

PRIVATISATION

Tories plan to sell off everything but the kitchen sink — and they're closing that down! See pages 8 & 9

A Socialist ACTION



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Maggie Thatcher: dole snatcher

But it's not worrying them!

THE REAL meaning of the Tories' election victory is becoming clearer every day. Now the Tories are talking about cutting the unemployment and supplementary benefit — which is only a meagre £25 plus rent for a single person. Chancellor Nigel Lawson has indicated that the present level of dole payments will be

discussed along with a series of other expenditure cuts this autumn. Already, the real value of social security benefits has fallen by 25 per cent since the Tories came to power. Now they want further cuts at a time when both inflation and unemployment are set to rise again.

Asked in the Commons about whether families on social security benefit could feed themselves, Thatcher said 'they should eat cheaper food'.

Sick

This is a sick joke. Already, nutritional standards are declining, and the consumption of protein-containing foods is well down.

The most outrageous reasoning behind the Tories' proposal is that with the present level of unemployment benefit 'there is no incentive to work'. If there is not much difference in pay between the dole and low paid jobs, it is only graphic evidence of the still scandalously low level of some wages.

But Lawson, Thatcher and the rest know full well that the ratio of unemployed to jobs vacancies is about 20 to 1.

Their new poor-law philosophy amounts to this: if you haven't got a job you're lazy and don't want to work; if you have got a job you're lucky — accept any wages on offer; wages are too high anyway, so a minuscule dole pittance will help to keep them down!

The reason we don't have the same kind of misery in Britain today as in the 1930s is because of the social security benefits

which were won by the working class.

Unemployment in the '30s literally meant not enough to eat — bread and dripping as the standard fare, and parents going without to feed their kids. That's exactly what Thatcher and Lawson want again.

Benefits

The question of unemployment and social security benefits is a question for every worker.

One way or another, many sections of the working class are going to be affected by these proposals. First and foremost they must be fought by the unions — and that means the TUC.

The fight for a decent level of unemployment benefit has to go together with the fight for a national minimum wage, and the organisation of the unemployed.

Even the Tory wets are going to oppose these new moves. So far we haven't had a peep from Len Murray.

Arthur Scargill:

'Extra-parliamentary action, not talks with the Tories'

ARTHUR SCARGILL, in his presidential address to the miner's union conference, rejected Len Murray's line of 'constructive' talks with the Tories, in favour of extra-parliamentary action to stop the Tory attacks.

Len Murray last Thursday signalled yet another lurch to the right by suggesting that now was the time for conciliation with the Thatcher government.

Just at the time when Tebbit is introducing a third round of anti-union attacks, Murray wants to lie down and play dead.

Tebbit's proposals aim to break the financial links between the unions and the Labour Party, attack the closed shop and outlaw occupations.

Scargill responded by saying that talking to the Tories would be like 'talking to the Nazis during the Second World War'. In his speech Scargill said:

'... We have re-elected a government which is intent on heightening international tensions and in-

creasing the likelihood of war — a government which, although it represents a minority of feeling in the country, will attempt to dismantle our health service, close down our schools, and destroy our basic industries — including coal.

Choices

'We have two choices. We can give in, as many people in Germany did in the 1930s, and allow the worst to happen — we can watch social destruction and repression on a truly

horrific scale, and wait for the inevitable holocaust. Or we can fight back ...

'This totally undemocratic Government can now easily push through whatever laws it chooses. Faced with possible parliamentary destruction of all that is good and compassionate in our society, extra-parliamentary action will be the only course open to the working class and the labour movement.'

Turning to the labour election defeat Scargill argued: 'We have to face the fact that the hearts and minds of Britain's trade unionists, among them our members, have not yet been moved by the vision of a socialist future. It is my contention that we need to put politics back into the centre of trade union activity.'

On nuclear weapons

Scargill forcefully defended the women of the peace camps. 'The women of Greenham Common, and the people at the other peace camps have led us into a new awareness of what is at stake in this race against time and the bomb.'

Lives

'They fight uncompromisingly for what they believe in. They put their lives on the line — not just for families and friends, but for all of us.'

'The trade union and labour movement must match their courage and join whole heartedly in direct action against the deployment of cruise and Trident missiles in Britain.'

'The threat of nuclear war is getting stronger, and the need for workers around the world to cam-

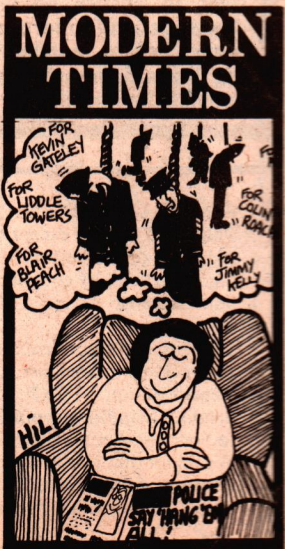
paign on an international scale is now greater than ever before.'

Arthur Scargill's attack on the policy of replying to Tebbit with 'discussions' will open a major debate leading up to the TUC.

Ever since the Tories came to power, Murray has been in the forefront of sabotaging effective struggles against them — his crowning achievements being the sell-out of the ASLEF train drivers and the debacle of the TUC leadership of the healthworkers' strike.

Now he wants to abandon even the pretence of struggle in favour of pally chats with Tebbit.

Both the TUC and Labour Party conferences must reject a further round of betrayals.



Socialist ACTION

CND, the 'freeze' and the 'Russian threat'

TONY BENN'S speech to an East London CND rally contains two arguments which need strong reiteration in the peace movement.

The first is that the accusation that the Soviet Union aims to invade Western Europe is a lie.

The second is that the US military build up — both nuclear and non-nuclear — is part of an attempt to economically and militarily destabilise the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Without understanding that the present escalation of the arms race is the responsibility of the United States, the peace movement can get politically disorientated.

EP Thompson in particular has been responsible for two strands of argument which threaten to undercut all the progress which CND has made.

The first is that the Soviet Union has equal responsibility for the arms race. The second is that we should now, after the general election, build an alliance with the SDP/Liberals on the basis of the demand for a nuclear freeze and opposition to Trident — thus giving us 'an anti-nuclear majority'.

Without doubt, these arguments are influential in the CND leadership, and the World Disarmament Campaign is already trying to launch a British freeze movement.

An alliance with the SDP/Liberals would be a major retreat for CND. The Alliance is pro-NATO, pro-nuclear weapons, and pro-cruise missiles. It only opposes Trident on strictly financial grounds.

The demand for a 'nuclear freeze' is a fake and a fraud from beginning to end. It counterposes putting pressure on the Geneva negotiators to the mass movement for unilateral disarmament which has been built.

Development

After the defeat of unilateralism at the 1961 Labour conference we saw the same kind of development. In the document 'Steps Towards Peace', written by Stuart Hall, sections of the CND leadership suggested a new campaigning basis which fudged unilateralism and multilateralism.

The Test Ban Treaty of 1963 defused the disarmament movement because 'real progress' in multilateral talks was effectively counterposed to the fight for unilateral disarmament.

To build a 'freeze' movement in Britain would be to aid the manoeuvres of the SDP/Liberal Alliance in their plan to gain prestige as the 'genuine multilateralists'.

Once sections of the peace movement start to accept cold war myths about the Soviet Union, as EP Thompson wants us to, then the arguments for unilateral disarmament and opposition to NATO are undercut.

The only way to overcome that danger is to fight to ensure no watering down of CND's demands, and to force the leaders of the labour movement to mobilise action, including blacking, mass demonstrations and 'warning' strikes against the missiles.

Benn and Scargill speak at CND rally

SEVEN HUNDRED people crowded into East Ham Town Hall on Wednesday 29 June to hear Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill speak at a rally organised by East London CND.

By Chris Morris

Tony Benn announced 'I shall carry news of this rally to Hiroshima where I

hope to speak on 6 August, the anniversary of the first use of an atomic bomb.' (Extracts from his speech are reproduced below.)

Arthur Scargill said, 'It is no longer a question of war or peace, but of war or absolute annihilation.'

'Heseltine said that the people of Greenham Common are breaking the law. We should say that we support them breaking the

law. All the fundamental rights that we have got were won outside Parliament, not inside Parliament.'

Links

Jenny Edwards, the national trade union organiser for CND, explained why links had to be developed between the fight against unemployment and cuts and the

bomb. 'We have got to take these issues into the workplace. NUPE, the FBU, COHSE and NALGO have said that they will have nothing to do with the civil defence charade. Now the transport unions are coming out against nuclear waste. We must support them.'

The rally launched a 'Leggin' it for Peace'

march in East London on 17-18 September from Kelveston Hatch Civil Defence HQ to London Fields.

Rob Highley, speaking from East London Youth CND, said:

'It is the youth who provide the statistics for unemployment and the cannon fodder for wars. We can stop the bomb. This march is part of the fight.'

'What the Americans and Thatcher fear are not Russian troops but the American and British people' says Tony Benn

“ WE SHOULD look at the next step in CND's campaign. There is something too narrow in looking at international relations solely in terms of technology. It is also an issue of policy. We must look at the foreign policy aspect of it, the real political analysis that lies behind the thinking of President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher.

But I want to first to look at their official statements. They have two arguments.

The first argument is that if we hadn't had the bomb since 1945 there would have been a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. This is a monstrous lie.

The Russians having lost 20 million people didn't want another war. The Russians were involved in the war even before the Americans, and fought

Ballot

on our side ...

On 10 May 1941 Rudolf Hess flew to Scotland to persuade Churchill to join with Hitler in attacking Russia. It is to his eternal credit that Churchill refused to do this (although I've got many other disagreements with Churchill). The liberties that we enjoy in Britain were bought in blood, including enormous sacrifice of Soviet lives and blood.

The second argument is that the Soviet Union is ahead of us in technology, which is manifestly untrue, and that it is more heavily armed, which is manifestly untrue.

Defence

In 1978 when the annual Defence White Paper was brought to the Cabinet, someone (it wasn't me) asked why the French weapons weren't included in the tables. We were told that this was because they aren't members of the military wing of NATO. As if there was some doubt whether their weapons would be fired at Washington or at

Moscow in a war! This is an example of how the figures are distorted.

Every army mothballs old equipment. When we mothball weapons they are taken out of the balance but every rusty old Russian tank from the battle of Stalingrad is still in the total. They never include the American army in America in the total, because it is supposed to be a European total, but they include the whole of the Russian army in Russia, although it is threatened by China on the other side.

Lie

But the biggest lie is that the Russians want to invade the West. There is no evidence whatever to suggest it. They are in deep difficulties in Afghanistan. Of course, they shouldn't be there. Not that we are in a strong position to criticise, as Britain invaded Afghanistan four times.

Reagan and Thatcher want to keep us in a state of fear, so we will subcontract our defence to an American colonel with two buttons to press, or an American colonel with two buttons and a British colonel watching him.

Now I want to turn to the real thinking that is going on in the United States.

According to the *International Herald Tribune* Weinburger, the Secretary of Defence, said: 'The United States must be prepared to hold and seek to reverse the geographical expansion of Soviet influence.'

Are the missiles coming here, not to defend us, but to drive back 'Soviet influence'?

According to the *London Times* of 1 July 1982,

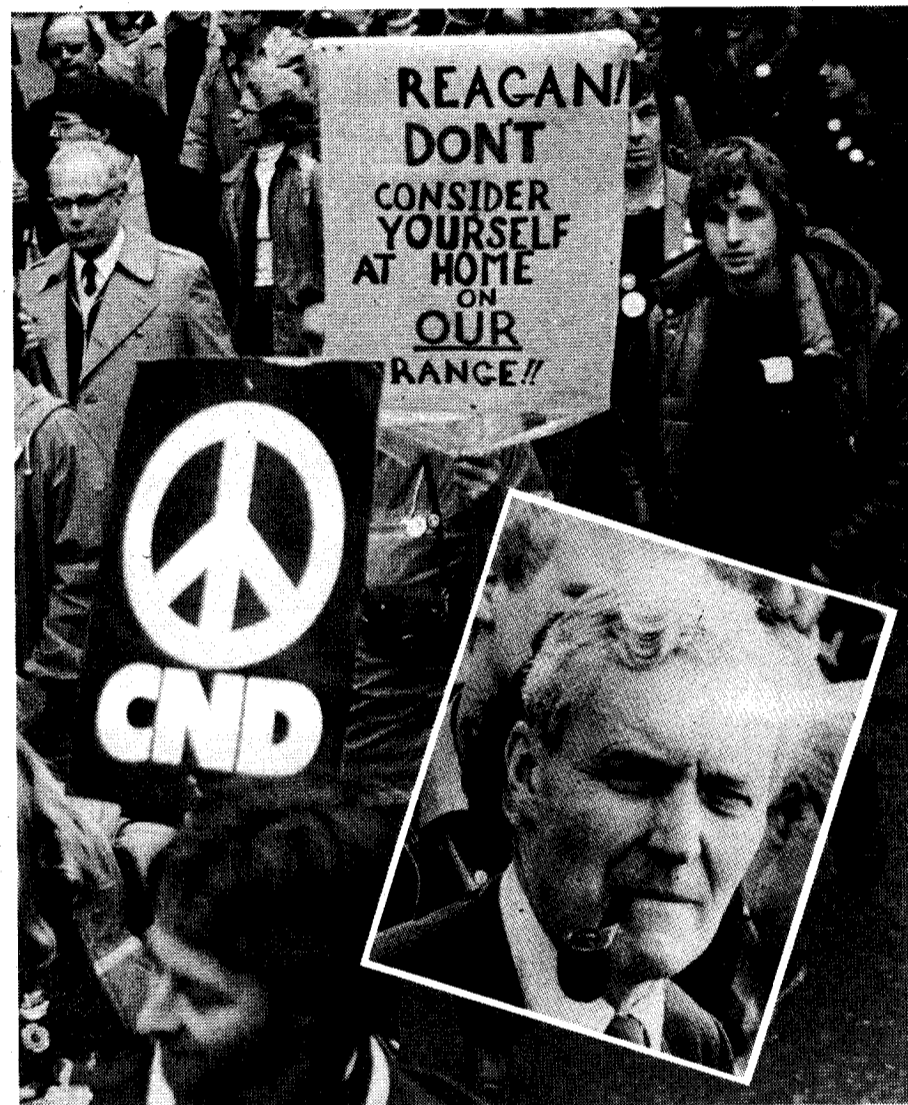


Photo: PETE GRANT Photo: COLIN HEADWORTH

an American official said 'There are only two levers we can use against the Soviet Union, military and economic. We do not want to use the military lever unless we have to'.

