

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

For Workers' Liberty East and West

Kick out the Tories in '87!



Lenin turns the tide

We continue our series on the Russian Revolution; see centre pages

Tories say work for your dole!

700 LONDON SCHOOL students went on strike last week to support their teachers against compulsory redeployment. And as we go to press more school student strikes and marches are due across the country. Youth are taking to the streets for a better deal.

What is the Tory deal for youth? Not just life on the dole — or not even life on the dole. The new Job Training Scheme (JTS) offers youth a single choice — a slave labour scheme

or nothing. It means in effect that 18-25 year olds will have to 'work for their dole'.

Also JTS 'trainees' will get a rate of pay related to their unemployment or supplementary benefit levels — rather than a flat rate. So JTS will pay less to many unemployed young adults than the £35 at present paid to 17 year olds on the second year of YTS.

And, of course, JTS will help the Tories to fiddle the unemployment figures.

It's one more attack on the rights of working-class youth. School

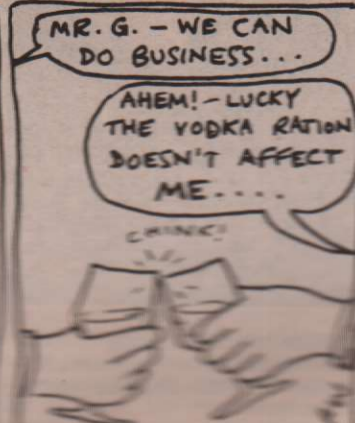
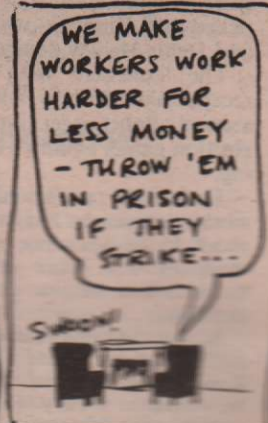
leavers need proper jobs and a future worth living for — not crumbs from the Tory table and forced labour. Action by School Students and others this week can be just the start of a campaign to defeat the Tories. We can beat them on JTS, and get a better deal for youth.

School students, students and young workers need to unite to oppose JTS. Trade unions must boycott JTS and try to kill it stone dead. Youth who do end up on JTS

Turn to page 2



Monique Blanquet (Report)



Thatcher meets the Tsar

Thirty years ago Tory Prime Minister Harold Macmillan went to Moscow to see that other reforming Stalinist Tsar, Nikita Khrushchev and got himself photographed in a white fur hat.

That, too, was part of an election campaign, though not so obvious a piece of Thatcher's electioneering as Thatcher's recent visit to Mikhail Gorbachev.

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JTS: Just Temporary Slavery

The Job Training Scheme (JTS) is being introduced nationally from this month. It is aimed mainly at 18 to 25 year-olds who have been unemployed for over six months.

JTS trainees will be 'recruited' through the 'Restart' interviews at Job Centres. The schemes will last between three and twelve months and will consist, in theory, of training and work experience. But unlike the Youth Training Scheme (for 16 and 17 year olds) JTS does not have a guaranteed period of "off the job" training at a college or similar education institution.

"Allowance"

Trainees will be paid an "allowance" amounting to their normal benefit, plus bus fares which makes JTS a "work for dole" scheme like the VS "Workfare" system.

At their Restart interviews 18 to 25 year olds will only have certain options offered to them: Community Programme places, for instance, will be closed to them. The 18 to 25 year olds' Restart "menu" will be: a job; a place in a job club; Enterprise Allowance Scheme; JTS.

Given the lack of real jobs, and the problems of getting on to the Enterprise Allowance Scheme (you have to have £1000 available to you before they even consider you), that leaves just the Job Clubs and JTS. And even the Job Clubs are getting very choosy about who they accept. So it looks as though the majority of 18-25 year olds called to Restart interviews are going to be shunted off into JTS.

Employment Secretary Lord Young has said there will be no compulsion on people to go onto JTS and that benefits will not be affected by refusal or early leaving. But this was also said about YTS and in practice a great deal of pressure is used to force young people onto that. And the introduction of JTS just happens to coincide with the arrival of an 800-strong army of "Claimant Advisors" at the dole offices. Their brief is to pull people off the

Unemployment Register and into low-paid jobs or a government scheme — like JTS. And the Claimants Advisors do have the power to recommend suspension of benefit.

The government plans to have 110,000 on JTS by September. Most of these places will be with Private Training Agencies, whose motives are to make profits, not necessarily to provide quality training. It seems most unlikely that sufficient work placements will be found for that number of people — and what work placements there are may well turn out to be providing cheap labour for unscrupulous employers, as happened with YTS.

The real motive behind JTS is clear — to get hundreds of thousands of people off the unemployment register, as part of the government's aim to get the figures down below three million in time for the next election.

This new scheme represents a serious attack on trade unionists as well as the unemployed. Employers will be able to get rid of existing workers and replace them with 'trainees' (as has happened with the YTS), and then use the fact that JTS trainees are working for dole money to bring down wage levels. The introduction of JTS trainees into a workforce will, inevitably, undermine trade union organisation.

Opposition

Considerable opposition to the new scheme has already been expressed within NATFHE and sections of the TGWU. NALGO has national policy to boycott the scheme. At the TUC General Council the vote to cooperate with the scheme was carried by ten votes to 30 — an unprecedented level of opposition within that august body. The TUC's position has come under further pressure as a result of the Labour Party coming out with a national policy of opposition to JTS.

So a strong campaign against JTS by rank and file activists could force the unions to come out against the scheme. Such a campaign needs to be organised now!



Lessons from last time

"Loony left threat to schoolkids!" screamed the papers last Wednesday as hundreds of school students walked out of lessons to support the teachers and also to demand a grant for post-16 education and decent pay on YTS.

Is a mass school students' movement about to be born? We certainly hope so, but the experience of the 1985 schools' strike gives us an important lesson in how not to build such a movement.

In 1985, the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) called a school strike over the introduction of two-year YTS and possible conscription on to the cheap labour schemes, and other issues. The strike itself was a major success and the Tories were forced to retreat in the face of a public outcry.

But unfortunately the movement didn't develop any further, and many of those who struck and demonstrated against YTS schemes have since found themselves forced on to them (and the issue of conscription on to YTS is looming again).

The decline of the movement wasn't due to lack of interest or enthusiasm on the part of those youth

By Reb Short, Nick Brereton and Duncan Chapple

involved, but to the top-heavy way in which the strikes were called and followed up.

Quite simply, the emerging school students' union was stifled by YTURC's bureaucratic methods.

A founding conference of the 'School Students' Union' (SSU) was called, and in typical YTURC style was presented with a programme to pass, a National Committee to elect that had in fact already been 'selected' by Militant and sent away with the general message: 'leave it to us and we'll tell you when we need you again'.

The most noticeable thing about that founding conference was the absence of rank and file students who weren't already Militant supporters (or in the Workers' Revolutionary Party). Certainly the only people who spoke were people committed to one side or the other. There was no discussion of how to take the union forward and build it, no discussion of future activities and barely any discussion of the conference document.

The conference degenerated into a slanging match between the WRP and Militant supporters. Finally we were presented with two possible slates for the national committee — Militant or WRP. Demands from the floor for individual elections, hustings, etc., were dismissed with promises of another conference, soon to follow, at which such elections could take place.

Not surprisingly, the 'founding' conference was the last heard of the SSU.

Tories say work for dole!

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schemes must be unionised. And youth on YTS and JTS must be paid at union rates of pay.

And there should be £35 a week minimum grant for all students.

School students' action can provide the focus for a campaign — But

Any ordinary rank and file student who did attend would by no means feel encouraged to go out and build this organisation. Although Dave Scirockin still claims to be its leader, the SSU doesn't really exist right now.

This is a crying shame. The SSU had a good set of demands which could have attracted youth to get organised and fight the Tories' assault on education. But without a democratic structure, or a rank and file base in the schools, and without plans for taking the SSU forward, or any basic strategy, it was doomed from the start.

The 'leadership' had no ideas and the students were unable to put theirs forward. The Tory retreat then was only temporary and two-year YTS is now again a threat as the Tories try to fight their way out of their economic crisis.

Let's hope that this time a mass union can be built as a follow-up to the strikes that have been called. Manchester schools will be out on 1 April, London on 2 April, and on Tuesday 7 April there will be a national school students' strike. The demands of the strikes are:

*Support for the teachers' action over pay and conditions.

*£35 a week for all in post-16 education.

*£55 a week minimum YTS wage.

If the story of the 1985 strike means anything it means that rank and file student power is the way to fight and win.

As Kinnoch has dropped Labour's promise of a miserly £27 for all those continuing education at 16, it is obvious that if the attacks on education are to be reversed, a strong and vibrant school students' movement must be built to keep the fight going on even after Thatcher is gone.

All out on 7 April!
Build a mass school students' movement!

as well as striking and marching, school students must get organised. There must be democratic action committees in schools to organise activity. School students can and should join the School Students Union. Sixth form students can set up unions and be part of the National Union of Students (NUS).

World Brief

Thatcher meets the Tsar

from page 1

As electioneering goes it is not at all bad! And Gorbachev has been happy to play along with the Tory leader. This won't surprise regular readers of Socialist Organiser, but it must come as a shock to those who think that Gorbachev is on our side — to Tony Benn, for example, and



the officers of Chesterfield Labour Party who recently wrote Gorbachev a friendly letter advising him not to help Thatcher.

If he bothered to reply he would probably paraphrase something

Stalin, the cynical real-politiker, once said about the Pope: "And how many battalions has Chesterfield Labour Party got?"

Neil Kinnoch also went electioneering and bridge-building — to Washington. But he didn't get so good a reception. Indeed someone in the White House deliberately put the story in circulation that Reagan had ticked off Kinnoch which Kinnoch and Denis Healey denied.

The contrast with Thatcher's reception in Moscow, where her hosts seemed almost eager to play the Tory election game, couldn't be more glaring.

Thatcher's projected image of world class leader may win her some votes. If it helps some of our friends on the left to sober up about Gorbachev, then we may have got a fair exchange.

About the time Harold Macmillan donned his white hat, Nikita Khrushchev announced that in Britain he would be a Tory. Gorbachev may not get round to saying it, but it is as true for him as it was for Khrushchev.

Our programme for Ireland

Green paper blues

Our programme for Ireland is: socialism — a socialist Ireland integrated into a Socialist Federation of Europe; thus, in passing, resolving the age-old conflict with Britain on the basis of British-Irish equality within the Socialist United States of Europe.

