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The main enemy is at home

Alternative economic failure

Unemployment has doubled under the Tories to over 3 million. **Pete Green** looks at new evidence which shows that Labour's Alternative Economic Strategy even if tried would scarcely affect that figure.

There are many people on the left who would agree that the Labour Party's Alternative Economic strategy has little or nothing to do with socialism. Yet they feel the Tories have been so bad, a Labour Government must be better. Surely, they argue, anything which saves jobs and rescues the economy from the disasters of monetarism deserves support.

The SWP has long insisted that such hopes are dangerously misplaced. Now evidence for such an assessment has come from an unexpected quarter.

The Cambrdige Economic Policy Group (CEPG) is by far the most radical of the academic model-makers who churn out forecasts of what's going to happen to the economy. They correctly predicted just how bad the current slump would be. They are also the people who made the demand for import controls academically respectable. Yet their latest Report[1] is exceedingly gloomy about what any future Labour Government could do.

The headline in the *Guardian* ran: 'Tory damage needs years to repair'. But any Labour Government which attempts radical measures will be in trouble well before those years are up. The Cambridge Report itself shows that the problems involve much more than Thatcher's legacy.

According to the CEPG if current Tory policies continue unemployment will be approaching the 5 million mark by 1990. They dismiss all talk of a spontaneous recovery, a phoenix emerging from the ashes of the slump. The slump, they argue, has gone too deep for that.

Gross Domestic Product they estimate would have to rise at an annual rate of around 3 per cent for the rest of the decade just to stop unemployment from rising further. With intense international competition and a slow growth of world trade that in itself would require a drastic shift of policies towards 'reflation' or pumping money into the economy.

The CEPG show that the sort of moderate reflation demanded by the Tory wets and the Social Democrats will still leave unemployment above the three million level (and that's the *official* figure, ignoring all those, especially married women, who do not register for the dole). Yet they also admit that their own favoured option of 'massive reflation, devaluation of sterling and wide-ranging import controls' is not much better. 1.9 million unemployed by 1990 from a Labour Government elected in 1984 is the best they hope for.

Moreover that's a prediction which still rests on the dubious assumption that such a policy will meet little effective resistance either at home or abroad. This scarcely fits with their own realistic assessment of the world economic situation which is worth quoting at length.

> 'But the formulation and pursuit of an alternative strategy now presents far greater difficulties than used to be the case a few years ago. Not only has the industrial base of the economy been severely weakened ... but more importantly most other countries are also suffering recession and the prospect for sustained world economic recovery are bleak. Under these conditions, competition for market shares is now intense and any attempt by one country to steal a march over others is hotly contested. At the same time, short-term capital flows have vastly increased in scale and the need to avoid speculative presure building up against a currency has become more important. Accordingly, governments both in Britain and elsewhere have become more constrained in their choice of policies. The difficulty of pursuing a radically different strategy from those followed elsewhere is amply demonstrated by the problems encountered by the Mitterand government in France in pursuit of its expansionary policies.' (p1)

The most remarkable concession to the harsh reality of chaos and cut throat competition in the world economy, which the Cambridge Group make, concerns import controls. After years of dismissing the problem of retaliation from other countries hitting British exports and jobs they now accept that:

> 'The major problem facing a protectionist Labour government would be the threat or reality of sanctions against UK exports. This could come not only from overseas governments and official institutions such as the EEC but also from multinational companies which at present acount for the larger part of Britain's export trade.' (p16)

Despite all this the CEPG hang onto their cherished panaceas. Import Controls remain central to their conception of the Alternative Strategy. They argue lamely that if the Government can survive an initial period of retaliation exports will start to grow again. The desperation of it all is revealed by the fact that their model assumes a tariff which rises to around 50 per cent of the cost of imported manufactures.

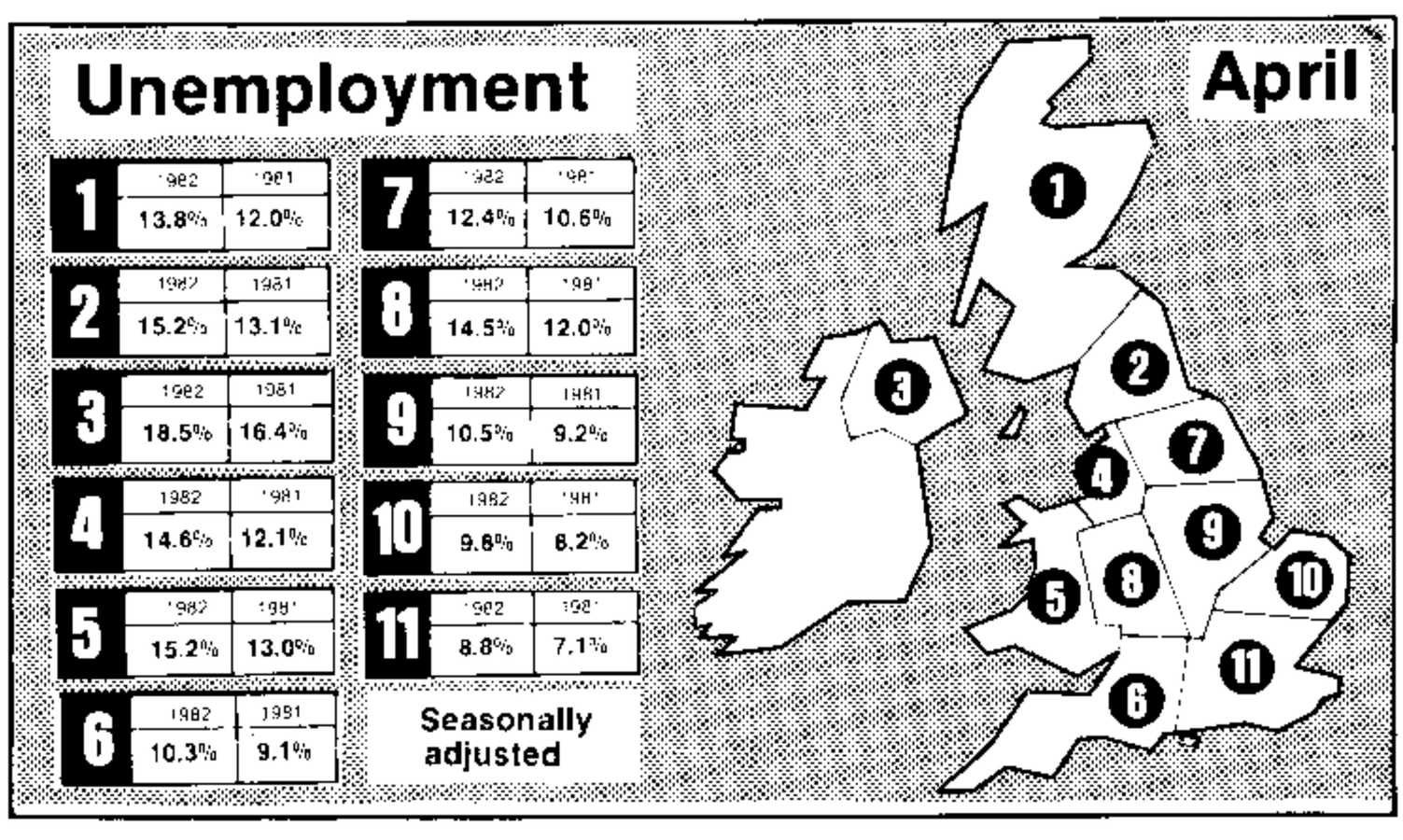
Twist and turn as they do the Cambridge academics cannot escape the logic of their own reformism. They defend 'Britain's right' to pursue thoroughly nationalistic policies and still hope for coordinated international reflation.

They also evade one crucial question, that of wages and profits. Despite a lot of talk about income redistribution, they want 'to create a favourable macro-economic environment which by raising profits and improving sales prospects encourages investment' (p23).

Profits, in other words, are what makes capitalism tick. If you're not going to get rid of the capitalists and seek to coax them into doing what you want instead, you soon end up playing the game according to their rules. The Labour Left have still to come to terms with that simple fact. Yet although no-one wants to say it too loudly an incomes policy designed to hold down wages and boost profits will be central to any future Labour 'strategy'.

The *Guardian* recently carried a lengthy analysis showing how an incomes policy was the 'missing ingredient' in the Labour Party's 'Plan for Jobs'. Michael Foot is talking about a 'new Social Contract'. The last one produced a drop in real wages of around 6 per cent between 1975 and 1977, whilst unemployment rose by half a million. Workers should have no illusions in what the next one would mean.

[1] ***Cambridge Economic Policy Review*** *'Prospects for the UK in the 1980s' April 1982 Volume 8 No 1.*



Figures from Financial Times 28/4/82

Labour's disgrace

It is the war of Thatcher's face. And it is the war of Labour's disgrace. The very fact that this crazy war is being conducted at all is thanks to the shameful support it has received from Labour.

The blank cheque was signed promptly and with enthusiasm, on Saturday April 3 the day after the Argentinians took control of the Falklands.

The special House of Commons debate was universally acknowledged to be a collective display of jingoistic frenzy. Enoch Powell spoke of court martials. Edward du Cann remembered that the Duke of Wellington didn't whine.

No objections from Labour. Instead the 'inveterate peace monger' Michael Foot positively egged on the jingoes:

> 'So far the Falkland Islanders have been betrayed. The responsibility for the betrayal rests with the Government. *The Government must prove by deeds—they will never be able to do it by words—that they are not responsible for the betrayal and cannot be faced with that charge.*'

His support was warmly appreciated. Tory speakers practically fell over themselves to congratulate him for 'speaking for Britain'. Patrick Cormack for instance:

> 'The Prime Minister should go forward from this debate, strengthened, reassured and grateful... If she feels that it is necessary to use force it will be used with the united and unanimous backing of the House of Commons.'

Labour MPs queued up to endorse that. John Silkin—Labour's 'unilateralist' defence spokesman—even took the opportunity to call for an increase in arms spending:

> 'We do not believe that the conventional forces—and in particular the naval and air strength of our country—are in the strength they ought to be.'

To be scrupulously accurate it should be noted that there were two, and only two, notes of reservation voiced to this all-party flag waving. And to be scrupulously accurate it should also be noted who made them—a Tory backbencher, Raymond Whitney, and a Labour right-winger, George Foulkes.

The day Michael Foot cracked the champagne bottle over the bows of Thatcher's task force, the Bennites said nothing, absolutely nothing.

And as the task force moved across the Atlantic the Labour leadership stuck firmly to its (or rather Margaret Thatcher's) guns. They made it quite clear that their first response was no brainstorm.

On April 14 Michael Foot was again

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stressing 'I support the dispatch of the task force', by now more than half way to its target zone. Denis Healey on the same day boasted that the 'broad consensus' between Labour and the Tories had been established 'rather more firmly and precisely'.

If anyone had any doubts about that consensus surviving into a shooting war they were to be rapidly disillusioned. The invasion of South Georgia clearly took Foot by surprise. For a moment he hesitated.

On the Monday following it he even made the vaguest suggestion that the invasion might not have been prudent. By the Tuesday he had forgotten this, and was endorsing the invasion. His only hesitation now, and he made a great fuss about it, was that the Government should 'not take any further steps in the escalation of military matters' before making a proper response to the UN Secretary General.

By Thursday even this qualification had practically disappeared. Foot readily accepted further escalation—the imposition of an air blockade—and declared once again, 'I also agreed, and still agree, that it was right for the Government to make arrangements for the dispatch of the task force'.

Pathetic left

By Saturday Denis Healey was endorsing, with positively indecent haste, the attack on Port Stanley airfield.

Given with enthusiasm, accepted with gratitude, the blank cheque was now being cashed in.

The Labour leadership have not been ignorant of the consequences of their fulsome support for Thatcher's war. Far from it.

Michael Foot, for instance, has been quite clear that his support has been necessary to conduct the war at all:

> 'If at the time of the dispatch of the task force or subsequently there were to be strong opposition in this country represented by the Labour Party to the dispatch of the task force my fear is that one of the consequences would have been to injure at least the world wide support that we have received'.

And Labour MP Peter Hardy has admitted with remarkable clarity just how the Labour jingoes have made a conscious decision to keep Thatcher in office:

> 'At the outset, it is clear that one of two Governments are at risk—either the Government here or that in Buenos Aires. My honourable Friends and I have very little cause to admire the present administration here, but in the national interest and to avoid further international ignominy, one hopes that the Buenos Aires Government collapses before ours.'

Should Thatcher call an election in a wave of patriotic fervour and gain another term in office then Labour has no one to blame but itself.

The disgrace of the Labour leadership is total. But what of the Labour left? Have they not saved Labour's honour?

Hardly. The most notable fact about the Labour left in the Falklands crisis is just how feeble it has been.

First of all there was their total silence on April 3. And that silence was doubly shameful because the patriotic fervour of the House of Commons on that day contrasted with a low point in Government credibility and bemused cynicism to the whole operation outside. This was the time to strike hard before the media barrage could begin to pull public opinion into line.

When the Benns and the Judith Harts did get themselves together they found themselves without a lot of familiar faces.

The ten MPs witch-hunted by the *Daily Star* (which included a sprinkling of maverick right wingers) may not have constituted a full turn out by the parliamentary opponents of the war. But it stands in stark contrast to the sixty or so Labour MPs who voted for Benn as deputy leader.

Many of these, like Stan Newens, have been vocal supporters of the jingoist camp under the cover of 'anti-fascism'. Less than half of them have been prepared to go even as far as Benn and Hart.

But how far have these two gone?

They have shown themselves little concerned with organising a serious campaign. Benn's first belated speech on the issue was far more like putting down a marker lest things go wrong.

And even as they have become more vocal they have been careful to preface their criticisms with an acceptance of the basic assuptions on which the war is being conducted. This is how Benn began his speech on April 28 (nearly four weeks into the crisis):

> 'The reality is that there is unanimity in the House on the question of opposing the aggression of the Junta. There is also unanimity on the right of self defence against aggression.'

Judith Hart, too, starts from the standpoint that 'there has been an act of intolerable aggression'. And that leads to downright feebleness in what is proposed. We deal with the question of the United Nations elsewhere. But what of the demand to recall the Task Force?

For Judith Hart on April 14 that became '... at this stage we should not retreat but halt the task force and allow time for negotiations'.

Note the '*we should not retreat*'. Note the '*halt*' the task force (somewhere South of Ascension Island) not 'recall' it. Note 'allow time for further negotiations'—and if these don't succeed, what then? No wonder Thatcher does not have too much difficulty parrying such opposition.

Lastly the Benn/Hart camp have been very careful not to criticise the Labour leadership for their conduct. There is after all the Peace of Bishop's Stortford, which takes priority over a serious fight against the War of Thatcher's Face. Indeed the Hart/Benn camp has been pathetically eager to grasp at any straw from the Labour leadership. Benn speaking on April 28 again:

> 'I support my right Honourable Friend the Member for Ebbw Vale (Foot) most strongly, and so unanimously does the Labour Party, in saying that until the UN option is opened and discussed there should be no further escalation of military force. Let there be no doubt: *any difference of emphasis that there may have been is over in the sense that the right honourable Gentleman speaks for the whole Labour Party in saying that.*'

The bulk of the Labour left becomes no less pathetic when one looks outside the hallowed chambers of the House of Commons.

The trade union leaders have lined up in support of the war. And that includes 'lefts' like Moss Evans of the T&GWU. He put it like this on April 18:

> 'Like any other rational citizen I would like to see the problem solved peacefully. But we can't as I see it, give any crumbs of comfort to the fascist regime in Argentina. We believe that they should get off the Falkland Islands and *if we can't do anything but use force, then force will have to be used.*'

If there are any leading broad lefts in the unions who disagree with this, then virtually all of them have remained remarkably silent.

Cheering the fleet

The final item in the catalogue of Labour disgrace is provided by the *Militant*. This 'Voice of Marxism' in the Labour Party intervened in the first four weeks of the Thatcher War with the following deeply agitational headlines:

> 'War over the Falklands', 'Workers will win nothing', 'Battle looms closer', 'Falklands war now likely'.

Three out of the four could have come straight from *The Guardian*. And when you read the text, the first half of virtually every article is a denunciation of the Argentinian regime, with phrases like 'workers cannot but condemn the Argentine invasion of the Falklands' picked out in large type.

The only problem *Militant* detects is that Thatcher cannot be trusted to wage a war against fascism. So British workers must impose sanctions on the Argentine regime and there must be a General Election to bring in a Labour Government 'on a socialist programme'. Presumably once the two hundred monopolies have been nationalised then *Militant* can cheer on the fleet together with the rest!

From Denis Healey through to the *Militant*, Labour's response to Thatcher's War of 1982 has been disgraceful. And unlike their forerunners, the open patriots or the mealy-mouthed proponents of 'peace through negotiation' in 1914, they cannot even excuse themselves by saying they were swept along by a popular tide of war fervour.

There were no white feathers being distributed on London streets in April 1982. Such war fervour as there now is followed rather than preceded Labour's suport of Thatcher's warmongering.

This time Labour cannot even plead cowardice in mitigation of their disgrace—apart from the cowardice at the roots of their whole political philosophy □

Socialism and war

The Falkland Islands crisis has brought the question of socialists' response to war to the forefront. In the long tradition of socialist internationalism, **Duncan Hallas** argues that the enemy is at home, while showing how the reformist tradition of national chauvinism lives on in the Labour Party today.

We are not pacifists, we detest the Galtieri dictatorship, we dismiss the notion that the Argentinian seizure of the Falklands is progressive on anti-colonialist grounds. Nevertheless we believe that, in a war between Britain and the Argentine, the defeat of British imperialism is the lesser evil. The main enemy is at home.

None of these statements perhaps is so self-evidently true as to pass by mere assertion. Let us therefore return to basics. What are the criteria by which socialists determine their attitude to war in general and to a given war? An excellent starting point is the opening passage of Lenin's *Socialism and war*, written amidst the slaughter of 1915.

> 'Socialists have always condemned wars between nations as barbarous and brutal. Our attitude towards war, however, is fundamentally different to that of the bourgeois pacifists (supporters and advocates of peace) and of the anarchists. We differ from the former in that we understand the inevitable connection between wars and the class struggle within a country; we understand that wars cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism is created; we also differ in that we regard civil wars, ie., wars waged by an oppressed class against the oppressor class, by slaves against slave-holders, by serfs against landlords, and by wage-workers against the bourgeoisie, as fully legitimate, progressive and necessary. We Marxists differ from both pacifists and anarchists in that we deem it necessary to study each war historically (from the standpoint of Marx's historical materialism) and separately.'

War is always 'barbarous and brutal', often horribly so. Think of the bombing, the napalm, the defoliation, the atrocities perpetrated by US Forces in Vietnam or by the Khymer Rouge. War is always an evil and it generates other evils too. Therefore, goes the 'anti-war in principle' argument, it should be rejected regardless of circumstances. No more war.

There is a healthy and progressive strand in this attitude and it is often connected with a rudimentary kind of class consciousness, 'It's a rich man's war but a poor man's fight', went the slogan of the opponents of conscription in the American Civil War.

I remember seeing, in an ordinary commercial cinema in Manchester a year or two after the end in the Second World War, a showing of the classic anti-war film '*All Quiet on the Western Front*'. At the point where one German soldier says to another 'we should make the generals and politicians fight it out with clubs' the audience, a fair number of whom must have been ex-soldiers, burst into loud and spontaneous applause.

That was a good spirit, a thousand times better than the patriotic flag-wagging of the Labour Party leaders then and now.

But, by itself it will not do. Marx and Engels and their followers supported the North in the American Civil War. Some of them, mostly German exiles, fought voluntarily for the Union. And they were right. For in spite of the horrors, the slaughter, the mutilations, frauds and the fortunes made out of war profiteering, the war for the destruction of slavery was a just and progressive one.

The judgement is political, which brings us to Clausewitz' classic definitions:

> 'The war of a community – of whole nations and particularly of civilised nations – always starts from a political condition and is called forth by a political motive. It is, therefore, a political act . . . War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means. All beyond this which is strictly peculiar to war relates merely to the peculiar nature of the means which it uses.'

The peculiarity of the means is stated by Clausewitz with his characteristic brutal clarity and total lack of hypocrisy:

> 'War is therefore an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will.'

All of which is incontestably true and fundamentally important. One thing follows immediately. For revolution is precisely 'an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will'. It is much more than that of course, but it is that or it is nothing.

But we cannot stop there. Since, in any class society, the ruling classes invariably resort to force to defend their rule – the rejection in principle of the use of force for political ends (not always, not usually, but in appropiate circumstances) is tantamount to abandoning the struggle for fundamental social change, for a classless society, for socialism.

Further, because wars cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism is established, the 'anti-war in principle' position, if widely adopted by workers, guarantees the inevitability of future wars.

The pacifist position, notwithstanding its humane impulses, is deeply conservative. That is why we are not pacifists.

But nuclear war, the threat of the nuclear holocaust, does that not alter the position entirely? It alters it certainly, but it does not change the underlying realities. There have been a hundred or so wars since the United States Air Force dropped the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, all non-nuclear (although some only just).

Nuclear war between the super-powers has not happened because it is not in the

interests, rationally considered, of either of their ruling classes. That is not to say that it cannot happen, merely to say that the holocaust, an ever present danger, cannot be avoided by burying one's head in the pacifist sand. It can only be avoided, in the end, by striking the nuclear weapons out of the hands of the ruling classes – by revolution.

From these most serious and weighty matters we turn to an affair that would be farcical if it were not so squalid and potentially dangerous - the Falklands (or Malvinas, if you prefer) crisis.

Back in the 1730's, a certain Captain Jenkins, a smuggler and a pirate according to the Spanish authorities who then ruled much of South America, a peaceful and eminently respectable merchant skipper according to his friends, was arrested by the Spanish Guardia Costa and had his left ear lopped off in the scuffle. The then equivalent of the *Daily Mail* and the Tory back benches went into paroxysms of hysterical rage.

The outcome, the 'War of Jenkin's Ear', had about as much to do with the matter as the 'right to self-determination' of the Falkland Islanders has today. It was a transparent pretext. What was at issue was the slave trade, a highly profitable business in which British slavers came out on top through various wars.

There is, however a difference. There was then a serious issue in dispute between the two ruling classes. The British bourgeoisie was determined to break into the South American markets and the rulers of Spanish America in Madrid, were equally determined to keep them out.

Not now. In the war of Jenkin's Ear, Jenkins was simply an excuse. Had he never been born the outcome would have been the same, give or take a year or two. Now, the excuse has become the reason.

multinationals operate freely in Galtieri's Argentine.

The claim on the British side that Thatcher is motivated by concern for the people of the islands, that 'the interests of the Falkland Islanders must be paramount' is a masterpiece of impudent hypocrisy.

Under British rule, the inhabitants of the Falklands have never even been allowed a freely elected local government with the powers of a town council, let alone 'self-determination'. Many of them are not even allowed security of tenure of their houses but are forced to accept the tied cottage system operated by the British Falklands Company which owns most of the useful grazing land. No serious consideration to the interests of the Falklanders has been given by any British government until the Argentinian invasion. Moreover, both Thatcher's government and Callaghan's before it have had secret negotiations with successive Argentinian governments about the future of the islands without any reference to the inhabitants, let alone the referendum now bruited about.

In any case, the self-determination argument is spurious to the core. A declining population of less than would make a respectable turn-out at a fourth division football match on an off day and lacking any social, ethnic, linguistic, cultural or historical features of its own, cannot be seriously regarded as a 'national' entity. A far more plausible case could be made for national self-determination for the Western Isles or the Isle of Man. And these more plausible cases would also be absurd and reactionary.

For, as Lenin wrote:

'If we want to understand the meaning of self-determination of nations without juggling with legal definitions, without "inventing" abstract definitions, but examining the historical and economic conditions of the national movements, we shall inevitably reach the conclusion that self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from other national bodies, the formation of an independent national state.'

In the present case there is neither a national movement nor any possibility of a national state. The self-determination argument is a fraud perpetrated to put a 'democratic' gloss on support for Thatcher's military adventure.

So far as the Falklands are concerned that is all that there is to be said but, to avoid misunderstanding, it is as well to point out that, in any case, we do not *unconditionally* support the right of self-determination. We do not, for example, concede it to the Ulster protestants, although they are indisputably a historically formed, selfconscious group with quasi-national characteristics. We reject the 'two nations' theory for Ireland and we do so because its effect is plainly reactionary and not at all on the basis of legalistic quibbling about whether or not the protestants do or do not have this or that 'national' characteristic.

The 'anti-colonialist' pretentions of the Argentine dictatorship are not much better than the fraud of self-determination. True, Argentina has some sort of more or less plausible claim to the Falklands on historical and geographical grounds and, certainly, the Islands are a British colony. But these are legal forms and abstract claims.

We support anti-colonial movements as movements of *struggle* by oppressed people against their oppressors and we support them because, as Marx said 'No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations.'