Article

On the same day an article by Professor Martin Schulman, formerly the advisor on Soviet affairs to Cyrus Vance, spoke of 'Right wingers who want to move step by irrevocable step, the aim being to set the stage for an ideologically driven campaign to force capitulation on American terms or the collapse of the Soviet empire, by exploiting its serious economic problems.'

Colin Gray, the new head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, said 'Washington should identify war aims: the emergence of a post-war world compatible with western values ... 20 million American casualties would represent a compatible level.'

If this is true it may be what we are really facing is the United States planning to destabilise the Soviet Union the way they destabilised Allende in Chile. Perhaps there is a similarity between what

Hess offered Churchill in 1941 and what is the strategic thinking of America today. Then there is a deep divergence of interests between the American government and the British people.

What is the real purpose? What is their real fear? What the Americans and Thatcher really fear is not the Russian troops but the American and British people.

Battle

The British army is using Northern Ireland as a training ground. In *Time* magazine on 11 September 1972 a British army captain was quoted as saying: 'The six counties became a testing ground for new weapons and new tactics, such as rubber bullets and blocking off the centres of towns.'

Brigadier-General Kitson said, 'Internal subversion and civil war rather than international war represent the wars of the future', and *Time* added, 'he believes that Northern Ireland is a place to learn.'

This is meant to be a discussion of how we are advancing from saying 'No Cruise, No Trident, No Polaris' to get to where we

need to be. We must keep CND together.

There will be some who say we must tone down our demands, others will say that the direct action must be increased, but we must keep it together. We must politicise the campaign with an analysis of the real foreign policy of the West which lies behind a strategy of nuclear rearmament.

Suffering

This is not a criticism of the American people. They are suffering under Reagan as we are suffering under Thatcher. As we have heard 20 million of them are considered expendable. We must free ourselves from the domination of the superpowers and develop a non-aligned foreign policy.

Our greatest obstacle in Britain is not Mrs Thatcher, who wouldn't last five minutes if it wasn't for Fleet Street and the BBC, who are our greatest obstacles.

We have it in our hands to change the course of world history. We are living in the most creative and constructive period for those who believe in the future.

By the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

Why we say 'Vote Heffer'

CLPD supports Eric Heffer for leader because he alone of the four declared candidates is identified with most of our aims.

He believes that conference decisions should be in principle binding on all party members, including Labour members of parliament; that policies agreed by conference should be pursued by the PLP in the way laid down in the constitution; and that the constitution itself should be amended to regularise the relationship between the PLP and the party in the country.

Eric Heffer stands firm on the party's commitment to Clause IV, section IV of the constitution. He is in favour of a significant extension of public ownership into the crucial sectors of the economy and believes that there should be a commitment to this in the next party programme and the manifesto.

Eric Heffer wants the Labour Party to remain a broadly-based party in which there is room for socialists of all shades of opinion, and he supports the right of members to campaign as a group for their particular point of view.

He is opposed to any disciplinary action being taken against such groups of members of such groups so long as their behaviour conforms to the existing party rules.

Eric Heffer supported and helped to steer through conference the



Photo: GM COOKSON

Eric Heffer

two recently gained democratic reforms — mandatory reselection and the electoral college — and is determined to defend them. He will work with us to ensure that these reforms are put to the use for which they were intended: namely to secure accountability to party membership of Labour's elected representatives.

He agrees with CLPD that this will only happen if the operation of the new procedure is kept strictly within the normal party channels.

CLPD is concerned at the coming Party conference primarily with the composition of the National Executive, for it is this which determines how conference decisions are interpreted and what new policies are adopted in the

absence of firm conference guidelines. CLPD views the election of the leader and deputy leader in this light.

Eric Heffer's record speaks for itself. Unlike the other candidates he invariably supported conference policies and the major democratic reforms, and opposed the witch-hunt against the Militant tendency.

His extensive experience of the trade union movement and the long service to the party at all its levels have given him an understanding which will serve him in good stead in the task of healing the party's present divisions and its rebuilding.

Both are vital conditions which must be met if Labour is to win the next general election.



Olga Maitland confronted by blockader

Tories call in the army at Greenham

A MASSIVE operation was mounted against the peace women's blockade of Greenham Common last Monday — including hundreds of police, military police and soldiers from the Queens Own Royal Highlanders.

Over 600 women turned up for the blockade, including delegations from the United States, Canada and New Zealand, as well as several European countries. Two MPs from the German Green Party also came.

Hundreds of police escorted military vehicles into the camp carrying equipment for the cruise missiles site, while soldiers on observation towers kept a watch on the whole of the perimeter.

The soldiers are apparently being stationed at the camp on a semi-permanent basis to prevent intrusions while the finishing touches are put to the missile silos.

Persistent rumours suggest that missile launching equipment has already been installed. It seems certain that the

cruise missiles will be brought in by air from the United States, avoiding the embarrassment of having to bring them through crowds of blockaders.

At last Monday's blockade Lady Olga Maitland of Women and (Tory) Families for Peace turned up to read the blockaders a letter thanking the Americans for their nuclear umbrella.

On the same day as the start of the Greenham blockade the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding held a

press conference featuring Terry Duffy and Frank Chapple as star speakers.

Duffy called not only for the overturning of unilateralism, but also for the removal of leaders who tolerate such a policy.

As the date for the arrival of the missiles comes closer, the labour movement must start to take action against the missiles. Every transport union is now unilateralist. We need a campaign to boycott all work on, and all supplies to the missile sites. (see editorial page 2)

Kangaroo court suspends Manchester Labour Party

By Cllr. Alf Holme (Manchester Wythenshawe CLP)

THE Wythenshawe Labour Party, in Manchester, will continue meeting despite the Labour Party NEC's attempts to suspend it and its officers at a kangaroo court inquiry on Friday 1 July.

Russel Tuck, John Golding and David Hughes — the NEC's three stooges — refused Wythenshawe officer's request to be informed of the charges against them, and be given time to prepare a defence and to be represented by their solicitor. The same 'in-

quiry' refused similar demands from the City Labour Party, also under investigation.

The attempt to close us is a part of the NEC's campaign against the City Labour Party for trying to ensure that Manchester council Labour group carries out City Labour Party policy. 27 councillors have already had the whip withdrawn on NEC instructions for voting against cuts.

Wythenshawe is under attack because of challenges to the decision by Woodhouse Park ward to select Frank Booth, North West Bakers' Union president

and a supporter of City Party policy, as its (successful) candidate in the May elections.

We do not yet know the result of this 'inquiry' but we have no intention of folding up. We carry on meeting and expect 85 per cent of the delegates to attend. We have been on Manchester Radio three times and we are willing to debate our accusers any time.

We'll be attending the Labour Party conference to put our case and we want support.

Labour Against the City Party — page 4

Youth CND meets in conference

MASS ACTION by the labour movement is needed to stop the missiles. This was the message to come out of last weekend's Youth CND conference in Manchester.

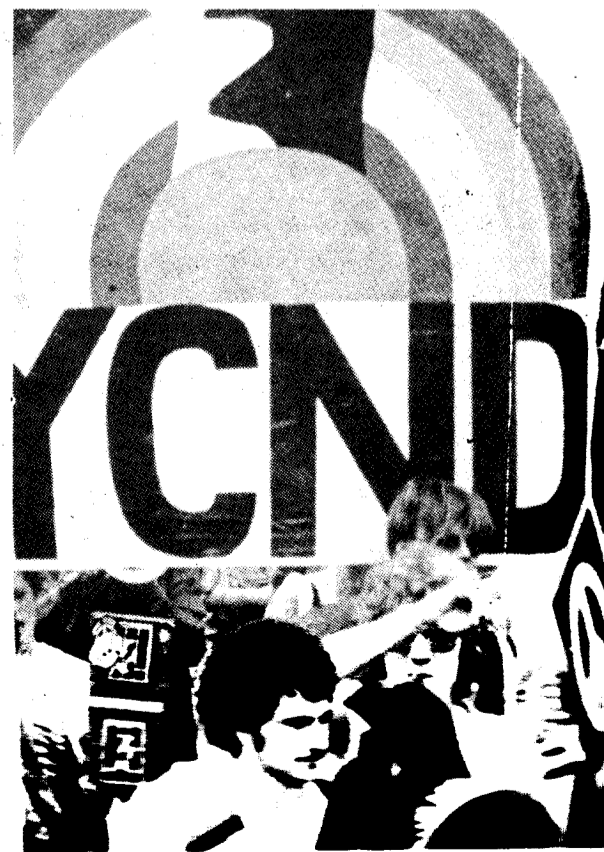
It focussed on a resolution committing the National Committee to build a 'jobs not bombs' march from Manchester to the TUC in Blackpool.

Delegates from several dozen groups spent the weekend discussing how to build on the great success of the 60,000-strong May Youth CND demo and festival in order to mobilise youth against the introduction of cruise and Trident.

Resolutions were passed proposing more Rock the Bomb festivals and gigs, a lobby of Labour Party conference (with Labour CND and the LPYS) and all out support for the 22 October CND march in London.

It was agreed that YCND needs to do more to attract black youth. And the organisation maintained its existing position of positive discrimination towards women and called on activists to support the Greenham blockade this week.

Some of the liveliest debate centred on the international resolutions. Among those passed were ones reaffirming YCND's commitment to the demand that Britain should get out of NATO and calling on YCND groups to mobilise for the 11 September march commemorating the coup in Chile ten years ago.



IRELAND UNFREE

Behind Sinn Fein's council victory

IN A COUNCIL by-election held in West Belfast's Andersontown last week, Sinn Fein scored a convincing win, getting Alex Maskey elected on second count with over 8000 votes — 49 per cent.

The by-election was called after the resignation of Gerry Kelly, one of the four anti-imperialist candidates elected at the time of the H-block campaign. Kelly, demoralised by the present demise of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, resigned his seat some time after resigning from the party.

In the North of Ireland, it is customary in this situation for the party concerned to nominate an alternative candidate who then gets co-opted onto the council.

When the IRSP failed to do this, the Social Democratic and Labour Party with typical contempt for the electorate tried to sneak in one of their own members. Councillor Fergus O'Hare objected to this manoeuvre, causing the election

The full results were:
 Alex Maskey (Sinn Fein) 8163 49%
 McPartland (SDLP) 6831 33.4%
 Mary McMahon (Workers Party) 1594 10%
 McGuinness (Alliance) 846 5.3%
 Jimmy Brown (Anti-informer) 333 2%

Peoples Democracy councillor John McNulty described the result as a 'pyrrhic victory'. Although it was historic in the sense that it was the first time Sinn Fein had been elected onto Belfast city council, much bitterness had been caused by the attacks made by Sinn Fein on Jimmy Brown of the IRSP.

PD had called on voters to select the anti-imperialist candidate of their choice, as the proportional representation used in local elections would ensure the split vote would not lose the seat.

French frame-up revealed

IN FRANCE a major scandal is emerging over the way in which three IRSP members were framed up by the crack GIGN — an elite unit of Presidential guards.

The arrests took place last summer when the Mitterrand government came under criticism after the anti-semitic bombing of the Goldenberg restaurant in which six people died.

Criticism — mainly from the right wing who urged action against terrorism — was deflected by the arrests and a statement that 'important international terrorists were now being held'.

During the news blackout in the next week, speculation was rife that Carlos the 'Jackal' or some rightist group had been pinned down. When it was revealed that it was three IRSP members in the net the press said it had been duped.

Neither the Dublin nor London governments wanted to move extradition proceedings, and now the 'evidence' against the three is gradually falling apart with crucial exhibits being mysteriously 'lost'.

What remains is a series of unanswered questions about the links between this secret police unit and Mitterrand's office.

National Briefing set up

THIRTY-FIVE Labour Party members representing Briefing groups or supporters from London, Merseyside, West Midlands, Swansea, Stoke and Brighton decided on Sunday 3 July to found a 'National Briefing supplement'

Leading off the discussion Jeremy Corbyn MP said that during the election there had been 'two campaigns': the campaign of the rank and file, which had been enthusiastic and had wanted to win voters to Labour's socialist policies; and that

of the leadership, which had dragged its feet and sabotaged those policies.

Now the party had to be rebuilt by linking up with the extraparliamentary forces that would be resisting Thatcher's attacks.

This was not possible if

the fudging and compromise with the right wing continued; a clear alternative pole to Neil Kinnock had to be built.

The new supplement is intended to be sold inside local Briefings, but to be produced in such a form that it can be sold independently where there is not yet a local Briefing.

