), October 5 to November 2. Contact: Jarrow 86, The Electric Press Factory, 39 Cookridge St., Leeds LS1 3DW.

NATIONAL JUSTICE FOR MINEWORKERS CAMPAIGN The South-East Region Steering Committee has just opened a London Office, where sacked miners will be based for campaigns, meetings, etc. The office is at Hammersmith Unemployed Centre, 190 Shepherds Bush Road, London W6. Tel: 01-603 1831.

Fighting FUND

£300 Barbecue

From Cardiff, Geoff Williams reports that he hopes to raise £300 for our fund from a barbecue being held next weekend, 23-24th. It is being run jointly by SO and Labour Briefing, with the proceeds split between the two groups.

Other forthcoming fund events include a trivia quiz to be run by North London SO — now rescheduled from 30 August into September.

The total so far stands at £12,527.31, or 84% of our £15,000 target. Thanks this week to Jean Lane, £5; Christine Priestley, £10; Andrew Garms, £5; John Hogan, £12; other readers, 90p.

Send donations to PO Box 823, SE15 4NA.



Where We STAND

Socialist Organiser stands for workers' liberty, East and West. We aim to help organise the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions to fight to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

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

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

We stand:

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

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

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

For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion. For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

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

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Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

The price of RTZ uranium

The history of the Namibian uranium contract is a scandal for the British labour movement. The contract to supply the CEBG was signed under the 1966 Labour government and the 1974 government refused to cancel it, despite Labour Party policy. As a result, nuclear power in Britain has been subsidised by the cheap labour of Namibian workers in the giant Rossing mine, run by RTZ. As might be expected, the health of the workers has not been made a high priority, as is made clear in "A Contract to Kill", a pamphlet from CANUC*, to be published soon.

All mining has dangers but uranium mining has extra ones, due to the radioactivity of the product. It is even worse in a police state like Namibia, illegally occupied by South Africa.

The danger comes from uranium, a mildly radioactive substance, and its decay products, many of which are more radioactive and more easily absorbed.

At Rossing, 15,000 tonnes of uranium-bearing granite are moved from an open pit each week, using dynamite, bulldozers and mechanical shovels. This produces a vast amount of dust, made worse by the dryness of the region (the Namib desert) and the perpetual winds.

The radioactive gas, radon, which usually seeps slowly out of the ground, causing part of the natural "background" radiation, is released in large quantities. Its particular danger is that it passes through masks as freely as air.

'Milled'

The ore is then "milled". It is dry-crushed, producing more dust, mixed with water and ground into sand. The uranium is dissolved out with sulphuric acid and the solution is purified and concentrated. Ammonia is added to separate the uranium as the salt ammonium diuranate. This is roasted to leave "yellow-cake", 85% pure uranium oxide. Yellow-cake is 75% uranium by weight, but only 0.5% is uranium-235, the fuel for reactors and bombs.

Throughout the mining and purification process there is a risk of breathing dust and radon. Dust and splashes of chemicals can also get on the skin and may be eaten with food.

The result is a high risk of lung cancer as well as a risk of cataracts, cancers of the skin, bone and reproductive organs, premature ageing and genetic damage (leading to deformed children). As the International Atomic Energy Agency has said, uranium is "an industry in which the number of deaths attributable to radiation far exceeds that in all other parts of the nuclear industry put together."

Protection for black and coloured workers at Rossing was originally nonexistent though white workers had regular check-ups, hospitals, etc. Strikes in 1976 and 1979 raised the health question as well as food and wages. These were savagely repressed but, nevertheless, RTZ decided to clean up its act, encouraged by a desire to survive Namibian independence.

Soon, it could be boasted (?) by the

general manager that Rossing had gone from being the worst mine in Africa to being the best. The competition wasn't too hot, though — some 600 miners die each year in the South African goldmines.

So what had changed? There is now a clinic for black workers and their families at nearby Arandis (regularly dusted with uranium ore!). Racist attitudes persist, though. The Chief Medical Officer at the mine was keen to study the effects of inhaled dusts and gases on the different ethnic groups among the workers.

On the job protection consists of masks, primitive, uncomfortable and often not worn, and dust suppression by sprinkling water, in short supply in the desert. Only during the later stages of purification are protective clothing and breathing apparatus issued.

Monitoring

Since 1979, Rossing has also begun monitoring radiation levels and workers' health. These are welcome developments but there are serious shortcomings. One medical expert there always blames lung problems on smoking, ignoring the fact that it is the combination of smoking with radiation that is really dangerous.