Only the working class can make Ireland socialist by conquering power. But the necessary unity of the Irish working class is held back and has for over a century been rendered impossible because of the chronic communal antagonism, centred in the north-east of the island. This antagonism runs through all classes in society.

In politics it is expressed on one side by unionism — the desire for close links or integration with Britain; and on the other by limited — Home Rule — nationalism and by full scale — Republican — separatism.

Contradiction

Irish history for over a hundred years has been dominated by the irresolvable contradiction between the Irish majority's commitment to Home Rule or separation from Britain and its commitment to Irish unity. A powerful Irish minority opposed even limited Irish local government (Home Rule) because, considering itself British and being vigorously Protestant, it refused to let itself become a mere minority in a Catholic Ireland.

The combination of the minority with a section of the British ruling class led to the rupture of Irish political unity and to the partition of Ireland.

In a process that began with a powerful, mainly Catholic movement for Home Rule, and then a powerful, mainly Protestant, Unionist counter-movement, the people of Ireland achieved not one but two Home Rules; and for the 26 Counties Home Rule quickly evolved into real (1936-7) and then even formal republican independence (1949).

But Partition was the opposite of a democratic solution. The Protestant minority were — with the exception of most of Antrim and Down — heavily interwoven with the other Irish community. A clear separating out of the minority was not possible.

Instead of a democratic solution by way of the natural Irish minority



Protestant demonstrators confront the RUC in Portadown. Photo: John Arthur, Reflex.

negotiating minority rights with the natural Irish majority, Partition brutally and arbitrarily cut Ireland in two — creating a new, artificial Catholic minority in the North which was bigger as a proportion of the Six County population than all the Irish Protestants were in the whole of Ireland. This is no solution.

The late '60s Catholic revolt against their condition of being second class citizens in the Six Counties, and the IRA's 16 year long war against the British army and the state personnel of the Six Counties, is the proof that the Partition settlement imposed on the Irish majority in 1920 is as untenable as it is unjust and arbitrary.

Against the oppression of Ireland by Britain, socialists like Marx and Engels argued for an immediate democratic programme — for the Irish people's right to self-determination. 'Socialism now' was not a sufficient answer to the national conflict in the pre-Irish secession UK. The class unity of the British and Irish workers could best be secured if British socialists advocated the right of the Irish people to secede from the UK if they wanted to — and the majority did.

Against Britain in Ireland now, maintaining the artificial and undemocratic partition of Ireland with military force, self-

determination for the people of Ireland as a whole remains the central democratic programme for British and Irish socialists.

In the light of the existence of one million people in Ireland who consider themselves British, the only possible democratic version of Irish self-determination — the only version that is working class and not bourgeois, or petty-bourgeois Irish chauvinist — is that which advocates a federal Ireland, in which, instead of Partition which creates two Irish minorities (one of them, the Six County Catholics, artificial) north of the Partition border, the natural Irish (Protestant) minority will be freely able to protect its interests and identity for as long as it chooses to.

Counterpose

Just as it was no part of serious working class politics to counterpose socialism within the old UK to the Irish majority's desire for Home Rule, so now it is no part of Marxist politics to counterpose a socialist Ireland to a democratic solution of the conflict that divides the people of Ireland. The problem is to create the conditions — working class unity — that will make it possible for Irish workers to win socialism.

Mutual respect and guarantees against any attempt by either side to indulge in chauvinist trampling on the rights or susceptibilities of the other — that is now the precondition for Irish workers' unity on a mass scale. Immediately, the advocacy of such a programme is a precondition for advanced workers from both Northern Irish communities to be able to talk to each other and to the less advanced in their own communities about class politics.

Given the attitudes of the one million Protestants, right now troops out alone stands in flat contradiction to self-determination for the Irish people as a whole. Troops out alone is a programme that only expresses the politics of those who think that getting Britain out of Ireland is the highest goal, at whatever cost. However nationalist and 'for a single unitary Irish state' such people may think they are, in fact their version of troops out — without a political settlement — inevitably and inescapably means 'dual self-determination'.

Troops out without a prior political settlement would not liberate and allow self-determination to the Irish 32-country majority but would set the Protestant community completely adrift from Britain to seek its own self-determination by way of bloody civil war and repartition.

Britain already has the most repressive labour law in Western Europe. Many of the laws which constrict the activities of British trade unions would themselves be illegal in other countries.

For example, in Spain, compulsory strike ballots before strike action would be unlawful — because they might hinder the right to strike, which is protected by the constitution. In Italy, workers may not be dismissed during a lawful dispute; in Greece and Portugal, employers cannot legally hire strike breakers.

However, the Tory government is not content with the existing level of repression. They believe that union bashing is a vote winner — so they plan to introduce a further round of anti-union laws. These new laws, set out in a Green Paper entitled *Trade unions and their members*, are designed to destroy both the individual workers' rights which trade unions have achieved for their members and the collective organisation which enabled them to do so.

Attacks on individual rights include measures which will:

- *Reduce workers' rights to pursue unfair dismissal claims;

- *Remove wages council protection from young workers, so forcing them to undercut adult wages in low paid jobs;

- *Deny women workers maternity rights, especially the right to return to their jobs after they have a child.

By Jeremy Green

The real meat of the proposals, though, is an assault on the collective rights of workers which make effective trade union organisation possible. The Green Paper includes provisions which will:

- *Give strike breakers the legally protected right to cross picket lines, even if a majority of workers have voted to strike;

- *Prevent trade unions from disciplining members who break union rules;

- *Give government financial support to individuals who want to take legal action against union decisions, even if those decisions are the result of a majority vote;

- *End closed shops, even in workplaces where 85% of employees vote for them;

- *Give individuals the right to examine unaudited trade union accounts;

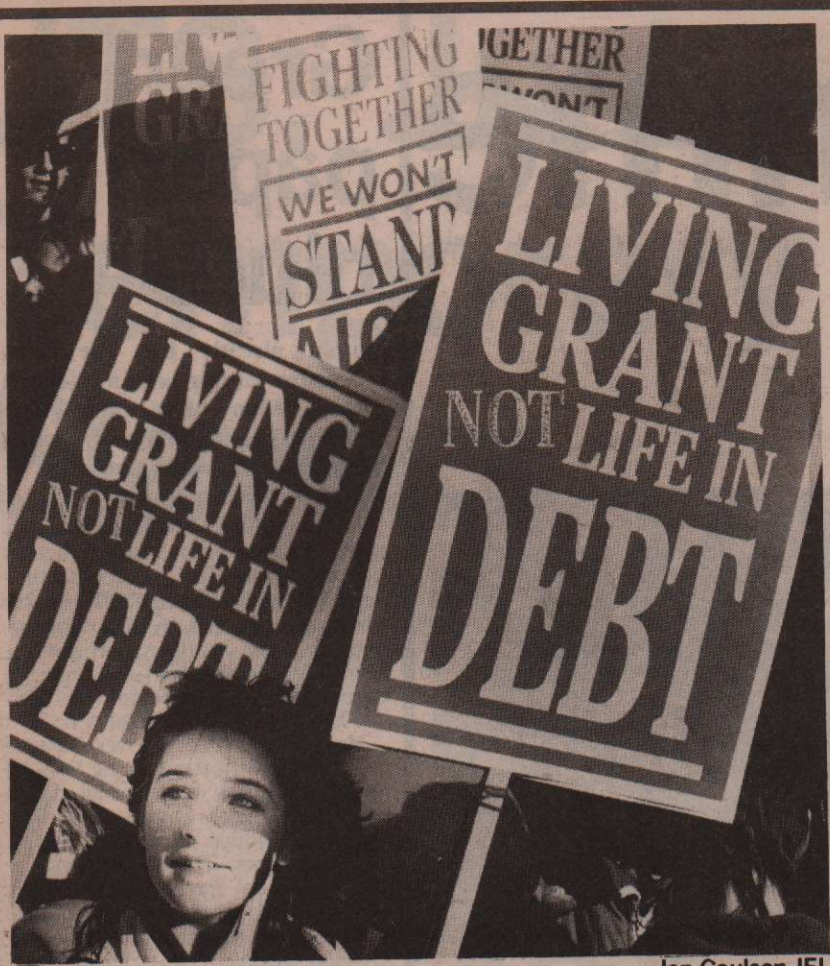
- *Sweep away existing trade union democracy and replace it with a single, postal, voting system.

It is no wonder that these proposals are being referred to in the labour movement as a "scabs' charter"; that is exactly what they are intended to be. Behind all the guff about "giving the unions back to their members" is a straightforward attempt to make almost any kind of collective action by workers impossible. Many forms of industrial action will simply be illegal. Most others will, in practice, be impossible — because the law will give massive protection to any minority of workers, however unrepresentative, who want to line up with the employers against their fellow workers.

For strike breakers, no expense will be spared to make sure that "their union" is given "back to them". A new body, along the lines of the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality, will be created to ensure that their legal rights will be upheld. Unlike the EOC and the CRE, though, this Scabs' Rights Commission will have the funds — and the statutory duty — to ensure that all applications to it receive support.

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Jez Coulson IFL

NUS turns right

EASTER NUS Conference marked a shift to the right. Preparing the way for a Labour government the Democratic Left leadership of NUS abandoned past policies to bring NUS in line with Labour Party policy.

Despite previous positions of opposition to all cuts NUS now supports 'alternative strategies' of cuts — which can only mean that Students' Unions should put forward plans for where they want cuts to be made.

Similarly, NUS is now in favour of colleges collaborating with the Universities Grants Committee (UGC) and the Polytechnic equivalent — NAB. In the past NUS has called for colleges to refuse to participate in 'rationalisation' plans.

NUS policy of opposition to all immigration controls was also junked at the behest of the Democratic Left.

The shift to the right started in colleges earlier this year and has been seen most clearly in both the lack of

national campaigns and the defeat of Labour candidates (of every hue) in Union elections this term. The blame for this drift lies firmly with the Democratic Left.

They themselves have moved rightwards and by their refusal to organise campaigns against the Tories there is no climate of opposition in colleges. NUS has not provided a credible strategy to defeat Tory attacks. Student Unions have retreated into being service centres and students have drawn the conclusion that there is nothing they can do.

Despite the shift to the right, SSiN candidates, Simon Pottinger, Michele Carlisle and Liz Millward were elected to the NEC (and SSiN candidate Stuart Beeston would have been elected but for a mathematical error by SSiN's organising team).

SSiN's fringe meetings were by far the largest at conference with over 150 attending one meeting.

The SWP were knocked off the NEC for the first time in years.