None of this has much relevance to the Falklands. There is no Spanish speaking population struggling against British imperialism. For Galtieri, 'anti-colonialism' is a convenient pretext to divert the Argentine workers away from their struggle against the dictatorship. The timing of the Argentinian invasion was no doubt influenced by the rising tide of demonstrations and strikes in Argentina. 'National unity' in support of a foreign quarrel is Galtieri's aim as well as Thatcher's and 'national unity' means the subordinating of the workers to the bosses.

We are irreconcilably hostile to both governments and both regimes. But we are in Britain and not Argentina and therefore

What we have now is the war, if it develops into a war, of Thatcher's face (in the Chinese sense) and of Galtieri's face too.

There is no longer a rational, if predatory, cause of dispute. The Falklands are of no great significance. Pure prestige and *internal* politics are the driving force on both sides.

True, there is talk of oil; but whether it exists or not is neither here nor there. After all, Thatcher's government is busy trying too 'privatise' the British National Oil Corporation, foreign oil companies hold a good deal of the North sea and foreign

the *British* government, the *British* state is the main enemy for us.

The Labour Party leaders, and even some Tories who enthusiastically supported the Pinochet coup in Chile, have discovered that the Argentine regime is fascist. That, of course changes everything! Strictly speaking, the Argentinian dictatorship is not real fascism but let that pass. Also leave aside the Tories. It is the 'left-wing' varient of this argument that matters. In essence, it is a very old one.

In 1907 the Second International meeting in Stuttgart adoped the famous resolution

on war which states:

"The Congress confirms the resolutions of previous International Congresses against militarism and imperialism and declares anew that the fight against militarism cannot be separated from the socialist class war as a whole.

"Wars between capitalist states are as a rule the result of their rivalry for world markets . . . Further, these wars arise out of the never-ending armament race of militarism, which is one of the chief implements of bourgeouis class rule and of the economic and political enslavement of the working classes.

"Wars are encouraged by the prejudices of one nation against another, systematically purveyed among the civilised nations in the interests of the ruling classes, so as to divert the mass of the proletariat from the tasks of its own class, as well as from the duty of international class solidarity.

"Wars are therefore inherent in the nature of capitalism. They will only cease when the capitalist economy is abolished . . . .

"In the case of a threat of an outbreak of war, it is the duty of the working classes and their parliamentary representatives in the countries taking part, fortified by the unifying activity of the International Bureau, to do everything to prevent the outbreak of war by whatever means seems to them most effective, which naturally differ with the intensification of the class war and of the general political situation.

"Should war break out in spite of all this, it is their duty to intervene for its speedy end, and to strive with all their power to make use of the violent economic and political crisis brought about by the war to rouse the people, and thereby to hasten the abolition of capitalist class rule."

Five years later, at the Basle International Congress this was unanimously re-affirmed, the British Labour Party delegates voting with the rest.

Two years after that, in 1914, the majority of the Labour and Social Democratic leaders in nearly all the warring sates, swallowed their words, abandoned the class struggle in favour of 'national unity' and supported their 'own' governments.

How did they justify this? Why, by pointing to the evils of the *enemy* regimes of course.

The German Social-Democratic majority, the most apposite comparison for our purpose, pointed to Russia. The Tsar rules over the 'prison house of peoples', they said, he has most bloodily suppressed the movements of Russian workers and peasants in 1905-7, his is the most brutal, backward and vicious state in Europe, the bulwark of European reaction for over a hundred years.

Of course all this was perfectly true. Tsarist Russia was every bit as vile, vicious and reactionary as Galtieri's Argentina and a great deal more powerful. Moreover it had a long common frontier with Germany and the Tsars armies were actually invading ethnic German territory in East Prussia.

What did Liebknecht and Luxemburg and Mehring and Zetkin say in reply? They said you are scoundrels, you are traitors. You have betrayed the German workers movement *and* the international workers' movement. Tsarism today is no different to what it was in 1907 and 1912 when you promised to oppose war. The war, for Germany, is 'real political instrument' *of the German bourgeoise*. You have deserted to the enemy and this desertion will not stop at temporary support for the war – as was indeed proved in 1918-19 when these same pro-war 'socialists' organised troops to shoot down *German* workers.

In Liebknecht's immortal words 'The *main* enemy is at home'. Not the *only* enemy of course. The Tsar *is* an enemy but support for the Kaiser actually *weakens* Russian workers opposition to the Tsar and since 'the struggle against militarism cannot be separated from the socialist class war as a whole', support for our 'own' government strengthens reaction *everywhere*.

Lenin and Trotsky and Rosmer and Connolly and McLean and Debbs all said, with appropriate 'national' variations, exactly the same thing. All opposed 'their own' government and its war. And they were absolutely right. Support for 'one's own' ruling class in such a war is tantamount to abandoning the struggle for socialism. For their war is a continuation of *their* politics by other means. And so, exactly, with the War of Thatcher's Face.

One good thing, at any rate, has come out of the Falklands crisis. The reaction of the Labour Party leaders has proved decisively, conclusively and irrefutably that the illusions of so many left-wingers that there has been, since 1979, a real swing to the left by the Labour Party have as much substance as fairy gold.

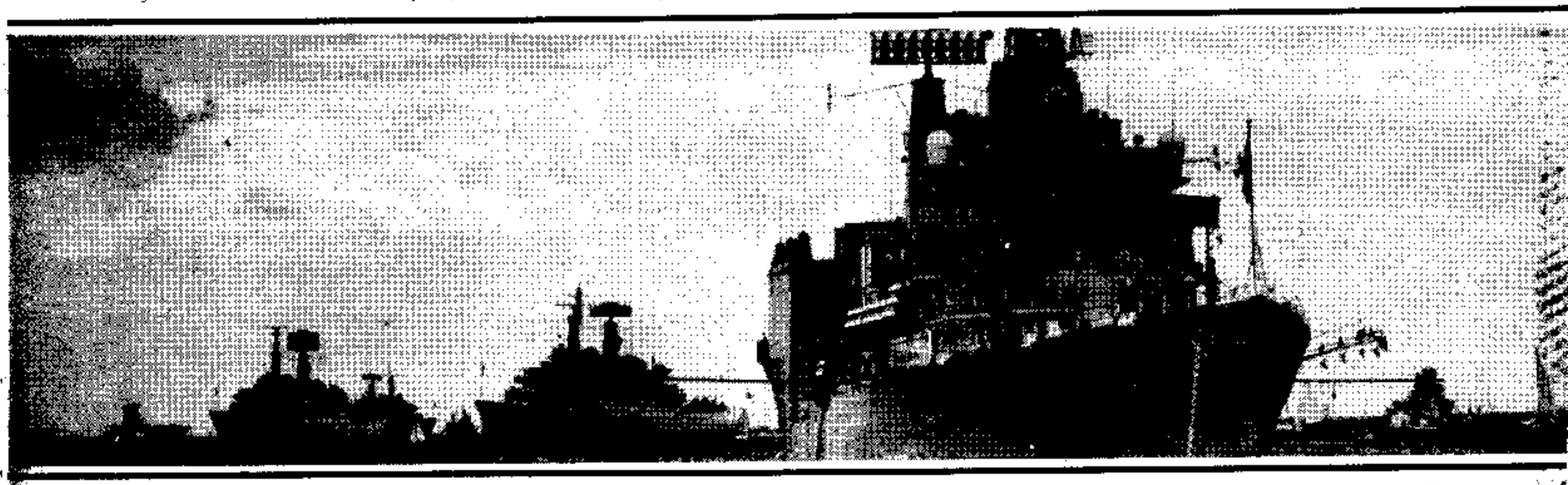
Michael Foot, wrapping himself in the Union Jack, and righteously denouncing the government's neglect of British interests (and outdoing Dennis Healy in the process!) is one thing. The support and applause he got from the overwhelming majority of Labour MPs is quite another. Not just the right but most of the *left MPs* enthusiastically cheered him on. They collapsed into jingoism at the first test. It did not take the courage of a Liebknecht or a McLean to speak out against the Falklands expedition. Merely a modicum of principle and backbone. That, in the vast majority of cases, was more than the left MPs could muster. What really matters is the spectacular demonstration of the lack of elementary class hatred, the indispensible gut reaction against militarism and war, on the Labour benches.

Can any sane person now believe that this crew, even if reinforced by re-selection and conference resolutions, could stand up to the bourgeoisie in a real crisis where bourgeois interests are at stake? If you can't stand out, loud, clear, firm and from the beginning, against a comic-opera war in the South Atlantic, you will never resist the immeasurably greater pressures of the boss class against any attempt to impose economic policies they don't want, let alone achieve socialism.

Nor can too much be said in favour of Benn and the handful of others (including that unreconstructed right-winger, Tam Dalyell) who did not back Thatcher.

Benn's position is basically, 'let the United Nations settle it'. The UN is a club of governments. We know some of them: Thatcher's and Galtieri's, Reagan's and Brezhnev's and so on, enemies of their own and every other working class. Benn's position, in fact, is not very different from such important organs of bourgeois opinion as *The Financial Times* and *The Guardian*. It may well gain him some credit, especially if the expedition proves a failure, but there is not a spark of socialist internationalism in it.

As to the Labour leaders as a whole, left, right and centre, we have been fortunate to have a foretaste of their conduct in any future Labour government – cowardly, mean, chauvinist, grovelling before the ruling class. □



Peron's long shadow

After years of silence, the British media have been stridently denouncing the Argentinian military regime. But they don't say much about the powerful Argentine workers' movement. In this article, Carla Lopez and Mike Gonzalez look at the historical background and explain how the movement against the junta has been diverted into nationalism.

Whatever happens at sea, Galtieri — the Argentine President — has already won his first and most important battle.

The great Malvinas adventure has achieved what thousands of police and soldiers failed to do — bring the class struggle in Argentina to a (temporary) halt and, apparently, unite the Argentine population behind its military oppressors.

Both the strength of the working class, its courage in fighting the military regime, and its political weaknesses have their roots in the historical development of Argentine society.

In particular it is vital to understand the importance of the movement known as Peronism, which has since the mid-1940s, assumed the political leadership of the Argentine workers.

The roots of Peronism lie in the particular situation in Argentina in the mid-1940s. From the turn of the century until almost the end of the second world war. Argentina had been dominated by an alliance between the landowning capitalists and British imperialism.

But since the Great Depression of 1929, British control of the economy had been in decline, accelerated by its own economic crisis and war. The weakening of imperialism coupled with the fall in export earnings as a result of the international crisis, encouraged Argentina to embark on a process of industrialisation. By 1944 industrial production formed a larger proportion of total output than ranching, and there was now a massive working class.

The Malvinas adventure brought the class struggle in Argentina to a halt—temporarily.

The emerging industrial capitalist class did not control the state. Rather, it was allied with that section of the landowners — the cattle fatteners — who were prepared to accept industrialisation under their control. The process of capital accumulation which took place under this alliance was possible through the represssion of the working class and the forcing down of real wages. Although Argentina's trade union movement was the oldest and most experienced in Latin America, it had been seriously weakened by divisions within the leadership between anarcho-syndicalists, socialists and communists.

In 1943, Peron became the Secretary of Labour of a new military regime. His aim was to construct a new class alliance, based on the working class, particularly its most recent recruits from the more backward rural areas, and the industrialists producing for the domestic market who were excluded from political power. The banner of the movement would be social justice and national economic development, the accumulation of wealth and its redistribution.

Peron and the unions

The project was temporarily viable because the economic situation was favourable and because US imperialism was too preoccupied with European reconstruction to fill the vacuum left by British imperialism.

Peron became President in 1946. For the working class, it meant a real rise in living standards: real wages rose by 37 per cent between 1943 and 1948. Numerous welfare and labour laws were also passed to protect the workers.

But the price was Peron's control over the union bureaucracy, as well as his decisive political influence over the mass of workers. This enabled him to stifle all attempts at union democracy and all opposition. All unions which tried to remain independent were refused legal recognition. 14 major strikes were declared illegal in 1948, and 12 more in 1949. When the railway unions refused to support Peron's election campaign in 1952, their leaders were forced to resign at gunpoint.

Peron's second period in office saw a serious economic crisis sparked off by a fall in the world prices for Argentina's exports and a series of bad harvests. Argentina's industrialisation process was dependent on importing capital goods, raw materials and fuel. The inability to keep this process going faced Peron with the choice of agrarian reform and further nationalisations or the repression of the working class and the opening of the economy to foreign capital in the industrial sector. He turned to the latter course, but the industrial capitalists frightened by the workers' mobilisations, allied with the landowners, church and military to overthrow Peron in 1955. The workers continued to defend Peron despite his turn to the right, showing that they had not broken with the Peronist ideology.

After 1955, the growth of foreign capital in Argentine industry accelerated. By 1969 150 giant firms controlled 32 per cent of industrial production and foreign capital accounted for 60 per cent of this. US transnational corporations had come to dominate the most dynamic sections of industry throughout Latin America. In Argentina this penetration took place most notably under the military government of Ongania (1966-1970), which represented a conscious attempt to repeat the Brazilian experience of 1964 and open up the economy to foreign capital while freezing wages and repressing the working class.

But in Argentina the working class led a militant and successful fight against the Ongania project. The culmination of that fight was a massive semi-insurrection in the industrial centre of Cordoba.

The insurrection, known as the Cordobazo, reflected the growth of an important rank and file movement which rejected the leadership of the corrupt Peronist bureaucracy, a section of which had collaborated with the military in the 1966 coup. Although the Cordobazo and similar movements in other industrial centres succeeded in bringing down the Ongania and subsequent governments, this rank and file movement was not sustained, and did not totally break with the political leadership of Peronism. This made it possible for the bureaucracy to contain the movement and collaborate with the Lanusse government of 1971-73 to bring Peron back from exile in Spain.

From the point of view of the different fractions of the Argenine ruling class, Peron was by then the only force capable of controlling the working class and channelling it into a populist, nationalist strategy which would preserve capitalism.

For the left of the Peronist movement, Peron represented a national and socialist option. By 1973, the strongest current holding this view was the Montoneros armed organisation. They had grown up in the post-Cordobazo period, with roots in Catholicism, nationalism, Peronism and even among disillusioned members of the traditional left, particularly the Communist Party.

The Montoneros believed that through a prolonged war Argentina could leap the phase of bourgeois democracy to arrive at socialism with a national colouring acceptable to the masses through its links with the popular movement, i.e. Peronism. The militaristic emphasis of the Montoneros (and of the non-Peronist ERP, the other major armed organisation) encouraged

Picture: Andrew Wiard

Picketing the Argentinian Embassy—June 78 ... years before Thatcher started 'crusading'

workers to leave factories in order to join the armed struggle and played a considerable role in the confusion and ultimate defeat of the workers' movement.

The Montoneros believed that Peron's return would be a major step towards their ultimate goal, and worked hard for the election which in March 1973 brought Peron's representative, Campora, to the Presidency. Campora began to implement the social pact between the CGT (the Argentine TUC) and the organisation representing small and medium sized capital. The CGT pledged that there would be no strikes for two years, in return for price stability and certain structural reforms.

But the mood of the working class, newly confident from the 'victory' of securing Peron's return, didn't fit such a pledge. They went on the offensive, demanding higher wages and greater union democracy. Campora's inability to control this movement was partially responsible for his removal. New elections gave Peron 62 per cent of the vote and he took over as president.

This time round, Peron's project was not even temporarily viable. Foreign capital was now dominant in Argentina industry, and the national bourgeoisie had no interest in challenging it.

Rather, their interests were aligned in the fundamental need to suppress the working class. Any attempt by Peron to secure more benefits for the workers could only adversely affect the profits of both national and foreign capital, and lead the workers towards the struggle for socialism. The logic of the situation pushed Peron decisively to the right, and he passed a series of highly repressive laws aimed at controlling the working class.

Peron died in July 1974, and was succeeded by his second wife, Isabel Peron. The world recession was by now seriously affecting the economy and Peronism was falling apart as a movement, its semi-fascist wing rising to power, led by Isabel's close friend, Lopez Rega, who began to organise a death squad to murder left-wing opponents.

In this situation the workers' movement again revived, symbolised in the strike in Villa Constitucion in early 1975. This strike followed elections in the local metalworkers union in which a slate committed to struggle won an overwhelming victory over the Peronist bureaucracy. There was a month long struggle in which four successive strike committees were arrested.

The determination to fight the economic strategies of late Peronism was stepped up after the introduction of an austerity plan involving devaluation and wage controls. There were wildcat strikes throughout the country. In Cordoba and Santa Fe provinces, a new type of rank and file organisation was formed, known as *coordinadoras*. In July 1975 the first general strike ever against a Peronist government took place.

It was in this situation of growing rank and file militancy, a deepening economic crisis and the internal crisis of Peronism that the military took power in March 1976. The left organisations, particularly the Montoneros, offered no leadership to the workers in its struggles before the coup, concentrating instead on military actions.

The programme of the military regime was brutally clear. To destroy a highly organised working class; to smash the guerrilla movements; and to impose a Chilean-type economic solution, which tied the economy to exports, froze wages and 'rationalised' the economy. Their first acts were to arrest 5000 trade union leaders, make all national trade union organisations illegal and destroy all social welfare organisations. The object was to 'impose Christian civilisation' and root out communism.

There has been no word from Moscow yet, however, to explain the massive level of trade between Russia and Argentina, nor to justify Russian military support for this rabidly anti-working class, anti-Semitic regime. And neither Washington nor Moscow have commented on the 10-15,000 missing prisoners within Argentina, nor mentioned the role of the Argentine military in training and advising the military oppressors of Central America.

The level of repression in and after 1976 destroyed the political organisations of the left and made workplace organisation extremely dangerous. The thousands of tortured and mutiliated bodies of workers that appeared in streets and rivers — and the thousands more that were never seen again — bore eloquent testimony to the risks of union activity.

Yet in October 1977, a general strike on the railways marked the beginnings of resurgence. Its leadership, the Commission of 25, brought together the more radical elements of the Peronist trade unions. Early in 1978, a dockers' strike began a year of many workers' struggles. Yet the moderate wing of Peronism had formed another organisation and was arguing for negotiations with the military.

A worsening economic situation — the value of real wages had fallen by 45 per cent in two years; 350,000 unemployed and factory closures on a massive scale — ensured the continuing growth of the workers' movement. And on 26 April 1979 the Commission of 25's call for a national general strike was answered by 40 per cent of the country's workers, despite ferocious repression and wave after wave of arrests and 'disappearances.'

By late 1981, the old General Confederation of Labour was reborn, an uneasy coalition of the two wings of Peronism. In November a march for peace, bread and jobs drew 30,000 people to Buenos Aires. And a few days later the old Peronist trade union machine — the 62 Organisations — was reborn.

The role of Peronism, its strange and confusing history explains the contradictory situation in Argentina today, and the place of the Falklands/Malvinas Islands in Argentina's politics. For Peronism continues to have the dominant position in working class politics. Its radical populism gives it an appeal to workers through the more militant trade union leaders (represented by the Commission of 25); its deep-rooted nationalism presents a permanent obstacle to the development of class politics and internationalism. Today, even the Montoneros share with *every other sector* of Peronism an unconditional support for the Argentine military's stand over the Falklands.

By mid-February of this year, the radical Peronists of the Commission of 25 launched a new initiative. Its three demands reflected the new strength of the workers' movement: firstly, a general wage rise; secondly, a new economic policy abandoning the free market policies and reflating the economy, reopening factories, and relaunching industrial enterprises through state intervention; and thirdly, an end to military rule and free elections.

And while the old Peronist leaders tried to start talks with the government, the 25 refused any contact until the three demands were met. A series of strikes and mass demonstrations were called in every province. In late March, 10,000 people marched illegally.

Climax in March

The climax came in Buenos Aires on 30 March. As workers began to march from the industrial suburbs towards the symbolic centre of the city — the Plaza de Mayo — 25,000 police were deployed throughout the city, barricading the main access roads. The military guarded ports and public buildings, dressed in full combat gear. More than 20,000 workers were on the march; hundreds were arrested, hundreds more seriously injured in repeated cavalry charges. Several workers were killed. Yet by late afternoon groups of workers had already reached the square, chanting: 'Out, Out, The Military Out' and 'If we are not the people, then where are they?' The working class had won the streets, for the first time since 1976.

Two days later, Galtieri announced the occupation of the Malvinas. Amid patriotic demonstrations in the capital *every opposition organisation* — from the old Peronists of the 62 Organisations and the CGT to the Montoneros, announced their unconditional support for the government's position. Class struggle was formally abandoned — and national pride became the watchword! Galtieri had found the answer to the rising challenge of the working class. □

Labour's imperialist past

The outright jingoism of the Labour Party over the Falkland Islands has shocked even their own supporters. **Colin Sparks** argues that it was only another step along a familiar path.

The Labour Party was born on 27 February 1900, in the middle of the Boer War. The founding conference took no view on this little matter. That was just as well for the infant party.

One wing led by the Fabians were enthusiastic supporters of expanding the empire. George Bernard Shaw wrote a pamphlet called *Fabianism and the Empire* in which he argued that the British Empire was a good thing for all concerned. The natives, including the Indians, were too immature to look after themselves and if we did not seize Southern Africa then somebody else would.

The Independent Labour Party were bitter opponents of the war and passed a motion condemning it.

> 'A war of aggression is, under any circumstances, an outrage on the moral sense of a civilised community and in the present instance particularly so, considering the sordid character of the real objects aimed at.'

Little matters like a war were, however, no obstacle to the pursuit of parliamentary seats, and the two sides patched up their differences.

Try as it might, the Labour Party was not to avoid its birthright. It was born in a world in which British Imperialism was *the* major force. Any attempt by other nations to alter that state of affairs would inevitably involve 'aggression'.

When the test came in 1914, the Labour Party failed abysmally. Although they began by opposing the war moves — along with the Bank of England — they rallied inside 24 hours to the defence of 'gallant little Belgium' and fought a war against 'Prussian autocracy.' They conveniently forgot that Belgium had one of the largest and most brutal empires in Africa. They brushed aside the objection that Britain was allied with the Tsar — the most savage autocrat in Europe.

The National Agent of the Labour Party, one Peters, and half his office staff left to work for the recruiting campaign. Ramsey MacDonald, although allegedly opposed to the war, sent a letter to a recruiting meeting in his Leicester constituency which called on 'the serious men of the trade unions ... to face their duty.'

But the matter went much further. Lloyd George wrote:

> 'Had Labour been hostile, the war could not have been carried on effectively. Had Labour been lukewarm, victory would have been secured with increased and increasing difficulty.'

The Labour Party responded to the call. Arthur Henderson, leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, joined the government. His decision was endorsed by a Labour Party conference by 1,622,000 votes to 495,000.

There was a minority who opposed the war, centered on the ILP. They made largely pacifist propaganda. They argued that the war was a mistake arising from the ambitions of devious leaders. They wanted a negotiated settlement and a setting up of a 'League of Nations' to make sure that war did not occur again.

This refusal to believe that wars result from the conflicts endemic to class societies, and the belief that if only the robber barons would sit down and talk in the League of Nations or later the UN is a recurrent theme in the left Labour opposition to wars right up to the present.

As the slaughter continued opposition to the war grew. It was led by militant workers who were largely outside the Labour Party, but it had its effect on that party too. It forced the Labour Party and the TUC to call a conference to make a joint statement of their war aims, on 28 December 1917.

They rejected the Bolshevik call for an immediate peace and, despite their democratic rhetoric, lined up with the war aims of the British ruling class: 'Any peace which left the Hohenzollerns lords and dictators of Central Europe would be a humbug and a sham', wrote the editor of the official report.

The conference also made explicit another theme of Labour politics. While opposing colonialism in general, they made an exception for 'The Colonies of Tropical Africa.' They proposed that these be placed under joint rule; 'In view of the fact that it is impracticable ... to leave the various peoples concerned to settle their own fates.'

The paternalism that had been a Fabian deviation 17 years before was now official policy.

If the Labour Party emerged from the First World War with little to shout about, it might be expected that they would have learnt from the experience.

They did not. J H Thomas, Colonial Secretary in the 1924 Labour Government, announced that they:

> 'intended above all else to hand to their successors one thing when they gave up the seals of office, and that was the general recognition of the fact that they were proud and jealous of, and were prepared to maintain, the Empire.'

In pursuit of that end the Labour governments of 1924 and 1929 made not one concession to demands for independence. They refused to discuss the question with the leaders of Indian nationalism, partly on the grounds that they were capitalists! On the other hand, they continued the brutal repression of all opponents of British rule, including shooting down Indian workers on strike against Indian capitalists.

The 1924 and 1929 Labour governments did not even try to lessen the daily barbarities which made up the small change of British colonial rule. For example, on 14 April 1924:

> 'Mr J Harris asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies what possibilities there are for a native in Nigeria, when placed on trial for his life, being able to secure special permission from the Governor to engage counsel to defend him; and in how many cases of the 381 natives executed in Nigeria since 1920 was this permission granted?'

To which J H Thomas replied:

> 'The appearance of counsel is forbidden in any matter before a Provincial or Native Court, and the Governor has no power to make exceptions. The second part of the question does not, therefore, arise ... I am considering the whole position in order to see if any change in the system is desirable.'

A Labour Minister was considering whether it would be 'desirable' to allow around 100 victims of execution per year to have the benefit of a defence lawyer at their trial.