Regular X-rays are given, though for what reason is not clear. X-rays add to the overall radiation exposure of the workers so should only be given for specific reasons. Urine tests are also given regularly, though analyses have been shown to be faulty. The film badges worn to measure radiation exposure are virtually useless for detecting the type of rays produced by uranium.

Though most radiation-linked diseases take years to show up, there is no pretence even at long-term follow-ups of former employees.

The vast amounts of waste produced by the mine represent a long-term threat to the environment and its inhabitants. "Tailings" accumulate at 80,000 cubic metres per day. Liquid tailings are pumped into an artificial lake pent up by a dam made of dried tailings, blocking the valleys into the Khan river.

Now, most uranium has a half-life of 4½ billion years (i.e. half of it is left after 4½ billion years, a quarter after 9 billion years, etc.). Many of its decay products have half lives ranging from thousands to hundreds of thousands of years. This waste should therefore be kept from the environment for many thousands of years, at least, but the tailings dam can't even protect the environment for one year!

The east wind constantly erodes the dam walls and blows radioactive dust up to 100 km away. Attempts to damp down the dust are doomed because of the water shortage. There are several ways in which radioactivity can seep into the ground water or into the river, thus reaching drinking water supplies. Pollution has been detected in the Khan river. One product of uranium decay is radium, which is very soluble and, once in the body, accumulates in the bones, causing cancer and leukaemia.

The rate of cancer deaths in Namibia is twice that of South Africa. Rossing must be responsible for at least some of the excess.

In a future article I will consider the response of British trade unions to the Rossing scandal. SO readers should see that Namibia is raised during discussions on sanctions and South African solidarity and that Namibian uranium is raised in debates on nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

*Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contract, PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW.

The English in Italy

Belinda Weaver reviews 'A Room With a View', now showing in London.

'A ROOM with a View', set in Florence and England in 1907, is based on the premise that Italy is a liberating experience for class- and propriety-ridden Britons.

The travelling British middle class went to Italy to soak up culture — to revel in the paintings, architecture and sculpture of Florence, Rome and the other Italian cities celebrated by poets.

But, as the film-makers try to show, naked statues, the crumbling beauty of the architecture, the hot climate and the passionate and violent example of the Italians also have an effect — in Italy, the repressed Briton discovers sensuality.

The Italians in the film are all stereotyped as brimful with passion, whether for lovemaking or fighting. The English, on the other hand, are mostly proper and repressed on the outside. Two characters, Charlotte and Miss Lavish, do enjoy scandal, but they are careful to talk in hushed tones.

At the lodging house where the English stay, Mr. Emerson and his son, George, though English, are exceptions — they're freethinkers, not bound by convention.

George is a personification of the emotional, natural, sensual, life-

affirming man. (He reads Byron.)

Lucy Honeychurch, a conventional English girl, meets George at the lodging house. He is attracted, but she rebuffs him until he kisses her in a field. Lucy begins to respond, but is quickly dragged back to England by her companion, Charlotte, who thinks the Emersons are of the wrong class.

England's influence reasserts itself, and Lucy becomes engaged to a prig, Cecil Vyse, the epitome of sexlessness.

However, Lucy has been awakened by her experiences in Italy, and after George reappears on the scene, she rejects Cecil in favour of George.

In this, she is finally encouraged by Charlotte, who had an 'adventure' in her youth, and who too has been influenced by Italy.

The film is based on the novel *A Room with a View* by E.M. Forster, a prominent English novelist writing earlier this century, whose books examined the manners of English upper middle class society with gentle irony.

The film has kept these gentle touches of irony and humour, and never slips into parody or the overacting all too common in costume dramas transferred to the screen.

The film is a visual treat. Even if you disagree with the film's premise, the film, especially Florence, is pretty good to look at on a wet London afternoon.



George Emerson [Julian Sands] and Lucy Honeychurch [Helena Bonham-Carter]

How revolt can be corrupted

THE STORY of Joe Colombo, the Mafia boss who briefly turned ethnic politician, is one of the most frightening stories I've come across in quite a while. Instructive, too.

Vietnam

It was told in the series 'Crime Inc' which Channel 4 is re-showing.

Perhaps significantly, the year was 1970, and in the USA there was a huge anti-Vietnam-war movement. The USA had also experienced the black civil rights movement and the black ghetto uprisings. It was a highly political period in American history.

So when the gangster Joe Colombo felt the pursuing FBI breathing down his neck, he reacted 'politically'. He started the 'Italian-American Civil Rights League' (IACRL) to campaign against the FBI's 'harassment' of Italian-Americans!