SWP support Kinnockites

THE SWP's behaviour at NUS conference was bizarre. Initially they supported SSiN against NOLS. But, halfway through the conference they changed their line and voted for NOLS, giving a number of reasons for the change — each one of them false.

At conference they said that they wouldn't vote SSiN because the UJS voted for Simon Pottinger against Jo Gibbons the Democratic Left candidate. Some of them chanted at conference 'SSiN gets votes from Zionists...'

The SWP could not seriously mean that. If they did then one awaits their refusal to vote for Tony Benn as probably half the PLP who, more than getting Jewish votes, are actually Zionists.

If the SWP did mean it then they are sick. What they are saying is that anyone getting Jewish votes is tarnished...with? With what comrades of the SWP? But this could not be a reason for a change of line. The UJS declared their intention — well before Simon's election — and the SWP knew it.

So, there, had to be

another reason. Socialist Worker (28 March) says that during his hustings Simon Pottinger denounced the SWP as racist. In fact he did not. (Though later when the SWP began to chant "SSiN gets votes from Zionists na na na na, SSiN supporters did criticise them for implicit anti-semitism). Again this hardly marks a shift to the right of the conference. Our position on the issue has been clear for a year or more. Nothing new was said, and the SWP knew our position. So this could not be the reason for their change of line.

The final reason they give is that Liberals transferred their vote to us after their candidate was defeated. That is true. Liberal transfers went approximately 50% to SSiN, 50% to the Democratic Left. Of the 73 Liberal votes we got, between 50 and 60 were UJS votes. The other 13 or 23 were probably Liberals voting for us because they did not want the Democratic Left to 'seal-up' the sabbatical positions and thereby guarantee that anyone not in the Democratic Left but on the NEC would be unmercifully carved out.

Anyway, the SWP are in a ridiculous position. SSiN got perhaps 10 more 'Liberal' votes than the Democratic Left. The SWP are saying it is OK to vote DL because they got the real liberal votes but not SSiN because they get some real Liberal votes but mainly UJS votes going through the Liberals!

There was no reason for the SWP to change their line. Nothing happened at conference to force them to change. Cynically, it is more reasonable to assume that the SWP knew that had to vote for Simon against the DL — that being the biggest Left-Right fight at conference — but they then wanted an excuse to vote for the DL after that — either because they do not want to promote their closet opposition or because they were hoping that their long established relationship with the DL could be revitalised: they vote DL and in return they are guaranteed one NEC member.

Could it be that the explanation for the SWP's childish behaviour and grotesque opportunism is — electoralism?

Militant and racism: hear no evil, speak no evil...

Simon Lawlor (SO 302) says that 'the Marxist programme' comes before the need to place blacks in positions of responsibility in the Labour Party. A statement like this naturally begs the question what exactly constitutes 'the Marxist programme'?

I for one don't counterpose the advancement of blacks in the Labour Party or society in general to a 'Marxist' programme. On the contrary, you can't have one without the other. Marx himself said that "Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded."

Are the social workers who struck against cuts in community care acting against the "Marxist programme"? Are the housing benefits staff in Liverpool betraying socialism because they demand greater physical protection at work?

Are the teachers, who struck because the Education Authority docked their pay for refusing to cover for absent colleagues similarly politically backward? Are we to condemn more than 1000 GMBAT members — led incidentally by Militant supporter Ian Lowes — for striking against council attempts to privatise landscape gardening work? Or the TGWU members at Speke airport who refused to sell their labour power at a low enough price for the 'socialist' city council to employ them?

Nowadays it doesn't appear that it is just 'uppity blacks' who are against Militant-style 'Marxism'. They are joined by the majority of trade unionists employed by the council! In this respect, Militant have much in common with Eastern European 'socialist' regimes. The workers there, too, do not seem to identify their interests with the "Marxist programme" imposed by the elite.

Council leader Tony Byrne, together with Militant hack Andy Pink, made various attempts in January to call in full-time union regional officials to discipline the local workforce. In the opinion of Messrs Byrne and Pink the unions are now 'running wild', 'out of control' and 'go on strike at the drop of a hat'!

As to Liverpool Council's record as a house-builder, let us consult the official statistics. In the financial year 1984-5, Sheffield City Council spent in excess of £153 million on housing. In that same financial year the figure for Liverpool was £136,485,702. The 1985-6 figures for Sheffield were in excess of £163 million on their housing account, but the full figures for Liverpool are not available yet because of 'creative accounting'. The total capital budget we know to be £86,361,438. If Lawlor wants to find out how much was spent in a specific area of Liverpool he will be told by council staff that this is impossible because of the complications of accounting. Nobody really knows where, or on what, money is being spent — but Militant supporters continue to make wild and extravagant claims without possessing any proper figures.

We are certain to find that in areas such as education and social services, Liverpool City Council is woefully inadequate in comparison to other local authorities. They have been able to adopt a relatively larger housing expenditure a) by getting into debt to foreign bankers and b) by taking money away from other spending areas. These facts merely show the limitations of local government reformism. They are not virtues.

It is also important to note exactly where council house building is going on in Liverpool 8. This is an area of substantial white as well as black population. In practice, very few of the new-build council house properties are going up in 'black' areas. It is

HATTON'S HELL

FOR 14 years John Hamilton was the Labour leader on Liverpool council, for part of that time the boss of one of Britain's biggest cities.

Today he is a broken man. He has been kicked out of office by the courts and faces a £106,000 surcharge. At the age of 64, after a lifetime in politics, he faces bankruptcy and the loss of his home.

If that had been caused by fighting for the city he loves, he would not care. But it wasn't.

Most of the blame lies with the men who really ran Liverpool for the past three years — the Militant Tendency. And one man in particular — Derek Hatton.

From the time he became Hamilton's deputy in 1983, Hatton was the real boss. He was by turns brutal and charming. He hoisted his tough political operator, but really he most enjoyed the good life and the glare of his own publicity. John Hamilton saw it all. Now, for the first time, he tells the full, true and shocking story.



The bitter fruits of boss politics

difficult to know the extent to which various ethnic groups benefit from new housing, of course, because the empty-headed Tendency does not agree with ethnic monitoring. It found it more comfortable to rule in the dark.

Discussing employment, Lawlor claims that 20% of the total new intake are black. But the parliamentary inquiry into black employment with local authorities has produced figures which serve to prove him wrong. This report said of Liverpool City Council that "In no other case did we hear such a sustained and bitter attack made on a local administration by members of the minority ethnic groups."

When the Personnel Committee chair, Councillor Harry Smith was asked to comment on this he said: "There is no excuse, I cannot defend the fact that there are not as many black faces in council offices as there could be. We are trying to make changes and we want to employ more black people. But, sadly, a lot do not have the faith in us to apply for an interview any more."

Harry Smith made this honest comment before the Tendency hacks could get to him with the 'correct line'. But the following day, the accomplished liars in the Central Support Unit published this amazing statement:

"During the past two years, 15.6% of blacks who applied for jobs were appointed, compared to 11.88% of whites.

"This is obviously a step in the right direction. But under the present recruitment system most jobs are advertised only internally which meant that only 538 of the applicants were black, compared to 20,829 whites."

There are lies, and damned lies and then there are the statistics presented by the Militant Tendency. But it is nice to have some hard figures for a change, even though they have been grudgingly flushed out as a response to a report from a select committee of a capitalist parliament! What we need to do, however, is to present them in a more honest light.

By their own admission, Militant say that only 84 blacks (including Sam Bond!) have been appointed to the City council workforce since they came to office in 1983. This compares to 2,475 whites. Therefore, of the total new appointments only just over 3% have been from ethnic minorities, in a city where blacks make up 8% of the Liverpool

population.

Since most of these appointments have been advertised internally first, we cannot even conclude that there has been a total increase of more than 3% blacks in the council workforce. For all we know, all the black appointments might be people who already have a job with the city council! (And judging by what Harry Smith had to say this appears to be the case).

I think I have given enough hard information here to disprove the ridiculous talk of 20% of the new intake being black.

The charges that the Black Caucus used violence and intimidation against the Labour Party are laughable, when compared to the Tendency's antics. Don't forget that Hatton set the cops on Black Caucus supporters who were protesting against the Bond appointment in the council chambers. Or isn't police violence violence? Or are the police thugs working for Liverpool City Council — which Militant said was some sort of "workers' state" — no longer police thugs? Did their "class nature" change after the "peaceful revolution" in Liverpool?

Please remember also that Bond paid out over £1,200 to 'minders' for the purpose of breaking up a meeting critical of him which was due to take place in Liverpool 8. Note that the hysteria whipped-up against the caucus in the summer of 1985 bordered on a lynch-mob type of frenzy, when backward Militant hacks employed racist stereotypes — their opponents were "pimps and gangsters" — to justify their position.

In the months before it was disbanded, Liverpool District Labour Party had its aggregate meetings patrolled by uniformed security guards who verbally abused and intimidated anyone who had the gall to even question the 'Marxist' leadership.

Do you have Labour Party meetings like that in your neck of the woods, comrade Lawlor? Don't talk to us about violence and intimidation!

Finally, comrade Lawlor, try turning to the 20 February edition of Militant. Two articles are given over in that paper to the problems of Liverpool — without a single mention of the fact that over half the council workforce has been out on strike against the council, for one reason or another, over the past month. But then our three wise donkeys — Byrne, Mulhearn and Hatton — hear no evil, speak no evil and see no evil.

Turn to the working class!

Socialist Organiser AGM

Socialist Organiser's Annual General Meeting last weekend (March 28-29) centred around the theme 'turn to the working class'. We discussed how to develop a class-struggle strategy for socialism in opposition to the creeping 'rainbow alliance' fashionable on much of the left. And we decided priorities for our industrial work, including the production of workplace bulletins.

Other interesting discussions included South Africa, Ireland, and work among women.

Below we print the summing-up speech of Michele Carlisle.



Michele Carlisle

THERE WILL be a General Election this year after 8 years of a vicious Tory government which has pushed millions onto the dole, shut down hospitals and schools, attacked women's rights, taken away maternity benefits, split up families with immigration controls and protected fascists.

Not only that, they've attempted to smash the organisations of the working class — the trade unions. The miners' strike and the Wapping dispute were not just about jobs, they were about the right to demonstrate, to picket and to strike. The Tories and the bosses are trying to crush any opposition to them through the legal system and with the police.

In 1987 we have the opportunity to get rid of the Tories, a

General Election is on the Agenda, it is the issue of discussion in the working class, but what are they being offered? A fighting Labour Party, supporting workers' activity and workers' rights? No. Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley and the cuddly Ken Livingstone.