The editorial board is to be open, and voting delegates can be sent from any Broad Left, cam-

paigned body or constituency left group which sells the supplement.

Women

An initial editorial board of nine was elected including only three women. The chair dismissed a suggestion from Valerie Coultas to set up a board of six, with positive discrimination in favour of women. Instead it agreed to leave three fur-

ther places open for women.

The new supplement is a crucial step forward for the left; a rank and file based, broad left journal with national circulation and the clear intention to rebuild the Labour Party as a mass, campaigning party.

Socialist Action urges all readers to support the new venture and extends warmest wishes for its success.

Women's Action Committee decides to go for NEC!

THE CAMPAIGN for Labour Party Democracy Women's Action Committee met on Saturday 25 June. The meeting was dominated by a discussion on what attitude WAC should adopt to the NEC elections in the Labour Party.

Not only did women discover that sections of the Tribune left had opposed Jo Richardson standing for deputy leader, because she was a woman, but we were also informed that Frances Morrell had been chopped off the NEC slate because she was too critical of the CLPD

leaders who staged a takeover at their last Annual General Meeting.

The women that the CLPD have chosen for their NEC slate are Margaret Beckett, Patricia Hewitt, Joan Maynard, and Judith Hart and Renée Short.

By Valerie Coultas

The Women's Action Committee decided to write to all these women asking them if they supported their campaign to get the Women's Section of the NEC elected by the women's conference (as other specialist sections are elected), and to get five resolutions automatically

on the floor of conference from the Women's conference.

The committee didn't expect Judith Hart and Renée Short to comply with these demands because their voting record shows their opposition.

As a contingency plan therefore the committee voted to put up its own candidates. Women who are delegated to conference and who can get nominated by their CLP's are therefore invited to stand as part of a WACC slate.

Invite

The meeting also decided to invite the CLPD leaders to attend the next meeting to discuss membership, fees, women's representation on left slates and the CLPD's model resolution on positive discrimination.

A request from Anne Pettifor, the WACC secretary to make sure that women and Labour left caucuses prioritised the WAC resolutions led to a heated debate. Many women pointed out that the debate about policy — particularly when the NEC



Neither Judith Hart (above) or Renée Short (right) agree with WAC's policies

LABOUR BRIEFING

had backtracked on abortion — was relevant to the position of women in the party.

To affiliate to WAC write to Anne Pettifor, 39 Caldervale Road, London SW4.



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

LAW Council backs Heffer and Meacher

A PACKED meeting of Labour Against the Witch Hunt's National Council agreed on Saturday 2 July to back Eric Heffer and Neil Kinnock for the leadership and deputy leadership of the party.

The meeting was one of the most representative

yet held; nearly sixty CLP's are now affiliated to LAW. The meeting identified this year's leadership and NEC elections as the 'witch hunt election' — the party's verdict on the disastrous record of John Golding's witch-hunting NEC.

It endorsed the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy's slate for the

constituency section, and approved — by 23 votes to 1 — a motion from Mandy Moore not to take a position on the slate for the women's section on the grounds that this slate should be decided by women within the party.

The meeting heard a report from councillor Alf Holme of Manchester Wythenshawe Labour

Party on the actions taken against the Manchester party by the NEC and agreed to campaign nationally against them.

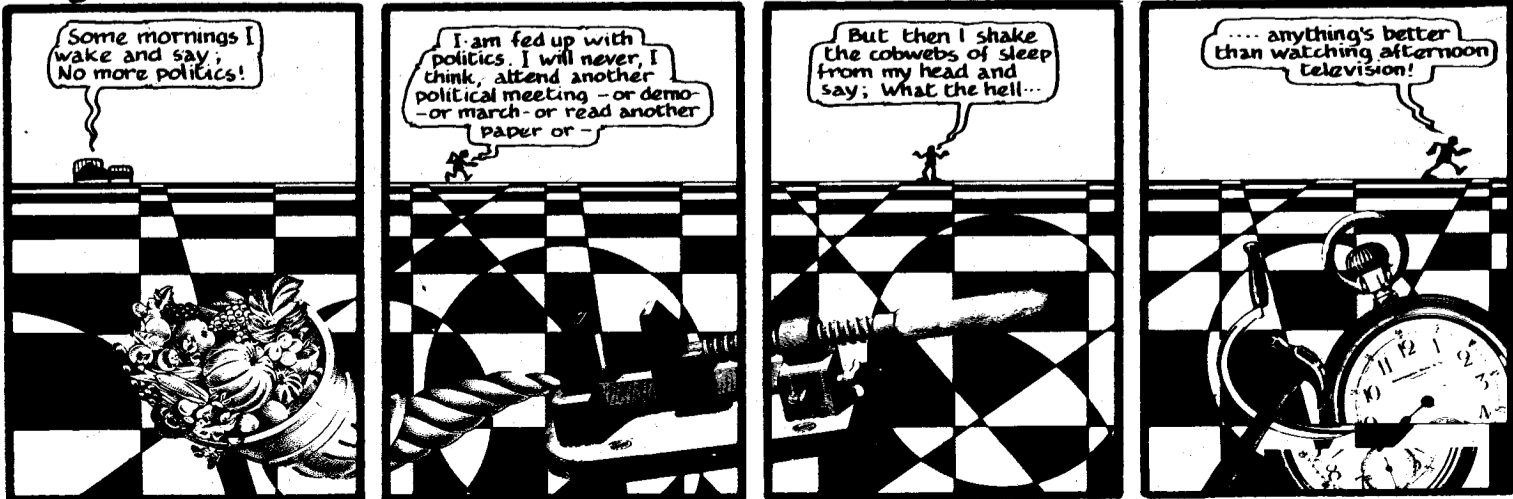
Ballot

LAW further agreed to oppose the use of the postal ballot in the leadership elections, to call a fringe meeting on Saturday

night before the Labour Party conference, to seek speakers on the platform of the large September rallies being organised by Tribune in support of Heffer and Meacher, to further its campaign for the Greenwich amendment to the party constitution and for reinstatement of the expelled editors of Militant.

A Piece of the Action

by bormac #17 7/83



Wythenshawe resolution

WE ... are appalled at the procedure adopted during the enquiry into Manchester Wythenshawe Labour Party and the decision to suspend the party.

We call on the NEC to reinstate Wythenshawe immediately and in future to act by the laws of natural justice in dealing with allegations or actions against Constituency Labour Parties, viz:

- Accused CLP's must know what the accusations are, who is making them, and be allowed to question those who are making them
- Proper notice must be

given and it should be up to the accuser to prove the allegations, not the CLP to disprove it

We support the action taken by Manchester Wythenshawe in refusing to attend the NEC's enquiry after their request for an adjournment to permit them to hear charges and prepare a defence, and Manchester City Labour Party's decision to refuse similarly after their request for a solicitor to represent them was denied.

This ... agrees to invite a speaker to hear Manchester's case.

Bringing back the rope?

WHEN THE judge put on his black cap he intoned the words 'to be hanged by the neck until dead' but the word 'until' had a chilling aptness. 'Until' was often anything from three to 15 pain wracked minutes.

The hanging of Antonio Spreccage in Canada in 1919 took 71 minutes.

As a surgeon writing in the British Medical Journal in 1927 explained: 'Dislocation of the neck is the ideal aimed at, but out of all my post-mortem findings that has proved an exception, while in the majority of instances the cause of death was strangulation and asphyxia.'

Sometimes even strangulation would have been a merciful end compared to what happened.

On 10 January 1946 at the Oakells Prison in Vancouver Bruce Potter, a 47-year old US service man, was hanged.

poured down in torrents on to the floor below. When they lifted the cap from him, his head was hanging to the body only by a small piece of skin at the back.

At the execution of John Goffey the rope broke and his body fell to the ground. Although his neck was not broken, the shock caused the blood to spurt from his ears and they adjusted the rope again. By then he had regained consciousness.

However the rope snapped a second time and once again the unfortunate man's body was



'The shock caused blood to spurt from his ears and they adjusted the rope again. By then he had regained consciousness.'

As usual the prisoner mounted the gallows and the rope was fastened round his neck, then the trap was opened so the body could fall into space. But the hand that had tied the rope was either unsteady or lacked training for the job. As a result Potter was decapitated when he fell and his head was torn from his body.

After Patrick Harnet was hung his body came to a standstill and the blood

lifted up and held in place. To make sure that the third hanging succeeded someone held the rope in place, and after 12 minutes Coffey died of strangulation.

But the horror and barbarism of legalised murder doesn't just affect the victim.

To order a hanging, to sanction an execution or to officiate in its grisly performance in any way is de-

meaning and inhuman. Constant familiarity with execution breeds a contempt for life and debases the human personality.

Because it is claimed that hanging must be seen as a deterrent it has to be clothed in a macabre ritual

By Bob Pennington

that is institutionalised like some religious rite.

This is why Viscount Templewood wrote in 1951 that: 'Executions are so much a part of British history that it is almost im-

possible for many excellent people to think of the future without them.'

From the time a person was sentenced until their death on the gallows they became 'good copy' for the tabloids.

First there was the drama of the trial, then the sentence, then the appeals and finally the appeal to the Home Secretary, the prisoner's last resort. Each heart-rending detail of the condemned person's agony and fragile hopes for reprieve were seized on by the press.

The pain and sorrow of their relatives was a subject for a titillating story, and the response of the public a matter for reportage.

This most sensational of all sensational events — the legalised murder of another human being — could sell newspapers.

So the act of hanging seeps into all society like some poison corrupting everything it touches.

I remember talking to two dockers who had both been in jail when a man was hanged. They told me

how, as the time approached, the whole prison was wretched in silence and even the worst of the 'screws' would look disconsolate and shaken.

Pain

Then as the clock struck eight — the hour of execution — a great noise would sweep the cell block as the inmates roared their rage and as one said to me, 'it was the release of our fear at what had happened.'

Only the barbarians want to return to the rope.

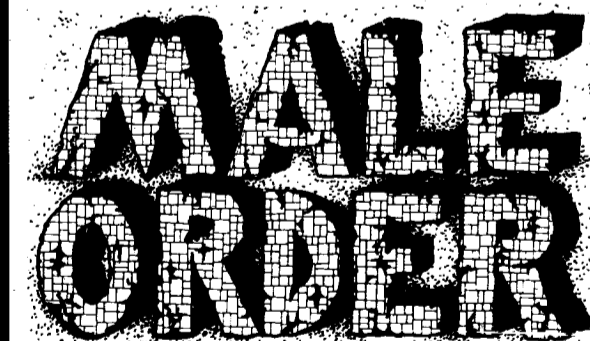
Only those who care nothing for humanity would want to bring back a ceremony that defiles everything it touches.

The pro-hangers seek revenge which is a primaevil reaction to the problems of society.

Brutality and intimidation can never bring social justice. As socialists we must do everything in our power to make sure the death penalty never comes back.



Wandsworth District Health Authority voted to close the South London Hospital for Women last week as angry campaigners protested at the meeting



LIFE prosecution

HARD on the heels of the large anti-abortion rally and SPUC newspaper advertisements comes more bad news.

The anti-abortion pregnancy advisory service, LIFE, alleged nine months ago that consultant gynaecologist Anthony Hamilton performed an abortion on a woman who was 8½ months pregnant. Now the Director of Public Prosecutions has given the go-ahead for the test case prosecution.

The charge is being brought under the Criminal Attempts Act, and Dr Hamilton is due to appear in court in Luton on 8 September.

It is no coincidence that this prosecution is taking place now, or that the press have chosen this moment to report it.

Every time the anti-abortionists make a new bid to reverse the 1967 Abortion Act, horror stories of aborted foetuses left crying in rubbish bins magically emerge from the pens of Fleet Street hacks.

These stories usually prove later to be unsubstantiated, but the facts aren't deemed to be newsworthy, and the damage has been done.

There can be little doubt now that there will be an attempt made very soon to reverse the limited gains of the '67 Act. The pro-choice movement should be on red alert.

In particular, every effort should be made, starting now, to get the biggest possible turn out of women and the labour movement for the National Abortion Campaign conference this autumn.

(Socialist Action next week will include a more detailed look at the latest anti-abortion offensive, plus a roundup of news on the fight for a woman's right to choose from around the world.

● NAC national conference is on the 1 & 2 October. Details from NAC 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1 01-278 0153.

Science fiction?

We've had films like *Android* and *The Stepford Wives* where men have made realistic robots of the 'perfect woman'.

Now here's a report, from the *Daily Mirror*, of a pioneering experiment in this direction.

Not normal

'Clara Lindner made her husband's life a misery for 12 years by chasing every speck of dust at her home near Frankfurt ... he decided it wasn't normal and persuaded her to see a specialist.

'Professor Rolf Hessler told her that her entire personality had to be changed and in a complicated operation removed a tiny section of her brain tissue. Now Clara is a different woman.'

Perhaps this new innovation will cut the escalating divorce rate?

Men will be able to send their wives for a lobotomy if they annoy them in any way and get a nice, compliant personality back. Is this what they mean by health cuts?

(Jenny Davenport)

Compiled by HILARY DRIVER. Send contributions to 'Male Order' Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday a week prior to publication.

Idrish wins right to appeal

MUHAMMED Idrish has won his right to appeal against a Home Office deportation order in the High Court in London.

By Bob Smith

The judgement on 17 June came in the same week that the National and Local Government Officers Association decided to support his case, passing an emergency motion at their Isle of Man conference.

The motion called on NALGO to build and support a day of action if Muhammed is deported, and to support a national demonstration on his behalf in September in Birmingham.