The message was simple and clear-cut, the lie big and direct. According to the IACRL, there was no such thing as the Mafia. That was just a myth put about by a racist police force less concerned with justice or with fighting real criminals than with self-publicity. The FBI had invented the Mafia and thus stigmatised and smeared the entire Italian-American community.

The Mafia myth was a burden and an affliction for every Italian-American, and it was time to fight back, said Joe

Colombo. Thus the Italian-American Civil Rights League was born with Joe Colombo as its leading personality. It slotted easily into the American system of ethnic politics, and it mushroomed into a powerful movement able to get tens of thousands to demonstrate on the streets.

They boldly picketed the FBI, demanding that it stop victimising and persecuting good Italian-Americans like Joe Colombo. They demanded more public recognition that it was an Italian who first discovered America for Europe, Christopher Columbus. The image of the Italian-American had to be changed.

Earners

Politicians, judges, entertainers, flocked to 'get a piece of the Colombo's action'. At \$10 per member, the Italian American Civil Rights League became a nice little earner for Joe Colombo and his Mafia friends.

The IACRL was a political force for about a year, and then one day in 1971, just as Joe Colombo was starting to speak to a big audience of thousands of demonstrating Italian-Americans, someone shot him in the head, blowing part of his brain away. The gunman was immediately killed by Colombo's bodyguards.

You see, the other Mafiosi hadn't had Colombo's faith in the power of the big bold lie to protect them. Colombo had broken their traditional

on the Box

By Mick Ackersley

Tracy Williams will be back next week.

code of background of anonymity, background manipulation, and as little publicity as possible. They thought Colombo's political operation would only get the FBI to turn the heat on them. So they had him shot.

Faked

They didn't quite kill him outright: he survived for seven years, incapacitated. What they did kill was the Italian American Civil Rights League.

This story illustrates the ease with which politics can be faked and vast numbers of people fooled and led by their noses — the power of pseudo-political demagoguery to drum up unreasoning movements around real grievances.

Marx said truly that ideas become a material force when they grip the masses. A big problem for socialists is that all sorts of ideas can grip the masses.

There are no political or ideological vacuums: it has to be either the ideas of the ruling class or the ideas of Marxism that prevail.

Corrupted

More than that: the emotion of rebellion and resentment can be hooked to many different ideas about the world in general — about what's wrong with it and what needs to be done about it.

Democratic political processes are routinely corrupted and perverted, not only by ruling-class political machines, but also by radical and pseudo-radical demagogues. Wasn't that what fascism — with its pretend anti-capitalism and its vicious scapegoating of Jews and others — was all about: focusing the resentment of poor people on nationalist and racist myths, and thus binding them to the status quo by way of mysticism and irrational leader cults.

One thing the Joe Colombo episode shows is the way that the expansion of democracy has separated the techniques of mass agitation and organisation from any necessary connection with serious politics or sincerely held ideas. This deadly decadence of politics is nowhere more plain than in America, where politics is to a serious

extent a branch of showbiz.

When he was accused back in 1919 of exaggerating the power of social ideas to shape events, Lenin replied that the difference between the Christian trade unions of Italy and a class-conscious trade union movement was that in Italy the workers' instinctive drive to combine together had been corrupted and taken over by 'the consciousness of priests'. The same instinctive drive could produce a fighting class movement given 'the consciousness of Marxists'. The decisive thing in the battle to make 'the consciousness of Marxists' central to the labour movement and to movements of the — like many of the Italian-Americans who rallied to Colombo's fake League — who feel themselves to be oppressed.

Lenin

The other examples of Lenin's principle are very numerous. One is the Irish Republican movement. If there had been a sizeable Marxist movement in Ireland in the '60s, the consciousness of traditional physical-force Republicans would not have dominated and shaped the Catholic revolt, and that revolt would not have entered the blind alley it is now trapped in.

The existence and activity of a socialist group can make all the difference. The creation and maintenance of such a force is the decisive question for serious socialists.

Where profits come from

By Martin Thomas

How did Marx analyse exploitation?

"The pivot on which a clear comprehension of Political Economy turns", he said, is the two-fold character of labour in capitalist society. Labour is both specific useful labour — producing particular useful things — and general abstract social labour — the mere expenditure of a certain quantity of social-average labour power. And what the worker sells to the capitalist is **not labour but labour power**.

Labour power — the worker's capacity to work — is sold just like any other commodity. Its value is determined by the labour time embodied in producing it: that is, the labour-time required for the various means of subsistence and enjoyment which the worker consumes to keep him or herself fit for work. But something special happens when the capitalist uses this commodity, labour power, which he has bought.