Labour entered government again in 1940. Attlee was deputy Prime Minister, Bevin Minister of Labour, Morrison Home Secretary. Together they made up half the war cabinet.

In a 1940 pamphlet called *Labour's Peace Aims*, Attlee recognised the right of self-determination and said: 'We do not demand from others what we are not prepared to concede ourselves.' A problem arose shortly afterwards. The population of India were demanding their own right to self-determination with increasing vigour. The British government then interned Gandhi and the major leaders of Indian nationalism. The Labour Cabinet ministers went along with this.

The Labour Party published a pamphlet by G Ridley, called *India*, which justified the arrest to its rank and file. Ridley argued that the Labour Party had, unofficially, promised India self-determination after the war. The Indian leaders were unreasonable to demand independence now. If they were prepared to drop the demand, then they should be released and the Labour Party would open negotiations with them.

All of this might be justified by the exigencies of war. But by 1945 Labour was the landslide peacetime government. They continued to try to hold on to India until their military advisors told them it was impossible. They supported the right-wing Greek regime with troops. Not until November 1949 was it agreed to withdraw the last 3000 British troops, leaving a military, naval, air and police mission still there. It was a Labour government which 'restored order' after the Japanese surrender in Indo China and Indonesia and handed them back to French and Dutch colonial rulers.

This open imperialism, the fact that the government was busy shooting down strikers in West Africa, and the evident fact that Labour wanted to hold on to as much of the Empire as possible, caused some disquiet in the ranks.

In 1946 the Labour Party published a pamphlet, *The Labour Party and the Colonies*, by Rita Hinden. It opened by asking an awkward question:

> 'What should Labour do about the colonies? Should we blame as a hypocrite the socialist who does not demand immediate independence for all colonial people ... These are questions of concern to all members of the Labour Party.'

After some pages of argument, Hinden came to the conclusion that:

> 'Ultimately our purpose in the colonies is the same as that which Mr Attlee announced for India. We recognise the rights of all people to self-determination ... One cannot immediately apply this principle to every small British Colony, but there is no reason why we should not declare that this *is* the principle on which we are working, and perhaps to take the first steps in the most advanced Colonies, wherever it might be feasible.'

It was not everywhere feasible. In February 1948 29 unemployed workers and cocoa farmers in what is now Ghana were shot down by British-led police. Perhaps this was one of those 'first steps'?

Hand in hand with all this went a policy of rebuilding the military might of the colonial powers. NATO was the centrepiece of this strategy. Brainchild of Ernest Bevin, Labour Foreign Secretary, the original treaty included a specific reference to the 'Algerian departments of France' as part of 'Western democracy.'

The war against Communism could now be used to justify almost any action. Sending troops to Korea, fighting a bitter war in Malaya, planning the overthrow of the Mossadeg government in Iran — all were justified by the new crusade.

The Labour Party got Britain into the first Cold War but, once in opposition after 1951 it had a bit more elbow-room. It did not change its spots. As late as 1957 it was still arguing that Britain should hold on to 'small colonies', like Pitcairn Island, Aden, Cyprus, North Borneo ... the Falkland Islands.

The real test was the 1956 Suez adventure. It is true that once the invasion was well under way, the Labour Party organised a big campaign, culminating in a huge rally on 4 December in Trafalgar Square. But the theme of this rally was not opposition to British imperial adventures but the demand that the future of the Suez Canal be settled by international negotiation.

The crisis was sparked off by the fact that the Egyptian government under Nasser nationalised the British and French owned Suez Canal. Hugh Gaitskell, right-wing leader of the Labour Party, took a predictable stand. On 3 August he said:

> 'It is all very familiar. it is exactly the same as that we encountered from Mussolini and Hitler in those years before the war ... Force is justified in certain events ... We should try to settle this matter peacefully on the lines of an international commission ... force cannot be excluded but it must be consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.'

The pro-Labour *Daily Mirror* was on the same track: 'Nasser should study the fate of Mussolini.' So was the *Daily Herald:* 'No more Hitlers.'

That was the right of the Labour Party, who could not be expected to be much better. The left was just as bad. You might think that Anuerin Bevan, famous leader of the left, would be in favour of a little nationalisation. He was not:

> 'If sending one's police and soldiers into the darkness of the night to seize somebody else's property is nationalisation, Ali Baba used the wrong terminology.'

What really happened at the time of Suez was that the first instinct of the Labour leaders, left as well as right, was to rally round the flag and whip up patriotic sentiment. Once they had made certain by their support that the Tories could launch a military action, they started to think it over. They saw that the war was not very popular and that their claims to be fighting fascism were a bit thin. They then ducked for the cover of the United Nations and started to criticise. The pattern may sound familiar.

The only time in its history when the Labour Party has not been prepared to use force to defend the British Empire was when the Wilson government consistently refused to take even effective *economic* measures against the white rebellion in Rhodesia.

It is a rotten record. If we had included Ireland, it would be much, much worse.

The story is so consistent that we cannot lay it at the door of individual leaders. It must be to do with the nature of the Labour Party.

There are two main reasons. Nationalism is so strongly embedded in capitalist society that the threat of war usually sparks off popular enthusiasm. The Labour Party is so dedicated to winning votes that its initial response is always to swim with this tide. It often tries to lead it. Principles count for nothing at the ballot box.

Capitalist wars are so obviously designed to secure profits for some gangster or another that working class feeling always turns against them sooner or later. The Labour Party starts to back away from its patriotism. Then they start putting up the smokescreen of the UN or whatever to cover their retreat.

The second reason explains why they can never manage to fight against the 'National Interest'. A war is, by definition an armed struggle and short of a civil war, it is a struggle between states. But the Labour Party believes that the state is a neutral instrument which they hope to use to change society. Therefore it is of overriding importance to defend the state. Without it, you cannot have reforms. So the best that the Labour Party can manage is half-hearted, pacifist opposition to war. □

There's nothing like a good war ...

Socialist Review readers obliged to venture into the Fleet Street battle zone in the immediate future would be well advised to invest in a thunderbolt-proof umbrella and a sound pair of insulated boots.

There is no doubt that the Falklands crisis has driven the bulk of the British press stark, staring mad.

Even for the most hardened media junkie, the depths of war mongering frenzy plumbed by *The Sun, Daily Mail, Express,* etc, is a sinister and sickening spectacle.

Only a few weeks ago Argentina, in what passes for the mind of the average sub-editor, was quite a pleasant place. It was a commendably firm bulwark-against-Communism sort of government with a nice line in corned beef.

There couldn't be much wrong, could there, with a junta comprised of Prince Philip's polo-playing chums, and such a prodigious appetite for British military hardware?

Then, literally overnight, friend became foe, 'firm government' became bestial dictatorship.

Compare this: (*Times*, March 31st): 'The territory in question is impoverished and inhospitable... Neither country (Britain and Argentina) has the slightest reason otherwise to quarrel with the other, and each has every reason to be on excellent terms.'

With this (*Sunday Express*, April 11th): '...they should have no doubt as to the capability and determination of the forces of the Crown physically to remove them from British territory and to liberate our people from a fascist dictatorship.'

Or *The People* (April 11th): 'Argentina... practices tyranny at home and troublemaking all over South America.'

A week is indeed a long time in politics. Flavour of *this* month is definitely 'fascist dictatorship'. You could almost hear the plaintive queries in the newsrooms: 'How *do* you spell the bloody word, anyway? Is it s before c, or c before s?'

Why the addition of 'tinpot' was universally thought necessary is an interesting question—is a tin-pot fascist dictatorship better or worse than the usual kind?

Life really began to imitate art (Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop* anyway) when the fleet set off to teach Johnny Gaucho a lesson he won't forget.

The Sun, never backward in coming forward in these matters, ran a somewhat premature 'Special War Issue'.

Prominent was a picture with the strap-line, 'Goodbye My Brave Love', and this incredible caption: 'Rifle in hand a British soldier gets a last, lingering kiss from the woman he loves before setting off to face the enemy.'

Love and death... much better than Bingo for shifting newspapers.

For some perverse reason, the smell of cordite seemed to whip the floating hacks into a state of ecstatic frenzy: exceeded only the *The Sun*'s 'I Hunt The Enemy With Andy'. It seems that our Warrior Prince was actually somewhere else entirely—as was 'The Enemy'—but why spoil a good story with quibbles.

If and when this whole absurd affair turns into something rather more bloody than an expensive farce, we had better remember Orwell's dictum that, 'The first casualty in war is always the truth.'

The Ministry of Defence rule book, to which war correspondents are accountable, defines their role as, 'Leading and steadying public opinion in times of crisis.'

Not that this bunch of gung-ho glory seekers are likely to need a rule book waved at them—a quick burst of gunfire should soon dispel any deviant tendencies.

For those who do not share the media's enthusiasm for the prospect of blood and floating corpses, *The News of the World* has this message: ' We must show the world that Britain still has CLOUT...' 'At best Benn and Co are guilty of defeatist claptrap.'

'At best'? What might 'at worst' be—white feathers followed by the firing squad for cowardice in face of the enemy?

The British press, with one or two exceptions, is bored with peace. They want war. Not the unpopular and unwinnable one in Ireland, but a proper, glamorous, old-fashioned sort of war.

They want it for the same reasons that newspapers always want war—to sell more newspapers, and distract attention from soaring unemployment and plummeting living standards at home.

On the day that Thatcher told us to 'Rejoice!' because British marines were on the uninhabited rock called South Georgia, *The News of the World* urged her on with an editorial, 'Why We Must Go To War'.

'The time for talking is over... Britain now waits for Mrs Thatcher to get on with the job, whatever the bloody consequences.'

Marx once capped a quote from Hegel by observing: 'History does repeat itself, but the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.'

The Falklands affair is certainly a farce. By the time you read this, Fleet Street and Thatcher between them seem likely to have gone one stage further and turned it into a murderous, tragic farce.

Paul Bryden

Poland: the workers' resistance

'The winter is yours' Polish workers told their rulers last December. 'But the spring will be ours.' The May Day weekend saw massive demonstrations and riots in Warsaw and other Polish cities. **Kara Weber** looks at the repression in Poland and the continuing resistance.

The courts still hand out vicious sentences for oppositional activities. Seven secondary school pupils sentenced on 9 March to between 1 and 1½ years for handing out leaflets; in April Piotr Wasilewski got three years for reading out loud illegal publications to his pupils; Antonina Dutkowska — three years for trade union activities; Stanislaw Dylag — four years for refusing to comply with an order to work as a driver. These are just a few names from the long lists flooding out of Poland: testament to the widespread oppositional activity which met the establishment of the state of war. Sentences of three to four years seem to be the norm but a sizeable minority get seven years or more.

Clearly, no one undertakes oppositional activity lightly in these circumstances. Yet it goes on. One recent report says:

> 'Solidarity continues functioning and existing resistance groups enjoy considerable prestige, whilst other groups spring up. The independent presses flourish and receive wide circulation inside factories across the country. Though still present, fear no longer paralyses the opposition.'

A Solidarity leaflet from Warsaw urged the creation of Circles of Social Resistance (KOS), which clearly draw upon the traditions established during the wartime fight against the Nazis.

> 'If you do not want to surrender, if you cannot reconcile yourself to terror, start immediately to organise KOS. Look around your acquaintances, friends and co-workers. Find among them those whom you know think and feel as you do, and propose to them the creation of KOS.
>
> Attention: persons known for their oppositional activity in the past and followed by the secret police, or those engaged in underground activities cannot establish a KOS.

A KOS consists at most of five members who know and trust each other. KOS is a secret cell of social resistance. KOS gathers and transmits information about incidents and repression. KOS organises help for the victims of the repression and their families. KOS collects money for common aid, for publications and for other organisational purposes.

Each member of KOS establishes another KOS. The newly created KOS acts independently, in full secrecy, maintaining contact with the mother circle only through the first person. Individual KOSes collaborate with each other through those who established them, transmitting instructions concerning joint actions, money, materials, etc.

Let us try to cover the entire society with a network of KOSes. Let us use personal contacts and family ties. Let us act decisively, courageously and with common sense.

Solidarity was, is and will be.'

This summarises the scope of Solidarity activity at present. Propaganda, graffiti and leaflets, looking after those in hiding, those sacked and the families of those in gaol. The survival of this activity is vital and deserves all the support, all the practical help that we as fellow trade unionists and socialists can give it.

The survival of the workers' movement in Poland will not be easy. Despair and disappointment, especially after the high hopes of last year, will do even more damage that the violent repression at least in the short term.

In the days immediately following the coup even when protest strikes were smashed, Solidarity urged workers to apply a universal go-slow. 'A slave's pace is a snail's pace' urged the slogan. The huge Ursus factory complex managed the grant total output of two tractors in two weeks. In the first two weeks after the coup the FSO car factory in Warsaw, which should produce 350 Polski Fiats per day only managed to exceed a hundred cars on four days and its daily average for the period was 65 cars.

However, this form of resistance didn't last long. On 19 January the Solidarity Warsaw bulletin reported that, even in a traditional workers stronghold such as Ursus, production was back to pre-coup levels. The price rises of several hundred percent for many essential food items which were then imminent forced workers to squeeze as much from their piece-rates as possible. After the price rises the average hourly wage would buy less than three ounces of ham, or four eggs, or one kilo bag of sugar. It was a stark choice: work or starve. Management was also sacking large numbers of workers for slack work, and this too, ate into the resistance of the go-slow movement. Similar reports were coming in from the mining regions of Silesia, where miners were forced to work ten hour shifts and coal production has indeed risen by some 14 per cent.

Warsaw Solidarity Chairman Zbyszek Bujak, still at large and in hiding, has said that if a factory felt strong enough to strike for the release of its internees it should do so, but so far there have not been any reports of strikes of this nature. He also talked of a nation-wide 15 minute protest strike, but perhaps in two or three months time 'when the situation becomes a little clearer.'

Muddled perspectives

So far as we know Solidarity has not been able to organise a fully co-ordinated *national* organisation, something which may not be in itself a crucial disability, for the union's regional organisations were often its strongest and best features. What is more important is the fact, that while the short term tasks of defending the organisation and its victimised members are very clear, the long term political perspective seems as muddled as ever it was before the coup.

To some extent there seems to be, incredibly, a level of overoptimism. The regional strike committee in Wroclaw drafted the following proposal in January:

> 'Solidarity will grant amnesty to all persons who are currently engaged in activities aimed against the interests of Polish society and the Polish nation and who violate the civic rights of the Polish people, provided they stop such activities by 2 February 1982 and disclose the scope of their actions by 1 March 1982.'

This contrasts almost surrealistically with the open brutality and confidence of the security forces. One example will suffice to illustrate this. On the 13 February in the internment camp at Wierzchowo Pomorskie, on the western part of the coast, in an unprovoked attack prisoners were dragged out of their cells and beaten up.

> 'In cell No 20, where, after shouts in the corridor of "Oh God, Oh Jesus!", "Don't hit me over the head!", Piotr Baumgart reacted by shouting to one of those in charge: "Sir, what is happening out there?" As if in answer several infuriated guards burst into the cell, and amongst the blows, kicks and slaps could be heard shouts of "Beat those Walesa-ites, sons of whores!" "Go to Lech, maybe he'll help you!" After the first beatings Lt Ambryszewski barked the order: "Fucking Walesa-ites, get into the corridor!" The prisoners saw that this order was yet another prelude to the "Path of Health". One internee runs along the snow barefoot; another, after a blow to the stomach, in his own excrement. All five of them try to protect their heads from the raining blows.'

After this treatment Piotr Baumgart was one of three prisoners exhibiting symptoms of brain damage. Altogether 12 prisoners were 'severely beaten' while 30 suffered 'lighter beatings.'

Solidarity's leadership argues that terror cannot last forever. That it is possible to make a people submit by using terror, but that it is impossible to govern for any length of time by terror alone. There is much truth in this assertion, as there is in the assessment that Jaruzelski has virtually no support at all in Polish society. But these two factors are not sufficient to ensure the ultimate victory of the Polish workers, nor to force the ruling class to submit and parley with the union or some other authentic organisation of the working class. Yet this seems to be the assumption which governs the long term vision of those organising underground.

Jacek Kuron, writing in Bialoleka internment camp, has made an attempt to map out a longer term strategy in rather greater detail, and has correctly identified two of the forces most responsible for the survival of exploitation and oppression in Poland: Russian domination and (by implication) the Catholic Church. His conclusions however are riddled with contradictions.

> 'After August 1980 the Polish nation became unified as never before. The problems came when the Soviet threat was realised and the nation understood it had to relinquish some essential parts of its aspirations. We argued about what these had to be, or should be, and we attempted to reach a compromise with those in Poland who represented Soviet interests. For the sake of compromise Poles generally accepted the decisive role of such people. We asked only for social control over their actions, and for genuine representation of the Polish nation whenever vital decisions were made. Those people did not wish to compromise ... on 13 December 1981 they smashed any hopes of social compromise, a compromise between society and the ruling class, which is now unimaginable ... However, the Church is opting for a compromise and the Church is the highest moral authority in Poland.

Solidarnosc: From Gdansk to Military Repression is the first full-length analysis of Solidarnosc to be written since the imposition of military rule. Drawing on a variety of original Polish sources Colin Barker and Kara Weber trace the unfolding crisis in Poland and the debates it provoked within Solidarnosc. They argue that Solidarnosc was too deeply rooted in the factories to be co-opted, that real revolutionary possibilities existed, but tragically this was only grasped by the radical wing of Solidarnosc too late.

The book also includes a major section on the underlying causes of the Polish economic crisis.

160 pages £1.95 from all good bookshops or (plus 30p post) from IS Journal, PO Box 82, London E2.

Warsaw Solidarnosc supporters fight back as riot police crush their May 3 demonstration.

> The attitude of the Church will be supported by the majority of Solidarity's leadership ...'

The problem of 'terrorism' weighs on Kuron, as it does on many of Solidarity's underground leadership. They are all very anxious to prevent it, warning loudly against 'provocation'. This is a general extension of their reformist politics ('violence breeds violence' says Kuron) but of course in the present circumstances they are quite right. It is one thing to build a mass movement which will have to be prepared, in the end, for armed confrontation with the forces of the state. It is quite another, and completely futile, action to substitute guerrila activity when the mass movement has been suppressed. Kuron argues that, in order to forstall the rise of terrorism, or the escalation of a local conflict which will in the end result in Russian intervention, there should be the organisation of a mass protest. The aim of this should be to bring down the military council, the WRON. Once that happened the road to compromise between society and the ruling class, would once again be open. Somehow Kuron manages to reintroduce the compromise he had just described as 'unimaginable'.

In general the revolutionary lesson has not been learned, or at any rate if some have learned it, their voices are absent from the material that we have at our disposal.

The Church is working hard at reconciling the military council with its stubbornly embittered subjects. Archbishop Glemp has outlined his ten point plan for a Social Council. The first points put forward some utterly utopian proposals for establishing accord between the Poles and their rulers but in the eighth point comes the real betrayal.

> 'The vast number of false, exaggerated and hurtful accusations against Solidarity must be dismissed. However, it is necessary to recognise that the responsibility for the deep crisis in which Poland finds itself is, in some measure, due to Solidarity. Solidarity attempted to self-limit its activities and to separate the Union from the activities of political opposition groups. This however was clearly insufficient. Trade unions should retain their independence, not only from state administration and the state employer, but also from political organisations.'

On the whole the Church has managed to strengthen its own position considerably as a result of the coup. Once more it is the only organisation which can oppose the state openly and get away with it. Once more it is a haven for the oppressed. Once more local priests have participated in the struggle this time acting as the link between Jaruzelski's prisoners and the outside world.

Jaruzelski's problems

The state has also been prepared to make concessions, in so far as it makes concessions to anybody, to the Church. The first, and only, public gatherings allowed have been religious ones. Archbishop Glemp's sermon calling for the release of women internees was followed shortly afterwards by state hints that some detainees might soon be released, particularly the women. It is probable that the state has seen the possibility of the Church as an ally. Not a very reliable nor a very close ally, but the only one that the Military Council has been able to find at all. For while the Polish scene is characterised by a tragic absence of a revolutionary perspective, it is also one where workers know who the enemy is and refuse all collaborative moves.

It has been obvious for a long time that Jaruzelski has been looking for a potential leadership willing to take over a puppet version of Solidarity, a union run within restrictions delineated by the state. Some old Solidarity leaders have been hauled out of gaol, wined and dined with important government ministers and thrown back in gaol again when they have refused to have anything to do with such a set-up. While some of the underground leadership have, in their blackest moments, mused that perhaps a restricted but legal union might be better than nothing, Jaruzelski's failure to find any collaborators has been conspicuous. In February, Deputy Prime Minister Rakowski together with Kubiak, a member of the Politburo, invited some 20 leading Polish intellectuals for a meeting. They were seeking support to help Jaruzelski contain the 'hard liners' in the Party. One of those invited, Professer Manteuffel, considered martial law to be a necessary evil and had already appeared on television supporting the authorities. 'The effect, however, is that his friends refuse to acknowlege him and even members of his family call him now not Ryszard but Kola (from collaborationist). His son left home. The professor doesn't know what to do now.' Another invited intellectual, Professor Skarzanka, said that, after 14 years in Soviet labour camps, she had no illusions left. She will never collaborate 'Gentlemen', she said 'you are quite alone with your speeches and your quarrels. Outside the narrow circle of the ruling clique nobody cares about you.'

And indeed, if the situation for the Polish workers is difficult in the extreme, Jaruzelski's position is equally black. A recent report from Poland states that 'The first six months of 1982 will undoubtedly be a period of deepening crisis and fall in production, not a period of stabilisation at a lower level'. At present the economy is running at 60 per cent capacity. While the workers go-slow has not been maintained all the causes of the crisis which has pushed Poland onto the brink of collapse by 1980 have been exacerbated by the coup. The planning mechanism has ceased functioning entirely, that much has been officially admitted. The management cannot be relied upon at all. In addition to those purged for their crimes under the Gierek era there are now those who have been dismissed for displaying their lack of loyalty to the Military Council. The economic sanctions applied by the West are said to be biting and the hard currency famine which affects the supply of spare parts and materials is more acute than ever.

Jaruzelski has not withdrawn his application to join the International Monetary Fund. Indeed the imposition of martial law in Poland has gone a long way to fulfilling the conditions demanded by the IMF of any country aplying for its aid: deflationary policies, the freezing of wages, cuts in public spending on 'unproductive' sectors, devaluation of the currency and the guarantee of safety for foreign investment capital.

Thus Jaruzelski is simply unable to buy himself a social base by engineering even a limited rise in the standard of living. It will take great tenacity for him to survive. There may yet be some justification for the latest Polish joke. There is to be a new kind of sausage on the Polish market. It is to be called 'Jaruzelska'. There is, however, a slight delay in production because the pig is still alive. □

All information taken from the bulletins of the 'Information Centre for Polish Affairs' and 'The Solidarity Trade Union Working Group in the UK'.

All out against Apartheid

South Africa is in crisis. A wave of strikes by black workers. A split in the ranks of the ruling National Party. **John Rogers** looks at the growing struggle of the black workers movement and its effects.

White South Africa woke up with a thumping hangover on March 24th. In a stringent Budget, the Finance Minister of the ruling Afrikaner Nationalists had formally announced the end of the country's biggest ever boom. After the huge rise in the price of gold in 1980 when speculators and financial institutions bought gold in preference to the declining dollar, it has been downhill for the price and the economy in 1981. From a record $875 an ounce, gold is now around the $300 level. Every fall of $100 in the price of gold loses one billion rand to the government's revenue.

South Africa is extraordinarily dependent on gold exports to finance its state sponsored and subsidised industrialisation programme. Gold still pays for over 40 per cent of imports of machinery and other capital goods.

The gold financed boom brought with it a new rise in militancy and organisation among the black working class. The last boom in the early seventies saw the rump of 16,000 black union members grow to an organisation of 45,000 organised in 22 new unions during the strikes in Durban and Natal in 1972/3.

In the mid-seventies the faltering of the economy forced the unions to adjust to a situation where wage increases and job protection involved a tenacity and organisational consistency in the workplaces which the successes of the strike wave had not prepared it for. But the latest rise in workers struggles has revealed an organisation of nearly 300,000 organised in three federations of unions which has grown and strengthened on the basis of hard experience.

Black trade union membership trebled in 1980/81 because militant strike action achieved results. The regime had encouraged employers to believe in the autumn of 1981 that the two year strike wave had climaxed in June and July. But when shop stewards at three different Johannesburg metal works were sacked in September the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) organised a joint solidarity strike of the 3,000 employees and won reinstatement.

Then motor assembly plant workers in Port Elizabeth struck for the reinstatement of 1,000 union members sacked at the Dorbyl components firm nearby in Uitenage. They had previously won a strike over Firestone tyre workers reinstatement. This time they lost, and MAWU also lost over mass dismissals at the Leyland Cape plant. Employers are getting tougher as the recession bites, resorting to more mass dismissals, and strikes are getting longer and fiercer. Nevertheless, MAWU did win half its 23 disputes from July to November, using lightning stoppage tactics.