Idrish is a Bengali social worker who worked in in-

ner city areas in St. Pauls, in Bristol and Handsworth in Birmingham.

He now works for Dr. Barnardo's in West Bromwich and is a founder member of NALGO branch there.

His legal advisors have told him that without the defence campaign waged on his behalf he would almost certainly have been deported.

The Home Office have alleged his marriage was fraudulent. When he forgot to submit his passport for a routine check two years ago and then went on holiday he endangered his right to stay.

It also appears that instead of an earlier extension he should have been given the right to stay.

The defence campaign on his behalf has been built in Bristol and Birmingham. Birmingham Trades Council has affiliated along with more than 20 NALGO branches

and over 20 Labour Parties.

Support has also come from MPs and ex-MPs, like Clare Short, Ernie Roberts, Denis Canavan, Tony Benn and Alex Lyon.

Unfortunately Roy Hattersley, candidate in the Labour leadership campaign, was not so keen saying: 'I will not take up any cases outside my constituency. People should see their own MP. But when a Labour government is returned I will look at his case sympathetically, if I am still at the Home Office.'

● Affiliate your organisation, ask for a campaign speaker, send protest letters to the Home Secretary. For more details about the defence campaign and the national demonstration phone Barry 021 523 8923, Ahsan 021 551 1846, Muhammed 021 523 7618 (Birmingham) or Aloke Roy 0272 570534.

Defend the Singh brothers

DAVINDER and Bikar Singh set out to visit relatives from their Handsworth home on 3 April. As they arrived in the Highgate area of Birmingham a gang of 20 racist thugs attack-

By Bob Smith

Their car was kicked and stoned, they were spat on and Davinder was hit in the face with a broken bot-

tle. But they bravely fought the racists off using a car steering lock.

The police then arrived, but arrested the two brothers and only one of the racists.

Abused

The police then racially abused and punched the brothers, keeping them overnight in the cells without access to a solicitor.

In the sober light of morning the police then realised their error. The

police have since offered a deal — accept a bind-over and forget the case.

But the brothers refused and are not going to be intimidated. As a result they will appear at Birmingham magistrates court on 15 August with the use of an offensive weapon and threatening behaviour.

● For further details, donations and messages of support contact the Singh Brothers Defence Campaign, Hand worth Law Centre, 220 Soho Road, Birmingham 19.

PRIVATISATION

WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO FIGHT

THE TORIES have begun to unveil their secret manifesto. It amounts to a declaration of war on the British labour movement.

Its three key components are:

- the introduction of new trade union legislation to render the trade unions ineffective
- the attack on the political levy to strangle the Labour Party
- the restructuring of British capital through privatisation

In the next session of Parliament the government have announced that they will sell off 51 per cent of British Telecom and the Royal Ordnance armaments factories.

In addition, without need for further legislation, a further 25 per cent of government holding in Britoil and British Gas's North Sea oil exploration interests will be sold off.

Energy Secretary Peter Walker is again considering the sale of British Gas showrooms, previously called off because of the threat of industrial action.

The three aspects of government policy go together. In particular privatisation is not just a threat to workers' jobs and living conditions but also to trade union organisation.

The fundamental drive behind privatisation is the prolonged recession of British capitalism. Capital in its drive for new sources of profit is forced to regain control over profitable parts of public services and a greater share of the work in supplying services and nationalised industries.

Such policies did not start with Thatcher. Under the right wing leadership of Callaghan the Labour government of 1974-79 presided over the sale of £750m-worth of shares in British Petroleum, allowed Tory-controlled councils to continue selling off council houses and made savage cuts in public expenditure.

The function which privatisation will play in Thatcher's anti-union plans was spelled out by the *Economist* at the end of last year's rail strike by ASLEF:

'Britain's unions are cowed, but not broken ... The manner of the train driver's defeat should also temper any crowing ... The train drivers stayed pretty solid. It was left to the TUC inner cabinet to bring ASLEF to heel. But TUC internal politics are always precarious. The TUC is not a reliable ally in the struggle against its own union power ... The union grip is strongest in the public sector

monopolies. The most effective way to reduce public sector union power is to end this state monopoly or near monopoly in the service they provide.'

So privatisation is a political attack. It has to be fought politically.

So far the trade union leadership has largely confined itself to campaigns of information and counter-propaganda against the Tories. However effective these campaigns have been in media terms (NALGO's £1m campaign being very prominent in this respect) they have little impact in terms of actually defeating the Tories.

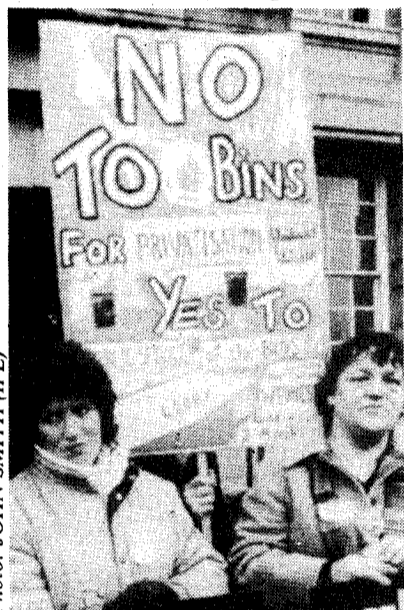


Photo: JOHN SMITH (IEL)

Bury fight against privatisation won victory

This is because the Tories' myths (see below) have credibility for many people because of the perceived inadequacies of the nationalised industries and public services.

These myths can only be smashed if the government's policies are fought through industrial action.

There are signs of a change in attitudes. The fight to defend the nationalised industries has begun under the new left leadership of the POEU.

Arthur Scargill's speech to the NUM conference similarly indicates a new drive by miners to fight closures. This strategy is correct. Industrial action should start before privatisation begins in order to defend the public sector from the cuts which made them targets for the government's propaganda campaign in the first place.

Unity between all those unions fighting against privatisation, could be the start of a generalised fightback against the Tories.

United trade union and Labour Party action is likewise fundamental to the fight against privatisation.

The Labour Party's current policy is to 'return to public ownership the public assets and rights hived-off by the Tories, with compensation of no more than that received when the assets were denationalised.'

This contrasts with 1981 conference policy which called for renationalisation without compensation. Obviously the greater the potential penalty paid by prospective buyers the more disincentive for those buying public assets.

A future Labour government must be committed to a plan with the trade unions which ends the attack on jobs, living standards and the public sector. That means a programme of nationalisation under workers control of the commanding heights of the economy, starting with the nationalisation of the five major clearing banks.

Socialist

But the importance of joint trade union and Labour Party action doesn't end with the fight for socialist policies, important though this is. In order to win the battle against privatisation there has to be a unity developed between workers at the point of production and consumers.

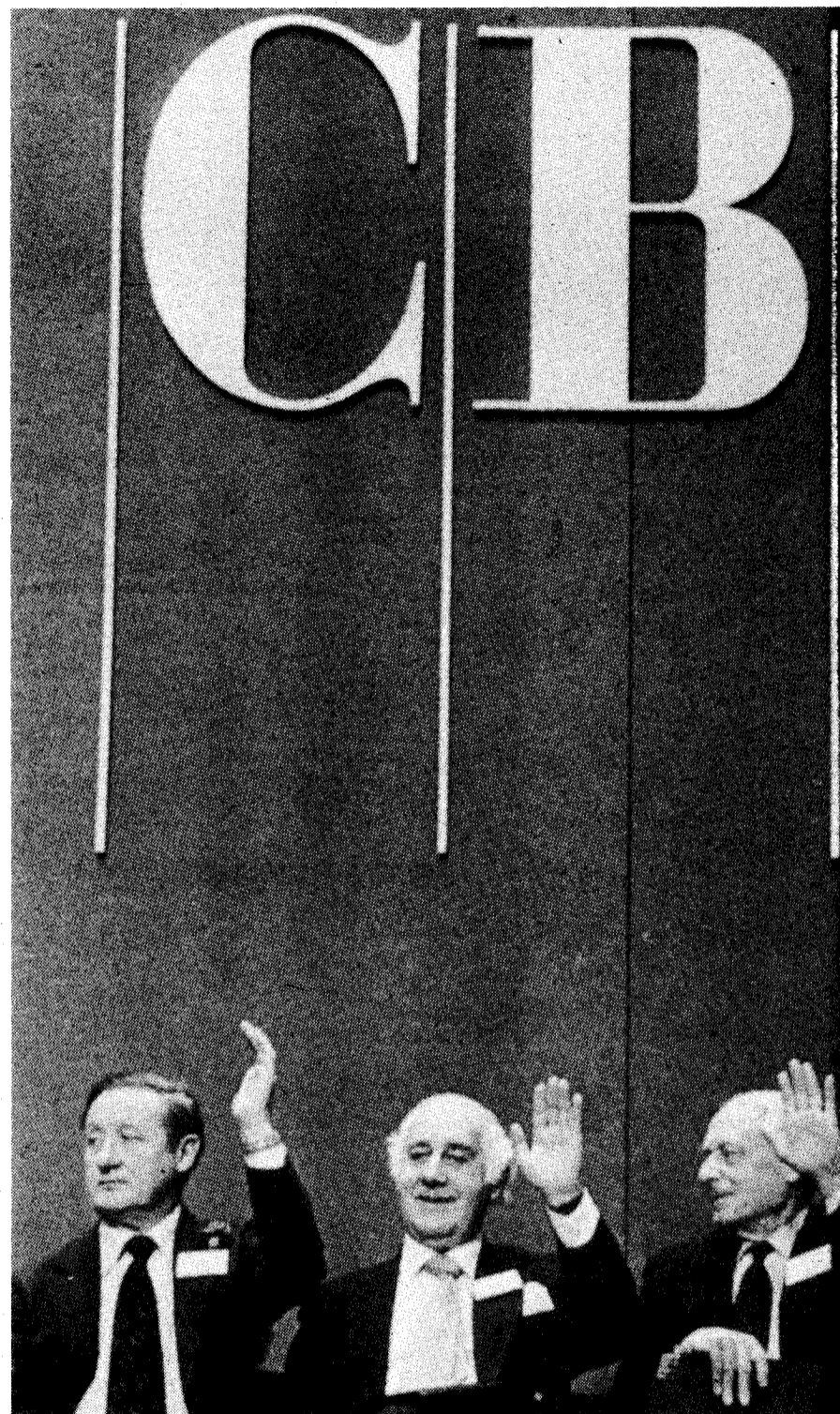
In the workplace, particularly in the public services, rank and file organisation through shop stewards committees is being strengthened as a reaction to the problems posed by the Tory government.

The Labour Party has to rebuild itself on the basis of forging links with all those who will bear the brunt of the Tories' attacks; tenants, women's organisations, black organisations and youth.

In this context joint action between the Labour Party and the trade unions should be the key to working class unity in struggle.

Only the left wing of the labour movement has the capacity to rebuild the labour movement in this way.

Broad lefts have to be constructed inside the unions committed to this type of perspective. They must link up with constituency lefts, fighting for the Labour Party to become a mass campaigning party, based on its links with those in struggle.



Britain's bosses back privatisation

HOW THEY DO IT

PRIVATISATION is a multi-faceted policy. It extends from the sale of public corporations to the whole spectrum of state-provided services.

Contracting out

INCREASINGLY the public services are becoming supervisory bodies overseeing work done by private contractors. For while the present level of contracting out is low, the scale of services affected is very wide ranging from manual to technical and administrative areas.

Architectural design, catering school meals, crematoria, recreation and sports centres have already been privatised or threatened.

In the NHS, hospitals have been directed to increase contracting out of cleaning, laundries, catering and non-emergency ambulances.

Among the nationalised industries British Rail is considering contracting out track maintenance. Private ownership of goods wagons has meant the threatened closure of Horwich and Shildon rail engineering workshops.

In government departments a wide variety of cleaning jobs, secretarial services and catering facilities have either already been taken out or will be.

Selling state owned companies

HALF the shares of companies like British Aerospace, Cable and Wireless, Amersham International and Associated British Ports have been sold off to private shareholders.

A Bill for the privatisation of British Telecom is going through Parliament in the next session. British Shipbuilders and British Airways sales are planned.

Selling public land and property

COUNCIL house sales head the list under this category. Nearly 400,000 have been sold at a discount of £2bn. Entire housing estates have been sold to companies like Barratts.

In addition the NHS has been compelled to sell hospitals and nursing

homes to private medicine interests and property developers.

Nearly 20,000 acres of Forestry Commission land has been sold along with land and properties owned by the Property Services Agency, itself sold off into private hands.