When someone consumes the food they have bought, or wears clothes they have bought, the commodities are used up and that is that. But when the capitalist 'consumes' the workers' labour power, **new value is created**. That value is more than the value of labour



"No to speed-up: Citroen 2 strikes". From France 1968.

power — and the difference is the source of the capitalists' profits.

The 1400 pages of volumes 2 and 3 of 'Capital' are largely devoted to showing how surplus value ends up partly in the form of rent, partly interest, partly merchants' profits, and only partly as industrial profits. But basically all these are derived from the surplus value created in production.

The fact that the worker requires for everyday living goods of a total value representing perhaps four hours of average labour-time does not stop the capitalist making the worker work eight hours a day. All those eight hours appear to be paid labour; but four hours are in a sense **unpaid labour**.

Thus capitalist exploitation is not cheating. It is perfectly fair and logical — according to the capitalists' standards of buying and selling.

However, when we say that the value of labour power is determined by the quantity of goods needed to keep the worker at an average minimum standard of living, it remains a fact that this average minimum standard of living is not fixed but can be pushed up or down by the class struggle.

"The number and extent of (the worker's) necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them, are themselves the product of historic development... In contradistinction therefore to the case of other commodities, there enters into the determination of the value of labour power a historical and moral element."

Or as Engels put it: "The laws regulating wages are in no sense iron — but on the contrary, very elastic."

Trotsky and Stalin

By Edward Ellis

IN THE centre pages this week, we look at the appalling role played by the so-called Communist Party in Spain, in 1936-37. Part of the background to their behaviour in Spain was the events in the USSR at that time.

A series of dramatic 'trials' were taking place, in which former leaders of the Russian Communist Party 'confessed to terrible crimes, and were shot. The most prominent charge was that of being 'Trotsky-fascists' — that is, agents simultaneously of Hitler and of Leon Trotsky.

Trotsky was one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution in 1917. Born Lev Davidovich Bronstein, he was won over to revolutionary Marxism at the end of the last century, and became a major writer and activist in the Russian socialist movement.

In 1905, in a revolution against the brutal regime of the Russian emperor, the Tsar, the industrial working class created for the first time 'soviets' — workers' councils. These were democratic bodies that represented the workers of a particular area, and could have formed a new government. Soviets were to reappear in 1917 when, with a Communist majority, they did form a workers' government.

Trotsky was made president of the soviet in St. Petersburg in 1905. On the basis of his experience in that — defeated — revolution, Trotsky developed a thorough criticism of the main ideas current among Marxists.

Capitalist

They argued that Russia was so economically underdeveloped that a revolution could do no more than sweep away the old system of rule by the nobility and the Tsar (emperor), and lay the basis for modern capitalist industry.

Many Marxists concluded that the capitalist class would lead the revolution. The role of the workers' party was to urge the capitalists forward while continuing to defend the workers' interests.

Lenin argued that the weak Russian capitalist class — tied to Tsarism, and afraid of the working class — would lead no revolution. The revolution could instead be led by the workers in alliance with the peasantry. It would still be a 'bourgeois' revolution, because the peasantry was a 'bourgeois' class, owning or aspiring to own private property, and the peasants massively outnumbered the workers. But the workers' party would fight for it to be the most radical, thoroughgoing form of bourgeois revolution.

Trotsky went further, arguing that the peasants could play no *independent* role. They would follow the capitalists or follow the working class. And if the working class could win the leadership of the peasantry, then the anti-Tsarist 'democratic' revolution would merge with the socialist, working-class revolution.

Was Russia too underdeveloped for this? Yes, taken on its own. But in the modern world Russia could not be 'taken on its own'. Foreign capital had already created large-scale modern industry in Russia alongside the vast expanses of primitive peasant economy. And the Russian workers, taking power, could hope to link up with workers in more advanced countries.

This theory, which was borne out by the revolution of 1917, is called 'permanent revolution'.

Although for many years there was no love lost between Trotsky and Lenin, in 1917 Lenin moved towards Trotsky's ideas on the tasks of the revolution, and Trotsky joined Lenin's party, by then called the Communist Party.

It was Trotsky who organised the Communist insurrection in October 1917 (November by our calendar) that finally put the working class in power. It was Trotsky, too, who organised the Red Army to defend the revolution against Western capitalist military inter-



Workers against Stalinism. Hungary 1956.

vention in support of Russian counter-revolutionaries.

The Russian revolution did defend itself successfully. Other revolutionary movements exploded all across Europe but were defeated or betrayed — because parties like Lenin's had not been built in time.

The Communist government was isolated in a terribly poor country, ravaged by world war and then civil war. People were starving; workers were deserting the cities in their thousands in search of food.