It is not surprising Labour are doing badly in the polls — not only do they seem like an imitation of the SDP, they are a poor imitation of the SDP.

But, the reason we are here is because we do have something to offer to the working class. There is something better than what Kinnock represents.

We know that we must build a campaign to get Labour in, but we also know we can build that socialist campaign, not simply to get Neil in no.10, but to force the

Labour Party and the labour movement to build a revolutionary working class movement that will overturn the capitalist system. This can be done, but it is a tall order. We've got some of the best activists and the best politics. We must go from here and build that socialist campaign and that revolutionary movement.

We all gathered around SO for a reason. Not because we like to sit in the AGM and talk, but because we want to change the world.

Changing the world is not a nice dream for heady idealists. We can do it. As Marxists we know that the force that can and will win socialism is the working class, as class fighters we must leave this AGM and work harder than ever to make that happen.

Rebuild the labour movement

By Eric Heffer MP

I believe, despite the opinion polls, and the hostility of the capitalist press, that Labour can win the General Election whenever it comes. But it can only do so, if it stops retreating from the socialist policies which were agreed by Labour's Annual Conference, and if it totally ignores 'advice' from a hostile press which in reality does not want Labour to win.

The truth of the matter is that Labour must stop turning in on itself, it must go out and propagate its socialist policies and leading figures should stop apologising for the Party's members and the Party's policies.

Damage has been done to the Party's prospects. For some in the Party to refer, as the capitalist press does, to some of our councillors and local authorities as "loony lefts" is to give a gift to our political enemies. To expel councillors and members for supporting the Militant newspaper, or any other left-wing paper in the party, that too is a gift to our political enemies.

To threaten comrades with disciplinary action because they are members or supporters of Black Sections, is a gift to the political enemy.

To fail to support the rights of minority groups like gays and lesbians is a gift to the political enemy.

To fail to support women's rights is a gift to the political enemy.

It is very wrong for people in the Labour Party to distance themselves from workers who are involved in class struggle, who are fighting for basic trade union rights and who require solidarity from all sections of the movement.

The miners should have received wholehearted support, as should the printworkers and others. They did not get it, either from some TUC or Labour leaders and their fight was weakened as a result.

The defeat of the miners was a watershed for the movement. In the past when workers have been defeated in industrial struggle they have tended to look for political solutions. They have looked to the Labour Party, but on this occasion, because of the cracked note sounding from Labour's trumpet, workers have hesitated and are not sure where to go or what to do.

It is our task on the left to give them some answers and political



Durham miners Gala, photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

direction. We have to expose the vicious class nature and politics of the Thatcher government, putting it in the context of the crisis of British, European and world capitalism.

We have to explain the true nature of the anti-trade union laws and what this government have yet in store for us, if they are elected again.

We have to explain that our democratic rights, painfully built up and fought for over the generations are being weakened and destroyed by this government. It is happening in a whole number of ways.

There is the attack on local government by its policies of rate-capping, the abolition of the GLC, and the Metropolitan Authorities. There is the surcharging and disqualification of the Lambeth and Liverpool councillors, through a class law which is outdated and which should have been abolished by past Labour governments. It must be abolished by the next Labour government.

We have seen the banning of trade union rights at the GCHQ, the im-

posing of a pay settlement on the teachers through new government legislation.

The Tories created a national police force which was extensively used during the miners' strike.

We have also seen efforts being made to stop the truth coming out about the role of the so-called Security Services. There has been the undermining of the rights of Parliament, deliberately misleading statements by Ministers on such issues as the Belgrano, Westland, the Wright book and the one published in Ireland.

It is clear this government is determined to centralise power, and destroy if it can all centres of democratic opposition.

That is not to say the government is fascist, but it is surely paving the way for a type of fascism by developing an authoritarian state apparatus step by step in defence of the capitalist system.

Labour, therefore — and we on the Left should press strongly for this



— must restore and extend democratic rights by restoring genuine local government, reestablishing the rights of trades unions, by giving greater devolved powers to the various parts of Britain, by ensuring that the police are brought under democratic control, and by finding the ways and means of democratising the media.

Comrades, it is clear that we on the left of the party cannot sit idly by and allow the party to become the SDP Mark II. If we do, that is a sure way to ensure the victory of our political opponents, including the SDP/Liberal Alliance. We must go out and fight for our socialist principles and policies, knowing that in reality, they are the only policies that in the last analysis can deal with the

problems that we in this and other capitalist countries face.

Part of that must be rebuilding the left in the trade union movement. I see from the press that there are efforts being made to try and use the TGWU to change Party policy in a number of directions. The answer to that is for the left in the unions to begin working more cohesively together, not to jockey for sectional gains and to again work out clear objectives and go out and work for them.

We have a mammoth task before us, but I am confident that the socialist left can rebuild itself in the Party and the movement.

We must not follow the path of despair and drop away, nor must we think there are easy short cuts, such as leaving the Labour Party and joining something else. Our job is inside this Party. It is to rebuild its socialist base on a better foundation, to ensure that class politics are sustained and developed, and to ensure that all minority groups are brought into the movement and catered for, and that they are totally identified with the Party.

Obviously in the Soviet Union it is one group of the bureaucracy fighting another, but the reforms can help loosen up the bonds upon the working people of the Soviet Union. This can mean that at last the basic socialist ideas of the October Revolution can again become real after decades of Stalinist darkness and oppression.

We must, therefore, support the struggle for freedom in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as we rightly support the struggle in Central America, Latin America, South Africa, the Philippines, Pakistan and elsewhere.

We must see the election of the Labour government as the first step. Not as an end in itself but as the beginning. A short, faltering step towards our socialist goal.

There are a number of important jobs that we must do.

We must rebuild the socialist base of the labour movement. We must get together now and after the general election with all those others who accept socialist concepts based on class politics and class struggle and work out a genuine united policy. It has happened in the movement in the past, during the 1930s when renewal was essential, and clearly it must happen again.

We must, however, not fall into sectarian error, and deliberately look for disagreements on the Left, but rally round a minimum agreed policy, and go out and work for it in the movement. The emphasis must be on the class basis of politics with the various minorities and fringe issues integrated into the overall strategy.

Lenin turns t

On 3 April, Lenin arrived in St. Petersburg from abroad. Only from that moment does the Bolshevik Party begin to speak out loud, and, what is more important, with its own voice.

For Bolshevism the first months of the revolution had been a period of bewilderment and vacillation. In the "manifesto" of the Bolshevik Central Committee, drawn up just after the victory of the insurrection, we read that "the workers of the shops and factories, and likewise the mutinied troops, must immediately elect their representatives to the Provisional Revolutionary Government."

The manifesto was printed in the official organ of the Soviet without comment or objection, as though the question were a purely academic one. But the leading Bolsheviks themselves also regarded their slogans as purely demonstrative. They behaved not like representatives of a proletarian party preparing an independent struggle for power, but like the left wing of a democracy, which, having announced its principles, intended for an indefinite time to play the part of loyal opposition.

Soviet

In the Soviet on the next day, out of 400 deputies present, only 19 voted against the transfer of power to the bourgeoisie — and this although there were already forty in the Bolshevik faction. The voting itself passed off in a purely formal parliamentary manner, without any clear counterposition from the Bolsheviks, without conflict, and without any agitation whatever from the Bolshevik press.

This readiness to submit silently, or with reservations, to the government of the bourgeoisie did not have by any means the entire sympathy of

In this excerpt from 'the History of the Russian Revolution' Trotsky examines the reasons why Stalin and Kamenev, leaders of the Bolsheviks in the first months of the revolution, failed to map out a coherent policy for the party and how Lenin managed to turn the tide.

the party. The Bolshevik workers met the Provisional Government from the first as a hostile rampart unexpectedly grown up in their path. The Vyborg Committee (of Bolsheviks, in St. Petersburg) held meetings of thousands of workers and soldiers, which almost unanimously adopted resolutions on the necessity for a seizure of power by the soviets. An active participant in this agitation, Dingelstedt, testifies: "There was not one meeting, not one workers' meeting, which would have voted down such such a resolution from us if there had only been somebody to present it."

On the question of the social content of the revolution and the prospects of its development, the position of the Bolshevik leadership was no less cloudy. Shliapnikov recalls: "We agreed with the Mensheviks that we were passing through the period of the breakdown of feudal relations, and that in their place would appear all kind of 'freedoms' proper to bourgeois relations."

Pravda said in its first number: "The fundamental problem is to establish a democratic republic." In an instruction to the workers' deputies, the Moscow Committee (of Bolsheviks) announced: "The proletariat aims to achieve freedom for the struggle for socialism, its ultimate goal." This traditional reference to the "ultimate goal" sufficiently emphasises the historic distance from socialism. Farther than this nobody ventured. The fear to go beyond the boundaries of a democratic revolution dictated a policy of waiting, of accommodation, and of actual retreat before the compromisers.

The left Bolsheviks, especially the workers, tried with all their force to break through this quarantine. But they did not know how to refute the premise about the bourgeois character of the revolution and the danger of an isolation of the proletariat. They submitted, gritting their teeth, to the directions of their leaders. There were various conflicting currents in Bolshevism from the

very first day, but no one of them carried its thoughts through to the end.

Although a Bolshevik almost from the very birth of Bolshevism, Kamenev had always stood on the right flank of the party. Not without theoretical foundations or political instinct, and with a large experience of factional struggle in Russia and a store of political observations made in Western Europe, Kamenev grasped better than most Bolsheviks the general ideas of Lenin, but he grasped them only in order to give them the mildest possible interpretation in practice. You could not expect from him either independence of judgement or initiative in action. A distinguished propagandist, orator, journalist, not brilliant but thoughtful Kamenev was especially valuable for negotiations with other parties and reconnoitres in other social circles — although from such excursions he always brought back with him a bit of some mood alien to the party. These characteristics of Kamenev were so obvious that almost nobody misjudged him as a political figure.

Stalin

Stalin was a totally different type of Bolshevik, both in his psychological makeup and in the character of his party work: a strong but theoretically and politically primitive organiser. Whereas Kamenev as a publicist stayed for many years abroad with Lenin, where stood the theoretical forge of the party, Stalin as a so-called "practical" without theoretical viewpoint, without broad political interests, and without a knowledge of foreign languages, was inseparable from the Russian soil. Such party workers appeared abroad only on short visits to receive instructions, discuss their further problems, and return again to Russia. Stalin was distinguished among the practicals for energy, persistence, and inventiveness in the matter of moves behind the scenes. Where Kamenev, as a natural result of his character, felt "embarrassed" by the practical conclusions of Bolshevism, Stalin on the contrary was inclined to defend the practical conclusions which he adopted without any mitigation whatever, uniting insistence with rudeness.