Exploitation of public services

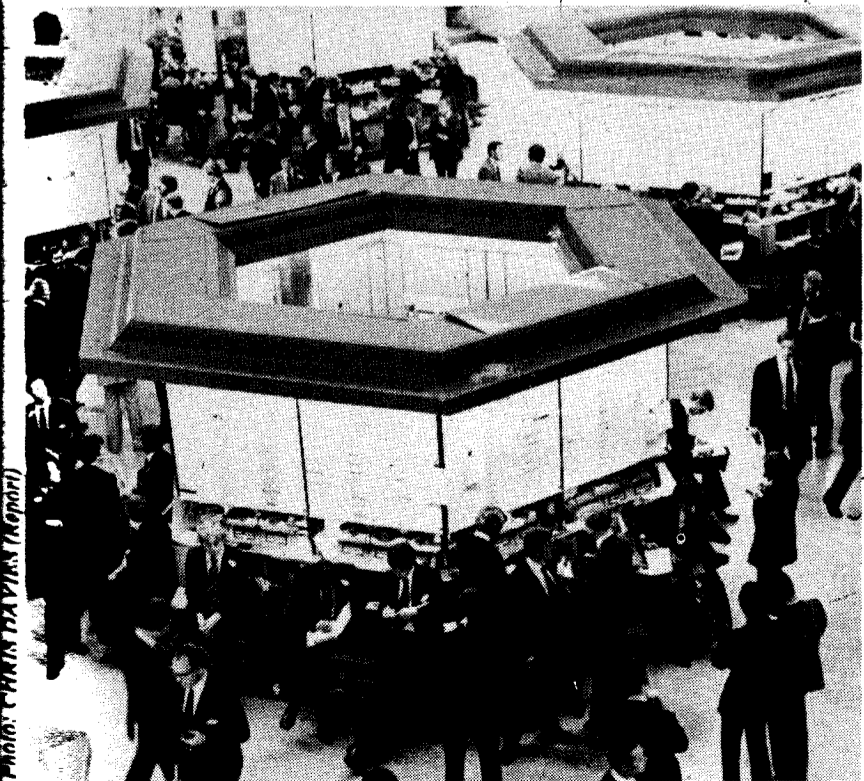
IN SOME cases the government has not gone the whole way in selling off strategic industries like the transport and energy systems.

There was some debate about the wisdom of selling-off British Telecom.

Instead they allow companies to use the publicly provided network of routes, cables and pipelines to sell their own services.

Thatcher has already announced taking control of London Transport away from the GLC. Privatising parts of the system is now possible, even including the hiving-off of whole tube lines and allowing private coach operators to take over bus routes.

NHS hospitals are now allowed a



Stock exchange has harvested millions from privatisation deals

ON: HT IT

The Tory's privatisation myths

'Privatisation saves money'

IT'S TRUE that nationalised industries often show a trading loss as compared with private companies. But they are subject to factors which do not impede private firms.

Nationalised industries have no shareholders. They rely on loans from the government. The interest charged is far higher than for a private company and is paid from pre-tax profits. In many cases these loans are the result of compensation that was paid when the industry was nationalised.

Secondly, services provided by nationalised industries to private business, particularly energy, are kept low so that private industry can make a profit. This has particularly been the case in the electricity and gas supply industry.

Thirdly, most nationalised industries use a depreciation policy that makes allowance for inflation. Money is set aside to replace worn-out assets on the basis of their replacement cost rather than actual cost. Few private companies do this, again apparently boosting the private firm's profits as compared with those of nationalised industry.

Finally, because of mismanagement in the past, several nationalised industries have now had to set aside very large sums for the adjustment of their pension funds.

So if the nationalised industries were judged by private sector standards they would be profitable. By selling them the government has handed over profits to the private business.

Freed of the constraints under which nationalised industry has to operate, privatised companies do turn in record profits for their new owners.

● **Cable and Wireless**, privatised in 1981, has shown a 47 per cent increase in profits over the last two years.

● **British Sugar Corporation** produced record profits and dividends in the year following its sale.

● **British Aerospace** immediately produced pre-tax profits 34 per cent higher in 1981, after its privatisation.

● **British Airways**, next in the queue for privatisation, had 1982's record £544m losses explained by the *Financial Times* as being because: 'management has written down a large chunk of the fleet with the result that future depreciation will be lower and profits in any prospectus forecast thus enhanced'

British Airways profits this year (probably the last before being privatised) are £77m.

'Privatisation increases freedom of choice'

THE TORIES argue that by allowing private companies to compete with state provided services, the consumers are offered a freedom of choice from which they can only benefit.

This view finds an echo among right wing Labour politicians who argue that the 'mixed economy' provides the best of both worlds. But this is not how it works out in practise.

Take the health service. Government strategy is to allow private medicine to coexist alongside the NHS. This has meant the growth of small commercial hospitals. The *Investors Chronicle* explained the principles on which they operate:

'Like rears on the seats in theatres, its bodies in the beds that count for a private hospital and preferably bodies which are continually changing.

'Commercial hospitals have to be selective about the sort of medical treatment that they offer. Long-stay

patients such as the elderly, mentally ill and those convalescing do not usually make good business. What does is the short-stay surgical operation such as hernia repair, varicose vein treatment, removal of tonsils, gall bladder and appendix.'

Tory strategy is to cut back on NHS services precisely to allow the growth of the private sector. So the idea of freedom of choice is a myth.

The state sector has to shoulder the burden of the unprofitable and the unpopular while the private sector develops its own new monopoly assisted by the government.

'Privatisation is the route to a property-owning democracy'

THE TORIES have made great play of the opportunities for more people to buy shares and benefit from the capitalist system. They say firms sold off are being 'given back to the people'. But which people?

● **British Aerospace** after privatisation had 158,000 shareholders of whom 40,000 had under 100 shares. Fifteen months later the number of shareholders had fallen to 27,000 and 143 large shareholders owned more than 60 per cent of non-government shares.

● **Cable and Wireless** had 157,000 shareholders when its shares were sold. Only 26,000 still owned shares 11 months later.

As most shares have appeared on the market their prices have rocketed. Large companies with the resources to do so then buy out small shareholders attracted by the initial profit to be made.

Even when employees are given shares in the company this rarely amounts to a marginal number — three per cent in the case of British Aerospace.

So far from privatisation amounting to these companies and services being given back to the people they end up in the pockets of the ruling rich.

'Privatisation eliminates waste.'

NATIONALISED industries and public service are often accused of having bloated bureaucracies and being bound by endless red-tape. In many cases this is true but are the privatised industries any better?

The Health Service in particular is cited as an example where the number of 'non-medical' staff could be pruned backed by privatisation. But in the US administration costs in their private health sector were 5.3 per cent of the total budget. In the UK administration costs were 2.6 per cent.

Savings made by reducing the workforce, as in the case of the privatisation of refuse collection and street cleaning, also do not help to save money. Those made redundant have to claim much larger sums in the form of benefits, and in the loss of tax contributions to the Treasury.

Neither does it necessarily produce a better service. In Wandsworth, Pritchards' first six months of street-cleaning were the subject of a special report to the council.

In one three week period over 1000 penalty notices were served on the firm for failing to do the job they were paid to do. The situation had not improved three months later — 12 per cent of the streets were not being properly cleaned. Finally Tory Wandsworth Council had to suspend the penalty system and introduce penalty-free zones.



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Network)

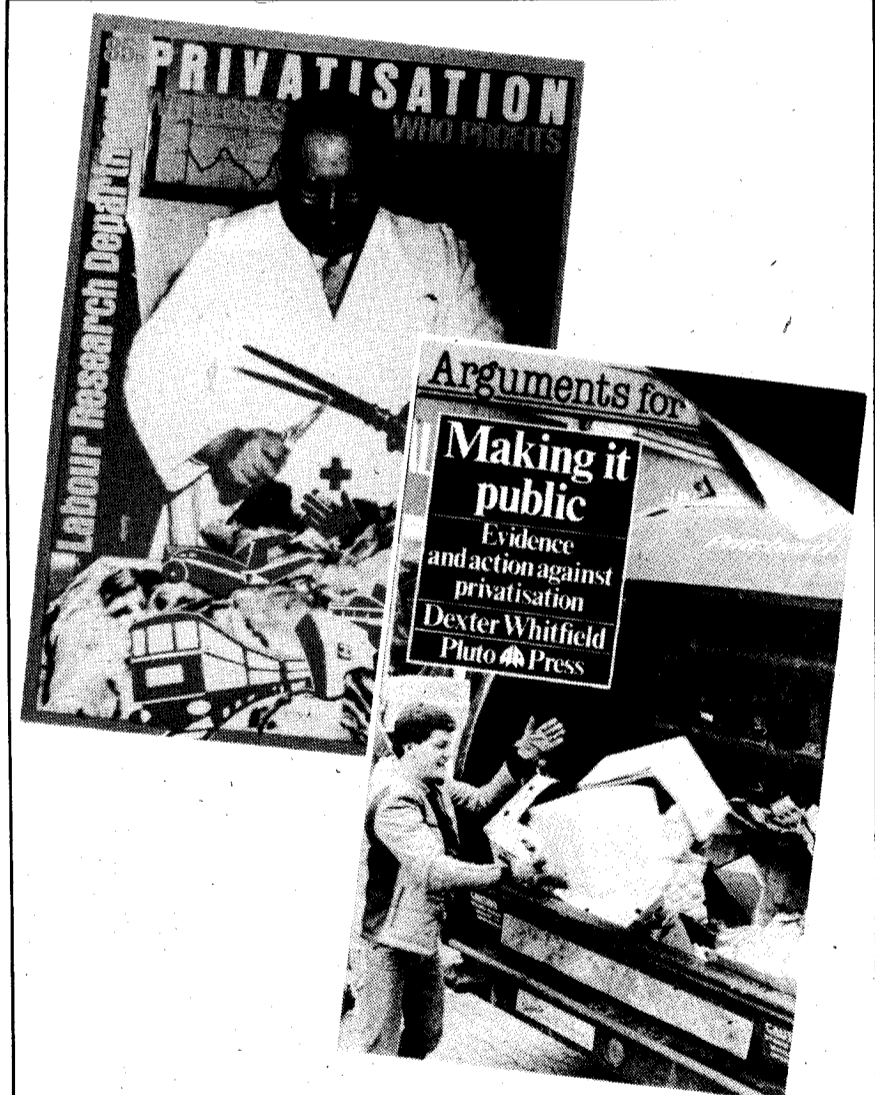
greater number of pay beds. Private firms can generate and sell electricity via the national grid. Project Mercury, the business-only inter-city telephone network will use British Rail facilities in competing with British Telecom. In universities and colleges academic staff are increasingly setting up their own companies to exploit new products developed in publicly-funded research projects.

Expanding private services

THE GOVERNMENT is expanding the provision of private health, education and transport.

Thirteen private hospitals are under construction and 45 more are planned. Health insurance now covers 4 million people.

Voucher schemes in education will be introduced to stimulate the foundation of new private schools. Cuts in public spending throw more health provision and other forms of caring into the home with the main burden being born by women.



Getting the Knowledge

MOST of the material on these pages is taken from these two excellent sources.

The LRD pamphlet is a mine of useful facts and statistics, updating LRD's previous *Public or Private*. It analyses the fate of 14 major state undertakings sold since the Tory election victory in 1979.

Dexter Whitfield's book covers much of the same ground, but then goes on to discuss the experience of the fight against privatisation and suggests the elements of a socialist alternative in an informed and exciting way.

Further aids to fighting privatisation are the *Anti-privatisation Newsletter*, produced by SCAT Publications, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1 (01-253 3627) and two videos produced by the Birmingham

Trade Union Resource Centre. The videos are designed to show members of the public and union members respectively.

They were made for NALGO's £1 million campaign against privatisation but are useful for any trade unionist. They are available on VHS and can be hired separately for £5 each or brought for £15 each or £20 for both, cash in advance.

Further details from Birmingham TURC, Victoria Works, 7 Frederick Street, Birmingham 1 (021-236 8323).

Making it public. Evidence and action against privatisation. By Dexter Whitfield. Arguments for Socialism series, Pluto Press, £2.50.

Privatisation. Who loses. Who profits. Labour Research Department, 85p.

WORLD IN ACTION

Stop Turkish executions!

SEVEN Turkish revolutionaries have been sentenced to death by the military junta.

The seven are Ahmet Erhan, Sadettin Guven, Haran Kartal, Baki Alrin, Tayfun Ozkok, Aslan Sener Yildirim and Ahmet Fazil. They were members of the DEV-SOL organisation, and have been accused of being involved in the assassination of former government ministers.

A wide variety of organisations, including Amnesty International

and the French Socialist Party have protested against the planned executions as have members of the US Congress and the European parliament.

Whether the executions go ahead will depend in good measure on whether the international pressure is kept up.

• Messages of protest should be sent to: President Kenan Evran, Head of State, Ankara, Turkey.

Hunger strike victory

IRANIAN refugees in Pakistan ended a hunger strike victoriously on 17 May.

250 refugees had occupied the UN buildings in Karachi to protest against the agreement signed between Iran and Pakistan for Iranian refugees to be handed over to the Iran authorities.

After more than two

weeks of sit-in and hunger strike they managed to force the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to negotiate over their demands.

UNHCR have now agreed to provide international protection for Iranian refugees in Pakistan and to provide them with medical and financial support.

Honduras changes journalists story

MUCH publicity has been given in the world's press to the death of two US journalists on the Honduras-Nicaragua border.

At first the Hondurans claimed they were

killed by a rocket-propelled grenade from the Nicaraguan side of the border.

Now the Hondurans say they were killed by a land mine — planted of course by the Nicaraguans.

Rios Montt in trouble

RUMOURS of a coup attempt against Guatemala's eccentric president General Rios Montt swept the country last week.

Montt, a born-again Christian who is determined to try to destroy the influence of the Catholic Church, has been a big embarrassment to the United States.

Right-wing politicians have been pushing for elections in order to get a share of power they were denied by Montt's 1981 coup.

Last week Montt dismissed six senior army officers, cancelled an army parade and television programmes.

Montt himself was brought to power by

WE SENT THEM ALL TO HEAVEN



junior army officers who wanted 'stability' to step up the war against left wing guerrillas.

With his base in the military disappearing Montt should soon join the ever-growing clan of ex-dictators in Miami.

Iran executions

59 PEOPLE between the age of 14 and 20 were executed on 2 May in the Kurdish town of Mahabad by Khomeini's regime.

Originally the 59 were sentenced to between three and ten years imprisonment, but later the authorities changed their minds and decided to execute them.