In these conditions, the Communist militants become more and more absorbed in the tasks of running the state and, bit by bit, more bureaucratic. Old Tsarist bureaucrats put their stamp on the workers' state. From 1923 onwards, Trotsky took up the fight against this degeneration of the party and the workers' state.

Stalin

Trotsky was defeated. The emerging bureaucracy, whose most prominent representative was Joseph Stalin, was too strong. The 'Left Opposition', as Trotsky and his comrades were called, were isolated, and then expelled from the party. Trotsky was expelled from the USSR in 1929.

The degeneration of the Russian Communists also affected the Communist International which they had founded. The Social Democrats before 1914 had blunted and toned down Marxist theory delicately, bit by bit. The Stalinists gutted the ideas of Marx and Lenin at a hectic pace, putting written-to-order goobledook in the empty husks in place of the original content. A terrible corruption befell the workers' movement and its basic ideals of freedom, democracy, equality and justice.

The Trotskyists were the sharpest critics of the absurd policies pursued by the Stalinists in the 1920s and '30s. On every question, the Trotskyists were proved right. For example, they were right about the ridiculous policy of the Stalinists in Germany, which said that the Social Democrats were worse than Hitler — and thus helped Hitler take power and destroy the labour movement.

They were right that the Popular Front — the opposite of the earlier policy and just as bad — would be a disaster.

They were right to criticise the Stalinist theory of 'socialism in one country', arguing like Marx and Lenin that socialism would have to be an *international* system, and that the Stalinist theory was nationalistic.

The Trotskyists were also right to say that by the mid 1930s the bureau-

cracy in the USSR, and the Communist Parties which it dominated, were beyond all hope of reform. The Trotskyists argued that new Marxist parties needed to be built, as part of a new ('Fourth') international Marxist party — and that a new revolution was needed in Russia to restore workers' democracy.

Not only Trotskyists were 'purged' in the Moscow Trials of 1936-7; anyone with any independent thought was to fall victim. But 'Trotskyism' was, in the bureaucrats' eyes, the most heinous crime — because it represented their most deadly enemy, working-class socialism.

Torture

The Stalinists called the Trotskyists 'fascist agents' (until Stalin signed a

pact with Hitler in 1939), and all sorts of respectable liberals and social-democrats went along with them. Today, even the CPs admit that the 'confessions' that were got out of the 'defendants' in the Moscow Trials were the result of physical and psychological torture. Many did not confess, and died in concentration camps.

Returned

In 1940, Trotsky himself was murdered by a Stalinist agent while in exile in Mexico.

But the Stalinists could never suppress the basic ideas of working-class socialism championed by Trotsky. In 1953 in East Germany, in 1956 in Hungary, in 1968 in Czechoslovakia, and in 1980-1 in Poland, those ideas have returned to challenge the bureaucrats.



Trotsky in exile

Durham miners fight back



David Hopper. Photo Stefano Cagnoni, IFL

On 16-17 August, the Durham Area NUM Coalfield Council voted to ballot its 8,200 members for an immediate overtime ban. The pithead ballot will take place over the next three weeks.

The trigger to the decision was mounting anger over the Coal Board's refusal to pay NUM members last year's pay rise, and the Area Coal Board's hard-faced attitude to the NUM.

72 miners sacked in the 1984/5 strike remain jobless, and only 12 have been reinstated. Four Durham pits have been closed since the strike.

Last week the Coal Board announced the effective closure of the Seaham section of the Vane Tempest/Seaham complex, and said the case couldn't go to the modified review procedure.

Their claim was that the 440 Seaham workers would retain their jobs by transferring to Vane Tempest, but miners know that such claims are fiction. The Board would never accept the resulting manning levels at Vane Tempest.

The transfers are due to start on 15 September.

David Hopper, Durham Area General Secretary, explained the background to the Coalfield Council's decision to Socialist Organiser:

"The main factor behind the overtime ban is the non-implementation of the wage offer, despite the fact that the NUM National Executive Committee has advocated its acceptance.

"The Board have seen fit not to pay it to the NUM, although the scab outfit has got it. 10 months have gone since the award should have been implemented — next year's wage rise is indeed

on top of us — and we feel that it's time to react.

Ignored

"The second point is the attempted closure of the Seaham part of the Seaham/Vane Tempest combine, the most profitable pit in the area. We believe that the Area union was bypassed; the machinery for the new so-called independent modified review procedure is being ignored; and the Board is just steam-rolling through. We feel enough is enough.

"The ballot for an overtime ban will be the first step in a campaign to stop the Coal Board just rough-riding through the industry.

"The victimised miners are long overdue some justice. We're getting a minimum amount of men back. On

some cases we've won tribunals and men are still dismissed.