Opposite

Notwithstanding their opposite characters, it was no accident that Kamenev and Stalin occupied a common position at the beginning of the revolution: they supplemented each other. A revolutionary conception without a revolutionary will is like a watch with a broken spring. Kamenev was always behind the time — or rather beneath the tasks — of the revolution. But the absence of a broad political conception condemns the most willful revolutionist to indecisiveness in the presence of vast and complicated events. Stalin, the empiric, open to alien influences, not on the side of will but on the side of intellect. Thus it was that this publicist without decision, and this organiser without intellectual horizon, carried Bolshevism in March, 1917, to the very boundaries of Menshevism.

(Pravda) declared that the Bolsheviks would decisively support the Provisional Government "in so far as it struggles against reaction or counterrevolution." (Kamenev and Stalin) expressed themselves no less categorically on the question of war: While the German army obeys its Emperor, the Russian soldier must "stand firmly at his post answering bullet with bullet and shell with



Soldiers celebrating the overthrow

shell". "Our slogan is not the meaningless 'Down with War'. Our slogan is pressure upon the Provisional Government with the aim of compelling it...to make an attempt to induce all the warring countries to open immediate negotiations...and until then every man remains at his fighting post!"

Defensists

Both the idea and its formulation are those of the defensists. The programme of pressure upon an imperialist government with the aim of "inducing" it to adopt a peace-loving form of activity was the programme of (the vacillating centrists of European socialism). It was anything but the programme of Lenin, who was calling for the overthrow of imperialist rule. Defending itself against the patriotic press, Pravda went even further: "All 'defeatism,'" it said, "or rather what an indiscriminating press protected by the Tsar's censorship has branded with that name, died at the moment when the first revolutionary regiment appeared on the streets of St. Petersburg". This was a direct abandonment of Lenin. "Defeatism" was not invented by a hostile press under the protection of a censorship, it was proclaimed by Lenin in the formula: "The defeat of Russia is the lesser evil".

Pravda

When that number of Pravda was received in the factories, it produced a complete bewilderment among the members of the party and its sympathisers, and a sarcastic satisfaction among its enemies...The indignation in the party branches was enormous. Pravda was soon compelled to print a sharp protest from the Vyborg district: "If the paper does not want to lose the confidence of the workers, it must and will bring the light of revolutionary consciousness, no matter how painful it may be, to the bourgeois owls".



1919 Lenin in Red Square.

the tide

The Soviets link up



of the Tsar

These protests from below compelled the editors to become more cautious in their expressions, but did not change their policy. Even the first article of Lenin which got there from abroad passed by the minds of the editors. They were steering a rightward course all along the line.

The policy of the party throughout the whole country followed that of Pravda. In many soviets, resolutions about fundamental problems were now adopted unanimously: the Bolsheviks simply bowed down to the Soviet majority. At a conference of the soviets of the Moscow region, the Bolsheviks joined in the resolution of the social patriots on the war.

It remains to ask — and this is no unimportant question although easier to ask than answer: How would the revolution have developed if Lenin had not reached Russia in April 1917? If our exposition demonstrates and proves anything at all, we hope it proves that Lenin was not a demiurge of the revolutionary process, that he merely entered into a chain of objective historic forces. But he was a great link in that chain. The dictatorship of the proletariat was to be inferred from the whole situation, but it still had to be established. It could not be established without a party. The party could fulfill its mission only after understanding it. For that Lenin was needed. Until his arrival, not one of the Bolshevik leaders dared to make a diagnosis of the revolution. The leadership of Kamenev and Stalin was tossed by the course of events to the right, to the Social Patriots: between Lenin and Menshevism the revolution left no place for intermediate positions. Inner struggle in the Bolshevik Party was absolutely unavoidable. Lenin's arrival merely hastened the process. His personal influence shortened the crisis. Is it possible, however, to say confidently that the party without him would have found its road? We would by no means make bold to say that. The factor of time is decisive here, and it is difficult in retrospect

to tell time historically. Dialectic materialism at any rate has nothing in common with fatalism. Without Lenin the crisis, which the opportunist leadership was inevitably bound to produce, would have assumed an extraordinarily sharp and protracted character. The conditions of war and revolution, however, would not allow the party a long period for fulfilling its mission. Thus it is by no means excluded that a disoriented and split party might have let slip the revolutionary opportunity for many years. The role of personality arises before us here on a truly gigantic scale. It is necessary only to understand that role correctly, taking personality as a link in the historic chain.

Arrival

The "sudden" arrival of Lenin from abroad after a long absence, the furious cry raised by the press around his name, his clash with all the leaders of his own party and his quick victory over them — in a word, the external envelope of circumstance — make easy in this case a mechanical contrasting of the person, the hero, the genius, against the objective conditions, the mass, the party. In reality, such a contrast is completely one-sided. Lenin was not an accidental element in the historical development, but a product of the whole past of Russian history. He was embedded in it with deepest roots. Along with the vanguard of the workers, he had lived through their struggle in the course of the preceding quarter century. The "accident" was not his interference in the events, but rather that little straw with which Lloyd George tried to block his path. Lenin did not oppose the party from outside, but was himself its most complete expression. In educating it he had educated himself in it. His divergence from the ruling circles of the Bolsheviks meant the struggle of the future of the party against its past. If Lenin had not been artificial-

ly separated from the party by the conditions of emigration and war, the external mechanics of the crisis would not have been so dramatic and would not have overshadowed to such a degree the inner continuity of the party development. From the extraordinary significance which Lenin's arrival received, it should only be inferred that leaders are not accidentally created, that they are gradually chosen out and trained up in the course of decades, that they cannot be capriciously replaced, that their mechanical exclusion from the class struggle gives the party a living wound, and in many cases may paralyse it for a long period.



July 1917. Demonstration calling for power to the soviets.

Wednesday 29 March

The first all-Russian meeting of Soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies, convened by the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet with the agreement of the Provisional Government, opens in Petrograd. 470 delegates attend, representing 185 different organisations, including 139 soviets. Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries predominate at it.

In Petrograd, soldiers in a reserve company of the Litvian regiment unanimously agree to each donate half-a-pound of bread out of their rations to the poor until resolution of the food crisis. On the Northern front, General Dragomirov reports of continuing unrest amongst the troops: officers are arrested, orders are refused, the disposition of troops is questioned, and agitation for an end to the war continues. On the Western front soldiers in the Ekaterinoslav regiment fraternise with German troops.

The Omsk Soviet of workers' and military deputies resolves to immediately introduce the eight-hour working day. In Tiflis the electricity station workers inform the Executive Committee of the local Soviet that they have introduced the 8-hour working day of their own accord.

Thursday 30 March

The all-Russian meeting of Soviets adopts a resolution in support of the war. A member of the Petrograd Soviet's Executive Committee moves a resolution calling for support for the Provisional Government.

Moscow railway workers appeal to the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies and to the Petrograd Soviet to demand of the Provisional Government that it prevent factory-owners from causing a cut in production, if necessary by requisitioning their factories and calling the owners "to account, for betrayal of the mother-country".

In Nizhny-Novgorod a committee of representatives of local industrialists passes a resolution condemning introduction of the 8-hour working day as "a crime against the state" and reserves the right to protest against and revise the decision.

There is fraternisation on the Northern front between sections of German and Russian troops.

Friday 31 March

A mass meeting of 10,000 workers at the Putilov works in Petrograd condemns the lies of the bourgeois press in blaming the shortage of munitions for soldiers at the front on strikes and calls for a boycott of various bourgeois papers. The meeting calls on workers throughout Petrograd to support their resolution.

A mass meeting of 1,500 reserve soldiers and officers in Petrograd adopts a resolution condemning the slandering of workers by the bourgeois press. It appeals to soldiers not to believe the lie that workers did not pay a price in blood to achieve freedom: "The working class was, and will be the leader of any truly emancipatory movement."

General Alekseyev informs the Provisional Government that he has sent orders to all fronts to maintain censorship of any material designed to spread unrest in the army, and calls on the government to "take the most decisive measures to guarantee that the army is free of discord."

Saturday 1 April

The Kazan Soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies resolves to introduce the 8-hour working day. The Ufa Soviet resolves to demand of the Provisional Government immediate publication of a decree on the introduction of the 8-hour

working day for the entire country. Pravda publishes a resolution adopted by sailors on the cruiser Aurora on the question of the 8-hour working day, and pledging the revolutionary solidarity of sailors of the fleet with workers fighting for further development of the revolution.

In an article entitled "Eight Hours" Pravda attacks the agitation of the bourgeois press in opposition to the 8-hour working day. It warns that this is an attempt to undermine the standing of the Soviets, and to incite soldiers against workers. Pravda announces the March total for its fighting fund: 15,750 roubles and 30 kopecks. The Provisional Government appeals for further financial assistance from Great Britain.

Sunday 2 April

The all-Russian meeting of Soviets agrees to convene an all-Russian congress of Soviets no later than 25 April.

On the Western front Russian troops repeatedly fraternise with the Germans, but on every occasion the fraternisation is broken up by artillery fire. In Balashov soldiers in the 141st reserve infantry regiment free arrested soldiers, burn down the guardhouse, demolish the regimental offices, burn all documents and try to beat to death the regimental commander.

In Herson a meeting of tobacco and confectionery workers resolves to establish a trade union, and demands introduction of the 8-hour working day. In Odessa, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of officers' and soldiers' deputies appeals to all members of the garrison to support the Provisional Government and to obey orders.

Monday 3 April

Lenin returns to Russia from exile in Switzerland. On arriving in Petrograd he addresses the masses of workers, soldiers and sailors gathered in the railway station square and calls for the victory of the socialist revolution.

The all-Russian meeting of Soviets concludes its business, adopting a series of resolutions without discussion and disperses.

A meeting of 3,000 sailors and soldiers in Helsingfors adopts a resolution supporting the introduction of the 8-hour working day and condemning the campaign of slander against the working class. It blames economic disruption on economic sabotage by the factory owners and pledges full support for the working class. A meeting of 6000 soldiers in Voronezh condemns the attempts of the bourgeois press to sow divisions between soldiers and workers. In Verna local military commanders and town officials are arrested on the instructions of a meeting of soldiers in the garrison.