Another affiliate of the FOSATU federation of black unions, the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU), won two of its disputes involving mass dismissals in the motor industry. After a protracted lock-out at Sigma near Pretoria it won recognition and at BMW near Rosslyn 1,300 strikers won 13% with a six monthly review clause. Then a cafeteria boycott by all 7000 workers of Volkswagen's Uitenhage plant canteen over the control of the cafeteria received national attention and precipitated the nationwide explosion of labour unrest which hit the country in early October. In the first week of that month alone over 1,000 workers were involved in some 30 strikes in the three industrial centres at Natal, the Eastern Cape, and the Transvaal.

Agett protest

An open political element began to come to the fore in the strikes. A unity conference between FOSATU and the other main union federations, chiefly SAAWU, had resolved to defy government bans on solidarity and to oppose attempts to introduce a Preservation of Pensions Bill. The Bill was the main feature of a general attempt by the regime to prevent financial support for strikes. Black workers had long relied on being able to withdraw sums from pension funds during strikes. The Bill proposed to prevent payouts of pension contributions until retirement age. The unions countered with a demand for direct workers control of pension funds.

The site of the greatest militancy towards the end of 1981 however, was the East Rand. Thousands of workers struck in the area's steel, paper, brewery, chemical and service industries. In one action all 500 workers of the Triomf fertilizer plant in the Transvaal struck and crippled production. Local white farmers faced severe financial loss without the fertilizer and had to consent to their schoolboy sons on vacation acting as scabs. A number of black workers were also forced to return to work by armed company officials.

Then came the final straw for the Pensions Bill: a strike wave in Durban and Johannesburg involving more than 3,000 workers at its height.

Workers at the Defy Industries plant in Jacobs, Durban, struck on pension demands for the second time in three months and a Johannesburg firm, Krost Brothers was hit by a strike of 1,300 over demands that union shop stewards be recognised. Earlier in this first week of February, 500 workers at Corobrik in Bedfordview struck in support of union recognition demands. MAWU members at Krost agreed to return to work after the company said it would recognise union stewards and sign a written agreement to that effect 'as a matter of urgency'. Corobrick management preferred to 'provide workers with company transport to the nearest railway station'—deportation to the homelands.

But most crucially, Defy's management responded to a demand for refunds of their pension by urging the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation to amend the fund's rules. Defy is covered by the metal industries' pension fund which has the same pro-

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Workers demonstrating in Johannesburg last February

vision for freezing workers' contributions as the Government Bill. That week the Government announced it was dropping the Pensions Bill. This was a vital factor in inspiring 100,000 to join the Agett strike the following week.

Workers who joined the funeral procession behind Neil Agett's coffin heightened the political element in the Agett strike by blatantly displaying the ANC flag. The security police did not dare intervene. Since then the illegal ANC colours have begun to appear more and more regularly on the street.

Agett was a white trade unionist who assisted a black trade union. His death in custody was met by strikes in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London, in the Transvaal, and in Natal. FOSATU, one of the main black union federations, estimates that 52,000 of its members in 83 plants around the country took part. It says that 15,000 participated in 31 factories in Natal, 25,000 in 23 plants in the East Cape, and most of the rest in Transvaal. David Lewis, general secretary of the Cape-based General Workers Union, says that 4,000 to 6,000 GWU members struck, and Jan Theron of the Food and Canning Workers Union (for which Agett worked) says the stoppage was effective at nearly all the FCWU organised plants.

Together with the support of the Council of Unions of South Africa, and the automotive workers, Theron estimates that a total of 100,000 workers walked out in response to his union's call, more than were involved in the whole of the 1973 strike wave.

Reforming Apartheid?

The response in Natal to the strike call is particularly important since it is among the Zulus of the area that Buthelezi has his base, and it is the strategy of the 'homelands' which has been a key element in the Afrikaner Nationalists' attempts to stabilise their rule.

Buthelezi uses his party, Inkatha, as a mafia style organisation to keep the pieces together. He succeeded in keeping Natal workers and Zulu miners in Johannesburg quiet during the Soweto period, by arguing that the hard-headed reformism—of Inkatha would achieve more than the violent outbursts of the student rioters of Soweto. But he succeeded to a lesser extent in subduing their militancy in the last year's strikes.

Buthelezi is the self-styled leader of a plan for 'détente' within boundaries defined by the apartheid system. He wants to negotiate between the largest so-called 'ethnic' group in South Africa, 'his' five million Zulus and the four million whites, the second largest 'ethnic' group.

Buthelezi is a clever populist who has managed to con a large proportion of Zulu-speaking black workers that he can ride a horse called 'beating the whites at their own game' while telling the white liberals that he is actually riding one called 'reforming apartheid from within.' In this respect he has proved more able than a figure he otherwise resembles, the 'moderate' Bishop Muzorewa in Zimbabwe. Ian Smith used Muzorewa, just as the South African regime is using Buthelezi.

In the long run, he has no future in the middle of the real confrontation between black workers and the regime, but he could have a few years yet.

His survival is based on having persuaded the regime to tolerate Inkatha as the only 'legal' black political party, and on sound financial backing.

Unsurprisingly, that backing has come from 'English' capitalists, mainly from Harry Oppenheimer, head of the giant mining firm, Anglo-American. Buthelezi's latest gimmick has succeeded in reviving interest in Inkatha as a third force, within South African politics generally as well as within Natal province, despite the sickening reality of poverty in Kwazulu. Buthelezi, Oppenheimer and white Natal industrialists gave their backing to a commission set up to devise a scheme for multi-ethnic power-sharing in Natal, the province with the lowest proportion of whites.

The 580,000 mostly English-speaking whites in Natal are outnumbered not only by the Zulus but by more than 650,000 Indians. In March the Buthelezi Commission produced a seven-volume proposal for a provincial legislature elected by universal suffrage, in place of the present whites only one. But the new body would be governed by an executive council where whites would have equal representation with blacks and more than the Indians. More fundamentally, the law reserving 60%

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of the combined areas of Natal and the Kwazulu homeland—including the prime farming and residential land—for whites, would remain in force. In practice, apartheid would stay.

The message to the Afrikaner Nationalist government from the Commission was: reform apartheid by appearing to share power with its organisations like Inkatha, or a more militant organisation like the banned African National Congress (ANC) will grow in strength.

The Commission gave survey evidence that only 56% of Zulus would still be willing to settle for reform. Even though it is a crime to express support for the ANC 37% of Zulu migrant workers surveyed in Anglo-American's Johannesburg gold mines had done so. These are the workers supposedly controlled by Inkatha.

In Natal, 25% of those surveyed had expressed support for the ANC. Many of these either belong to the new black unions, have been through the experience of victimisation and deportation to one of the bits of the homeland, or especially in the case of the Johannesburg miners, want to form a union.

Effective union militancy is what has prompted white industrialists to lavish so much money on Inkatha. As the recession bites into black employment people like Oppenheimer know that however much black union militancy may be blunted, the tendency of black workers to translate their workplace organisation into some kind of political response to the crisis will grow. They warn that unless Inkatha-type organisations receive national white support, black militants will look increasingly.
to the ANC.

Yet being seen to have a dialogue with Inkatha is exactly what Botha and the leaders of the Nationalists want to avoid like the plague at present. Botha fended off a break up of his party when Dr Treurnicht led 19 extreme right-wing MPs out of it in March. Treurnicht is threatening a realignment of white politics around his new party. The natural support for such a party would come from white workers, whose living standards will drop as a result of the monetarist budget. The traditional appeal of the Afrikaner Nationalists has been to white workers and farmers against 'English' capitalists like Oppenheimer, who were forever trying to 'talk to the black'.

Treurnicht claims that Botha represents Afrikaner capitalists who have grown fat on apartheid and have moved into the white 'reformists' camp, from which they are attacking the entrenched privileges of the white workers. If Botha is to refute these charges he has no room to negotiate an ambitious reform programme on Oppenheimer lines, nor to go along with the Namibia settlement being pushed by Britain, France and West Germany.

On the contrary, he is likely to resort to more use of the security forces and militarisation of the white population. In February Brigadier P J Goosen officer in charge of Steve Biko when he was murdered, was promoted to deputy commissioner of police. White membership of the previously voluntary militia was made compulsory in March. □

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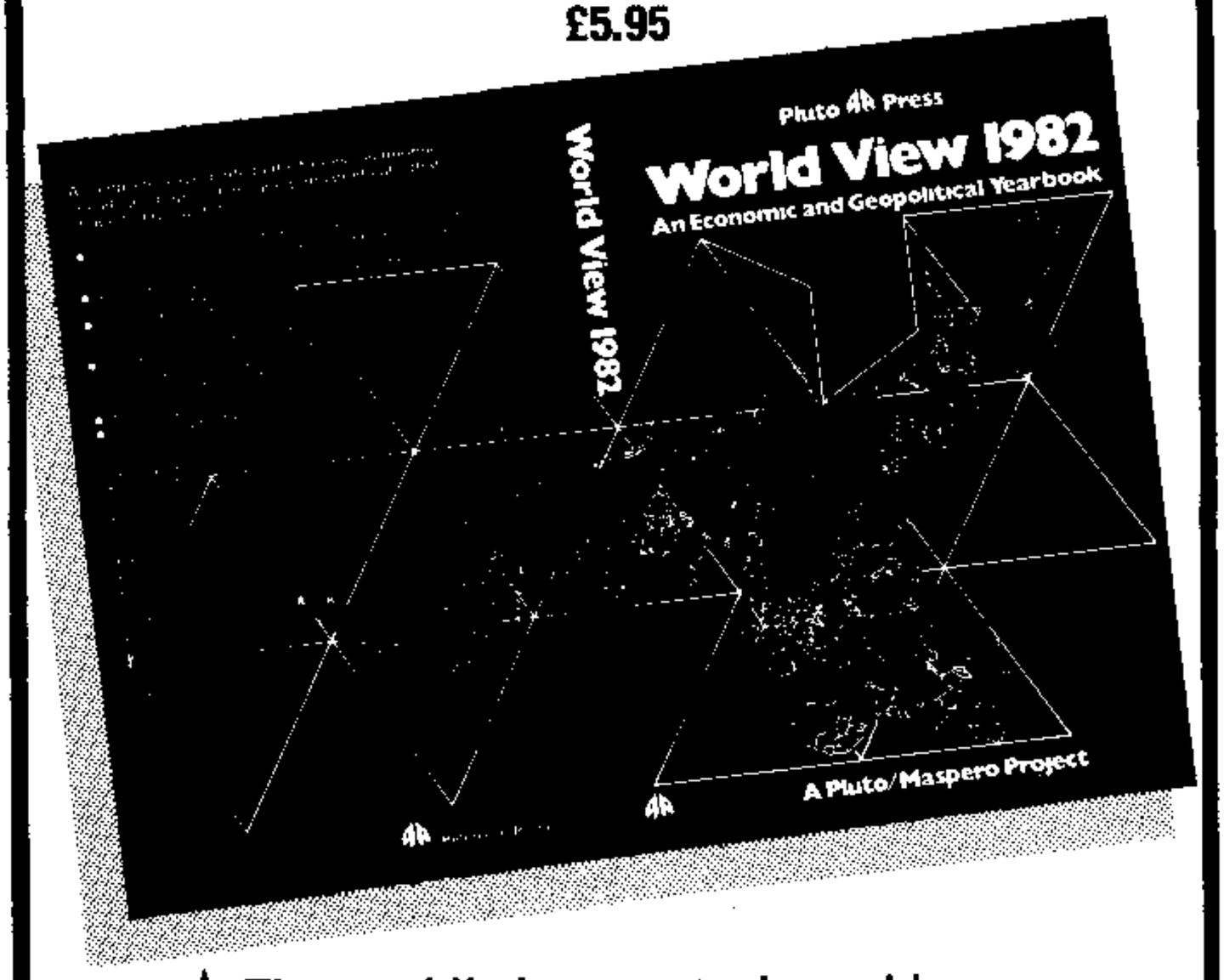

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The Roman Connection

One of the spinoffs of the Falklands crisis is that the Pope might not make it to Britain. But the proposed visit has caused rows between Catholic and Protestant organisations. **Norah Carlin** takes a look at both sides of the argument.

The Papacy has a long and influential history. It has outlasted various modes of production, from the slave society of ancient Rome through feudalism. It is still a flourishing institution in modern capitalism. The continuity masks the fact that the Papacy, like every other institution, has changed with society.

The church was first 'established' in 312, when the Emperor Constantine announced his conversion. The clerical bureaucracy became one of the few efficient props of the decaying Roman Empire. But they could not save the collapsing system, and the church, and with it the papacy, became the pawn of whoever had the greatest force. The decline of the level of civilisation went hand in hand with a collapse of the church.

By about 1000 AD, the Roman Catholic Church was a crumbling institution. Married peasant priests, bishops who were merely consecrated feudal barons, monks living comfortably off vast estates, hermits and wandering preachers, upheld a religion which was a mish-mash of half-understood ancient philosophy and primitive nature-worship.

The Bishops of Rome, the heads of the church, were notable for their wealth, corruption and their degenerate behaviour.

In the next few centuries, European society changed dramatically. The growth of towns, trade and craft production; the expansion of population, settlement and agriculture; the growth of monarchies and royal government—all transformed Western Europe from a backwater of the world into a prosperous and developing society.

From 1046, a series of reforming popes set about the restoration of the clergy into an organised body. Priests were forbidden to marry and effectively disciplined by the bishops, and monasteries were regulated under papal control. Bishops, with the Pope's backing, confronted monarchs with demands for clerical privileges, or entered royal governments as powerful and capable administrators.

The papacy became identified with feudal society in its prime—and went into decline again as society continued to change. Towns gave rise to a new secular culture and education, while the higher clergy relapsed into corruption and the lower clergy into ignorance and superstition.

By 1500, the popes were mere feudal overlords of parts of central Italy. And the Church was badly shaken by the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. But it survived, once more under papal direction.

Lagging behind the Protestants, the papacy took the clergy in hand, and the church proved that it was still useful, both to the absolute monarchs who ruled most of Europe on behalf of the landed class, and to the new capitalist merchants and manufacturers who needed a disciplined and obedient workforce.

But the power of the pope and the Catholic Church was now based on resistance to change, and this was symbolised by the battle of ideas. When Galileo popularised the new knowledge of the physical world and the fact that the earth goes round the sun, Rome condemned and persecuted him.

The Church managed to extricate itself from the intellectual absurdity of teaching that the sun circles the earth in the eighteenth century, by discreetly taking Copernicus (who was the first to deny it) off the Index of Prohibited Books.

But until this year it continued to defend the vilification of Galileo on the grounds that his ideas were 'dangerous at the time'!

How has the papacy, this legacy of feudal society, survived into the 20th Century? Not by remaining feudal. The Papal States were lost by 1870, but the Pope today is a very big capitalist investor.

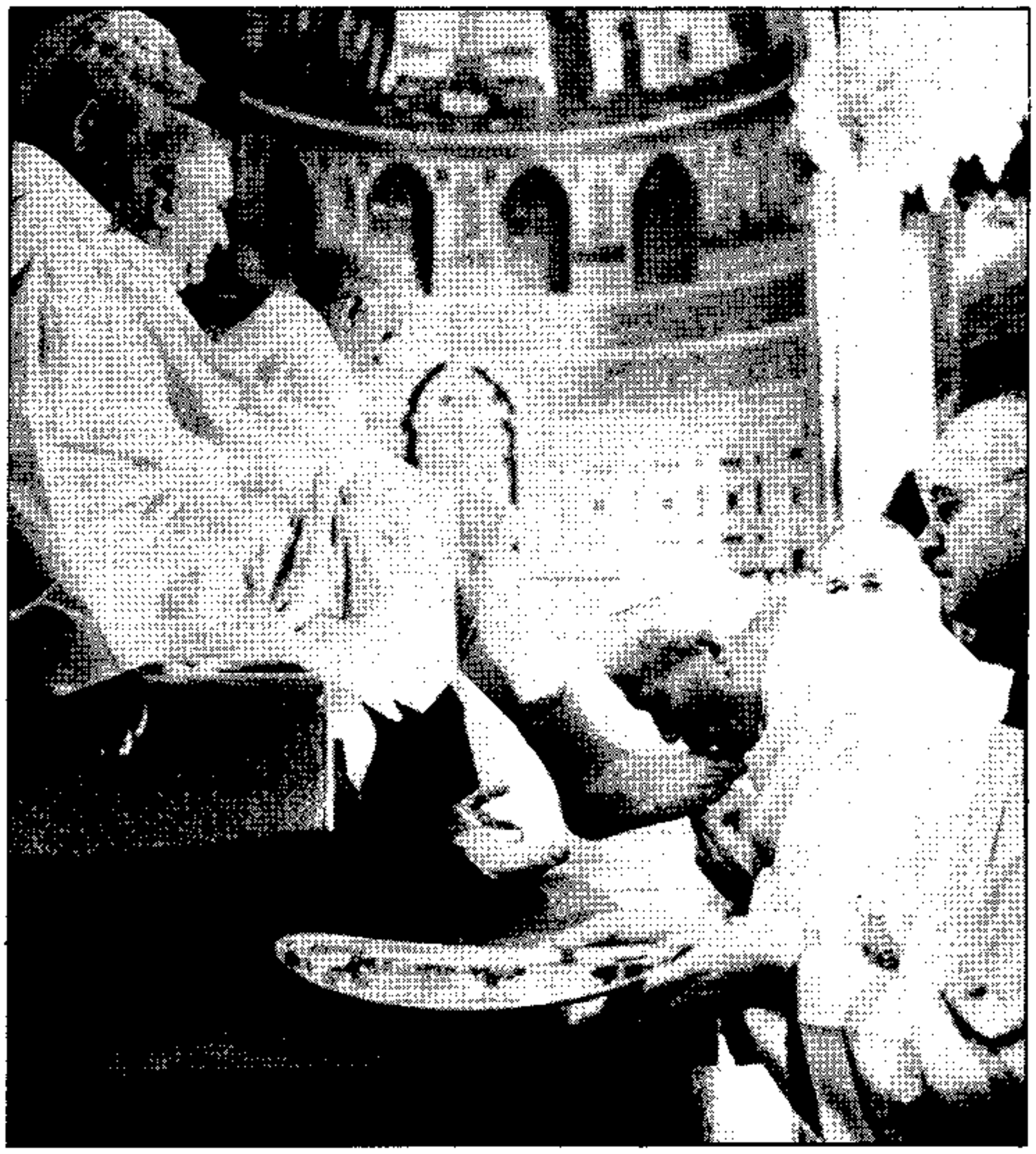
In 1864, Pope Pius IX mounted a vicious attack on those liberal Catholics who had begun to absorb ideas of freedom and democracy with his *Syllabus* of eighty 'errors'. These included religious toleration, secular education, majority rule, and the freedom of the state from religion.

'Socialism, communism, secret societies, bible societies, and societies of liberal clergy' were all condemned in one sentence.

The next pope, Leo XIII, tried to modify the authoritarian image by a 'charter of workers' rights' in 1891. This proclaimed the right of workers to a living wage, decent conditions and trade union organisation. It also stated that private property was a divine law, and nowhere did it mention that right of workers to *fight* for their rights.

It explicitly denounced class struggle. The 'charter' was in fact an appeal to employers and governments to do their duty by granting these rights—an appeal to which Catholic employers and governments have never responded enthusiastically.

The papacy survives today by allying with the conservative forces in every society where it operates. Under Pope Pius XII, it lived comfortably alongside Mussolini and Hitler.



'Cleanliness is next to Godliness': Pope John Paul attending to the faithful

This is sometimes a more delicate and highly skilled pursuit, for the most reactionary forces are sometimes defeated, and papal policy aims to stay on the side of those that survive.

Hence the complicated manoeuvres of withdrawal from the most brutal Latin American regimes. Hence the shift from white imperialism in Africa to the most conservative black forces available (a particularly delicate operation in Zimbabwe). Hence the detente between the church and some Eastern European regimes, which looks like paying off for the papacy, though not for the workers, in Poland.

The church also survives because there is in every class society a market for 'the opium of the people' and the church knows where to find it.

Women are easy targets, and the more they are tied to producing cheap labour for capitalism (as in most peasant societies today) the easier it is to fit in the church's reactionary views on contraception and abortion.

But where Catholicism is the religion of the oppressed and exploited—in Northern Ireland, Latin America or Poland—it can come to be identified with their struggles for freedom, independence or social justice. The papacy is anxious to disassociate Catholicism from such struggles, but the local clergy may be less keen, while ordinary Catholics in this situation often see no distinction between defence of their religion and defence of their rights.

The papacy has adapted and manoeuvred many times in its long history, but there is one thing it cannot adapt to: a *classless* society. Only when *all* conservative forces, ruling and exploiting classes, and oppression are defeated can Roman Catholicism, the brandleading opium of the people, fade into irrelevance and the papacy disappear. □

Protestantism: Changing with the times

Popular revolts against the Catholic Church began at about the same time as the papacy began to reorganise in the eleventh century. But it was not until the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century that a major breach was made in the power of the Catholic church. Martin Luther's attack on papal power, medieval ideas and the separate status of the clergy—begun in 1517 with his 95 Theses and continued in a series of best-selling German pamphlets—was biting, scurrilous and popular.

Luther exposed the corruption, the irrational ideas and the perfect uselessness to everybody of the Catholic Church. From the bible itself he demonstrated that Christianity could be very different: more rational, more meaningful to the lay Christian, and more relevant to everyday life, without the mystical and superstitious claims made by the clergy as mediators between God and mankind.

Luther succeeded where many earlier heretics had failed because his ideas had an immediate appeal to a variety of social classes all over Europe. Among these were the rising bourgeoisie—the merchants and manufactureres who ran the towns on the profits of trade and craft production, and hated the grasping, interfering clergy and their obscure ideas. But Luther also appealed to the feudal nobility, and in Germany to the territorial princes who were completing their carve-up of the medieval German Empire.

But Luther also succeeded because of the *limits* he set to the struggle against the Catholic Church. When peasants and urban craftsmen and labourers began to turn to Luther's ideas, he made it clear that while the church and clergy were legitimate targets, neither the feudal landowners nor the merchant and manufacturing élite of the towns were to be touched.

In 1525, masses of German peasants, suffering from economic difficulties and a recent upsurge in the power of landlords and princes, took up arms against the existing social order. Encouraged by radical Protestant preachers such as Thomas Müntzer, they identified their fight against exploitation and oppression with the word and law of God as found in the bible. They demanded equality, fixed rents and a peasant parliament, and they had the support of many townspeople and rural craftsmen.

Luther's reaction was violent in the extreme. He had at first criticised lords and peasants equally, but once the peasant army was on the march he called on the lords to 'stab, smite and slay, whoever they can', because the peasants 'have forfeited body and soul, as faithless, perjured, lying, disobedient knaves and scoundrels'. The peasants were duly massacred.

The Protestantism of John Calvin, a French lawyer who settled in Geneva, provided a much more promising outlook for social change and revolution in the mid-sixteenth century. In Geneva itself, reform was strongly identified with the merchants and manufacturers.

Calvin, though he never personally supported rebellion against any ruler, supplied a much stronger justification than Luther for political action against Catholic rulers. It was the duty of the Christian citizen, he said, to work for the reformation of society against tyranny and ungodliness.

But Calvin saw political action as being especially the responsibility of the Christian *magistrate*, and in France his cause was taken up by some of the most backward-looking nobility, as well as by townspeople, peasants and craftsmen. This strangled the Protestant revolution in France almost from birth, as Protestant nobles protested to Calvinist assemblies when peasants revolted against Catholic landlords. In the city of Lyons the printworkers, who initially supported Calvinism, deserted it when the new Protestant magistrates denounced them for beating up scabs during a strike.

Catholic power

The Vatican is wealthy, but less so than many multinationals. The total is secret, but most guesses are around £50 million without the art treasures.

What is less well known is that the Vatican is heavily involved in financial speculation. Religious orders deposit their money with the Vatican Bank and these are used in deals on the international money markets.

Usually the Vatican makes a handsome profit, but it has been known to incur losses. During the 1970s a financial speculator called Sindona lost the Vatican millions in crooked deals with the head of the Vatican Bank, the American Cardinal Paul Marcinkus. Sindona ruined himself in the process, but Marcinkus has kept his job.

**Cardinal Hume—
Pope's man in Britain**

By contrast, the Vatican hasn't proved so liberal in other areas. It is widely thought that the Second Vatican Council (1962-64) liberalised the Catholic Church. But whilst it has certainly backtracked on the most reactionary formulations of Pius IX, how far the leadership of the Church has opened up to new ideas is debatable.

Since the early 1960s there has been a growing divergence between official pronoucements and ordinary catholics. In the USA surveys show that 85% of all married catholics, despite regular catholic education disagree with Pope Paul VI's 1968 restatement of the ban on contraception.

There is also a growing difference of views between the church leadership and clergy in some parts of the world. In Latin America large numbers of clergy preach 'liberation theology' which seeks to identify Christianity with the struggles of workers and peasants. The present Pope, John-Paul II, rejects the idea of 'liberation theology' completely and during his visit to Mexico in 1979 denounced it.

Despite his avowed support for 'human rights' there is no sign that he is a liberal pope. On divorce, contraception and abortion he is as inflexible as his predecessors. He sees the main enemies of human society today as 'pollution, war and abortion'.