The executions are

part of Khomeini's continuing war against the Kurdish people. Komala, a journal of Kurdish exiles, reports that a film was made of the executions and shown on Kurdish TV.

Large numbers of people turned out in the towns of Mahabad, Sanadaj and Bokan to mark a day of mourning declared by the Kurdish opposition.

ITALIAN ELECTIONS

Christian Democrats lose out



Militants of the Democrazia Proletaria and the Trotskyist LCR protest against austerity measures

THE GENERAL ELECTION held the weekend before last in Italy was a setback for the Christian Democrats — Italy's Tories — who have effectively ruled Italy for 30 years.

Their vote fell from more than 38 per cent in 1979 to under 33 per cent, and their parliamentary representation from 262 to 225 seats.

The fall in the Christian Democratic (DC) vote reflects a protest against the corruption and inertia of successive Christian Democrat coalitions.

While Italy suffers from unemployment higher than Britain's and a rate of inflation around 16 per cent, the Christian Democrats have been incapable of putting forward any policies to deal with the crisis.

At the same time, in the run-up to the general election, Italy was rocked by another series of Mafia scandals in which both national and local Christian Democratic politicians have been implicated. A section of the electorate is fed up with the continual crisis and corruption under Christian Democrat rule.

But Italy's main op-

position party, the Communist Party (PCI), also lost a couple of percentage points and four of its parliamentary seats.

The result is hardly a defeat for the Communists, but they have not been able to gain at the expense of the DC. What happened instead was a fragmentation of a section of the DC vote towards a series of smaller parties.

By Phil Hearse

The Republican party of Spadolini, Craxi's Socialists and the neo-fascist MSI all picked up a couple of percentage points. Most of the vote that went away from the PCI went to the right. But observers are interpreting it as a protest vote, and not a general drift to the right in Italian politics.

The result of the election will be an even more complicated and fragile government coalition. If the DC gets together the Republicans, the Socialists and a couple of smaller parties they will be able, perhaps, to concoct a coalition with just over 50 per cent of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies. But on any particular issue the coalition could fall, precipitating another general election.

Although it has not gained in seats, the specific weight of the PCI has increased in the parliament. It means that the Communists will be able to exert greater parliamentary pressure, and be better placed to defeat any ruling coalition in parliamentary voting.

The alternative governmental project, that put forward by PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer, seems unlikely to come off. He proposes a coalition led by the Communists and the (very right wing) Socialists. Such a coalition would also include a number of small bourgeois

parties.

But Socialist leader Craxi who wants to emulate the success of Spain's Socialist leader Gonzalez, is reluctant to make the party the hostage of a PCI-dominated coalition. Instead he is content to wait for better times ahead.

Features

One of the more remarkable features of the contest was the election of left-wing theoretician Toni Negri on the slate of the Radical Party. Negri has been accused of being the 'intellectual leader' of the Red Brigades. In fact Negri was the main theoretician of the ultra-left Autonomia movement — actively hostile to the workers movement, with an anarchist bent.

Negri has been on trial for several years in one of the most infamous frame-up trials in recent times. No serious evidence of any association with the Red Brigades was brought forward. Only his 'intellectual responsibility' was on trial.

In order to protest at this outrage, the Radicals made Negri one of their star candidates, putting him on TV nearly every day. As a result of his election, he now gets parliamentary immunity, effectively wrecking the frame-up.

The far left slate — Proletarian Democracy — supported by the Italian Trotskyist movement won 1.5 per cent of the votes and seven seats in the Chamber of Deputies, including long time leader of the far-left Massimo Gorla, elected in Milan. Eighty Trotskyists were among the 500-plus candidates who stood for DP.

The tragedy of the Italian elections, despite its few hopeful points, was this. The old ruling party, the Christian Democrats, suffered a reverse. But the workers parties, in particular the PCI, were not able to capitalise on it.

Today the PCI is a party of order, a party which supports capitalism. It has no serious ideas about how to solve the crisis — and the voters know it.

Central America: war just weeks away

WAR between Nicaragua and Honduras is just weeks away. Honduran troops are now openly helping the counter-revolutionary 'Somocistas' in their cross-border raids.

Clashes have taken place between Honduran and Nicaraguan troops, as the Honduran army has carried out cross border raids.

The Nicaraguans, who at the beginning of the fighting relied on militias to defend their northern border, have now moved regular troops into the area. Heavy weapons and tanks are being dug in and a network of trenches established.

On 25 June Honduran troops came across the border to destroy the Nicaraguan minefields and defensive emplacements. Eye-witnesses have seen Honduran troops unloading ammunition for the counter-revolutionary forces.

There can now be little doubt that the activity of the 'contras' has been a softening-up operation for a full scale war. The military build up in Honduras has of course been masterminded by the United States.

General Gustavo Alvarez, the commander of the Honduras armed forces, spent three days in

Washington earlier this month. While there, he was awarded the Order of the Legion of Merit for his services to the United States.

Hundreds of US military advisors and CIA agents are now in the country. More than 50 American airmen are running a radar station 15 miles south of the capital Tegucigalpa, and 70 US engineers are supervising the expansion of the military airport at Comayagua.

Honduras has just taken delivery of a squadron of fighter planes from Israel. The Honduran army is building a metalled road to the Nicaraguan border, for rapid deployment of an invasion force.

The centre of the US build up is the Puerto Castilla base in Honduras, where the first batch of 100 El Salvador army personnel have arrived for training. In addition the

US's Howard airforce base in Panama is the scene of constant activity as material is relayed by air to both Salvador and Honduras.

This vast military effort should leave no doubt that the United States is indeed going for a military solution in Central America. Together with the war preparations against Nicaragua, the US has masterminded the biggest military offensive yet in El Salvador, designed to clear the province of San Vicente of FMLN guerrillas 'once and for all', which is now in its third week.

On 20 June Reagan made another war-mongering speech denouncing those who would 'allow Central America to become a string of Marxist dictatorships'. In defence of the real dictatorships in the region — the bloody right wing military dictatorships — Reagan is spending hundreds of millions of dollars.

In the next few months the people of Nicaragua will face their sternest test since the 1979 revolution. International solidarity will be a vital weapon in the struggle to defeat Reagan's efforts.



Rain dampens the spirits of counter-revolutionaries on the border

LETTERS

Where we stand on Labour's NEC slate

WHAT a lucky paper Socialist Action is to have Sarah Roelofs writing for it.

Not only is she clairvoyant — able to report meetings yet to happen, in the past tense — but also can report on secret meetings of the London left, which the party in the country is meant to follow.

Unfortunately though, there was some interference on her crystal ball, and her account of the Labour Coordinating Committee's attitude to the National Executive Committee slate is quite wrong.

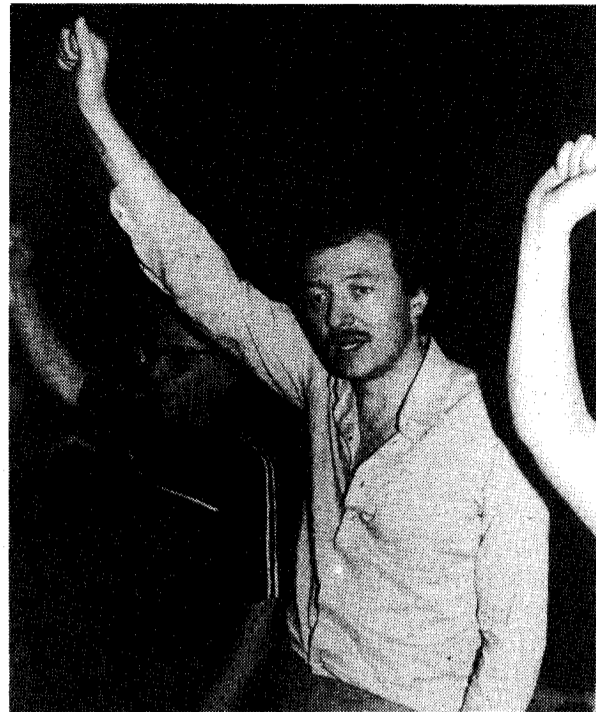
Traditionally, the LCC has been extremely wary of the NEC slates as it has always been unclear on what basis, and by whom, they are drawn up.

Livingstone — politically acute

KEN Livingstone's speech on the next steps for the Labour left certainly deserved its full page spread in SA 14, as it was a lot more politically acute than many of the paper's pre-election articles and analyses some of your own errors. ALAN THEASBY, Middlesbrough

In particular we have never been sure whether we are supporting a list of people whose politics are OK, or merely people able to win and better than hard right wingers.

This year it seemed possible that a consensus could be reached around this latter approach and indeed it has worked for the trade union section. But the women's section presents real dilemmas, as it is clear that there is no consensus as to whether



Ken Livingstone

Photo: PETE GRANT

to support principled feminists or candidates who can win.

The LCC has therefore only backed four candidates — Hart, Beckett, Maynard and Hewitt — as there is clearly no consensus on the last place.

Attitudes to the 'boycott the register' position did not come into it, as we have backed candidates with different attitudes to this in the

other sections and, incidentally Peter Hain wasn't at any of the meetings where discussions took place.

Only backing four may not be entirely satisfactory, but until some political clarity is brought to the discussion of slates, muddled compromise is bound to be the order of the day.

NIGEL STANLEY, Organising Secretary LCC.

No lesser evil for leadership election

I WOULD like to make some criticisms of Socialist Action's orientation to the Labour Party leadership elections.

The issue cannot be approached from the point of view of which is the lesser of two evils, but from an appraisal of what are the tasks of the left over the coming period.

The general election defeat is not simply reducible to the sabotage of the right wing leadership. The essential fact is that the consciousness of the working class, in the absence of significant mass struggles, has lagged behind the reality of the polarisation of politics, and resulted in the fact that the only major party to increase their proportion of the vote was the Alliance.

The polarisation of politics was most strikingly revealed inside the Labour Party, resulting in a profoundly contradictory manifesto of left wing character being fought for by a half hearted right wing leadership.

This situation persists and is not reflected in the leadership battle. Socialists should approach the coming Labour Party conference from the principled defence and extension of existing left wing policies.



Neil Kinnock at the 1976 Labour conference

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

In doing so, a balance sheet of the past experience of the strategy of the left must be made. Here two points stand out. First, that Benn's electoral fetishism and tactical compromises have resulted in abject failure.

Second, that the election of Foot did nothing to prevent the launching of a witch hunt or the fudging of policies, but simply provided the leadership with a left cover to more effectively carry these out.

These points indicate the need for a bold new

strategy of the left, of intransigent defence of left wing policy gains as the basis of extra-parliamentary mass action.

Support for Kinnock however represents a continuation of past strategy and a capitulation to those vacillating elements who want to trade left policies for a leadership with a more acceptable political colouration.

It is exactly an adaptation to that which tends to lag behind. M. WONGSAM, Manchester

Write to us!

This is your page. Send us your comments, criticisms or even congratulations. But please be brief — letters over 300 words will be cut. Write to: Letters, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP. (Tel: 01-359 8180)

The novels of B. Traven

OX-CART DRIVERS risking bandit attack on high mountain passes, cattle drovers outwitting wily rustlers, indian traders facing the perils of steaming jungles, scenes in gambling houses and rowdy bars, Ben Traven's novels are full of the components of high adventure.

His stories, though, are also about revolution, about Mexico in turmoil and hope, about an ache for freedom and a desperate peasant hunger for land.

Reviewed by Tim Wright

His characters range from yankee drifters living on their wits, unscrupulous Mexican traders providing slave labour for jungle timber camps, to impoverished Indians being led ever closer to revolution by their struggle for survival.

The Cotton Pickers, Traven's earliest book, is about American Gerald Gales, who wanders through Mexico from job to job soon after the 1910-1917 revolution.

He works first as a cotten-picker, then in a bakery in a busy port, and finally as a cattle drover. He ends up, the cattle safely delivered, with plenty of money and a grateful employer — a classical ending to an adventure story.

His employer's gratitude, however, is mixed, for he has heard rumours of Gale's past.

In both his earlier jobs Gerard Gales has been held responsible for causing strikes. 'It's not my fault,' he tells his cattle ranching employer, 'if men get dissatisfied and want something better.' The developing confidence of workers to act against

their employers is the underlying theme of this book.

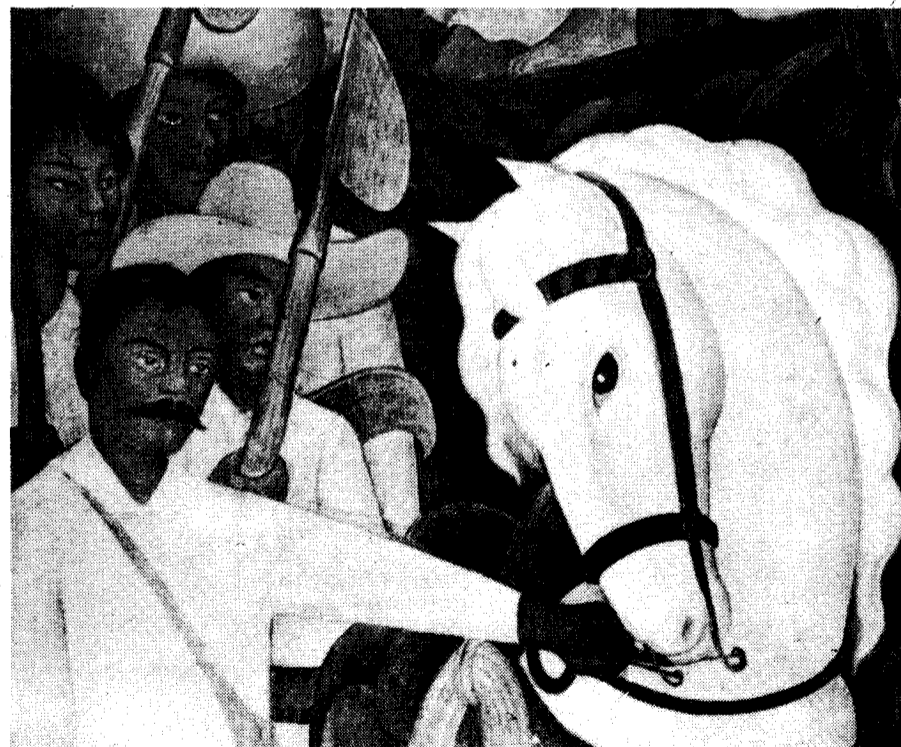
During the cotton-worker's strike, the strikers burst into a song taught to them by the American drifter: 'The words were as the breath of life to them and the song welded them together as into a block of steel. A first dim awareness of the immense power and strength of the working people united in a common purpose was awakened in them.'