Tuesday 4 April

Demonstrations are held throughout the country in memory of the Lena events, when gendarmes massacred unarmed demonstrators during a strike of 1912 in the Lena goldfields of Eastern Siberia. Mass meetings at the close of such demonstrations pass resolutions calling for the guilty gendarmes to be brought to justice, for a boycott of the bourgeois press, for the publication of all secret agreements concluded by the former regime, and for an end to the war.

The Omsk Soviet of workers' and military deputies resolves to introduce the 8-hour working day of its own accord after the failure of the industrialists to do so. The Provisional Government promises an amnesty for all deserters who return to the ranks by 15 May. Those who fail to do so will be pursued with the full rigour of the law.

A congress of teachers' representatives from all parts of Russia opens in Moscow. It resolves to support the Provisional Government, actively support defence of Russia in the war, and call for convocation of a Constituent Assembly. Krupskaya (Lenin's companion-for-life) writes in Pravda: "The all-Russian congress of teachers reveals with utter clarity that the teaching masses are wholly under the influence of the bourgeoisie."

1917

YEAR OF REVOLUTION

By Stan Crooke

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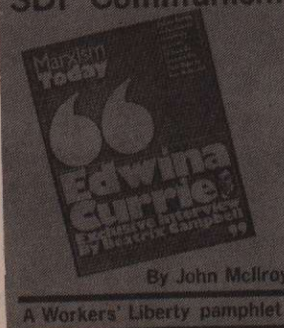
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ACTIVISTS' DIARY

WALLASEY SOCIALIST ORGANISER PUBLIC FORUMS.
Wednesday April 15, 'Should

Labour keep nuclear power?' Speaker: Les Hearn.
Monday May 16, 'Woman in a 'Man's' Job'. Speaker: Jean Lane.
Wednesday June 17, 'Can Kinnock deliver socialism?'
All meetings: Wallasey Unemployed Centre, Seaview Road, 7.45 p.m.

Viraj Mendis will stay. Stop all deportations now! Conference, Church of the Ascension, off Royce Road, Hulme, Manchester. 10.30 am, Saturday 11 April to

EAST MIDLANDS JUSTICE FOR MINEWORKERS RALLY: "Support the Justice for

Mineworkers Bill". Speakers: Tony Benn MP; Peter Heathfield, NUM; Sharon Atkins, PPC E. Nottingham; Alan Meale, PPC, Mansfield; Bill Etherington, NUM and JMC.
Sunday 12 April, 7.30 p.m. Festival Hall, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts.

WHERE WE STAND

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

to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

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

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

socialist bureaucracies.

We stand:

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

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

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

For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.

For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

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

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Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

Passive smoking kills

Scientists (except those paid for by the tobacco industry) have known for some time that people who work or live with smokers run an increased risk of illness and death.

Through "passive" or forced smoking, they may contract smoking diseases, including lung cancer. The evidence for this has been discussed several times during the six year's life of this column.

It was therefore welcome, though greatly overdue, when Her Majesty's Government finally recognised this weight of evidence and Edwina Currie issued an official warning. In particular, the DHSS admitted that non-smokers living with smokers run a 30% greater risk of getting lung cancer. This risk is far smaller than that incurred by smokers but it gives the lie to those who stand on their "rights" to smoke when and where they please.

Unfortunately, (and typically), the government seems likely to leave the matter there, doing nothing or, indeed, less than nothing to help smokers give up. The budget left cigarettes at the same price and cheaper in real terms, while the government has decided to kill off the Health Education Council, after starving it of funds for years. Within its limits, the HEC has done its best to publicise the risks of smoking; the underhand advertising of smoking, especially on the "no adverts" BBC, through sports "sponsorship"; the growth of smoking amongst women and the young. It was prompt to advertise the dangers of passive smoking last week, after Currie's announcement. The government had done little to publicise its own warning, beyond a press conference or a TV or radio interview.

Now serving officials of the HEC are being excluded from discussion on the future of public health education on the grounds that they might be ap-

plicants for jobs in the government's proposed new set-up. Their increasingly open criticism of the government's record on health education is a more likely reason.

Fog can seriously affect your health.

Acid rain has been understood for some time now — rain drops dissolve gases from the air as they fall. The effects, too, are well-known — damage to vegetation, river and lake life, corrosion of buildings, etc. Luckily, though, it poses little direct threat to human life.

It is a different matter with fog. Fog is made up of tiny particles of water which don't fall. As a result, the water has more time to dissolve the gases, making it more acid and humans and animals in the foggy region will be forced to breathe it. This causes irritation of the lungs, asthma and exacerbates existing conditions, like bronchitis.

Fog particles can also dissolve and concentrate other substances. A letter to Nature in February reported measurements of the amounts of pesticides in fogs in California and Maryland. The results were frightening.

The concentrations of pesticides in the fog water were typically a millionfold or more higher than that in the air. Anyone breathing such fog would thus receive a million or more times the dose of pesticides they would get from just breathing air. And, as the measurements were taken in agricultural areas, such doses were not small.

That this can happen will be particularly worrying for people living in agricultural regions where fogs are common. Also, since the fogs can be carried by wind, people in nearby towns can also receive unwelcome doses of chemicals that they would otherwise encounter only on their fruit and veg!

Woman in a 'man's job'

EXPERIENCES OF A WOMAN BUILDING WORKER

'Woman in a 'man's job'' is available for 50p plus 18p post from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



Warsaw Ghetto fighters surrender as the Nazis overrun the Ghetto

The Warsaw Ghetto uprising



Smirking Nazis watch a man they are about to shoot say prayers for their victims on the ground and for himself

Tracy Williams reviews "The Wall", Robert Markowitz's long and ambitious film about the 1943 uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto.

In September 1939 380,000 Jews lived in the Jewish quarter of Warsaw. In January 1940 the German army moved in and the quarter was surrounded by a ten-foot high wall.

In October 1940 the 80,000 non-Jews living in the quarter were given two weeks to get out, their places taken by 140,000 Jews who had been living in other areas of Warsaw.

By January 1943, there were only 40,000 left. The rest had

been slaughtered or deported to the Auschwitz death camp.

Conditions inside the ghetto rapidly deteriorated. Disease and starvation were rife.

Early in 1943 the Jewish coordinating committee was formed by bringing together Zionist groups, the Stalinists and the socialists and it drew up plans for the military Jewish combat organisation.

On 19 April of that year, German armoured cars started bombing houses. The resistance group fought back with grenades and machine guns. The Nazis withdrew but came back and began a heavy artillery attack which lasted three days.

The Ghetto was now a huge furnace. Those who survived — about 600 — took refuge in the sewers, but only a few finally escaped.

For those who did, the torment and fear they lived through is very hard to comprehend from the viewpoint of 1980s Britain.

For example in the film an old Jewish man suddenly realises that a train that left the ghetto "for the Ukraine" was back in less than seven hours. The journey should have taken three days...The train had deposited its human cargo at Auschwitz.

Life, survival, at the price of death, of killing others in the hope that you yourself may be spared; of voluntarily going to the train just because they gave you a piece of bread and marmalade. In similar conditions how many of us would "give in" and how many of us would fight?

Although the resistance was late in coming, it proves that through armed resistance the oppressed can defend themselves.

The hell-hole stockyards

When I was asked to write a review of this film I had just returned from seeing it — greatly moved by this story of a young Southern black going to work in the hell-holes called stockyards in Chicago during the First World War.

It is a very harrowing tale, well told, of racism, unions and working class life in the 1910s. But before reviewing the film, I decided to read a well known book about almost the same thing, "The Jungle" by Upton Sinclair, written about the stockyards in the first decade of the century.

It was only when I read this amazing book, which showed me in much

By Pat Blandford

greater detail and clarity than the "Killing Floor" what a terrible place the Chicago stockyards were — and indeed all of Chicago, for working people — that I realised how much the "Killing Floor" had left out: the unbearable conditions in work; of housing in the slums; the corrupt city council; and the Beef monopoly. But above all, what it left out was the politics.

For a film set around 1917 and the greatest working class victory in history — the Russian Revolution — and involving itself with unions whose members at that time were mostly Eastern Europeans, often

with a history of involvement in revolutionary politics, it gave no indication of any politics above a very basic syndicalism with the inevitable reformism.

My final criticism — I found it very hard to believe that all lessons of black and white workers together in struggle can be completely forgotten and destroyed by racism. If that is true, what hope have we got.

Lastly, I have probably been over-critical of this film. For all its faults it is very good and truly gripping, long overdue in its subject matter. Go and see it if you possibly can. Unfortunately, like most films of this genre, it is only playing in selected cinemas in big cities. And I wouldn't hold your breath until EMI bring out the video.

Maggski 10 Kinnochio 0

A SERIOUS Anarchist of my acquaintance confessed to a degree of disappointment at Michel Gorbachov's willingness to play along with Thatcher's pre-election campaigning in Moscow:

"Somehow, I always felt Gorbachov ought to be a Labour supporter", he admitted wistfully. I am sure he is not alone in this. How many of us rather hoped that Mikhael would pull the rug out from under her, like Reagan and his minders did to poor Neil Kinnochio?

The contrast in receptions was not lost upon the Tory press: "How vividly this contrasts with Neil Kinnochio's Washington visit last week" crowed the Daily Mail; "For a start he couldn't even find a top American politician to invite him to dinner....."

"Which is to say that the whole trip could hardly have been more of a fiasco. What a difference between the two leaders in their performance on the world stage. Back here the electorate will have not difficulty in deciding which of them deserves their trust."

The Express pointed out an interesting difference between the Kinnochio bums rush from the White House and Thatcher's regal progress through Moscow: "As she steps into the Kremlin this morning, Mrs Thatcher will surely draw the obvious lesson from the fiasco of Mr Kinnochio in Washington. It is that there is no point in trying to win over her host to her own ideas. For no amount of lecturing or exhortation will change either the ambitions of Mr Gorbachov or the nature of his regime."

By Jim Denham

Leaving aside the fact that the Windbag's presentation to old Hop-a-long apparently consisted largely of assurances of Labour's loyalty to NATO, it does seem to me that the Express has an important point here. Despite all her Cold War rhetoric and corner shop capitalism, Thatcher has a firm grasp of Real-Politik. She knows that the jovial son of Stalin won't be impressed by any lectures from her about the benefits of privatisation, especially given how well he has done out of a nationalised economy himself. So she hasn't bothered too much about proselitizing the merits of generalised commodity production.

Instead she attended a Russian Orthodox Church service at Zagorsk and lit "A Flame For Freedom" (Daily Mail) for the cameras, swanned round Moscow with a few hundred press men in tow, and then headed off to the Bolshoi with Mikhael. 10 out of 10 for presentation. Mission accomplished.