"That's obviously a factor, together with the breaking off of the laid down conciliation and consultation procedures, which have been established in the industry since 1947.

"Enough is enough as far as we're concerned. We feel that we cannot operate as a union unless we get some strength and response from the membership. We're certainly not being allowed to do our jobs by the Coal Board.

"And we're hoping that a positive result in the ballot and an overtime ban in the Durham coalfield will be the springboard for other action in coalfields throughout the country.

"We were pleased that someone showed a lead with the South Wales overtime ban and obviously we've got to respond."

Paxmans strikers can win!

By Paul Suff

WE HAVE now been locked out for seven weeks with no end in sight. Morale among the workers is still, amazingly, very good despite the hardships and the ups and downs of the dispute.

Picketing has proved highly successful, no deliveries of any description have got in.

We were recently given a shot in the arm when Post Office workers who were threatened with suspension if they didn't cross our lines, stood firm and refused to cross. The Post Office backed down.

Our one failure was when a scab-driven hire-truck drove through late one night at high speed. The lorry was loaded with two engines and sent to Stafford, where the workers at Dorman Engines, already on a four day week, were threatened with a three day week if they didn't work on them.

We're now sending people to Stafford to try and get these engines blacked.

We are getting much more organised now and over 500 appeal sheets have been sent out.

We have received support from as far away as Scotland and Kent, from miners, seamen, printers, from all local engineering firms and from within GEC. Over £3000 has already come in. This is being used to help those in particular financial difficulties, especially single people with no state benefits.

We have also produced an advice pack which contains information on how to deal with gas, electric, phone and mortgage payments, and any benefits that can be claimed.

A weekly bulletin sheet is now being printed to keep people informed. This should help combat the lies and rumours that keep appearing in company letters and the local press.

Management have attempted to keep up with the pressure by singling out people they consider to be 'trouble makers'. Two senior stewards have already received letters warning them of their conduct on the picket line.

We had a setback when the technical staff, who had been refusing to cross picket lines returned to work. They are still supporting us financially, but conscience money is no substitute for solidarity. Ask the miners.

As the dispute goes on our resolve gets greater and we're more determined than ever to win our reinstatement and a wage increase.

We badly need to win.

The movement badly needs a victory. With your support we can achieve it. Please send donations and messages of support to: The Secretary, Paxman's JSSC, 77 Artillery Street, Colchester, Essex.

Send Support

OVER 600 Colchester workers need your support after being locked out by a 'Murdoch-style' management.

Following a ballot in favour of industrial action, 620 workers have in the space of one month been dismissed, reinstated and subsequently locked out for refusing to work overtime. The lock out is at Paxmans Diesels Ltd., Colchester. The company manufactures diesel engines and is a GEC subsidiary.

Despite GEC's massive £1.5 billion sitting in the bank (interest stands at £176 million) Paxman's workers haven't had a pay award for nearly two years. Skilled grades are on £130 for a 39 hour week.

Paxman's Joint Shop Stewards Committee has a record of support for others in struggle, not only other workers in dispute, but also worthwhile causes involving the needy and underprivileged.

This dispute can be won. Unlike Murdoch, the management at Paxman's has no ready made scab workforce to replace the locked out employees and the unusual range of skills retained by Paxmans workers cannot be readily replaced.

If the management at Paxmans are compelled to reinstate the workforce, as well as justice being done, it will be a major boost to the morale of a great many workers following the depressing defeat of the miners and Murdoch's activities at Wapping.



Women march on Wapping. Photo Andrew Wiard, Report

Fleet St. crunch

'Tiny' Rowlands has joined the press barons' war against the print unions.

Last week he announced his intention to move The Observer out of Fleet Street to new premises at Battersea and slash 650 jobs. Hardest hit will be the SOGAT machine chapel: all 550 jobs there will go because Rowlands plans to farm out the printing work to four provincial contractors. This is one of the key parts of the proposal: and will set a dangerous precedent. Maxwell has already flaked of transferring his presses to provincial "green field" sites and if Rowlands succeeds, the Mirror machine room will be decimated overnight.

Under existing TUC regulations, "green field" sites are open to single-union deals: another opportunity for scabs like Hammond to form bosses' unions.

This, coupled with the battery of Tory anti-union laws, will make it very difficult for the traditional print unions

By a member of London SOGAT Clerical

to keep their base in the industry.

The other union sections — NGA and SOGAT clerical — will also be threatened by Rowland's plans. Up to 50% of the NGA jobs are threatened by direct input by journalists and "reorganisation" of the clerical workers spells redundancies.