Catholics spreading the faithful in 16th century England

In England, the Calvinist Puritans took the lead against King Charles I and his High Anglican establishment, but whenever really radical ideas emerged among their followers they stamped them out. The Levellers, for example, were denounced by *all* the Puritan churches (Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Baptist) for their democratic ideas. Calvinists pursued 'heresy' almost as rigorously as the Catholic Church. Michael Servetus, a Spanish refugee, was burned alive in Calvin's Geneva for denying the doctrine of the Trinity: and some of the Levellers in England were denounced for such relatively mild views as that Christ died to save all humanity (rather than the Calvinist 'elect' only).

The celebrated 'Protestant ethic' of hard work, saving, investment and progress helped to destroy the old feudal hierarchy of society. But for the producer, whether peasant, craftsman or wage-labourer, it meant submission to new forms of exploitation. Protestantism was much more *effective* than Catholicism (at least before the church's own Counter-Reformation) in getting through to the individual conscience and forcing conformity, because it aimed directly at the rank and file Christian. In a society where there were almost no factories, but many captialists wanting to make profits out of the work of craftsmen and peasants, it sought to provide every worker with a 'policeman inside' to guarantee work discipline and regular production.

In time, many English (and Scottish) working people came to identify Protestantism with the 'good old cause' of freedom and progress against tyranny and reaction. They came to see Catholicism as the main enemy, with High Church Anglicanism perhaps as the second Ugly Sister.

The further identification of Catholicism with the Irish was used not only to justify the colonisation of Ireland (which had actually begun under a Catholic monarch, 'Bloody' Mary, but was taken up by the Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians), but also to divide British and Irish workers when Irish immigration increased during the industrial revolution.

Anti-Catholicism in nineteenth-century Britain was ninety per cent racism. All the racist remarks of present-day Tories and fascists—about being 'swamped by an alien culture', diluted by inferior stock, and terrorised by criminals of low intelligence, were made over and over again in nineteenth century England (and even more in Scotland) against the Catholic Irish. The Catholic clergy in Ireland helped by identifying Protestantism, rather than imperialism, as the main cause of Ireland's suffering. (They conveniently forgot that the victory of the protestant King William of Orange in Ireland in 1689 was *celebrated* in Rome because the papacy at that time supported anyone who was an enemy of France.)

The papacy is a reactionary, parasitic and oppressive institution which only outlived feudal society by capitalising on reaction wherever it could.

But Protestantism has also captialised on exploitation and oppression, and can hardly be regarded as less parasitic. To fight present battles in the terms of the past is worse than useless, it is positively pernicious when no one remembers what those battles were about and for whose benefit they were fought. □

Protestant power

The hardest and most committed protestants in Britain are those strongly influenced by Northern Ireland. The Orange Order provides them with a mafia-style network that excludes catholics from jobs in major cities like Glasgow and Liverpool.

In Northern Ireland itself the most significant and militant sect is Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church. His church in Belfast cost £175,000 to build and his powerful *Protestant Telegraph* regularly denounces 'papists, jews and reds' as part of one gigantic conspiracy.

But it is the USA that is the fortress of protestantism today. 90% describe themselves as believers in God and one third profess to being 'born-again christians'. Churches like the Southern Baptists, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and Seventh Day Adventists have grown rapidly in recent years.

Ian Paisley—professional bigot.

These sects are very reactionary. They are 'fundamentalist', denying the theory of evolution and taking everything the Bible says literally. Their leaders, such as the Rev. Jerry Falwell are the driving force behind the right-wing Moral Majority Movement, which attacks gays, women and civil rights.

This movement now has an alarmingly strong influence over the media. The soap firm Procter and Gamble recently laid down, under Moral Majority pressure, its own extreme code for sponsored television programmes.

The most successful smaller sects now rely on broadcasting rather than church attendance. They have become known as the 'electronic churches'.

Some of them are wealthier than the Vatican. Herbert Armstrong and his son, Garner Ted Armstrong, were raking in over 200 million dollars a year at their peak. And down in sunny California the Rev Robert Schuller has built a 'shopping centre for Jesus' with a Crystal Cathedral just a few miles from Disneyland.

These sort of people are very far from being a lunatic fringe in the USA today. They must not be confused with those churches that practice snake charming or commit mass suicide. They are major enemies of progressive and socialist ideas. They would all welcome the chance to spread to Britain.

'Scotland's no what it used to be'

Chris Bamberry looks at the novel *The House with the Green Shutters* by the Scottish writer George Douglas.

At the turn of this century Scottish literature was dominated by the 'Kailyard' school. Their inspiration came from Victoria's discovery of the Highlands. To-day it survives in the form of the White Heather Club.

George Douglas let the sharp breath of reality into this cosy fiction. The town of Barbie where his only novel *The House with the Green Shutters* is set is clearly drawn on Ochiltree in Ayrshire where Douglas was born. He was the illegitimate son of a small farmer who matriculated to Glasgow University, going on to Oxford and then Fleet Street and an early death at 32.

In its realistic portrayal of Scottish life the novel stands alongside Robert Lewis Stevenson's *Weir of Hermiston* and Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song*.

At the heart of the book is Douglas's examination of the 'Scottish character'. He sees it as a character fundamently flawed with malice: a malice stemming from Calvinism. We are used to the Sir Harry Lauder image of the tartan-decked comic Scot. Compare that to this passage:

> 'For many reasons intimate to the Scot's character, envious scandal is rampant in petty towns such as Barbie. To go back to the beginning, the Scot, as pundits will tell you, is an individualist. His religion alone is enough to make him so. For it is a scheme of personal salvation significantly described once by the Reverend Mr. Struthers of Barbie. "At the day of Judgement, my friends", said Mr. Struthers, "at the Day of Judgement every herring must hang by its own tail!" Self-dependence was never more luridly expressed . . .
>
> 'From their individualism, however, comes inevitably a keen spirit of competition (the more so because Scottish democracy gives fine chances to compete), and from their keen spirit of competition comes, inevitably again, an envious belittlement of rivals. If a man's success offends your individuality, to say everything you can against him is a recognised weapon of the fight. It takes him down a bit. And (inversely) inflates his rivals.
>
> 'It is in a small place like Barbie that such malignity is most virulent, because in a small place like Barbie every man knows everything to his neighbour's detriment'.

King in the town of Barbie is John Gourlay. A self-made man, naturally, though one who's built his business on the dowry of his feckless wife. Gourlay reigns over a town set in the Ayrshire of Burns, but an Ayrshire 50 years on.

While Barbie itself is destined to remain a backwater, the railway never reaching it, around it the coal fields and steel works are growing. Gourlay is a carrier. Having built a thriving business in just one small town, Gourlay's sole ambition is to establish 'The House with the Green Shutters' as the finest in the district, with the biggest kitchen range in Scotland.

Into this world steps John Wilson, 'a man o'pairts' who's learnt a trick or two, and made his pile, in Edinburgh *and* even further afield in England. The stage is set at his first encounter with Gourlay:

> '"Man, I'm a son of auld John Wilson of Brigabee!"
>
> "Oh auld John Wilson the mole catcher!", said contemptous Gourlay. "What's that they christened him now Toddling Johnnie was it noat?"'

Wilson meekly accepts Gourlay's taunt because Douglas explains:

> 'He had come back after an absence of 15 years, with a good deal of money in his pocket, and he had a fond desire that he, the son of the mole catcher, should get some recognition of his prosperity from the most important man in the locality. If Gourlay had said with solemn and fat-lipped approval, "Man I'm glad to see that you have done so well!", he would have swelled with gratified pride. For it is often the favourable "estimate of their own little village – what they'll think of me at home" – that matters most to Scotsmen who go out to make their own in the world.

Gourlay is soon drawn into a do or die conflict with Wilson. Turning the insult about being the mole catcher's son around Wilson launches into business with all the new techniques available. In the face of that Gourlay is stumped being: 'One of those stupid men who have mastered a system, not by intuition, but by a plodding effort of slow years, always exaggerate its importance – did it not take them 10 years to understand it?'.

The success of the book lies not simply with Douglas' sensitive view of a Scot's small town nor of his use of the Scots tongue, but in his use of the 'bodies'. The Deacon, the Provost and other worthies who idle their days at the town cross and act as a Greek Chorus through whose eyes we see Gourlay's fall.

Beaten in business Gourlay must still show the 'bodies' that 'The House with the Green Shutters' still presides over the town. When Wilson's son graduates to Edinburgh University, Gourlay's must go too.

Young Gourlay hates college but does manage to win the Raeburn Essay Prize – 'the brightest of a not very bright batch'. But with his head turned by that small success the Young Gourlay turns in his weakness to the bottle. Explaining his desire to be a big man in words that could be echoed by too many Scots: "The drinks my refuge, it's a kind thing drink. It helps a body".

In the end the novel collapses in tragedy. It portrays the harsh world of the Scots trader of the last century. The means to salvation is to make your own pile and thereby join the select few who'll be saved. The democratic tradition of Calvinism was dying. Other traditions were dying too. The radical sympathies of Burns lay in the past, as did Edinburgh's 'Age of Reason'. Calvinism had become the religion of accumulation.

In the small talk of Barbie much of this comes through. Espying the Free Kirk Minister, Tam Brodie, 'a staunch Conservative and down on the Dissenters', turns to his cronies and spits out:

> '"I see few signs of studying on *him*. He's noathing but a stink wi' a skin on't"'.

By the close of the book the days when a young Scot of 'character' could go out in the world and make his fortune are drawing to a close – in Britain itself anyway. A new Scotland building ships and engines for the Empire has arisen.

In one of the few insights Douglas permits her, Gourlay's wife laments in too familiar terms:

> '"Scotland's no what it used to be! Its ow rerun wi' the dirty Eerish"'. □

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The AUEW's floating minister

THE AUEW National Committee has just met. **James Johnson** looks at their discussions.

How appropriate that Sir John Boyd should be the man to describe the Labour Party as 'a sewer with all sorts of rubbish floating in it'.

He should know. He has been Chairman of the party. Up north, where he comes from, there is a phrase for certain, unpleasant forms of human debris which describes ideally a man of Sir John's status and high moral principles. Those specimens that survive their winding journey from the 'lavy pan' to the sea intact are known as 'floating ministers'.

As with most preachers, however, Boyd's message from the AUEW National Committee in Eastbourne was not intended to apply to himself. He was referring specifically to the Militant tendency, which was a 'cancer' that must be 'cut out before it destroys this great party of ours'.

Not a man to harbour a grudge, Boyd took the opportunity to list every other lefty outfit he could think of which he considered worthy of 'investigation'.

The vote was carried by 47 to 41, perhaps the narrowest margin of the conference. But it still gives Boyd the ammunition he needs. At least one of the big guns at the Labour Party conference will be trained on the trots — and last year showed how powerful an influence the union block vote can be.

Although the final AUEW election results were not announced at the conference, despite a big story in the *Daily Mirror*, it is clear that the right wing 'militant moderate' machine has no real problem handling the 'broad left' opposition and many of the debates are entirely ritualistic.

However, there have been some interesting shifts at that level inside the union in recent months.

For instance, the amalgamation issue has reached a new stage with Terry Duffy including in his Presidential address what one paper described as the 'strongest indication yet of a possible future link-up between the engineers and Frank Chapple's electricians.'

The bureaucratic games which have already led to the courts and drawn in the official 'certification officer' to take sides between TASS and the AUEW Engineering section, have taken a new twist.

TASS have now opened up their own 'blue collar' section with the clear aim of recruiting highly skilled shop floor workers into their own ranks.

Terry Duffy has declared war on this new move. His own hobby horse — 'staff status' for manual workers — would be a bit counter productive if every engineer who was upgraded immediately joined 'the enemy'.

The longer the battle between the sections goes on, the more ludicrous, and deeply divisive it becomes.

Having been effectively cleared out of any position of real power within the AUEW, the Communist Party is increasingly driven to rely on the appointed leadership of TASS to maintain a toehold in engineering. When Gavin Laird becomes General Secretary he will be no less fervent than his mentor, John Boyd, in trying to rid the industry of CP influence for good.

Meanwhile, it would be a big mistake to imagine that the right-wing continue to get away with it purely by jiggery-pokery. They use arguments which sound very convincing to members.

For example they say that the AUEW fight against the Industrial Relations Act was very good but it cost the union a lot of money, while the rest of the TUC did next to nothing. Why not let one of the other, more militant unions lead the way next time?

At a time when people are keeping their heads down, ideas like this get a good hearing. And then, when the *Daily Mirror* reports that Hugh Scanlon was paid £18,600 (plus a free Daimler) for his part-time post as Chairman of the Engineering Industry Training Board, it's hardly surprising many members wonder who is on the right side and who on the left.

That's why attempts at the National Committee to 'trick' the right with really quite frivolous resolutions can only rebound.

For example, one broad left motion called for a one day national strike, led by the TUC, against unemployment. To oppose this call, delegates argued, would indicate 'timidity' towards Thatcher's policies. Hasn't she had enough examples already, without giving her another one? the opposition argued, with some justification.

NUT Executive takes a caning

This year's NUT Conference was marked by a series of defeats for the Executive. **Nick Grant** reports.

The first defeat for the platform came over disarmament. Alf Budd, NUT President stated that in his view, the top motion, prioritised by half the NUT membership, was outside the aims and objects of the union, and would not be debated.

This brought a sharp challenge which was carried, after much manoueuvring, by 121,000 votes to 114,000. This started a war of attrition between the floor and the platform.

Debate went ahead on the motion which contained four demands: support for unilateral nuclear disarmament, opposition to Cruise missiles, opposition to Trident, and affiliation to CND.

A delete-all amendment was thrown out, but there was heated exchange on another which aimed to delete CND affiliation. Ex-President Jack Chambers argued for it on the basis that CND membership would cost us the membership of Tory-voting teachers. This brought another card vote, and it transpired that sections of the Communist Party influenced Broad Left abstained in support of Chambers, and the deletion was narrowly successful. The ensuing debate on the remnants of the motion was a battle of the unilateralists and multilateralists, won by the former.

Although Budd reiterated his view that this was all taboo, and that no NUT funds could be spent in campaigning for these ends, the decision marks a significant victory for the left in debating and winning a position on a political issue within the NUT in the face of scaremongers foretelling great loss of membership. It is now up to school groups and areas to support anti-nuclear initiatives at all times, and emphasise the unequivocal position won at Scarborough.

Sadly, the Executive position on salaries went through despite well supported moves to include flat rate increases, and to 'roll-up' the present three basic scales into one. It can't be long before these demands, central to Rank and File policy for years, are won.

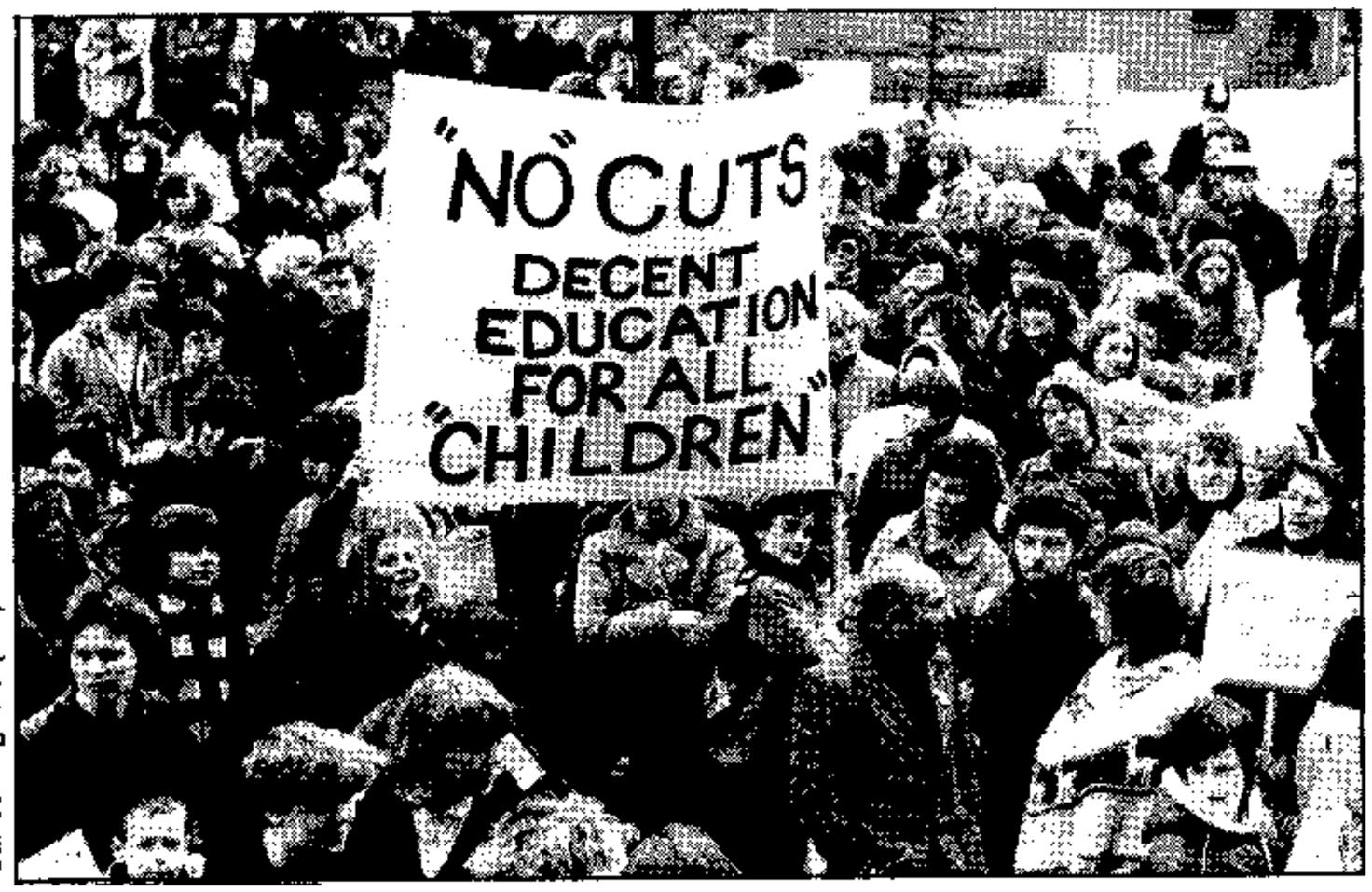
Ironically, executive motions, which usually dominate conference business were dealt with relatively quickly and we were left with more time to deal with what was left of members' motions. Consequently we reached a beautifully simple demand that:

> 'Teachers on the normal establishment of schools should no longer be required to cover for absent colleagues. Special staff should be made available for this purpose.'

This concerns the fact that whenever a teacher is away through illness, in-service training, outside visits or union business, other members of staff are expected to give up marking and preparation time or double-up classes and sometimes forego lessons and visits of their own. There is no agreed contract of employment in teaching, and the custom has been that anyone refusing to cover when told to do so by the headteacher, can be deemed to have breached what management regard as their contract.

All teachers object to covering. In the past, it has irked because without time to prepare it results in little more than child-minding. But in times of at least twenty thousand registered unemployed teachers, it takes on the nature of unpaid overtime which denies work to 'supply' teachers. Supply work is often very difficult and stressful because of the variety of classes and subjects that may need to be covered at short notice. But it is a job.

A weakening amendment was tabled by



Carlos Augusto (IFL)

Teachers, parents and kids rally outside Barking Town Hall.

Barking jobs—104 saved; 55 lost

The seven week long strike over jobs by NUT members in Barking and Dagenham ended with strong disagreements about whether the final settlement was a vicltory or a defeat. **Terry Reynolds** looks at the arguments.

The settlement of that out of 159 jobs originally threatened, only 55 will now disappear and none through redundancy.

Barking NUT members were still seething from last year's fight against cuts when the authority announced this year's plans. It wasn't simply a question of resisting redundancy but of opposing *any* form of job loss.

After a campaign of school meetings, 75 per cent of members voted in favour of action. But divisions soon appeared.

The first was between the local officers' action group and Rank and File. The officers proposed escalating strike action while Rank and File argued for all-out strike action. This was the first sign of timidity from the officers, a 'broad left' grouping. Though they won the argument, they virtually conceded the case by organising an extremely short period of escalation to all-out action.

The next division was over the objectives of the strike. When the strike began, Rank and File proposed a set of five demands: 1. No redundancy; 2. Automatic renewal of temporary contracts; 3. No early retirement without job replacement; 4. No compulsory redeployment or change in job description; 5. Maintenance of present staffing levels. They were adopted by a large majority.

The National Executive denounced the demands as 'unofficial' and 'imposed on the association.' In the interests of unity, the 'left' officers argued for abandoning the five demands in favour of just two: 1. No redundancy; and 2. Maintenance of staffing standards. Despite fierce opposition from Rank and File, the officers overwhelmingly won the argument.

This was the first step in winning the membership to a settlement on terms acceptable to the national executive. It was won by the 'left' local officers for the executive and at its bidding.

Similar differences appeared over the control and direction of the strike. Rank and File argued for mass meetings to have executive power and for negotiators to includes school representatives. These arguments were opposed successfully by the officers on constitutional grounds and as showing lack of trust in the officers' integrity.

Rank and File also argued from the first day of the strike for widespread and effective picketing — of *all* schools, whether or not on strike, and of other council depots. The officials prevaricated, and in the end picketing took place, but under the constraints of Prior's Code against secondary picketing. Members could only picket their own schools, schools not on strike could not be picketed, no other council depots could be picketed.

Moreover, pickets were not to attempt to stop people working in schools — only essential deliveries to close schools.

Nevertheless, many strikers were involved in picketing, most for the first time in their lives. They were shaken by the patchy response to respect for picket lines. Very little solidarity was organised through official channels or directly with other workers, though two successful exceptions were initiatives to the Shell Oil depot and the GLC supplies depot.

As the strike progressed it became clear that the level of picketing was not going to close schools. Although the authority's suspension of a T&G driver for respecting our picket lines led to all refuse department drivers walking out, the boost to our members' confidence had the paradoxical effect of convincing the majority that the strike did not need to be escalated.

The decisive moment in the strike came when the officers introduced 'defence of the curriculum' as our aim. The council had by now guaranteed no compulsory redundancies — about 30 of the 159 jobs threatened — and the officers used this as a basis for horse trading with the council. When the council offered to keep about two thirds of the jobs, their offer was eventually accepted by a 2 to 1 majority (the National Executive having already issued a press release announcing the dispute was settled).

Though the strike won considerable gains, the victory could have been greater and even complete if the strike had been pursued militantly and aggressively, as Rank and File argued.

What won the dispute was the solid strike, the picketing, the campaigning. What lost 55 jobs (through natural wastage) were the negotiations undertaken by the local officers and the national executive. □

the Executive but they were so flustered by the speed of business on the last morning that no speaker came forward to move or second it. A strengthening amendment saying that the 'special staff' should be on permanent contracts was heartily passed, and the final motion went through unanimously.

Widespread implementation of this decision will affect every school in the country, and could lead to the employment of thousands of extra teachers. Rank and File are organising immediate support for this decision, because we fully expect that at its first post-Scarborough meeting the Executive will argue that the policy should be used as a bargaining lever rather than an instruction to act and win jobs. *What began as unofficial action organised by Rank and File members in the early seventies, is now NUT policy.*

The conference then went on, much to the executive's fury, to oppose corporal punishment. This decision, argued on the questionable basis that caning is simply outmoded rather than an infringement of students' rights, was a fantastic step forward for the headteacher-dominated NUT.

Next year the NUT conference goes to Jersey for the first time. Gay delegates face imprisonment there for any display of their sexuality due to its archaic legislation. The executive however, refused to even address themselves to the problem. Rank and File and the Gay Teachers group are planning a street demonstration in St Helier, so they are going to have to say something then.

The conference showed the clear emergence of a broad left tendency in the NUT to which the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA) addresses itself. With two ex-IMG members on the Executive the STA are firmly focusing their attention on the union apparatus and winning the 'middle ground' of delegates and local officials to a constitutional fight for progressive policy.

This conference went further than any of us could have expected in that respect. It remains to be seen which organisation is prepared to fight for the implementation of left policies and over the issues that arise between conferences where classroom teachers face massive cutbacks. □

Maseys shows the way

The recent occupation at Massey Ferguson in Coventry ended in a partial victory. **Coventry SWP** looks at the reasons why it took place.

The unfortunate thing about the Massey's occupation was that it was almost unique. Coming in an area conspicuous for its lack of fightback over jobs, it stands out like a beacon.

The first thing that strikes you about trade union organisation is the close relation between the shop floor and the Joint Shop Stewards Committee. Five mass meetings were held to confirm opposition to compulsory redundancies. It was a mass meeting that took the final decision to occupy.

The company attempt to do a Michael Edwardes and by-pass the union with a secret ballot failed totally. Hardly anyone took part in their ballot. A subsequent mass meeting voted overwhelmingly against such ballots with only 13 in favour. This high level of involvement of workers in the union is based on piecework in the gang bonus system.

The system means that the shop-floor are involved in the day to day control of their working conditions.