But what did Kinnochio expect to appease the old Cowboy and his posse of memory men? Did he expect any other treatment than that he got — that is, a twenty minute hearing before being shoved out through the tradesmen's entrance? John Akass summed up the Kinnochio visit quite accurately in the Express: "I have a nasty feeling that Mr Kinnochio has finally fallen down the same hole as the Labour Party in general, which is to suppose that the dodgy little fudges which work internally will also work externally. He has attended too many meetings of compositing committees."

He is trying to flog Labour's stark unilateralism with a lot of convoluted verbiage about the International Monetary Fund talks and the dubious promise of more expenditure on conventional weapons. The British public is not fooled. Neither, most certainly are the cold power politicians of Washington. The Labour Party now fools nobody but itself. Hence this dingy fiasco."

With Reagan and Gorbachov both battling for Thatcher — aybe Kinnochio would be better advised to look elsewhere for support. Like the working class, perhaps?

One final rather obvious thought that hasn't been taken up by any of the national press: if it is true that Labour's defence policy leaves us all at the mercy of "Foreign aggressors", and if it is true that Russia is top of the league when it comes to "aggression"... then why the hell is Gorbachov doing so much to boost Thatcher's election campaign?

American Trotskyist James P Cannon on: Socialism and democracy

What is the relationship between socialism and democracy? This passionate speech made in 1957 by the pioneer of US Marxism, James P. Cannon, argues that they are inseparable, and that socialism must and can only be understood as a massive extension and expansion of democracy.

I am glad to be here with you today and to accept your invitation to speak on socialism and democracy.

Strange as it may seem, an agreement on these two simple, elementary points, as experience has already demonstrated, will not be arrived at easily. The confusion and demoralisation created by Stalinism, and the successful exploitation of this confusion by the ruling capitalists of this country and all their agents and apologists, still hangs heavily over all sections of the workers' movement.

At every step for 30 years, the Stalinist work of befuddlement and demoralisation, of debasing words into their opposite meanings, has been supported by reciprocal action of the same kind by the ruling capitalists and their apologists.

They have never failed to take the Stalinists at their word, and to point to the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union, with all of its horrors, and to say: "That is socialism. The American way of life is better."

They describe the United States, where the workers have a right to vote every four years, if they don't move around too much, but have no say about the control of the shop and the factory; where all the means of mass information and communication are monopolised by a few — they describe all that as the ideal democracy for which the workers should gladly fight and die.

The authentic socialist movement, as it was conceived by its founders and as it has developed over the past century, has been the most democratic movement in all history. No formulation of this question can improve on the classic statement of the *Communist Manifesto*, with which modern scientific socialism was proclaimed to the world in 1848. The *Communist Manifesto* said:

"All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority."

The authors of the *Communist Manifesto* linked socialism and democracy together as ends and means. The "self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority" cannot be anything



Workers against Stalinism: Hungary 1956

else but democratic, if we understand by "democracy" the rule of the people, the majority.

The Stalinist claim that the task of reconstructing society on a socialist basis can be farmed out to a privileged and uncontrolled bureaucracy, while the workers remain without voice or vote in the process, is just as foreign to the thoughts of Marx and Engels and of all their true disciples as the reformist idea that socialism can be handed down to the workers by degrees, by the capitalists who exploit them.

All such fantastic conceptions were answered in advance by the reiterated statement of Marx and Engels that "the emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves."

That was another way of saying — as they said explicitly many times — that the socialist reorganisation of society requires a workers' revolution. Such a revolution is unthinkable without the active participation of the majority of the working class, which is itself the big majority of the population. Nothing could be more democratic than that.

Moreover, the great teachers did not limit the democratic action of the working class to the overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy. They defined democracy as the form of governmental rule in the transition period between capitalism and socialism.

It is explicitly stated in the *Communist Manifesto* — and I wonder how many people have forgotten this in recent years: "The first step," said the *Manifesto*, "in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to establish democracy."

That is the way Marx and Engels formulated the first aim of the revolution — to make the workers the ruling class, to establish democracy, which, in their view, is the same thing.

From this precise formulation it is clear that Marx and Engels did not consider the limited formal democracy under capitalism, which screens the exploitation and the rule of the great majority by the few, as real democracy. In order to have real democracy, the workers must become the "ruling class".

Only the revolution which replaces the class rule of the capitalists by the class rule of the workers can really

"establish democracy," not in fiction but in fact. So said Marx and Engels.

They never taught that the simple nationalisation of the forces of production signified the establishment of socialism. That's not stated by Marx and Engels anywhere. The nationalisation only lays the economic foundations for the transition to socialism.

Still less could they have sanctioned, even if they had been able to imagine, the monstrous idea that socialism could be realised without equality; that nationalised production and planned economy, controlled by a ruthless police dictatorship, complete with prisons, torture chambers and forced labour camps, could be designated as a "socialist"

"The authentic socialist movement...has been the most democratic movement in all history."

society. That unspeakable perversion and contradiction of terms belongs to the Stalinists and their apologists.

All the great Marxists defined socialism as a classless society — with abundance, freedom, and equality for all: a society in which there would be no state, not even a democratic workers' state, to say nothing of a state in the monstrous form of a bureaucratic dictatorship of a privileged minority.

The Soviet Union today is a transitional order of society in which the bureaucratic dictatorship of a privileged minority, far from serving as the agency to bridge the transition to socialism stands as an obstacle to harmonious development in that

direction.

In the view of Marx and Engels, and of Lenin and Trotsky who came after them, the transition from capitalism to the classless society of socialism could only be carried out by an ever-expanding democracy, involving the masses of the workers more and more in all phases of social life, by direct participation and control.

And, in the course of further progressive development in all fields, as Lenin expressed it, even this democracy, this workers' democracy, as a form of class rule, will outlive itself. Lenin said: "Democracy will gradually change and become a habit, and finally wither away," since democracy itself, properly understood, is a form of state, that is, an instrument of class rule, for which there will be no need and no place in the classless socialist society.

Forecasting the socialist future, the *Communist Manifesto* said: "In the place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association."

Mark that, "an association", not a state — "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all".

Trotsky said the same thing in other words when he spoke of socialism as "a pure and limpid system which is accommodated to the self-government of the toilers...and uninterrupted growth of universal equality — all-sided flowering of human personality...unselfish honest and human relations between human beings."

And I say we will not put the socialist movement of this country on the right track, and restore its rightful appeal to the best sentiments of the working class of this country, and above all to the young, until we begin to call socialism by its right name as the great teachers did.

Until we make it clear that we stand for an ever-expanding workers' democracy, as the only road to socialism. Until we root out every vestige of Stalinist perversion and corruption of the meaning of socialism and democracy, and restate the thoughts and formulations of the authentic Marxist teachers.

WOMAN'S
EYE

Pat Curry talks to SO

Pat Curry is the second woman to get elected onto NUM lodge committee.

The first woman was Freda Dean from Philadelphia who worked in the canteen and didn't stand against men.

Pat stood against a man for her place on the committee. She received the same number of votes as the last placed man.

The chair had a casting vote and cast it in favour of the man.

When another man stood down from the committee through ill health, she was brought onto the committee.

For a long time prior to her election she hadn't even been aware that a woman could stand for a position on the Lodge Committee.

What made you stand for the Lodge Committee?

Canteen women felt they weren't hearing enough about what was going on in the NUM.

During the miners' strike they had no choice about getting involved and walking into a hall full of men broke the ice.

Had women been more involved in the NUM before, they wouldn't have been lost off along the road.

How do men relate to you being the only woman on the Lodge Committee?

The men have accepted me. They are patient in explaining things. I have an excellent committee of men.

There is a lot of jargon talked at meetings and not working down the pit, I didn't understand it.

A trip was organised for me down the pit to explain what the jargon meant.

The men fully support our fight for equal pay. David Hopper and Davy Guy (Area Secretary and Area President) have sent out letters telling men to back the women.

What is the latest situation in the fight for equal pay?

The industrial tribunal turned down our case for equal pay in September. We have appealed against it and we'll be lobbying the appeal hearing.

The fight for equal pay has gone on for six years. We get about 20% less than other surface workers and get no concessionary coal which means canteen workers have large coal bills to pay. Women who work in offices get concessionary coal.

After having been turned down at the industrial tribunal we thought we should just concentrate on getting concessionary coal but the solicitors have advised us to go for the whole lot.

Given the fact that the fight for equal pay has been going on for six years do you think the NUM have taken the canteen women's fight seriously enough?

After going to the solicitors the issue seemed to go dead and we felt we'd been forgotten. But the men are beginning to take the fight seriously and are being involved in the lobbies we organise.

Before the strike a lot of the men didn't even know we were in the NUM. But during the strike we stood shoulder to shoulder with the men. The strike changed a lot of people's attitudes.

In one issue of the Durham Miner, other women suggested women's sections should be set up in the NUM. Would you be in favour of this?

There should be a seat reserved on Lodge committees for women. Women have always been behind the men. During the strike we stood shoulder to shoulder with the men.

In large collieries men greatly outnumber women. Women don't have a voice.

Women work the same shifts as men and a lot of issues affect both men and women but the men don't realise it.

Canteen workers have our own meetings to organise lobbies. We've set up a campaign in the Durham coalfield called CAD (Campaign Against Discrimination).

At first we had to lobby Redhills (Durham Area NUM HQ) to get the support of the men. We had to let the men know we were serious. The lobby was unconstitutional. You can't lobby your own members. But we've got the full backing of the NUM.

We are hoping to make CAD a national campaign. So far we've been in touch with women in Kent, Nottinghamshire, Doncaster and Derbyshire.

We are trying to coordinate a national women's organisation in the NUM.



James P. Cannon

NUM Conference

A conference for sacked miners

Last week's NUM special delegate conference voted by a two-thirds majority to increase subscriptions by 36p to £1.20 a week. With the losses in manpower we have suffered I think this was inevitable.

If we have to pay in order to keep a national union going, then we are quite prepared to do that. Personally, I still think we get our trade unionism on the cheap — less than a packet of fags a week!

The lads on the ground have accepted it as part and parcel of the fight to keep the national union. I have heard no adverse comments at all.

The thing I could not understand was South Wales's opposition. They

By Paul Whetton
Bevercotes NUM (in a personal capacity)

voted against until they had seen 'properly audited accounts'. I thought the case for the increase was quite adequately explained. It seemed that South Wales are hedging and retreating behind the barricades of federation. They want to look after South Wales and South Wales alone.