To smooth the way for the deal Rowlands offered the print workers eight weeks salary on top of the redundancy package "provided there is continuous production until March".

Bribery, as the NGA rightly pointed out at their chapel meeting on Saturday night. They demanded that this clause was thrown out before any discussions take place, but little else came out of the Saturday meeting. Negotiations will continue but strike action hasn't been ruled out.

TORY LAW

Fight for 5,500!

Rupert Murdoch is going back to the courts this week to prevent the six pickets at his Wapping lie factory from being "abusive" to his scabs.

He wants to keep up the pressure on the print union leaders because Dean and Dubbins are still fighting over who gets the crumbs.

It is said that 100 jobs have been offered to the strikers — all SOGAT jobs, and Dubbins isn't happy. He'd be much happier if he could tell the 800 or so NGA strikers that he'd got 30 or 40 jobs in Wapping for them.

What about fighting for 5,500 jobs,

Brenda?

And instead of issuing a notice to your members threatening disciplinary action if they don't obey the court injunction, and disperse immediately upon arriving at Wapping, how about a directive telling the 30,000 Fleet Street print workers to down tools and spend eight hours a day on the Highway?

Don't send Bill Miles down to Wapping to whisper sweet nothings to the scabs — send him to Fleet Street to tell the members to get off their arses and fight! That's what we elect our leaders to do — lead the fight for trade union rights — not help the bosses destroy us.

Much the same result was achieved at the SOGAT machine minders' chapel meeting later the same night.

Reports of the meetings suggest there is still a feeling of militancy, particularly among the machine operatives — many of them News International strikers — who know that if The Observer goes, they'll never work again.

But they can't sit back and hope that Rowlands will change his mind: he won't. If the Observer chapels came out now, and joined forces with the News International strikers, it would encourage all the other Fleet Street workers to fight back.

The bosses are still pressing ahead on all fronts. At the Financial Times, management want a no-strike agreement; the Telegraph is recruiting non-union labour through an outside employment agency for its new Westferry Road site and at the Mirror Maxwell is pressing for a Murdoch-style agreement: complete "flexibility" of labour; management's right to manage; non-automatic replacement of staff; no-strike agreement. He too is rapidly recruiting non-union staff.

The Mirror chapels are fighting back: at the moment the unions are balloting their members over this proposal, with a recommendation of rejection backed up by strike action. If the Mirror vote in favour of a strike, the whole of Fleet Street must come out in solidarity with them, with the News International strikers and with the Observer.

This is the crunch. The print unions have their backs against the wall and there will not be another chance.

The Socialist Students in NOLS column will be back in September, at the start of the new college term.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

STALKER AFFAIR

What's the truth?

EVEN IF Manchester's deputy chief constable John Stalker is fully cleared by the police in-

quiry into him, he is unlikely to finish his investigation into RUC 'shoot to kill' operations in

Northern Ireland.

Stalker told the Irish Times (10 August): "I would have liked to finish it, but so be it..."

The inquiry report is complete and due to be considered by the Manchester Police Authority on Friday 22nd. The press has speculated variously that Stalker has been cleared, that he has been accused of misuse of police cars, and (in the Murdoch Sunday Times) that he has been linked to ex-president Marcos of the Philippines!

Stalker was appointed, according to Britain's usual cosy police complaints procedure, to look into cases where the RUC shot unarmed Republicans and Catholics. It seems he took his job too seriously, and was about get senior RUC officers into real trouble.

RUC

With the RUC under tremendous pressure because of the Anglo-Irish deal, a lot of powerful people did not want that trouble. Stalker was suspended just before completing his inquiry, on vague and (so it seems) insubstantial charges.

The inquiry has been handed over to West Yorkshire Chief Constable Colin Sampson, no doubt on the calculation that he will handle it more tactfully, and anyway a delay will be gained.

The whole affair is a scandal. The labour movement should organise its own inquiry into Stalker's suspension and into the activities of the RUC and British army in Northern Ireland.

MINERS MUST FIGHT BACK!

There comes a time when the NUM has got to stand up and stop the retreat, and the South Wales lead with their overtime ban has got to be echoed by other Areas and Branches.

The Coal Board announced last week that they want to close Seaham colliery in the North-East, just after they said it was to stay open. I think there is an element of desperation in this latest round of closures.

With the possibility soon of the Thatcher government going and Labour getting back in, the Coal Board is worried. They know the pressures on the Labour government — for the reinstatement of the sacked lads, but also on the commitment for coal. So they want to get in quickly.

Dangers

Obviously, we have to be aware of the dangers of the Labour Party reneging on their promises. That is why it is vitally important that the NUM, and its supporters, continue to apply the pressure on Kinnock.