There is a very complicated bonus system. This gives considerable control to the gangs. The gang decides how it will work its given monthly production programmes. It decides how many people will work on it. There are built-in safeguards which give a guaranteed bonus. If a gang does 2 weeks work in eight days to increase its bonus and is transferred to other gangs it remains on its own bonus.

The gangs also submit claims for lost bonus, for example when a machine breaks down.

Negotiations happen monthly and even weekly. So there are regular meetings, real decisions over working lives, and conflicts with the company going on all the time. The confidence, experience, and involvement built up in these little struggles laid the foundation for the big fight back over redundancies.

It also means that the shop stewards serve a real function. They are not just a means of communication but a central part of the bargaining process. A gang with a poor shop steward will soon find its earnings falling behind gangs with better stewards. Overall, this strong organisation means that wages in Masseys are well above the Coventry average. The best organised gangs earn more than their supervisors.

One result of this is that the whole stewards' organisation in Massey's is much less bureaucratised than in many factories. In the machine shops the gangs average about five people so there is absolutely no possibility of having full-time, or semi-full time, stewards. The gangs are too small to carry a man and are insistent that they will not. Becoming a steward does not mean getting an easier life. The quality of the stewards is thus higher than in those factories in which becoming a steward is halfway to promotion.

In a factory as big as Masseys this is not the case everywhere. The average throughout the plant is one steward per 25 workers but the assembly shop gangs are eighty strong. They do support a full-time steward. There are also the full-time convenors who exert a considerable influence over people.

The JSSC meets every week and there are reports-back to gang meetings. The machine and assembly stewards each have their own weekly meetings.

The JSSC is active and tightly organised. A steward who misses three consecutive meetings is removed from the JSSC. When the JSSC voted to attend the People's March through Coventry the one steward who failed to turn up had his steward's card removed.

The committee has become fairly political. It supports CND and took support for Solidarnosc to a mass meeting. Collections for disputes are regular. Ansells, Plansee, and Lee Jeans shared £600 from one collection, Talbot got £750. Gardners got £500 and the People's March £700. Coventry NUPE only got £150—because they went back to work halfway through the collection.

These regular collections mean that workers know about other disputes. They knew about the Gardners' victory and could balance it against the defeats in the Coventry car plants.

The two week occupation was not an overwhelming victory. There were no compulsory redundancies, but jobs were lost on a significant scale through voluntary redundancy. During the dispute itself the management threat to use injunctions to end the occupation was never taken to a mass meeting.

Since the return to work the management have tried to organise a counter-offensive. The weaker areas have not been able to resist, but the best organised have used the confidence built in the occupation to keep the management at bay.

But the real demonstration of what can happen to you if you don't fight is amongst the staff. The management have imposed 200 compulsory redundancies there. Sackings include half the clerical staff union reps. The entire supervisory grade, all non-union, were called to a meeting by the management. They were told that their grade had been abolished and that they had half an hour to leave the premises.

Masseys shows two things clearly. When working class people are involved in taking real decisions about their lives, they are ready to stand up and fight. Where they do not have that organisation, the management can sack who it likes and put the fear of god into the rest.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Massey workers—effective picketing.

Dilly Boy

Billy Wheeler is a 'rent boy', a young male prostitute. He explains how the crisis affects him.

It's not so easy being a rent boy these days. Since unemployment has risen so has the number of male prostitutes, but the number of punters (the men who pay for sex) has dropped.

This has caused some trouble between the different sets of boys who hang out round the 'Dilly' (Piccadilly Circus, London), public toilets, gay clubs and pubs of Soho. But a strong protective bond still remains between us. Punters are now in a position to get practically anything they want for a meagre sum of money. When money is really short punters can get sex with a boy or boys for a meal or the chance of a bed for the night. This is now a common occurrance.

Getting social security is difficult. If you have nowhere to live you have to pick up your S.S. at a special social security office each day, and its on the other side of town to the 'Dilly'. By the time you've paid your fare and got something to eat there's not much left. Some of the boys are unable to claim social security anyway, as they've run away from home and school.

Most of us are gay, though some claim they do it just for the money. Rent boys come from all over Britain. They come to find a job and somewhere to live, only to find that's just as hard in London as anywhere else. Becoming trade seems an easy way of making money.

If you're lucky enough you can get a 'sugar daddy'. This is where the punter gives you presents, money, dinner dates, clothes, and sometimes even a home, in return for sex and loyalty. Sugar daddies tend to be older than the punter and they treat you like their slave, entertainer and sex object. When they show you off to their friends its not uncommon for them to introduce you as "their new boy" or "meet my boy". These relationships can last for quite some time depending on the daddy. They have the upper hand. If a boy leaves his sugar daddy, then he will be back on the streets with no job and no security.

Without a daddy life on the streets is harder. If you don't pick up a punter you could find yourself walking the streets all night or being picked up by the police.

Pimps are uncommon. The boys who do have them have the worst time of all. You have to give the pimp around half of what you earn. If you don't earn enough to keep them they beat you up. Of course you have to have sex with them. The pimp controls your home and your life. They're meant to protect you from bad punters and deal with them if they don't pay you but they rarely do.

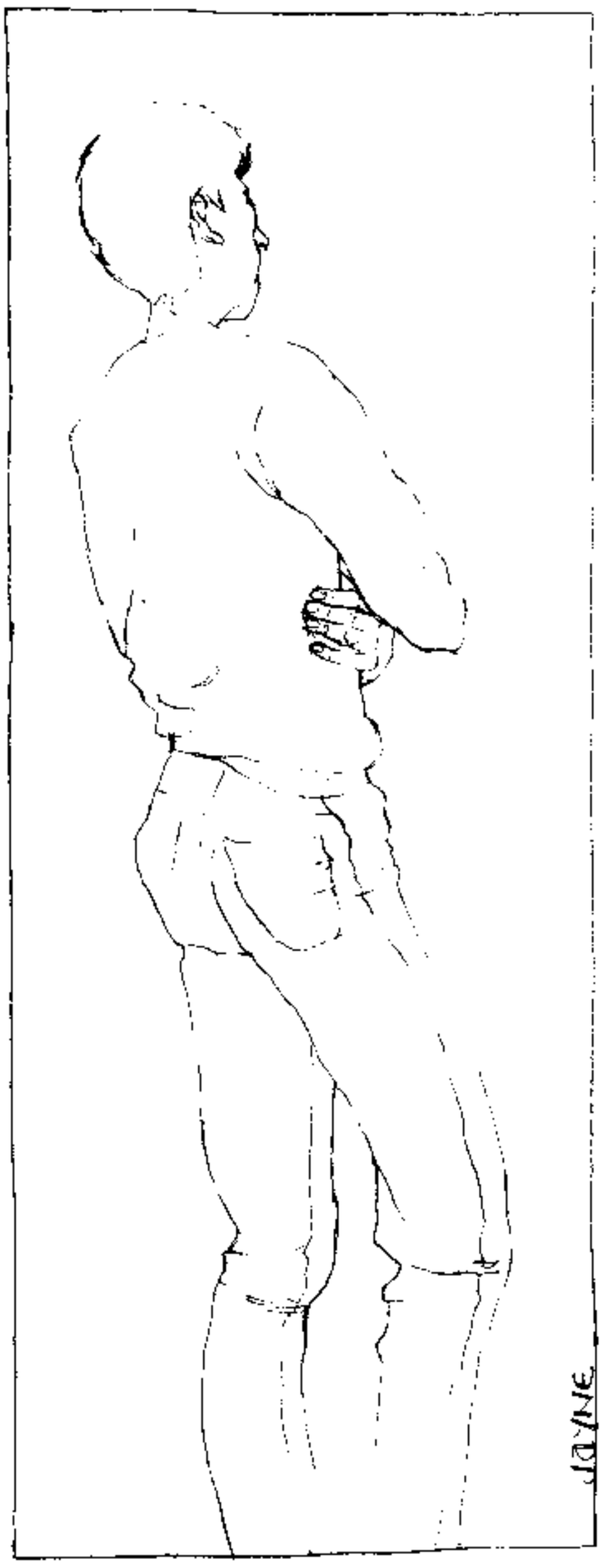


Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

The main risks in being on the game are the punters, queer bashers and the police. The three types are not exclusive. The punters may not pay up after a session, or only give you half the amount that was agreed, or deny that it was for money at all. There's not a lot you can do in these situations. All you can say is that you're underage (homosexuality is still only legal if you are over 21) and you'll go to the police.

But then you come up against your second problem: the police and courts. They will send you back to your parents or to a detention centre. Anyway, who are the police likely to believe? A wealthy businessman (which most punters are) or a 16 year old runaway homosexual?

Some of the policemen pretend to be punters. They pick you up in gay clubs or down the Dilly. Some of them even have sex with you then nick you. Once in the police cell, they can beat you up, call you names, keep you in all night and afterwards harrass you when they see you around on the streets.

There's always the risk when going with a punter that they might turn out to be queer bashers. They can lead you up a dark alley, where you'd been expecting to give them a blow job for £20, and suddenly there are three of his friends waiting for you to beat you up.

If you go home with a punter you can be taking your life in your hands. They could be into heavy S & M leather stuff, and you can end up being raped. When this sort of thing happens we really stick together. The punter is blacked and other boys are warned about him.

The same thing happens to punters who refuse to pay or turn out to be police. This word of mouth network is quite effective.

There is not a lot of contact between the women prostitutes and us. We see each other on the streets, but each judges each other as rivals, and are usually hostile.

Your life as a rent boy ends when the punters decide you have lost your looks or got too old. As long as there's high unemployment there are plenty of replacements. When that happens, well, its hard enough getting a job at the moment let alone trying to explain you have been a prostitute for the last two or three years.

It's ironic that Thatcher and her crew, who are so against us being rent boys and child prostitution, are doing so much with their policies to encourage it.

After the heady days of the campaign for the deputy leadership, where now for the Labour left? What moves for the embattled Militant tendency? Do followers of Tony Benn just wait in the back rooms till next conference? In THREE LETTERS TO A BENNITE, Paul Foot takes a fraternal look at the dilemmas they face...

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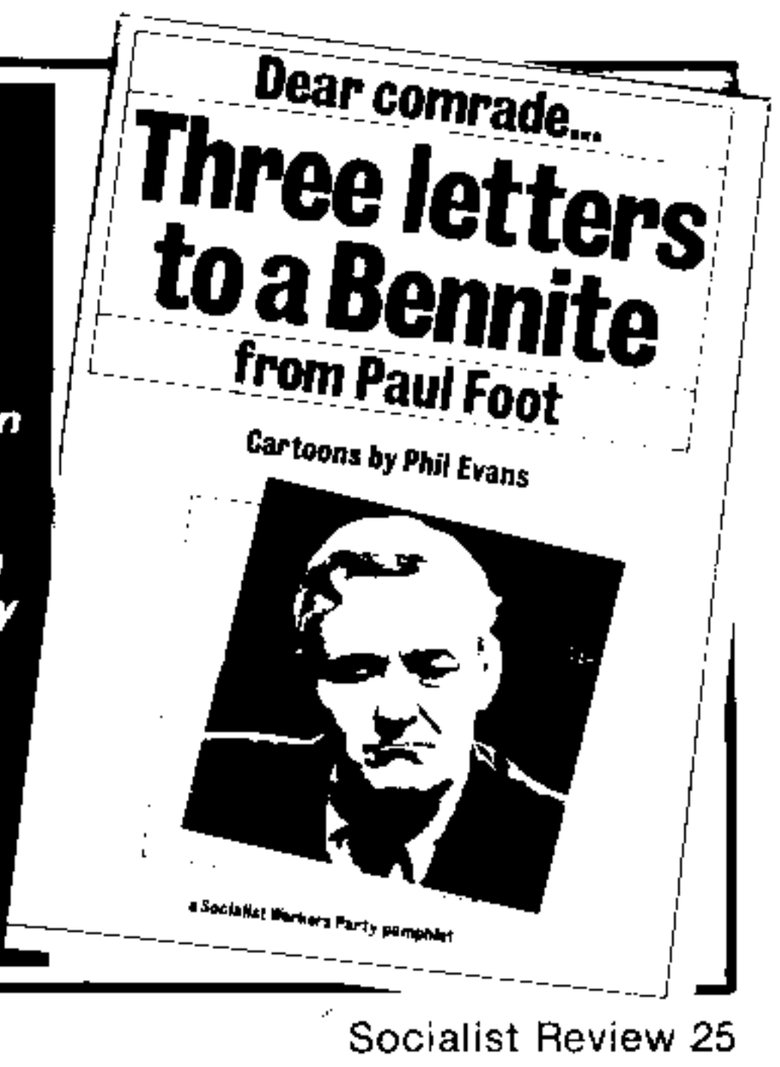


Evolution

APRIL 19th was the centenery of Darwin's death. His theory of evolution is under attack. 'Creationists', who believe that life came into existence exactly as claimed in Genesis, argue that this view is equally scientific. **Margaret Willis** examines their claims.

When Darwin wrote his book *On the Origin of Species* the concept of evolution was already in existence. His great contribution was to explain how it happened — the evolution of adaptation through natural selection. Three things are needed for this to take place.

The first is heredity, the passing on of an organism's characteristics to its offspring. This is accepted in the phrase 'like begets like'. What it actually means is that each newly fertilized egg contains a programme for development, and since it received that programme from its parents it will be roughly the same as theirs. The set of instructions that make up that programme is called the genotype, the individual instructions being called genes; we carry a copy in every cell of our bodies.

We have a half set in our sex cells, so that when sperm meets egg a new, full set is formed — specifying the new individual. It should be stressed that the genotype is nothing without the environment, the obvious example being the need for food. To ignore that interaction is to fall into the trap of biological determinism, as pernicious in its own way as creationism.

The second requirement is variation. Although offspring resemble their parents they are not exactly the same; one human is not identical to another. Variation is constantly produced by the shuffling of genes in sexual reproduction, but the ultimate source of variation is mutation. The genes act as coded messages based on four 'letters', the four different types of sub-units of DNA (the hereditary material). Sometimes one of the 'letters' is miscopied and this is a common type of mutation, although others such as duplication of genes occur. If the mistake is present in the sex cells it will be passed on to the offspring through the normal process of heredity.

Genes are responsible both for producing the substances that do the work of the cell and for regulating the timing of that production, and usually a mistake will result in lowering of efficiency or the death of the organism. Sometimes the change will be so small it has no real effect; but sometimes the new genotype will actually be better than before.

The third requirement is that members of a population, whether animals or plants, do not all survive equally well or produce an equal number of offspring. There is a constant struggle to survive and reproduce efficently — to fight disease, avoid predators, find enough food and water, attract a mate, avoid the effects of extreme heat or cold. Inevitably since individuals are different, some will do better than others — they are said to be better adapted to their environment. If that adaptation has a genetic basis it will be passed on to their offspring who will also do better and so on. Eventually those individuals that possess the adaptation will predominate in the population; the others will have been selected out by natural processes and evolution will have occurred.

To see how it fits together look at the example of the peppered moth. The common type was originally light-coloured, but occasionally a dark mutant arose. This dark form; when it settled on the pale tree trunks was easily spotted by predators and eaten — it was less well adapted to its environment and selected against. Although a constant supply of mutants was arising through mutation the 'dark' gene could not spread through the population and remained rare. Then the environment changed.

With the coming of the industrial revolution soot and grime began to settle on the tree trunks, and they were soon commonly dark. Now when the common light-coloured moths settled on the trunks they were clearly visible and taken by birds; whereas the dark moths were now more likely to survive and produce large numbers of dark offspring which eventually predominated in the population.

This example is unusual because the process happened fast enough, and the effects of the gene were sufficiently noticeable, for us to be aware that it was taking place. Also being a modern occurrence scientists were able to prove that the change in colour was adaptive, for example by placing moths on trees and observing the behaviour of birds. The central problem for evolutionists is to explain the origin of species, which is a process taking thousands of years and therefore is either taking place now, too slowly for complete study; or happened in the past and is not available for experimental work.

However experiments on small-scale changes now — for example the acquisition of penicillin-resistance in bacteria and heavy metal tolerance in plants round old mines — together with the study of the large-scale change in the fossil record, have convinced practically all biologists that the process described above is responsible for the development of new species. In fact in the case of metal tolerant plants, tolerance and non-tolerance have become associated with different flowering times, so we may be seeing the emergence of a new species (the requirement being reproductive isolation).

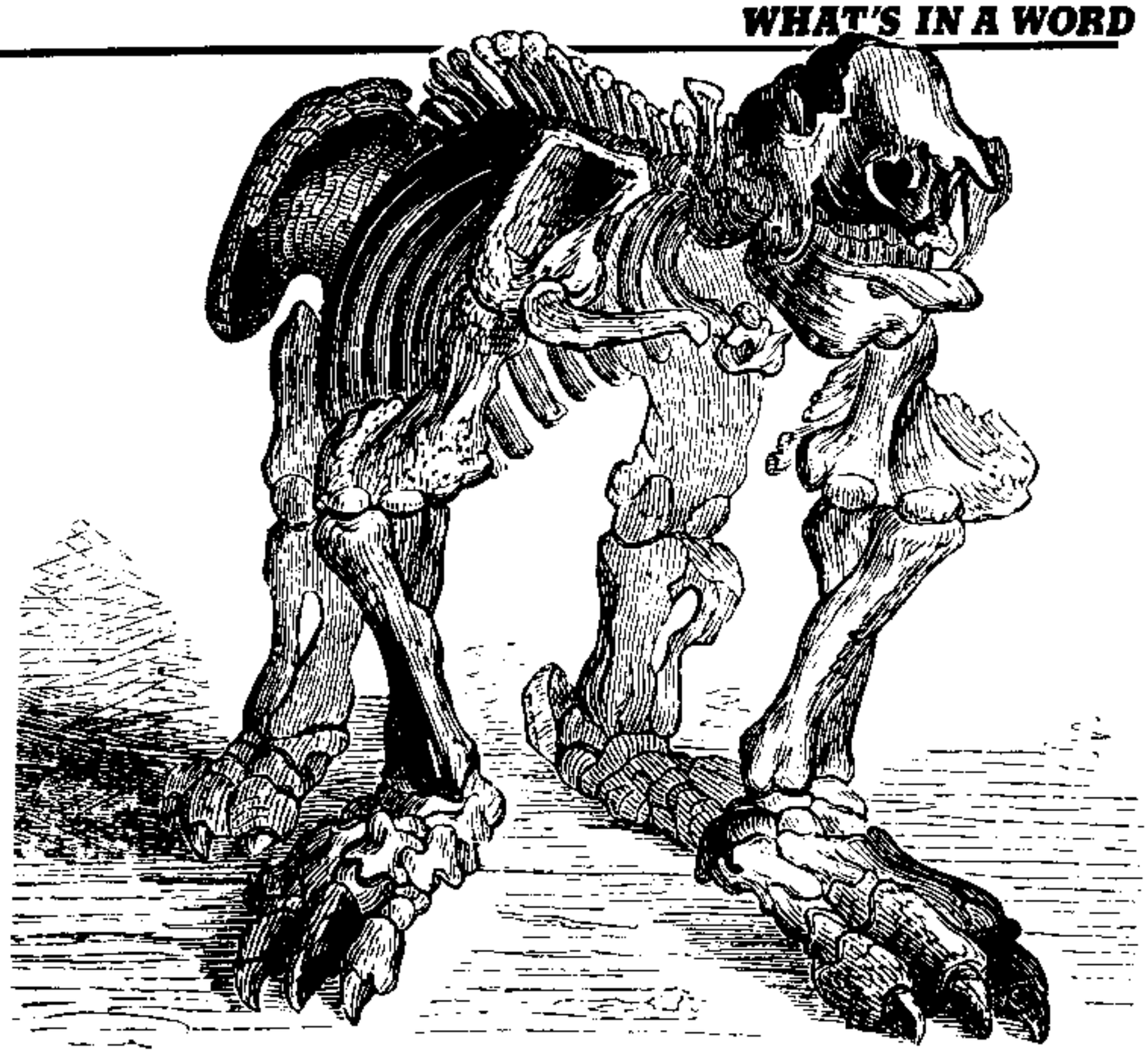
Creationism is a refutation of evolutionary theory and a literal belief in the Biblical account of creation: that God created each species separately and immutably at the same time. Arkansas and Louisiana passed laws recognising creationism and evolution as having equal scientific basis — in the recent court case at Little Rock, Arkansas this was held to be unconstitutional, but the fight is not over yet. Partly there is a confusion over the word 'science'. The creationist argument is that if a theory is not one hundred per cent verified, if there is debate over it and a constant generation of new ideas and new problems to investigate, then that theory is merely philosophy and no more scientific than the Bible. However, the basic task of any science is to generate new questions and suggestions as to how they might be answered. Without this process it is sterile and stagnant and simply represents a dead end in our search for knowledge.

What scientists are researching is not *whether* evolution produces species but *how* it does so; not *whether* natural selection is important, but *how* important it is. This kind of debate is a million miles away from blind unquestioning faith in creation because the Bible says so. Let us look at some aspects of modern evolutionary debate.

One is the part played by pure chance in evolution. Imagine a population of peppered moths in which 50 per cent are dark and 50 per cent light. If they produce thousands of offspring and natural selection is not operating, then about 50 per cent of the offspring will be dark. But if only ten offspring are produced it is quite likely that by chance, six or seven of them will be dark. If this continues the moths will be evolving without the action of natural selection. Sometimes this kind of 'genetic drift' is strong enough to override a low level of natural selection — but natural selection is still seen as the chief mechanism of evolution. The question is how much of the variation found in populations is there by chance and how much because of interaction with the environment.

Another controversy about the origin of species is getting a lot of attention at the moment from people who want to think 'Darwin got it wrong'. (Evolutionists don't expect him to have got everything right, considering he didn't even know of the existence of genes). The new theory goes by the name of 'punctuated equilibria' and mainly concerns rates of evolution. Darwin saw evolution as taking place at a constant rate, a species gradually amassing small changes until it becomes a new species, and offshoots continuing in the same way. This can be depicted as an evolutionary 'tree' with gradually sloping branches.

When opponents of evolution pointed to gaps in the fossil record, in the sense of the lack of intermediate forms between one



The *Megatherium* or giant sloth—the most dramatic of the fossil discoveries that moved Darwin towards his theory.

species and another immediately following it, Darwin said it was merely an artefact of the poverty of the record. The main proponents of the new theory, Eldredge and Gould, suggest that these gaps are real. They say that the fossil record shows long periods of stasis — lack of change within a species — and then a new species arises so suddenly (in geological terms) that intermediates are unlikely to be found. This is because genes are adapted not only to the external environment, but also to the genetic environment; genes have to be good mixers, and in particular fit in with the complicated development programme.

If a small section of a population becomes isolated, because of various factors such as genetic drift, these constraints can be overcome and a revolutionary change in the genotype can take place, resulting in a new species. If favoured by the environment, this may ultimately take over from the old population and become abundant enough to give a good chance of being found as fossils. This theory is often presented as striking a blow at the heart of evolutionary theory, but it must be stressed that at no point are Eldredge and Gould suggesting processes that are not well accounted for in evolutionary theory.

Creationists always point to the problem of the first stages of the evolution of life. All life is made up of cells, but where did the first cell come from? Since life is thought to have evolved naturally rather than by a miracle, the probable conditions of the early days of the earth were reproduced in the laboratory to see if life would form spontaneously. Complicated molecules — precursors of life — were found, formed by the experiment. Creationists say this doesn't prove that was how they were formed, or that they then progressed to cells, and they are right.

The argument is not entirely circular as they suggest — rather it is that since it is generally agreed that evolution due to natural earthly processes has occurred later in earth's history, and it can be envisaged how life originally arose from natural earthly processes, then *in the absence of a better explanation* we must assume that it did. Hoyle and Wickramsinghe offer another theory — the seeding of the earth by comets. If they find good evidence for it, then our explanation falls. But that would be a very different matter from turning to mysticism in frustration at science's present — and perhaps permanent — inability to say 'This is definitely how it happened.'

The fossil record is the next point of creationist attack. This record is necessarily incomplete, given the rarity with which organisms will both undergo fossilisation and be discovered; also creatures like worms have no hard parts to be fossilised. So up to Cambrian times — 600 million years ago — the record is very poor, and when fossils are then found in abundance most of the major types (phyla) are already present. A certain amount of guesswork must therefore go into interpreting evolutionary relationships, although Pre-Cambrian era fossils have been found, consistent with evolutionary theory.

There is other evidence: a creature alive today, Peripatus, seems to be intermediate between annelids (worms) and arthropods (insects etc) and shows at least that such intermediate forms can exist. From the Cambrian on the fossil record is sufficiently abundant to give ample evidence of evolution. To take our own line, there is a progression from non vertebrates, then fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, apemen, Homo. There are few major missing links in the record — how would creationists explain the discovery of the fossil apewoman, Lucy, without moving outside the realms of scientific argument? Or the discovery of Archaeopteryx, basically a feathered dinosaur, between early dinosaurs and birds?