Drifters

In this early tale of Traven's police side with picketers and employers are forced to compensate strikers for wages lost during strikes.

He shows a sad naive about a revolution which was hijacked from the masses by murder and double-dealing, the killing of Emiliano Zapata, the betrayal of Pancho Villa. He also shows a huge ignorance of the lives of prostitutes and women in general in machismo-ridden Mexico.

The red-light district is a place of blissful pleasure where prostitutes work in safety and are thanked courteously by their clients. The imperfections, though, of this first book are hardly there in Traven's later works, particularly in the series titled the 'Jungle Novels'.



Diego Rivera's Emiliano Zapata from the front cover of March to the Monteria

These stories, set in Mexico prior to the revolution, when the dictator Porfirio Diaz ruled over a country of corruption and of huge oppression, show a deep knowledge of the country and display a finely developed story teller's technique.

Ingenious

Through an ingenious interweaving of the plot, and through the use of two central characters, Celso and Andres, Indians who have broken with their past of subordination to the tyranny of church and state, Traven develops a real sense of the growing

restlessness and revolutionary anger of the population.

The relevance of his stories, though, goes beyond Mexico, and is about the need for revolutionary socialism on an international scale.

The price of cotton and the predicament of the cotton growers is shown to be something dictated from the great stock exchanges of the world.

The desperate conditions of Indians felling mahogany trees deep in the fever infested jungles of southern Mexico are not caused merely by unscrupulous Mexicans

but by a whole set of world conditions.

World revolution is Traven's answer.

Informed

To read Traven is both to enjoy a good book and to gain an informed insight into the conditions which take the desperate beyond despair to a revolutionary hope for a new future. His books touch your heart and inspire you.

Ben Traven's novels are published by Allison and Busby and are available from The Other Bookshop, 329 Upper Street, Islington.

TV CHOICE

The Front Line
Saturday 9 July, 7.30, Channel 4

A MAJOR event this week is this 90 minute documentary on El Salvador. But be prepared.

If you support the struggle of the Salvadoran people your anger at the disservice done by this film could place your television screen at risk.

The press blurb claims a 'balanced format' — one camera team with the right wing and the army, another 'with the guerrillas'. But it's clear where the sympathies of the production team lie.

The civilian population are presented as innocent bystanders caught between two sides, in a film which fits neatly into US imperialism's campaign of disinformation.

The El Salvador Solidarity Campaign has campaigned unsuccessfully to prevent

FMLN radio operator screening of this documentary, or at least a reply.

Worth watching so that you can gear yourself up against any damage done by its showing at peak Saturday evening time.

The Best of CLR James
Monday 11 July, 11.30, Channel 4

Last week's all-embracing look at America was a bit disappointing.

This week he talks about cricket and its history. Mike Brearley is among the cricketing audience.

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DIARY

(These listings are free for all major labour movement and campaign activities. Semi-display advertisements cost 5p per word and must be paid in advance. Send to: Diary, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday, one week prior to publication).

● **National Abortion Campaign** conference is now postponed until Oct 1-2nd. For details please contact NAC at 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Tel. 01-278 0153.

● **Fourth Anniversary of the Nicaraguan Revolution** — concert and speaking tour: Bristol Tue 19 July, 7.30pm, Trinity Hall, Old Market; Manchester Wed 20 July, 7.30pm, UMIST SU; Newcastle Thu 21 July, 7.30pm, St Thomas' Church, The Haymarket; London Fri 22 July, 7.30pm, Friends House, Euston Rd, WC1. Presented by Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 20 Compton Terrace, London N1.

● **Lebanon — One Year On** public meeting with speakers from PLO, Lebanon and Stuart Holland MP. Fri 8 July, 7.30pm, County Hall, London SE1. Admission free. Organised by Palestine Solidarity.

● **Release Nelson Mandela! Victory to the ANC!** Weekly picket of South Africa House, Trafalgar Square 5.30-7.30, Fridays. Called by City Anti-Apartheid Group.

● **Oppose police racism!** Public meeting organised by Stoke Newington & Hackney Defence Campaign. Wed 20 July, 7.30pm, Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, E8.

● **Has socialism a future?** Conference organised by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee. July 22-24, Manchester Poly SU. Details from LCC 9 Poland St, London W1.

● **Labour Movement Conference on Ireland** 16 July, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Starts 10.45am. Delegates £3, observers £2. Further details: LMCI, Box 189, 32 Ivor Place, London NW1.

● **Liberation network** — for people with disabilities. Meeting to organise a steering group to set up a London wide resource centre

for people with disabilities. All interested people welcome Sat 16 July, 2-5 pm, Morley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Rd, London SE1. Further info from Micheline Mason 01-673 4310.

● **Acid Rain** — Britain's invisible export. Public meeting with speakers from Scandinavian organisations, Labour Party and scientific community. 13 July, 7pm, Grand Committee Rooms, House of Commons, London SW1. Details from Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA) Public Health Group, 9 Poland St, London W1 (01-439 3749).

● **The Politics of Health in Zimbabwe** Hour long video available for meetings or functions. £10 (payable in advance). Send to Books for South Africa Fund, PO Box 50, London N1.

● **Glasgow Polish Solidarity Ctee** Conference 17/18 September. For details contact Gordon Morgan, 59 Durward Ave, Glasgow 041-649 8958

● **SE England Trade Union Conference on Namibia** Sun 17 July, Oxford Hse, Derbyshire St, London E2. Further details from Namibia Support Committee 01-267 1941.

● **Women for Life on Earth**, 1983 Star marches converging at Greenham on Hiroshima day, 8 August. Leaving County Hall, London on 29 July. Mixed. Contact 01-699 6712 for details.

● **SE England Trade Union Conference on Namibia** Sun 17 July, Oxford Hse, Derbyshire St, London E2. Further details from Namibia Support Committee 01-267 1941.

● **Who Killed Colin Roach?** Video film of the campaign available for meetings, from Roach Family Support Committee, 50 Rectory Road, London N16 7PP, 01-254 7480.

Socialist Action National Tour

Socialist Action supporters are organising a national series of meetings to discuss *What Next after the election? Come to the meeting in your town!* **LEEDS Thu 7 July speaker Alan Freeman, Leeds Trades Club, 7.30pm LEAMINGTON Mon 11 July, speaker Alan Freeman (contact 0926 313408) PRESTON Fri 8 July, speaker Alan Freeman (contact 0772 21814)**

AFRICA UNDER ATTACK

"SOUTH AFRICA'S UNDECLARED WAR" briefing/workshop

date: SATURDAY 9 JULY, 10am-1.30pm

venue: College Hall (opposite U.L.U.), Malet St., London, WC1

films: on South African aggression against Angola & Mozambique

speakers at the briefing: Marga Holness (Angola Information Office) Alan Brooks (Mozambique Information Office) recently returned from Mozambique & Angola Representatives from ANC and AAM, MAC, NSC.

workshop: discussion on ways of countering media disinformation about events in the region & on measures to ensure the implementation of the UN arms embargo against South Africa

registration: 50p on the door

Socialist Action

Join the fight for socialism

If you want more information about Socialist Action or to be put in touch with local supporters send this form to Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1.

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Coin it for Socialist Action

THE front page of the Daily Mail last week was rocked by the news that the people were about to force a government U-turn over a crucial issue.

So what was the campaign that shook them? Greenham Common women stopping cruise missiles? Trade unionists dumping Tebbit laws? Getting the troops out of Ireland? No. None of these.

It was that they were calling a 'campaign of mass consumer resistance'. And what were we resisting. The poor old £1.00 coin.

The coins are being 'boycotted in droves'. People only ask for them to put in money boxes. They are the most 'uncirculated' coins yet produced.

But now here is the point of all this. Looking at the map with this week's running total of £13,686, I was wondering. As there is only one more week to go before we have to meet the £19,500 target, are any of our readers leading the campaign against the £1.00 coin or can they put us in touch with the ring leaders?

It won't do you any good, comrades! Their value is not going to go up. It would be much better to put them in the bank and send us a cheque.

Remember, only one more week to go!

Thanks this week to:

Bath	£22.50	Islington	125.00
Cardiff	2.50	Moxham	3.00
Anor	5.00	Draycott	3.00
Ian Parker	5.00	P Stern	40.00
Glasgow	70.00	Ferris	15.00
Birmingham	100.00	R Pietrasik	9.00
Huddersfield	7.00	Dunn	24.00
Portsmouth	22.00	M Coulson	12.00
J Baker	5.00	R Gimpel	10.00
South East London	140.00		
Haringey	140.00	Total this week	£960.00
South West London	200.00	Total so far	£13,686.96



Socialist Action Forums

EDINBURGH Socialist Action readers forum is on the last Thursday of every month. Phone 031-667 9630 for further information and details of venue.

HOUNSLOW Socialist Action forum. Thu 7 July. 'Resisting Thatcher'. Speakers (all in personal capacity): Ken Jones (NUT exec), Colin Talbot (POEU), Andy Lilley (Sec Ealing TUC). 7.30pm, Town Hall, Treaty Road.

SOUTH WALES Socialist Action & Revolution summer school on 'Women in the struggle for their liberation and socialism'. 16/17 July, 11-5pm, East Moors Community Hall, Sanquhar St, Splott, Cardiff. Creche provided, social in evening. £1.25 per day (50p unwaged).

BRENT Socialist Action fundraising social 'Solidarity with the Palestinian struggle', an evening of Middle Eastern delights, traditional food and music. Sat 16 July, £1.75 (£1 unwaged) includes food. Tickets & info phone Kath 01-226 0571 (days).

T & G decides for Kinnock

THE TRANSPORT and General Workers Union 30th Biennial Delegate Conference has committed its 1.25 million block votes to Neil Kinnock in the Labour leadership election.

But debate was turned into a vote of confidence in the executive and its method of using the block vote.

Because of the time given to the debate the issues behind the personalities were not discussed. The question of Eric Heffer's candidacy was not debated. Nor were such questions as the positions of the candidates on the witch hunt, on unilateralism or on the EEC.

The debate polarised around the question of democracy. A motion from Tyneside General

Trades Group calling for a ballot to decide on the election was overwhelmingly defeated.

Moss Evans argued that it would cost £760,000 of the union's £800,000 political income to carry out. This argument was spurious because workplace ballots carried out by branch officers would cost only a fraction of this.

The executive were determined to prevent their control of the block vote being impinged. They also rejected a motion by 5/293 branch moved by Alan Thornett, calling for an emergency conference to be held if the leadership question arose between conferences.

Effectively the leadership elections question was steam-rollered through. There was no allowance for a discussion of the real issues behind the election campaign.



London Transport strike

ON TUESDAY 28 June, 2500 London bus drivers and conductors walked out on strike.

The action began when London Transport management tried to have garage inspectors doing the traditional work of senior conductors at the Tottenham garage.

The Transport Union at Tottenham brought all their buses off the road and appealed for support from other garages.

By late afternoon all buses from 15 Central London garages were off the road. Management rapidly saw their error and agreed to normal

working procedures at Tottenham.

This is the kind of fighting unity we will need to defeat the cuts proposed in the LT three year plan.

This proposes a five per cent cut in operated mileage, 700 less drivers, an increase in the number of driver only buses with the loss of 1500 conductors and new work procedures for garage inside staff.

In a divide and rule ploy, LT have told the public that fares will only be held down if these economies are carried through. (An LT worker)

Unit Superheaters battle on

LAST WEEK workers from Unit Superheaters in Swansea picketed their own union offices.

They are all members of the Engineering Union and are protesting at the failure of the union to give real backing to their ten week strike.

The workers originally occupied their factory, which is owned by the British Steel Corporation, against forced redundancies.

They claimed that the aim of BSC was to smash the union in the plant and allow management to operate on a hire and fire basis. Order books were full at the time.

BSC got a High Court injunction to end the occupation and then announced the plant's closure. They refused to pay redundancy money, claiming that the workers had broken their contracts.

Twenty four hour pickets are kept up and support is growing nationally. There have been factory tours in Sheffield and Scotland and the Broad Left journal, *Engineering Gazette*, is organising a series of meetings in their support.

The workers are now campaigning in South West Wales to force the AUEW to put on a local levy.

BSC have told local MP's that they intend to make an example of the workers. It is vital that the labour movement also make an example in their support for Unit Superheater's members. (Graham Attwell)

PICKET LINES. Short 150 word reports by Thursday before publication. Longer stories, contact the Editorial Board by Monday, the week before publication.