I think the general mood in the pits is changing. The miners at Hatfield Main in Yorkshire have said they will come out on 24 hour strike as part of their campaign to reinstate two miners still sacked at their pit.

Some of the men are still saying 'take the money and run', but many of the younger miners have a completely different attitude.

The 24 hour strike at Hatfield Main will give a real boost for the sacked miners. We sometimes feel a little neglected.

We're acutely aware of the problems they have at national and area level, but the sacked lads do tend to get the feeling that they've been forgotten a little bit. I would hope that other pits will take the same sort of attitude as Hatfield Main and decide we can do something.

Last week I reported on management harassment of our members in the Notts pits. We've now got written proof of what they're doing.

Our members have written to the bosses saying they're in the NUM, only to find the Coal Board saying two or three weeks later that they didn't reply to the letter and so no union subscription will be stopped from their pay. But



Miners go back at Silverwood. Photo: John Harris

we have management's acknowledgement, in writing, that the original letter was received.

This will now be dealt with at national level.

In Notts we're gearing ourselves up for the 6 September demonstration in Mansfield, and want to make sure it's a tremendous event. I would appeal to Labour Parties, trade union branches, socialists, up and down the country to please make your presence felt in Mansfield.

We don't want to be isolated, not least because the police would love an excuse to get into a group of Notts

few officers went bananas.

What they're not saying is that they were the hard core, and that it was policy. And I still think that some of those in police uniform, without numbers, were squaddies from the army with orders to go in and create mayhem and put the fear of god into people.

A lot of good came out of the printworkers' public meeting, where I was one of the speakers, in London last Thursday. The main reason was that it was rank and file printworkers involved, without the constraints of official union leaders who, in my opinion, have not done justice to their members.

But it did surprise me, after the length of time that they've been on strike, that they still haven't sorted out the sort of things that should have been decided early on in the strike — a strike committee, and action in Fleet Street.

I would only reiterate what I said at that meeting, and that is that Fleet Street has got to be called out, and that they will have to appeal to other workers to support the printworkers over the heads of their leaders.

Solidarity

We asked for that kind of action during the miners' strike and it fell on deaf ears. Money is one thing, food another, both vitally important — but solidarity action is the one thing that the bosses really understand.

That's why there are all these court judgements to try to stamp out solidarity action and picketing, because they realise it's effective and could tip the scales.

I was very disappointed last week to see that the call for the expulsion of the EETPU is not going to be allowed to go to TUC conference. Whether or not the

decision is right is one thing, but to deny the supreme decision-making authority of the trade union movement the right even to debate it is something else. They should have allowed it to go through and be placed before the membership.

No doubt the small committee went through the rule book and can find a constitutional argument about ruling the NGA amendment out of order, but their decision was still wrong and shows that they're frightened of the membership taking decisions.

Unless the leaders stop the retreat and start fighting, they're going to find themselves increasingly redundant. The idea which says keep your heads down, don't rock the boat, we'll wait for the Labour government and then everything will be hunky-dory, is a total fallacy and lulling workers into a false sense of security.

Militants in the trade union movement are saying the opposite — we're saying, the best means of defence is attack, and let's start fighting now.

And then there will be the attempt at the TUC to get agreement for Labour to carry over sections of the Tory laws on balloting. It will be covered with talk about the need to involve the members.

But nobody has ever sought a mandate from my branch on such issues. The only mandate I can ever remember giving is that we don't obey Tory laws.

I bet you Kinnock and his lot won't put that simple proposition to the rank and file — do we accept Tory laws or do we fight them?

Paul Whetton is the secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts

Defend the right to strike!

From page 1

should commit themselves to a fight against any attempt to impose legal straitjackets on them, even from a Labour government.

Labour's proposals do contain some ideas that would be of value to workers. In place of anti-union laws we should have positive rights for workers — to strike, to organise, to defend their picket lines.

The labour movement needs to campaign for such rights. The first part of such a campaign is to reject what Kinnock wants to do.

Licensed to riot

From page 1

the people who served them loyally during the strike are not brought to account for their illegal and brutal tactics.

The miners, and the working class in general, need to collect our own evidence on the police's role in the miners' strike and other disputes. A labour movement inquiry should be carried out, and the Labour leaders should be forced to act on its own conclusions.

The police should be under the operational control of elected authorities, and they should be open to scrutiny by independent, publicly-accountable investigations. At present they are a law unto themselves, under the command of Chief Constables who are increasingly open about their Tory sympathies.

The labour movement must tackle the job of bringing the police under control — and if necessary replacing its present hierarchies.

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