Along with missing links creationists talk of the improbability of small-scale changes leading to far-raching new adaptations. How could a feather be selected before other changes such as musculature and reduced body weight had also evolved to allow flight? This is easily explained by the phenomenon of pre-adaptation — a characteristic being originally selected for one reason and becoming capable of modification for another. Feathers probably originally arose for insulation, developed in size for their usefulness in catching insects, at the same time giving lift which would lead to selection for general flying ability. We can see in the fossil record *what* happened, and by studying living forms we can construct plausible reasons for *why*.

Of course a determined creationist can explain away all the evidence for evoluton if the 'science' argument is dropped. God put the fossils in the rocks as part of his mysterious plan. Geological processes are not the same as they used to be, therefore, the earth is thousands not millions of years old. Yes mutation happens today but it is a punishment for Adam's Fall. Natural selection likewise reflects the 'consequences of sin'.

In fact creationism is not a prerequisite of Christianity; many evolutionists are Christians. Why then are creationists once again so vociferous, and why does creationism go hand in hand with general right wing ideology? Partly it is because of the denial of change, the emphasis that the world is as God created it and always will be, that life-forms are fixed and immutable. Biological stasis can be taken to mean social stasis with all that this implies in times of economic crisis.

Creationism also holds back any attempt to analyse why the mass of people still find life such a struggle when science in all its forms has provided the means to an easy and fulfilling life: 'A miraculous Creation and Fall explain the moral problem of sin and suffering,' an English creationist tract argues. Above all, Creationism provides a prop to Authority, that of God as interpreted by his disciples on earth — namely Church and State.

If all that we see around us is the outcome of natural processes, rather than a fixed part of God's plan, then it follows that our destiny is in our hands. Without God to keep us under control who knows what might happen? 'The "real" world of social intercourse and political decision is no longer regulated as it once was, by considerations of a philosophical and religious character,' the tract continues. The problem is: who is to decide? Who is to take control? Creationism is one weapon in the battle to ensure it won't be me and you. □

Tyndall tries again

At the beginning of the month a re-alignment of the extreme right took place under John Tyndall the former leader of the National Front. **Steve Cedar** examines its significance.

Among the organisations that have come together in Tyndall's new British Nationalist Party, are members of the British Movement, the League of St George and the British Democratic Party.

What do Tyndall and his friends hope to achieve from this new organisation? Firstly, Tyndall has never forgotten the battles he had in the past with Martin Webster—the NF's 'activities' organiser, two years ago when Tyndall lost control and was booted out.

The organisation Tyndall set up, the New NF, never gained as many members as he had hoped, and he has been marginal to the far right since then. Someone who claims to be, as they all do, the Fuehrer of Britain, needs a few more people around him. It is the BM who have been growing amongst the discontented youth who are so important to the fascists.

The fascists' weakness is borne out when you look at their candidates in May's local elections. The NNF are standing virtually no-one, and where the NF are standing people, it is a tiny percentage of what they last fielded. In Hackney, in East London, only four NF candidates are being put up, in an area where in the past the nazis have often beaten the Liberals to third place. When you look at the personalities involved, there is no one new, just those who have been around the fascist movement for years.

The fact is that the nazis have declined in recent years. After the 1979 general election, the nazis split and split again into warring factions. The combination of the massive campaign of the ANL and the Tories open racist legislaton lost the nazis a lot of votes and, at least for the present period, finished them electorally.

NF chairman Andrew Brons (left) and one of the demonstrations to get him out of his job (above)

Since then, they have more or less confined themselves to 'extra-parliamentary activities, like the occasional bombing of a house or bookshop, or, much more frequently, the racist attacks on black people. This should really be seen as a sign, not of the nazis' strength, but of their weakness.

Tyndall recognises this and has decided to have another crack at building up the nazis' base. His timing is very good. Every anti-fascist knows that when summer arrives, the nazis come out of hibernation. But the best opportunity for Tyndall to recruit is the latest 'Law 'n Order' scare that has been created by the police and the media.

With two of the biggest forces of the state to aid him he has a real chance. Unemployment is at three million plus, and there are few signs of any fightback among workers. He hopes to whip up the sort of racist hysteria that we have come to know in recent years.

What will this new Nazi Party be doing in the coming months and what should our response be? Undoubtedly there will be the attempted marches. Undoubtedly blanket bans will cause problems for all of us. What will be more challenging will be the fact that they are much more open about being nazis these days. They have a stronger emphasis of anti-semitism and anti-communism. And with sections of the BM behind them, this new grouping will be much less embarrassed by its violence than the 'respectability' seekers of the NF.

In these circumstances socialists must respond in an open, positive way. We are not for back-alley punch-ups. Experience has shown that this tires people. It also makes it increasingly difficult to involve other people, which is what we have to do. It has become clear that without arguing our general politics and offering a concrete alternative to the nazis, we are onto a loser from the start.

For example, last year in Leeds the NF sold regularly outside Elland Road football ground. For a long time the ANL used to counter-leaflet and then, through the local Right to Work Campaign, a series of leaflets were put in arguing for reduced rates of entrance for the unemployed. By doing this and pointing out that the nazis had nothing to offer on the question of unemployment it was planned to cut their appeal.

The nazis in Leeds have little base at present, which is probably why they are now concentrating much more on building in Harrogate where NF chairman Brons teaches at the local FE college.

Similarly in Islington, London, the local nazis have undergone a dramatic decline. After a series of violent clashes last year a Right to Work rally was held at Chapel Market, the scene of the battles. Although modest in size, the fifty people who turned out to argue with and offer activity to people (in this case the Tory Party Conference Picket) had the effect of humiliating the nazis.

In South London at East Street Market the NF, NNF and BM all sell every week. For the last two years 20-30 nazis have turned up to sell their 'literature'. Socialist Worker sellers turn up each week and have maintained the sale. They have refused to be baited and haven't retaliated. In order to

isolate the nazis and cut away any potential base a lot of leafletting of the area took place to get people on the Right to Work march through London.

It is clear that over the last couple of years the nazis have become quite marginal, with their tactics showing desperation rather than growing influence. This is not to say that the dangerous level they reached before cannot be repeated.

This new gathering of Tyndall's will have to be watched carefully. It means continuing to penetrate into the areas where they have support. We need to use the Right to Work Campaign and make sure we get plenty of young people out on the streets against Ronald Reagan's visit. Last year's riots also knocked the nazis back by seeing black and white fighting the police together. If there are more this summer we have to be in there arguing socialist politics.

The nazis at present have no real political identity. It is our job to make sure it stays that way. □

A new machine, but the same politics

The National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) won control of the NUS Executive at its Easter conference. They ended thirteen years of Communist Party leadership. Pat Stack looks at the background and prospects.

Throughout the seventies the Broad Left (under the organisational and political control of the CP) provided the leadership of the NUS. Despite a few minor upsets they remained unbeatable at elections. As the Communist Party moved further towards 'Eurocommunism' and the notion of Broad Democratic Alliances, so the Broad Left moved steadily to the right.

Following the 1977 campaign, student politics followed the industrial struggle into a downturn. Direct action was seen only in isolated incidents. The college authorities began to flex their muscles, and the right wing gained in the local unions. The Broad Left was then faced with the choice of taking on this right wing shift or adapting to it.

The CP was faced with problems. Their stalinist past hindered the building of the 'Broad Democratic Alliance'. Although they still controlled the national machine their base in the colleges was practically non-existent. Few Broad Left groups existed and even fewer CP students were to be found. To deal with these problems the name Broad Left was dropped and the Left Alliance was launched.

The Left Alliance represented more than just a name change. Liberals were included in the new alliance. The rightward trend was sharpened. Presenting a respectable image of students, and being good negotiators with government, became the main aims of the leadership. Students who fought back damaged this image and so were opposed. Previously occupations were given grudging support, now they were greeted with open hostility. Revolutionaries were portrayed as the main threat to the union's future. SWSO in particular was the target for witch hunts.

All this happened against a background of cuts, college closures and attacks on students' right to organise. Right wing Tories attempted to get colleges to leave the national union.

The irony was that the very group who had taken over the bureaucracy in order to change the union had been forced, by their determination to hang on to that bureaucracy, to make so many accommodations to the right that they had almost taken the union full circle. The one area where the CP were able to build a Broad Democratic Alliance had proved to be a political disaster and would soon prove to be an electoral one.

Just as you cannot examine what happened to the CP in isolation from the world outside student politics, neither can you explain the growth of NOLS as a political force without taking into account the rise of Benn in the Labour Party. The growth of the Labour left set the scene for the NOLS split from the Left Alliance. Embarrassed by sharing an alliance with Liberals, and becoming aware of their own electoral strength, NOLS split away last year.

NOLS can claim groups in most colleges, some of them very big, although a lot of their membership exist on paper only. At this Easter's conference they were quite clearly offering a genuine electoral challenge to the Left Alliance. The margin of their victory proved surprising. They got almost double the Left Alliance vote. For the Left Alliance the conference was a disaster. They were reduced from dominating a 17 person executive to only three people. For the CP things were worse. They failed to get one member onto an executive which had more or less been their property for 13 years.

Socialists should welcome the defeat of the Left Alliance. NOLS is, in words at least, a force to the left of the Left Alliance. Yet it is wrong to expect to see a significant shift by NUS to the left.

The conference itself threw up many danger signals. NOLS presented a sharp alternative to the Left Alliance in elections, but in no policy debate did they disagree. NOLS sided with the Left Alliance in supporting cross campus ballots (the student equivalent to the postal vote). The main debates were nearly always between SWSO and everybody else from NOLS to the Tories.

The conference was held at the end of a term which saw 25 colleges in occupation, but the mood of the conference did not reflect this. During the course of those occupations many individual NOLS members in the colleges had played an active part. The NOLS leadership and their members on the National Executive varied between mild support and opposition.

NOLS has broken from the Left Alliance organisationally. They have rejected some of the more rightwing stances of the CP. But they still think that controlling the Executive is the most important task. If concessions have to be made to do this, then they will make them.

They have already started. There is evidence that Neil Stewart, the new President, ran an anti-communist witchunt when canvassing in the more rightwing colleges. At a fringe meeting at the conference, Tommy Sheperd, the most left wing of the NOLS Executive members, spoke eloquently of the need to support the Reagan Reception Committee. At the first Executive meeting after the conference, Sheperd and the rest backed away from support under pressure from Aaronovitch, the retiring President.

It is difficult to see how NOLS will avoid following the same path as the Left Alliance. They represent a 'broad church' stretching from mainstream Labour to Bennites. They lack the political coherence. They even lack the machine which for so long helped the CP to avoid defeat.

As for the CP, the picture is black. They no longer control the machine. They have little to offer the liberals and careerists they used to guarantee a place on the Executive.

None of the changes at the top of NUS represent anything as significant as the 25 occupations. If the downturn and rightward drift of student politics is to be halted, then it is precisely that self-activity which provides the potential for the change. □

Days of Hope

THE GENERAL STRIKE OF 1926

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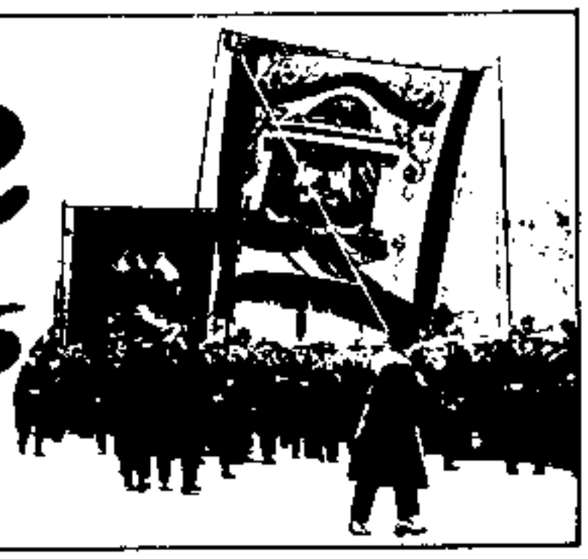

CND: The leaders retreat

Easter is a traditional high-point of CND activity. **Peter Williams** looks at this year's events.

A large number of people turned out. Despite the loss of momentum over the winter, CND is still very much alive and kicking — as it ought, given the aggressive deployment of British nuclear submarines in the South Atlantic and the imminent arrival of Reagan.

But at the same time CND nationally seems to have got a bad case of cold feet. It is clearly embarrassed by the prospect of disturbances arising out of Reagan's presence in London in June. It refuses to have anything to do with the Reagan Reception Committee. Initially the London leadership refused to permit the banner to be at the 7 June picket of the American Embassy, a decision eventually overturned by the London Region AGM. YCND, however, are fully supporting the events.

The reason for this is the row over Trident. The splits in the Tory Party, and the Labour opposition's attack on its cost, seem to have convinced the CND national leadership that victory for *part* of its programme is within sight. So they distance themselves from anything that might antagonise its new-found allies against Trident. That means anything that smacks of left-wing agitation or opposition to NATO.

It seeks confirmation for this in its analysis of the opinion polls, which suggest that while two out of three disapprove of Trident, the same proportion also thinks that Britain should remain in NATO. So CND is busily rewriting its policy towards nuclear alliances.

In the April/May issue of *Sanity*, a long and tortuous article argues that increased European political unity within NATO could isolate America and stop further nuclear build-up. The conclusion drawn is the following:

> 'A movement for British isolation and withdrawal which is one interpretation of CND's current policy would not help remove the feelings of vulnerability of the West Germans nor would it aid European unity. It is this new unity which threatens the position of the United States in NATO.'

And, in commenting on the polls themselves, *Sanity* states:

> 'CND's aims have always been interpreted as calling for the mutual dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact rather than unilateral withdrawal from NATO.'

This astounding conclusion knocks a huge hole in CND's unilateralism. For it is a conclusion that sees the best hopes of peace through operating within the existing military alliances. Every government since the war has said this, and CND was founded to oppose it.

And if you apply the same 'logic' to the question of Britain's nuclear weapons you arrive at the multilateralism of such pro-NATO, cold-war opponents of CND as Denis Healey. He too has always interpreted his 'opposition' to nuclear arms in terms of the 'mutual dissolution' of the stockpiles held by both sides.

This softening towards NATO (in flat defiance, it should be added, of last year's conference) is an extremely dangerous step. It is also an extremely silly one, since it will fail to provide the muscle CND needs, and for which respectability is no substitute. The Easter CND events show why.

The numbers at the various activities up and down the country varied considerably. The biggest was at Glasgow, with 30,000. With Trident due to arrive on the Clyde that is hardly surprising. But the opposition is not just to Trident. For many workers, particularly working class youth, the appeal of CND is the slogan, Jobs not Bombs — a much wider issue. The committees set up in Paisley and Maryhill are run by working class youth; and part of the big trade union presence on the demonstration (which was overwhelmingly local) was made up of young apprentices.

For youth, the traditional CND leadership — often formal and bureaucratic — is far to cautious and respectable. It fails to connect to their immediate and pressing concerns.

One striking feature of many of the marches is the active role of local YCND groups. In Hull, for example, with a turnout of 1600 (double what the organisers had expected) there was a contingent of students with their school banners. Cambridge YCND was successful in getting more young people than ever before on the East Anglia march from RAF Woodbridge to Ipswich. And on one of the South Wales marches (from Llanelli to Bridgend), a good proportion of the 70 or so were school students.

The attitude of local leaderships is indicative of the problems of prodding CND into connecting up with other issues.

Wales is a good example. Presented with the idea of a week long march, the leadership were worried that it might resemble a Right to Work March and so get out of hand. They insisted on three separate marches, with a maximum of 40 on each appointed by CND groups and with vetting committees (shades of the People's March!).

This proposal was defeated in West Glamorgan and the march from Llanelli to Bridgend was open and without limitation on numbers — and also the most successful. Apart from the school students already mentioned, there was also a hospital workers' section, thus making the link between welfare and military expenditure. Once again, local CND activists were able to demonstrate the relevance of CND beyond its traditional audience, and not just as a single, isolated issue.

Elsewhere the reluctance to go beyond what is safe and traditional is evident. At Sheffield, the Easter march organisers had expected 20,000, following last year's march of between 10 and 12,000. In the event, the turn out was 5,000. That is not bad, but local activists were not surprised, given a widespread feeling that just tramping the streets served no good purpose.

So a local activists' group has picked on the fact that nuclear trains travel through Rotherham to call a demonstration for mid-May. Despite opposition from the city's CND leadership, worried about confrontation, this initiative is gathering support.

The same group has also obtained a copy of a confidential report by the local Health Authority, containing instructions to medical personnel in time of nuclear war. The group plans to use it to good effect by intervening in the local health workers' pay claim campaign.

Once again, the point is that with flexibility, openness and imagination, local CND groups can link up with the concerns facing workers and youth. Intervention round issues like unemployment and pay may spoil the image of respectability that CND nationally is so eager to preserve. But, as the round-up shows, unless CND builds the solid support among working class people and their struggles, all the gains made by repudiating anything 'offensive' will prove to be as firm as quicksand. □

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Rape anger

As a working class woman I am replying in anger to Julie Waterson's article on rape. I feel that by offering a class analysis to rape she excuses men by blaming their actions on capitalism.

She fails to see rape within a wider context of male attitudes to women and offers a simplistic view based on statistics. There is more to male dominance than capitalism: attitudes and conditioning – built over centuries – which see women as available, passive, sexual objects have as much to do with rape. Most rapes aren't reported because of humiliating treatment given by police and courts, which make the victim feel guilty (e.g. being questioned on the history of one's sex life).

To blame rape on unemployment and working class men is wrong. Rape is committed by men, irrespective of class. Middle class men are more likely to get away with it because of influence, contacts etc and the victim may be less willing to prosecute because of the man's position.

Julie states that 'women outside of the working class, when raped, can deal with it better because they have the education and confidence to come to terms with it.' This is ridiculous: it suggests that the capacity to pass 'A' levels is sufficient training to overcome rape and the emotional trauma that follows it. A black belt in karate is more useful than a philosophy degree!

She summarises her views on rape by saying, 'middle class men can afford to pay for sex, working class men can't'. She totally misses the point by seeing rape as sex and men's uncontrollable urges; men need prostitutes or they rape. Is cheap sex the answer!? If state brothels were provided would they tame violent men? Sister, I don't think you have questioned male sexuality at all!

I disagree with Julie's view that only the working class can bring change in society, women throughout history have had to make changes for themselves. I also feel that women should organise together against rape; I have learnt through experience that to discuss issues like rape at work is a waste of time.

Jane Saunders, London W.3

No special cases

Peter Alexander's letter (SR 82:3) criticising my article on Southen African solidarity indicates an inability on his part to break from the liberal 'special case-ism' of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

He argues that if the TGWU advocates linking import controls with 'the call for sanctions' we should say 'excellent' and 'let's strengthen the solidarity . . . by blacking all trade.' Now just what is the rationale behind this? Everywhere else we argue that import controls don't save jobs. Exporting unemployment is a short-term expedient which soon has us all at each other's throats and everyone's job on the line.

But apparently this shouldn't apply to South Africa: it's okay to try and keep a few jobs in Doncaster for twelve months by stopping imports of South African shirts and shifting the burden of unemployment onto black workers in Durban. Somehow that's called 'solidarity'. Even though it would rightly be called 'nationalism' if Taiwanese workers were at the receiving end.

Presumably when the police arrive to load the redundant contract workers onto meat wagons for dumping out in the Bantustans, this furthers 'the liberation struggle' by exemplifying 'repression'. While the new lumpenproletarians, finding themselves without means of livelihood and none of the leverage on the system which they need to get it, become raging revolutionaries! Is that the theory?

Nor will it do for Peter Alexander to argue that sanctions strengthened the working class in Rhodesia. What this means is that they didn't work. Rhodesian capital reorganised itself under the aegis of South Africa and weathered the storm. But our argument is about effective solidarity. It's about things which it's expected and hoped will work. And it's because we fear that import controls against South Africa will have the effect of weakening and dividing the class that we argue against them.

And we don't care that Thatcher says she's against sanctions too. Just as we didn't care when she said she was for Solidarity in Poland. We know full well that she cares no more for the black workers of South Africa than she does for the miners of Silesia. And we know too that as soon as we start arguing for real direct worker-to-worker southern African solidarity, the first thing we will be up against is the new anti-union bill of Thatcher's No 1 Hatchet Man.

Neil Faulkner
SWP Southern Africa Group.

Don't knock 'people'

The article 'The Power to stop the city' (SR 82:3) contained a phrase that really worried me. As a criticism of the Fare Fight campaign it is stated: 'The orientation is to people rather than workers and to voters rather than trade unionists'. Perhaps Martin Roser hasn't noticed that a large number of users of public transport are 'people'. Would he refuse non-working women, the unemployed, the retired and students a say?

Furthermore the article was supposed to be concerned with the fact that democracy had been over-ruled by the House of Lords. How does Roiser dare to say that voters are second-best to trade unionists? As I see it socialism is about democracy and democracy is about 'people' and voters.

Wendy McCanna
Portchester, Hants

Socialist Review welcomes readers' letters. Please keep them as short as you can, and type them if at all possible. Send to : *Socialist Review*, PO Box 82, London E2.

Picture: JOHN STURROCK (Network)

Sweet reformism

Lindsey German takes a critical look at *Sweet Freedom: the struggle for womens' liberation* (Picador £1.95) by Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell

This book is high on the list of Alternative Bestsellers. It has been greeted as a history of the past decade of the women's movement, and as a radical blueprint for its future development.

But the book is thoroughly reformist. Not only that, its reformism is not particularly radical. It starts by talking about the suffragettes and ends with an undisguised plea for more women MPs and positive action in the Labour Party and unions. The ideas which purport to be new have in fact barely changed since the days of the suffragettes. With one important difference: the men and women who held those sorts of ideas in the early part of this century had a hundred times more guts, more life and more hatred of the system than Coote and Campbell show today.

Coote and Campbell talk in left wing terms but have a very different view of the enemy. They never explain things in terms of capitalist social relations. Instead each problem stems from 'patriarchy' 'male domination' or simply 'men'.

They are not concerned to clear out the old structures and replace them with a new system. They assume that those structures will remain—parliament, the unions, the education system—and that all which has to be done is to reform them in a feminist direction.

Coote and Campbell see the problem here as:

> '...the general alienation of the women's movement from parliamentary politics. It is one thing to write letters to MPs, sign petitions and carry torches down Whitehall—to beat on the front door from the outside. It is quite another to go round the back and fight one's way inside—past forbidding doormen, through long corridors of protocol and compromise, up grubby, hypocritical stairs, into uncomfortable ante rooms of self advertisement—to seek out the place where power is supposed to lie, but seldom can be found. So women have continued to lobby a male dominated legislature, which has had little understanding of their needs and no intention of making them a priority.'

They have the same attitude to the unions. They proudly proclaim that:

> 'In September 1981 the TUC ratified a detailed set of proposals for positive action in favour of women.'

Similarly they claim the unions need more women on union executives and more full time officials. They quote approvingly attempts to get more representation for women in the Labour Party:

> 'Increasing numbers of women in their twenties and thirties were making the Labour Party the main focus of their political activity as *feminists* as well as socialists.'

The authors' whole 'Alternative Strategy' for positive action assumes the continued existence of capitalism. Not only that but—even worse than their male counterparts—these womens movement reformists also presuppose a capitalism where the working class only have access to a small share of the cake.

They criticise the male reformists for having 'purely economic' objectives, and claim instead the need to look at the 'redistribution of labour and wealth within the family'.

Again this assumes a world where responsibility for childcare and housework lies with the individual family unit, instead of with society as a whole.

It also assumes a wage structure where women get lower wages because men get higher ones. But every piece of statistical evidence on wages points in another direction. Where the better paid fight and win higher wages, or better conditions, they tend to raise the level of wages for the lower paid too. When they don't fight, the lower paid are even worse off. The reason is simple. There is not a set amount of money in the national coffers. Employers and governments pay what they think they can get away with. What you get depends on what you fight for.

But in summing up their strategy for equality the authors claim:

> 'The biggest obstacle in our view, is not finding the necessary resources, but persuading men to relinquish their privileges.'

Not capitalists, note, or even some men, but *men*. Their privileges are the problem, not the fact that 7% of the populaton own nearly all the wealth, or that enough is spent on arms in the US every year to provide all the schools, hospitals and nurseries that are needed.

And how do we persuade them? Simple—by taking on the bastions of male power:

> 'The women's liberation movement has so far remained on the edge of institutional politics... Most feminists have felt there are better things to do elsewhere, without getting caught up in the hostile currents of the male dominated "mainstream". If we are seriously planning to transform society and liberate ourselves, we shall have to get in and swim.
>
> 'This doesn't mean abandoning our own politics—but while we continue to organise separately and develop our own ideas and strategies, we must also carry the form and content into the mainstream and we must seek to wield power ourselves—*as feminists*. That is, unless we are content to ask favours of powerful men for the rest of our days.'

This is the nub of the whole book. Liberation isn't about the transformation of society from below which can establish, through socialism, a genuine democracy and equality. To Coote and Campbell, it is

just that the wrong people are in control at the moment—that is the main thing that needs changing.

Women have to win positions in parliament, the unions and local government, they claim, so they can act on behalf of the millions of working women who because of their oppression and exploitation as women *and as workers* will never get near to becoming MPs or trade union bureaucrats.