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Behind the left turn of rail conference

LAST WEEK the capitalist press screamed 'National Union of Railwaymen lurch left'.

MARTIN EADY, a London delegate to the conference explains the reality behind the headlines.

The political climate in the union is certainly changing. The influence of CND showed when the union's previous multilateral policy was overturned.

Only two delegates opposed a resolution calling for affiliation to CND and support for CND policies.

Unilateral policy is not explicitly in the resolution, but this was supported in the discussion and by general secretary Jimmy Knapp. The union also opposed the movement of nuclear missiles by rail.

This dramatic change of policy must now be followed up in the membership, a task made easier by a commitment to 'permit and encourage branches to affiliate to local CND groups.'

sion suggested that the resolution would be carried.

Knapp's intervention secured a loyalty vote against. This position of a 'left' general secretary on such a crucial political issue will not be forgotten.

Despite this position, Knapp and the conference stood out against an amendment which called for elimination of 'the cancer of the Militant tendency' from the Labour Party. The 14 to 61 vote which defeated this amendment shows that there is little support for the witch hunt in the union.

Another change from the era when Weighell was general secretary came with unanimous opposition to incomes policy. But here Knapp called for a 'planned policy' between the TUC and the Labour Party.

Register

Throughout the conference the influence of the new general secretary, Jimmy Knapp was clear. The left is still unable to carry votes against the opposition of the general secretary and there is a block of delegates who will do whatever the platform tells them.

Although Knapp said he opposed witch hunts in the Labour Party, he defended the infamous register for organisations inside the Labour Party.

This meant that a resolution on Labour Party unity, which backed the Greenwich Constituency Labour Party amendment to the Labour Party constitution, was defeated by 27 votes to 49. This Greenwich amendment seeks to make legitimate the existence of various groupings within the Labour Party and the floor discus-



Peter Parker

It was an insult to the conference that Sir Peter Parker, chairperson of British Rail, was invited to speak. His address came just before the debate on the job cutting Serpell report.

Members anger and opposition spilled over with a demonstration that halted Parker's speech for several minutes with chants of 'Serpell, Serpell'.



Kings Cross station was deserted during last year's strike. Action like this is needed again against Serpell.

This effectively crushed the conciliationists in the union who counterpose the 'liberal' Parker to the 'reactionary' Serpell and Goldstein, who could replace Parker as head of the BRB.

When Parker finally got to speak he blamed railworkers for the Serpell report, claiming that the 6 months of strikes last year had affected the parliamentary committee decisions on job loss and line closures.

Strength

The conference responded with a resolution opposing Serpell and outlining a programme of nationalisation of the transport industry and investment for an 'integrated socialist transport system'.

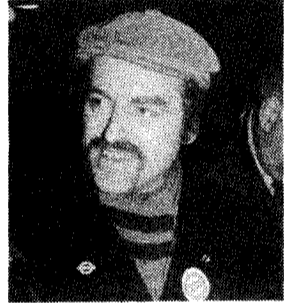
A unanimous vote came behind the strengthening of the Triple Alliance of rail, steel and coal unions to fight attacks on the nationalised industries.

This included the call for a national delegate conference of the Triple Alliance — although Knapp considered that a

twice yearly meeting of union national executives covered this point.

The conference fully backed a campaign against cuts, productivity measures and privatisation on London Transport.

There was enthusiastic support for a resolution opposing the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill.



Martin Eady

Support for the re-unification of Ireland by consent was agreed, with 13 votes against, despite a speech I gave arguing that such consent was impossible.

But the conference did reject a Militant-inspired amendment calling for the Labour Party to organise in the North of Ireland — a totally reactionary and divisive suggestion which accepts British claims on

Ireland and denies the national question and the unification of Ireland.

Activity

Delegates agreed that the fruits of new technology should be passed to working people, with a shorter working week and expansion of services and full employment.

The resolution carried states correctly that 'any introduction of such technology not be at the expense of earnings or jobs'.

Another resolution effectively rescinded the 1982 special general meeting decision by opposing any further talks on productivity, including driver-only trains.

This lays a good base for the future, but Knapp opposed this last resolution by accepting driver-only operation on the Bedford to St Pancras line, open stations and the 'trainman' concept.

A major campaign will be needed to make sure that the good decisions of conference are carried out. We can't rely on the supposedly left leadership to achieve this.

Post Office Engineers take action

LONDON telephone engineers ended their strike against privatisation this week, but said that the dispute was not over.

By Jenny Davenport and Marcella FitzGerald, LONDON North Central Internal branch of the POEU

They handle the transmission of data on computer links and have been called out by the Post Office Engineering Union.

This is part of a campaign against privatisation of BT, in this case a response to management aiding a rival private network Project Mercury.

Project Mercury is a service for big business run by big business — Barclays Bank, Michael Edwardes, late of BL, British Petroleum and the newly-privatised Cable and Wireless all have stakes.

They want to set up an independent communications network in competition to BT, creaming off the most profitable parts and with it resources to subsidise the public service. They expect BT engineers to set up the system for them.

When five engineers refused to do work for Project Mercury they were suspended without pay. BT management held meetings with every individual staff group, telling them that it is useless trying to fight privatisation.

They have sent propaganda to every members' home inciting them to disregard the union and do as they are told. This assault on BT workers reached new heights on Tuesday 21 June.

That night, three members of higher management sneaked into the Project Mercury headquarters and spent until 3am interconnecting Mercury to the BT network — a job which would have taken a competent engineer no more than three hours.

A mass meeting of over 3,000 engineers in

North Central area agreed to back those suspended and passed unanimously a proposition from Dougie Rice, secretary of the internal branch, calling for support for the union action.



POEU NEC member Phil Holt

Phil Holt, a member of the new, Broad Left dominated, national executive committee of the POEU told the meeting that the union now had a leadership that was 'resolute about fighting privatisation'.

Jock Campbell, secretary of the City branch got resounding applause when he explained that there is no room for half measures and that the POEU 'had to go for the jugular vein' of the monied interests that are out to destroy our industry in the name of private profit.

The new executive has already instituted a £1 per week levy of members to build up a strike fund and is approaching other public sector unions for an alliance for a concerted fightback against Tory attacks on the nationalised industries and welfare state.

WORM'S EYE VIEW



Steve Bell



Never too late to learn

WHEN Prince Philip toured an industrial training centre in Sweden he was greeted by cries of 'The Malvinas are Argentinian'.

Prince Philip insisted on discussing with them, and here they are pictured explaining the Malvinas are Argentinian.

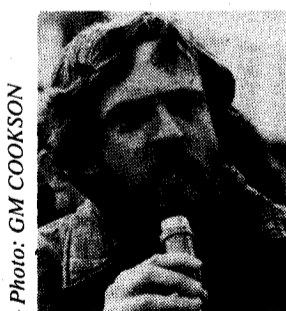


Photo: GM COOKSON

The real thing

AN interesting thing happened to Jeremy Corbyn, the new Labour MP for Islington North, on his way to the Commons on the first day of the parliamentary session.

Proceeding in an easterly direction he was accosted by policemen at the Commons entrance who refused to believe that he was an MP — because of his open-kneed shirt and beard — and thus refused him admission.

Peers

THE dispute over Michael Foot's list of 27 new peers has revealed some interesting views about the House of Lords.

Margaret Thatcher believes that 27 new Labour Peers (plus only about 17 new Tories) 'would threaten the government majority in the House of Lords'. Eh? At the last count the

Free gifts

LABOUR Research has done a break down of the pro and anti-Labour coverage in the popular dailies during the election.

In features and editorials they found that the anti-Labour coverage was thousands of inches more than pro-Labour. Only the Daily Mirror had no anti-Labour coverage.

Tories had a majority in the upper hundreds. The fact that most of them just turn up to collect their expenses is neither here nor there.

But what is Michael Foot — lifelong opponent of upper class privilege — doing nominating peers anyway?

Everyone knows he's rewarding Labour (right wing) 'worthies' who lost their seats at the general election.

calculated a total of £1,520,305 worth of space in the Sun, Express, Mail, and Daily Star.

This calculation does not include the acres of newspaper space devoted to 'unbiased' opinion polls.

The Tories admit to £1.3m worth of paid advertising, as opposed to Labour's £47,000.

LIVE WIRE

April - May '83.

JOURNAL OF THE METROPOLITAN NORTH WEST BRANCH, P.O.E.U.

Parliament, Whitehall & Bank of England Hit By Strike As POEU Says

NO

A Socialist ACTION

Police chief's outburst means new attacks



Photo: GM COOKSON

Wash-out at Cowley

AT A MASS meeting at the BL Cowley plant on Monday 4 July the workforce voted by a margin of 3-1 to accept management's proposals which included the withdrawal of the three minutes washing-up time at the end of each shift.

In April the workers had struck for 4½ weeks over the threatened removal of washing-up time and only returned to work on the basis of continued negotiations between management and unions at a national level.

The workers reaffirmed that the three minutes were non-negotiable by an almost unanimous vote at a meeting six weeks ago. However, since then the national negotiations have broken down with the management adamant on the withdrawal of the three minutes.

The blame for the turn-about in the attitude of the work force lies almost entirely with the leadership of the TGWU and the AUEW.

Towards the end of the April strike Moss Evans and Terry Duffy were in continual negotiation with BL management to bring

an end to the dispute. They were responsible for the return to work formula which effectively curbed the active resistance of the workers to the management attacks.

By a BL worker

The withdrawal of the three minutes is only the beginning of the management's drive to increase productivity. Once it was clear in the negotiations that the management would not budge from the three minutes, the union leaderships 'washed their hands' of the issue.

The body plant

workers accepted the withdrawal of washing-up time last week, only when the plant union officials failed to provide leadership. This obviously had its effects on the assembly plant.

Despite the lack of national support the shop stewards committee in the assembly plant consistently showed a lead by recommending strike action as the only way of defending the washing-up time and protecting working conditions.

In spite of this setback the Cowley workforce has demonstrated a willingness to stand up to management's attacks only to be betrayed by the union leadership. Duffy considered it a 'tragedy' if Cowley were to strike again — a clear indication of his desire to line up with BL management.

The task remains to continue the fight for union leaderships which will defend the interests of their members.

IN A BLAZE of publicity Kenneth Newman, head of the Metropolitan Police and ex-RUC chief, has hit out at what he called a 'campaign of dedicated denigration' against the police.

Lashing out at what he called 'activists' groups on the far left' Newman went on to attack the political climate in the capital which he saw as inimical to progress in policing and in particular the growing demand for police accountability and people campaigning for it.

While it is tempting to dismiss this gibberish as a manic outburst we would be doing so at a cost to what existing civil liberties we have at present.

By Unmesh Desai
(Newham 8 Campaign)

Newman and his strategy for policing London (and this applies to other parts of the country as well) deserves much more serious consideration if we are to develop new forms of resistance to the increasingly acute authoritarianism.

In particular one of the points of Newman's first annual reports — where activists are termed a destabilising influence and 'a threat to public order' — merits particular attention as well as the new style of community policing now being developed.

The sort of thinking prevalent in this type of policing sounds quite impressive with talk of a 'multi-agency' approach, 'corporate management' and other high sounding phrases.

But an insight into their real meaning was given by Newman himself when in a foreword to an unpublished conference at the National Police Staff College at Bramshill in July 1982 he wrote of the need to 'seek new strategies for dealing with inner city problems not only by the police but by all agencies of social control'.

This form of policing sets out to penetrate the community in a number of ways and consists of much more than the return of

than a double-edged tool to penetrate the community — through professional agencies, spying and gathering intelligence.

What is particularly interesting is that people who question this type of policing are deemed to be either 'misinformed' or 'dissidents' stirring up hatred against the police.

It is in this light that Newman's outburst should be seen — preparing the ground for delegitimising protests to these new schemes and labelling anyone fighting for police accountability as 'an activist who is a threat to public order.'

As the economic crisis intensifies leading to increasingly acute authoritarianism it is more important than ever before that socialists and labour movement activists take the 'law and order' issue — seen as the domain of the Tory Party — seriously and politicise it.

The systematic removal of civil liberties is to be seen as a necessary part of the Tories' strategy for controlling the unemployed and jobless youth.

It is in the light of this strategy that acts like the Criminal Justice Act and the Police Bill have to be seen.

One way of fighting these attacks on an immediate and practical level is by campaigning in the widest possible way against the Police Bill due to be introduced into Parliament in 1983 and making campaigns like the Newham 8 and Colin Roach a central focus of such a campaign.

● The Newham 8 trial is expected to start in October. Plans are being made for a national march against racism, rally and a conference. The campaign can be contacted at: PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London, E7 9JN.

more officers to the beat. 'Penetrating the community' can take the form of close coordination and cooperation between the police and other agencies — such as the social and welfare agencies, education departments and housing departments and other areas of local government.

The implications of this are all too obvious: exchange of information and getting police policy to influence decisions made by local government agencies.

One effect of this can be seen in attempts being made in some London boroughs to get youth workers to pass on information on kids they work with to the police. An extension of this form of policing is the neighbourhood watch schemes now in the process of being set up.

Action

The other aspect of community policing which it is necessary to draw out is the input and gathering of intelligence — by insidious placement of police officers in schools and other community institutions and through 'home beat' officers who are expected to gather information on their patch.

Part of this intelligence gathering consists of what has been called the 'diagnostic' approach of finding out attitudes of the public and local groups to the police.

Community policing is too often seen by many on the left as an alternative to hardline policing. But once the gimmicks surrounding it have been exposed it is nothing more

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(Family Barrister at the Inquest)
RON SMITH
(Father of Helen Smith)

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