The argument is an exact parallel with the arguments of the Labour left. The conclusions of the book are effectively: join the Labour Party, fight to get women represented, they will change things for you.

Our argument is very different. The liberation of women, as for the whole of humanity, lies in the transformation of capitalism and the success of socialism.

The liberation of women can only come from the emancipation of the whole working class—which can only be brought about by the working class itself. We talk about building a revolutionary party to move towards that aim. Coote and Campbell talk about bolstering up a Labour Party which2 might, if in government, provide a few reforms which benefit women.

What is more, entrenched in Coote and Campbell's politics is a refusal to face reality. For example they claim that, 'In the early 1980s the women's liberation movement is entering an exciting new phase'. This is really quite an incredible statement. Far form entering an exciting new phase, it is floundering around, turning in on itself, trying to find a role. Increasingly it has lacked the analysis to come to terms with what has happened in the outside world since the 1970s.

There is, of course, massive disagreement on how that state of affairs came about, and on how it can be changed, but the crisis of the women's movement itself would seem to be virtually incontestable.

Today all the regular publications which sprang up in the early days of the movement have disappeared, with the exception of *Spare Rib*. The conferences are rarer and rarer. Rather than women coming together to discuss activity, they are seen as a means of sheltering from the unpleasantness of the outside world. Shelters may be desirable, but they hardly constitute a *movement*.

If the criterion is working round women in struggle, the women's movement again fails miserably. The occupation at Lee Jeans, the Liverpool typists' strike, the latest attack on trade union rights, have all evoked a singular lack of concern among most sections of the women's movement. The work done round these disputes came from socialist organisations like the SWP and from the 'male dominated' trade union movement.

How do Coote and Campbell explain all this? They don't even try. To do so would mean having to develop an analysis based on class politics, not on gender.

Instead as evidence of the 'exciting new phase' they say that 'feminist ideas are current, rather than strange and fantastical as they once seemed, and we understand the nature of female subordination a lot better than we did in the early 1970s.'

Here we have the authors' attitudes to women's liberation in a nutshell. The movement has 'advanced' towards its 'exciting new phase' because at best a few thousand women have a better understanding of female subordination than they had ten years ago. The fact that women nurses and civil servants today are going to have to accept single figure wage increases, or women are fighting at Kigass for the elementary right to belong to a union, or women are having to bear the burden of the cuts in millions of homes round the country; all this is secondary to the raised consciousness of the few.

This is not to deny there have been advances in certain areas. But it reminds me of some left trade union bureaucrats, who even today talk of 'left advance'. What they mean is perhaps a couple more 'lefts' on the TUC general council, while ignoring in the balance sheet, for example, the left's hammering in the AUEW, or Derek Robinson's victimisation.

So, *Sweet Freedom* is not about the liberation of millions of working women, but about the emancipation of a fairly small and relatively privileged grouping. Its 'radicalism' is a sham and its 'strategy' a blind alley.

Which isn't surprising because genuine liberation has everything to do with revolution and nothing to do with reform. The radicals who have flocked to buy it could have saved their money. □

Essential humour

The Joke Works.
The political cartoons of Phil Evans
Edited by Steve Irons
A Socialist Worker publication
£2.95

Racism, sexism, unemployment, Northern Ireland, new technology, the Falkland Islands. You name it, Evans does a cartoon about it.

Evans' cartoons are as essential in getting the politics of the SWP across as any *Socialist Worker* editorial. Any book that brings lots of Evans' cartoons together as the *Joke Works* does is therefore really welcome and not just to someone who wants to brighten up leaflets.

My favourite section in the book is the one dealing with health and safety (or rather lack of it) at work. It seems the grimmest situations bring out all that is sharpest and most wicked in Evans' humour.

But as the book states in its introduction it has aspirations beyond just presenting a good cross section of Phil Evans' cartoons. Quite what it is attempting to do beyond that I have to admit to being slightly puzzled about.

Along with the collected cartoons the book has a typically confusing, but funny foreword by Dave Widgery. A brief biography by Phil, which is not as confusing but still very funny. Plus seven essays by the book's editor Steve Irons — some are confusing; none are funny.

The first three essays at the beginning of the book are the least perplexing. These have simple direct titles like 'The Party', 'The Paper' and 'Evans at work'. I found these very useful as they were very informative about each subject and provided a lot of very interesting background information.

The last four essays seemed to belong to another book altogether with such curious titles as 'Communication under Capitalism' and 'Attitudes to Art and Artists'. Still it's a small quibble.

I see in the bibliography that there are two more books by Evans to come, *Ireland for Beginners* and *Marx's Das Kapital for Beginners*. Hopefully these books will both be out by Christmas; they'll make great presents.

Peter Court

The 1945 Labour Government, Ellen Wilkinson is on the far right.

Not so red Ellen

Ellen Wilkinson
Betty D. Vernon
Croom Helm, £14

Red Ellen, they called her – red hair, Red politics. Suffragette, trade union militant, member of the early Communist Party, supporter of the General Strike, 'leader' of the Jarrow March: it was an impeccable pedigree for a left-wing Labour MP.

It is also, in the hands of Betty Vernon, perfect material for the Great Woman school of history. Not a page of this irritating little book passes without some eulogy or other of its subject. Thus Ellen Wilkinson's 'entire political life personified protest against poverty and inequality, expressed with courageous determination', she was 'affectionately known throughout Jarrow', she was 'a passionate advocate of social justice', and her memory remains 'as a flame of inspiration'. And that's just the first page.

All of which is more than a little infuriating, and not simply because, at £14, marshmallow has never been more expensive (or more sickening). For an important story got lost here, buried beneath layer after layer of simplistic nonsense. In a sense it is not one but two unrelated stories.

There is about Ellen Wilkinson's life that predictably forlorn decline from radical vigour to the self-satisfied complacency of an important person which, as Michael Foot is now reminding us, is Labour's other, less-discussed, militant tendency. The rebels of yesterday, by endless, often imperceptible accommodations to the logic of Parliamentary politics and, almost as important, to the lure of office and 'influence', become the 'responsible' politicians of today and the reactionary leaders of tomorrow.

Crucially, though, this is not a private affliction of this or that individual but a symptom of the disease of Parliamentary socialism. And the 1945 Labour Government, which is now being re-packaged on the Left, could hardly be a better example of it.

Ellen Wilkinson was Minister of Education in that government: and her colleagues included, as a well-known Labour politician later put it 'all the brilliant prophets of the inevitability of violence, Aneurin Bevan, Stafford Cripps, Emanuel Shinwell and John Strachey', a list which included herself. In other words, the Left was relatively strong and well-positioned.

Moreover, the government had a landslide majority, the Tories were in a state of paralysis, the mood of the country was for radical change, the armed forces were brimming with socialism and an array of planning controls dominated the economy. The scene, in other words, was tailor-made for socialism. We know what happened.

What is less known, because it is shrouded in left-wing Labour mythology, is what happened to the 'brilliant prophets'. They were as much the architects of a revamped capitalism as their right-wing Cabinet colleagues, as Ellen Wilkinson's Ministerial career partly illustrates.

Labour Party conferences in 1942, 1943 and 1945 voted for comprehensive education, dismissing the inequalities enshrined in the 1944 Education Act, with its tripartite system of grammar, technical and secondary modern schools, as 'reactionary and doctrinaire'.

Nonetheless, it was exactly this 'reactionary and doctrinaire' scheme which was implemented by Ms Vernon's crusader against 'poverty and inequality'. Comprehensive schooling was relegated to the sphere of 'experiment' and, where tried at all, burdened by sheer size (in defiance of the demands of Labour educationalists).

The 1946 Labour Conference, took the rare step at that time of voting against the Party leadership in condemning Ellen Wilkinson and her Ministry's pamphlet, *The Nation's Schools*. The result was a new, re-worded pamphlet and the same old, inequitable policy.

With that age-old trick of dressing up reaction in radical language, the Minister defended the indefensible: 'No one can truly say that grammar schools are being filled with children from a privileged social class . . . Not everyone wants an academic education. After all, coal has to be mined and fields ploughed, and it is a fantastic idea that we have allowed, so to speak, to be cemented into our body politic that you are in a higher social class if you add up figures in a book than if you plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land'.

By 1947 Ellen Wilkinson was dead, but the tripartite pattern continued under her successor, George Tomlinson, ensuring that Labour would, in the words of a current Party educationalist, pass up 'possibly the greatest opportunity in this century' to bring about radical educational change. And what was true of education was true of other government departments, including those headed by the 'brilliant prophets' of the Left.

That perhaps is the story of the Labour Party which the 1945 Government shows better than any other, and which in miniature Ellen Wilkinson shows as well as any individual. It is a story of some relevance today, and if it is not to be found in this book, or even glimpsed from it, we can always look to Ralph Miliband's excellent *Parliamentary Socialism*, which, not surprisingly perhaps, fails to merit an inclusion in Betty Vernon's bibliography. As for the latter, the old phrase 'All my eye and Betty Martin' might be adapted for her benefit: it was a sailor's way of saying what I feel about this book. Bullshit.

Geoff Ellen

BOOKSHORTS

Two new books from Bookmarks, *Solidarnosc: The Missing Link* (£2.50) is a reprint of Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski's famous 1965 Open Letter to the Party, which was discussed in last month's 'Books are Weapons'.

Tony Cliff's *Neither Washington nor Moscow* (£3.95) is an excellent collection of writings on revolutionary socialism, ranging from China to the class struggle in Britain. To be reviewed extensively in next month's issue.

Ursula Huws *Your Job in the 80s* (Pluto £2.50) is a useful guide to the types of technology that will affect women in different industries. Unfortunately its particular focus on women, while raising some interesting questions, leads to hopeless conclusions about how to fight.

Marielouise Janssen-Jurreit *Sexism: The Male Monopoly on History and Thought* (Pluto £4.95), a best seller in Germany, covers a variety of topics from history to sexuality to male violence. Interesting, but suffers from the author's straight radical feminist viewpoint.

Two radically different books on Iran. In *Roots of Revolution* (Yale University Press pbk.) Nikki Keddie provides the first detailed analysis of how Iran's mullahs were thrown up as the leaders of the revolution. Strongly recommended, though weak on the act of revolution, and especially on the role of the strikes and strike committees that had such a decisive part to play.

Penguin have produced a paperback edition (£1.95) of Barry Rubin's *Paved with Good Intentions – the American Experience and Iran*. Interesting as a somewhat rambling history of the relationship, but Rubin protests American innocence far, far too much. The title gives the show away.

Alastair Davidson *The Theory and Practice of Italian Communism* (Merlin £4.80) the first of two volumes, deals with the Italian CP up to 1943. Tries to pretend that today's Eurocommunist Party is a direct development from its revolutionary forerunner. The end product, despite an apparent wealth of detailed research, is completely spurious.

A new addition to Pluto's Workers' Handbook series is Maurice Frankel's *Chemical Risk: A Worker's Guide to Chemical Hazards and Data Sheets (£1.95)*. Although it contains some useful information, this is outweighed by a reliance on official machinery and management benevolence rather than shop floor activity.

James Walvin *A Child's World* (Pelican £2.95) is an interesting sociological history of childhood in the nineteenth century. It covers such things as sex, education and play, and shows how attitudes to children developed with their changing role in the workforce.

Everyday soap

Dallas, the TV soap opera that promised to wash dirty linen in public, has disappeared from our screens, and **Norah Carlin**, for one, does not lament it.

When *Dallas*, first appeared many of the most unlikely people were riveted to the screen. It opened with a row over the bribery of Texas state senators by a family of oil magnates and the marriage of a shopgirl to the playboy son of the family. No punches were pulled - this playboy son had been providing parties and prostitutes for politicians, and his bride was the daughter of a man who had been ruined by this same Ewing family.

Corruption and fraud were openly discussed, and class antagonisms displayed in what is supposedly a decent and classless society.

The Ewing family structure was an eye-opener too. Southfork Ranch was an extended family, which Pamela Barnes was expected to join without question on her marriage, despite the snobbery and bitchiness she met there. Her brother-in-law, ruthless JR, behaved towards his wife and many mistresses more like a Renaissance potentate than our usual idea of a middle-American businessman. There was a black sheep brother (Gary Ewing), and numerous family skeletons, including an illegitimate son of old Jock Ewing's employed on the ranch in a menial capacity.

Soon, Pamela wanted to return to work as a shop assistant, and was reluctant to settle down and have children. The mother of the family, Miss Ellie, turned out to resent the way her part of the property was being exploited, and broke with family and class tradition by holding a party for a Democratic candidate because he was a conservationist.

Dallas certainly appeared to be a soap opera with a difference, but its degeneration was rapid and complete. The arch-enemy of corruption, Pamela's brother, Cliff Barnes, was shown to be as nasty a character as JR himself – ambitious, obsessed and eager to have his turn at wheeling and dealing at the first opportunity. He failed in business, of course (he couldn't compete with those born to power).

The women of *Dallas* turned out to be unreliable and dependent creatures. Pamela's desire for independence was shown to be an irrational obsession, easily replaced by others. She gave up her job to search for her mother, then turned against her mother and collapsed into a nervous breakdown when she decided all she really wanted was a baby. Miss Ellie, after trying to divorce Jock, ended up reconciled and mourning the death of the best man that ever lived. The once-neglected Sue-Ellen ran from one man to another, divoced JR and then couldn't make up her mind whether to remarry him.

Whatever happened to *Dallas*? Was the original mixture too strong for the sponsors and media moguls, and forcibly watered down as a matter of policy? Or was all that class and corruption just bait, held out to attract an audience wider than the usual soap opera faithfuls? Morsels continued to appear – JR organised a counter-revolution in a South-East Asian country; a woman, Donna, wrote a best-seller about Texas politics – but it all turned out right in the end for the Ewing family, especially the male Ewings.

Perhaps the soap opera form, which dissipated a strong idea into a series of 'rounded' characters, who must all get their turn for sympathy, and a plot full of preposterous twists. Did JR become a more sympathetic character because some of the audience actually liked him, and was this expected or unexpected?

Maybe the series was an embarrassment to its makers because of its international popularity. It can hardly have been intended as a blockbuster – there were about four basic sets, and some of the acting was appalling. Linda Gray (Sue Ellen) has two expressions, *Oh-what-a-lovely-present* and *I've-been-used*, and Patrick Duffy (Bobby) looked better under water as the Man from Atlantis.

Hollywood strike

Or was *Dallas* condemned because of the leading role the actors played in the Hollywood strike of 1980? They swung the thing by turning the plot strategy against its makers and threatening to deprive the world of the answer to who shot JR. Charlene Tilton on the picket line, explaining the strike to the world media, was more sympathetic and effective than in her dreadful role as Lucy Ewing. Was her subjection to rape and kidnap in the last series a punishment?

After the strike, the cast were constantly attacked in the gossip columns. Victoria Principal (Pamela, and one of the more competent members of the cast) appears to have decided that individual blackmail by threatening to leave unless paid more was conduct more becoming to a star than collective action – but this may be yet another slander.

The plot thickens in real life as *Dallas* dies on our screens, at least in Britain. It is rumoured that another series may be made, but the BBC will not buy it. Towards the end of the last series, many conflicts were resolved, unusual for *Dallas* which is famous for its 'cliffhanger' endings.

One can't help feeling that the very last episode, in which the character called Cliff attempted suicide just to keep us all guessing, was a final tongue-in-cheek, two-fingers gesture by the scriptwriters.

Three new books from the SWP

Neither Washington nor Moscow
by Tony Cliff
A collection of writings, most of them long unavailable, which trace the political foundations of the SWP.
288 pages
£3.95

Solidarnosc: The Missing Link?
by Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski
A new edition of the classic 'Open letter to the Party', a revolutionary socialist analysis of Poland written in 1965.
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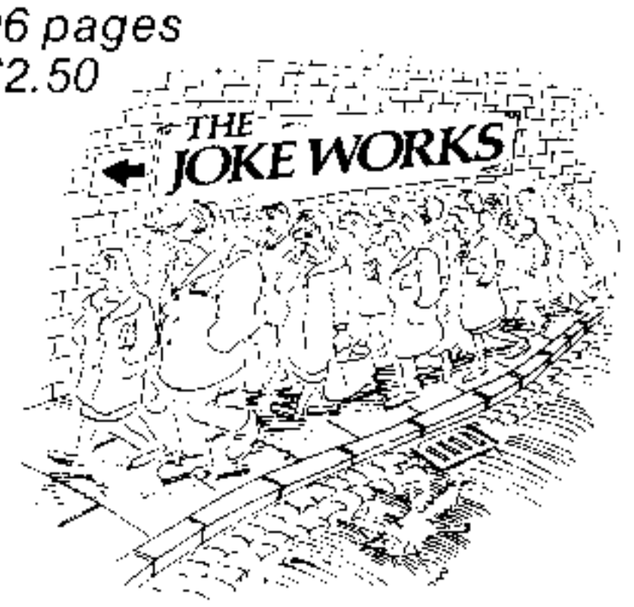

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MAY 1968

Early in May 1968, I received a draft editorial for the coming issue of *International Socialism*. It dealt, clearly but gloomily, with the political and organisational decline of the Labour Party, the alarming rise of racism, notably among London dockers, and the move to the right in British and international politics. I wrote back to the editor, commenting that perhaps the recent student unrest was a bright spot in an otherwise dark sky, but basically agreeing with his analysis. We didn't call it a downturn in those days, but we knew what it was. Then I switched on the wireless and heard about fighting in the Paris Latin Quarter.

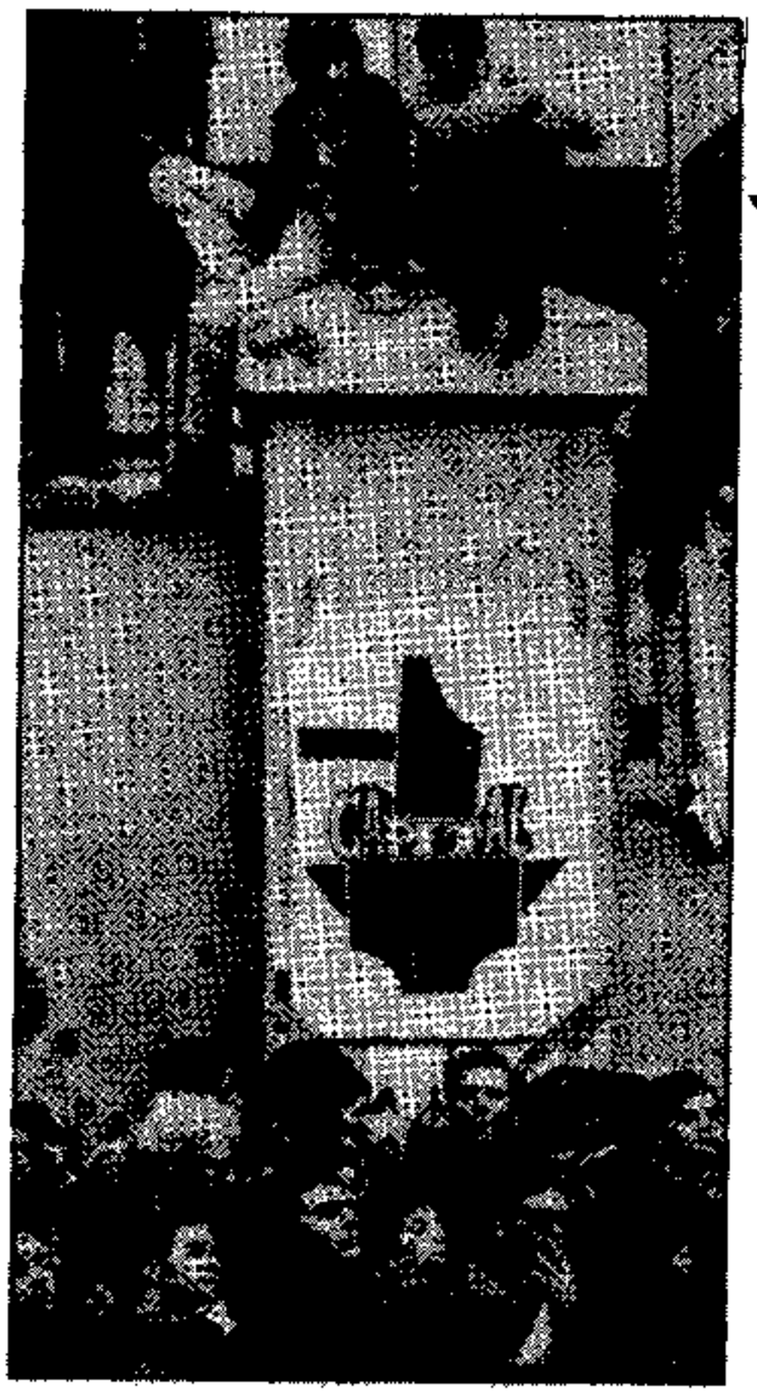
The causes of the student revolt which erupted in France in the Spring of 1968 are complex and various. The enormous expansion in student numbers meant that a University degree was no longer a passport to a good job; more immediately it meant grotesquely overcrowded lecture-halls and libraries. Some of the older student activists had been involved in the struggle against the Algerian War in the early sixties, while a younger generation had been radicalised by the American war in Vietnam. Sexual politics, too, played a part; one of the students' demands was 'free circulation' – the right of male and female students to visit each others' hostel rooms.

On May 3rd, following a series of demonstrations and meetings in the University of Paris, police were sent in to 'restore order'. Students threw stones and the police retaliated with tear-gas grenades. More demonstrations culminated, on Friday, May 10th, in the so-called 'Night of the Barricades', when thousands of students built sixty street barricades and fought the police till 7.00 am on the Saturday morning.

The students did not immediately win popular sympathy. The Communist Party newspaper, *L'Humanité*, denounced them as 'the children of big bourgeois, contemptuous of students from working-class origins' who just wanted to get on with revising for their exams. But if most workers felt distrustful of the students, they also felt a certain respect. For ten years, Charles de Gaulle had ruled France with political authoritarianism and economic austerity. Workers had made fun of him but had not had the confidence to do anything about it.

Now the students had shown it was possible to stand up and fight even against a well-armed modern state. The union leaders could see which way the wind was blowing. Hoping to defuse the situation and to get credit for themselves in the new militant mood, they called a one-day strike. On Monday, May 13th, ten million stopped work and a million people demonstrated in the streets of Paris.

The next day workers at the Sud-Aviation aircraft factory near Nantes decided to stay on strike and to occupy their factory. Twenty members of management were locked up in their offices, where they



were to be kept for a fortnight. To begin with the *Internationale* was played to them over a loudspeaker as 'an effective way for bosses to learn the *Internationale* without ideological effort.' However, the workers themselves soon asked for this to be stopped!

While no-one knows exactly how it happened at Sud-Aviation, it is clear that one of the union branches there was led by members of a Trotskyist organisation, the OCI (in fact a right-wing, sectarian, and often thuggish Trotskyist organisation, but every dog has its day). It is at least an encouraging thought for comrades who spend years burrowing away at building a presence in their workplace that one day leadership will really mean leadership.

★★★★★

What now happened was that the strike spread from one place to another. The power of example and the reports of the mass media showed one group of workers after another that they too could strike and occupy. (This was despite the fact that *L'Humanité* had played down the Sud-Aviation strike, giving it only seven lines on page 9.) Virtually every major factory in France was occupied. But though the industrial proletariat was the heart of the movement, the effects spread far beyond. Footballers and Folies Bergères dancers were involved in occupations. There were rumours of discontent and mutiny in the police and armed forces.

As in any general strike situation, it was

not enough to stop work. Workers had to take into their own hands the running of society. During May and June action committees were set up throughout France to coordinate activities, organise supplies, etc. In Nantes striking workers took over the running of the town. They set up road-blocks on the main approaches to the city and issued their own travel permits and petrol coupons. The women set up committees to organise food supplies, and were able to purchase directly from the peasants in the surrounding countryside, undercutting the big grocery stores and forcing them to close.

Ten million workers on strike for a month – the biggest general strike in history – made a situation that was not easily wound down. If there had been a revolutionary party with roots in the working class, it might well have been impossible. But the revolutionary groups were almost wholly based among the students, while the Communist Party had a strong grip among the working class. And the CP, with its eyes firmly set on the parliamentary road, was not prepared to give any credence to 'proletarian revolution'. Instead, it insisted on confining the movement to economic demands. Of course, real gains were won (35% on the minimum wage, an extra week's annual holiday for all) but they were less than what had seemed to be at stake.

The CP-led union, the CGT, defused the occupations by sending most workers home and running the strike with non-elected committees of union activists. Then they manoeuvred and sometimes openly lied in order to get workers to return to work. They moreover agreed with de Gaulle to participate in fresh parliamentary elections – from which the right-wing parties emerged triumphant. The CP proved its parliamentary credentials by submitting to a disastrous electoral defeat.

As de Gaulle regained control of the state and the CP regained control of the unions, the revolutionary left had to learn, by a series of harsh lessons, that it was nothing like so strong as it had thought itself in May. And yet things were never quite the same again. Revolutionaries would continue to be victimised or dismissed as cranks – but at least they would never be quite so lonely. For a few glorious weeks there had been ten million of us.

Ian Birchall