I also agreed with the special conference's decision to rationalise the NUM's structure. The present system, which gives, for example,

Northumberland a seat on the NEC although they only have one pit, needs to be changed and brought into line with the situation today.

Having said that I can sympathise with those sacked miners from Kent who were lobbying the Conference and demanding, among other things, that the Kent Area is retained on the NEC. They obviously see that as the best chance of keeping a voice against their victimisation and isolation by the Coal Board.

I am not up-to-date with the situation there, but I think the other argument also carries weight — that they would have better protection by lumping in with another Area and this would stop their continued isolation.

The lobby also demanded a national conference of all the sacked miners.

I think that is crucial. Sacked miners themselves need to discuss their situation and put forward initiatives to lift the campaign. I agree with them 100%

There will be another special conference to discuss the issue of flexible working. In fact, I have just been looking at last year's Conference agenda and a resolution from Durham put the position quite clearly. In the event of the Coal Board trying to introduce any continental or multi-shift system, the union should campaign against it and there should be a ballot vote of the membership. I think we need a ballot vote on this issue; it will give us a chance to campaign and explain the issues to the membership. We can also use it to reinforce the union's demand for a four day week and a six hour shift.

NUT lobby

The National Action Committee of the National Union of Teachers has given official backing to a mass lobby of County Hall in London this Thursday.

Every Inner London school will be authorised to send a delegation to the ILEA Schools Sub-committee meeting to press it to reverse the controversial TAAN scheme. All NUT members identified as TAANs can also attend.

The lobby will be demanding an end to the identification of individual teachers, the compulsory transfer of teachers, and the resultant cut in teaching jobs in schools. The TAAN scheme, which is to be an ongoing process and not a one-off exercise to ward off a budgetary crisis, is far worse and on a larger scale than many redeployment schemes in even Tory local authorities.

Given the general reluctance of the NUT Action Committee to sanction anything organised by its Inner London 'loony left' ILTA Council, this lobby marks a significant breakthrough. The spontaneous militancy of the walkouts and demonstrations all over London by students as well as teachers in the past week has built up such a head of steam that both the union NEC and the employers are forced to take notice.

The ILEA is seeking union cooperation in fighting the Baker Act, and the Tory attacks on the ILEA — yet they are imposing cuts and worsening conditions on teachers and students just as harshly as Baker is leaning on them.

The NUT National Officers are still out for ILTA's blood — appealing against the verdict of the National Disciplinary Panel which did no more than reprimand the ILTA officers for the January 13 London strike against Baker's Bill. Yet they are now forced to organise national industrial action against Baker, and to give ILTA backing in its conflict with the ILEA. This is entirely due to the strength and organisation of the London teachers.

It is vital that the labour movement in London, every CLP and affiliated trade union, give the teachers full support.

In the run-up to the general election, London teachers will be a major target for the Tories and their media, because we are one significant group of workers who have stood up and are still fighting. We must not be isolated.

Lobby County Hall, SE1, at 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 2 April.

Ealing Nalgo

Fighting a Labour Council

NALGO workers in the London Borough of Ealing have now been on all-out strike for five weeks. The Labour-controlled council have made two offers, neither of which have addressed the NALGO claim for Inner London weighting on their pay.

The second of these two offers was described by strikers as 'peanuts mark 2'. It is an offer on low pay only, and would mean a graded rise of £1 to £5 a week.

Eve Turner, chair of the staff negotiating committee, told Socialist Organiser: "NALGO members are insulted by the fact that the Council considers the low pay margin to be up to £8,000. We consider Ealing to be one of the worst paid boroughs in the country, and we are low-paid given our skills."

As the Council's cut-off point for low pay is only £8,000, very few workers will be affected by their latest offer.

A march and rally on Monday attracted about 1500 workers. They rejected the council's latest offer by 1124 to 252. This was despite the fact the council had sent out letters to the workers saying the offer was only

By Robert Read

valid until March 31, the end of the financial year.

It seems clear that the offer on low pay is an attempt to split the union, but its overwhelming rejection shows the strength of feeling amongst the NALGO workers. Addressing the rally Eve Turner said: "I want to see us going back as a united union."

The Council was apparently convinced that the strikers would return to work this week. However, the NALGO office said that 85% of its members were still out.

Across the Borough the strike is holding out well. About 30 schools are closed, as well as libraries, sports halls and swimming pools.

The main problem in the dispute is the lack of support from other council unions. Support from NATFHE and the NUT has been good, but problems have come from the GMBATU who have put in for a 21 point claim including a lower pay rise than NALGO's demand plus a freezing of white collar jobs, together with a reallocation of resources and a redirection to 'front line' services.



Parents held a rally in Westminster Central Hall to protest at the current problems besetting the education system, prior to going on to lobby the House of Commons. (photo: Stefano Cagnoni: Report)

Islington Nalgo

Housing Workers strike

Islington Council's Housing Advice workers were locked out again this week. On 9 March they were suspended without pay for working to rule; on 30 March they were chucked out of the Town Hall by the police for occupying the Council Leader's office.

The occupation was a protest at the Council's total refusal to negotiate with NALGO over the lock-out, and was a follow-up to a successful one-day branch strike on Friday 27th.

The strike closed all the Council's libraries, almost all of its 'Neighbourhood Offices', most Day Centres, and disrupted many departments. Support for the strike grew during the week before, when the Council's Chair of Personnel not only refused to discuss the Housing Advisory lock-out at the regular

negotiating meeting with the 'white collar' unions (the local joint staff committee) — but threw out other claims too.

The Council refused to discuss implementing a 37 hour week for workers in Social Services day and residential, which they had already agreed, and they would not talk about another long-running dispute over pay with foremen in the Building Works Department.

Islington Council is now rounding on more and more of its workers, in Housing, Social Services, Building Works, and there are probably more to follow.

Once the Council started its attack on union rights with the lock-out it had nowhere else to go but to step up the attack or to give in. To make them give in Islington NALGO is organising further industrial action and political pressure in the Labour Party.

Civil Service pay

Unions reject offer

It seems likely that the two main civil service unions — CPSA and SCPS — will vote to reject the government's 4.25% pay offer, and to commence a rolling programme of industrial action.

The original offer was 4%: when this was rejected by the leadership of the civil service unions, the offer was upped by a whole ¼%!

The right wing leadership of CPSA has not had the guts to recommend a vote for rejection in the present ballot on this new offer. As usual, it has been left up to activists in the branches to deliver a vote for action. All results are due in by 2 April, but press reports on Monday 30 March indicated that there would be a large majority for rejection of the offer.

The result of such a rejection will be a six-week programme of regional strikes, beginning on 6 April. Each week, certain selected offices in a given region will be brought out for the whole of that week. On the Thursday and Friday of the week, all offices in the region will come out on strike. The first region to take action will be that covering Manchester, the North West and Wales.

For years, pay in the civil service has slipped behind pay in outside industry. CPSA's claim is for a £20 per week flat rate increase, but in real terms even this would not bring us up to the pay levels we enjoyed in 1980. For too long civil service workers have put up with pathetic increases in salary; 1987 must be the year we begin to fight back.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Farm Show trial

The popular press bayed for blood in the Broadwater Farm trial that ended last week. PC Blakelock had to be avenged — regardless of the justice of the case. So three men were sentenced to life in prison after a veritable show trial.

Winston Silcott was sentenced to 30 years for murder, riot and affray. 20 year old Egin Raghip and 19 year old Mark Braithwaite were also found guilty.

But on what evidence? No forensic evidence was ever produced in court.

None of the convicted men was identified in more than 1000 photographs of the riots that took place in October 1985.

Winston Silcott signed no confession. The other two men confessed — but were not interviewed in the presence of a solicitor, and were abused and threatened by the police.

161 people were charged after the riots out of 362 arrested — six for the murder. And the police bullied those arrested into making confessions.

Judge Hodgson — though not in the presence of the jury — accused the police of breaking the law. Police broke the Children and Young Per-

Caterpillar workers decide: Step up the support

"The occupation continues" was the message received by those crowding outside the entrance of the endangered Caterpillar plant

By Brian McKenna

in Tannockside near Glasgow, on

day 56 of the occupation there.

While outlining the position convenor John Brannon urged that the huge support already generated by the sit-in be intensified; almost on cue, workers from Scotlithgo and Govern shipyards handed over cheques for £1500 and £800.

The narrow vote: by a margin of 6, 368 to 362, to continue the occupation was won in the face of great pressure from Caterpillar management. Following the decision of the mass meeting of March 23 to continue the sit-in, Caterpillar took the workforce to the court session in Edinburgh.

There on the Wednesday Lord Clyde granted them and interim interdict prohibiting the workforce from entering or remaining in the plant.

The joint occupation committee (JoC) responded on the advice of James Early from the Scottish Executive of the AEU by offering negotiations based in part on an acceptance of a discontinuance of production by Caterpillar — this offer was rejected by management on Thursday. Caterpillar insist on a return to normal working before they will negotiate.

Even Tory Scottish Industry Minister Alan Stuart was compelled to condemn the company at a rally in Glasgow on Saturday 28 — he was however still booted off stage by the 5,000-odd demonstrators present.

Announcing the March 30 decision to continue the fight inside (rather than outside the factory), John Brannon was fairly confident that the police would not be mobilised against the occupation at present. Since the court decision was won within Civil law.

Donations to: T. Stephenson, 17 Campsie View, Bargeddy, Bailston, Glasgow.



Old Bailey picket, photo: Jez Coulson IFL

sons Act by detaining juveniles overnight. And solicitors were denied those arrested.

One 13 year old boy was held for three days by police without access to either a solicitor or his family. Then a social worker was not allowed to see him — after he had told police that he would inform the boy of his right to remain silent.

In such conditions, confessions are worth very little. Worse, a terrible climate was created around the trial

by the gutter press. Gory descriptions of Blakelock's death — referred to only once during the trial — became the staple fodder of the tabloids.

Press coverage had a racist edge to it. The death of Cynthia Jarrett in a police raid on her home in Broadwater Farm — which sparked the riots — was quietly forgotten.

What the police and the press wanted was revenge on the black youth of Tottenham. Revenge they got — but not justice.

Kinnock has got a bloody cheek

A few weeks ago Haslam promised the results of his 'review' into the cases of the sacked miners 'within two weeks'. Nothing has happened since then. I think little will come of it; it was always a sop. Maybe there will be a gesture and a few lads get their jobs back, but I am not building any hopes on it.

Last week I was called in to the Job Centre on a 'Restart' interview! When I got the letter I was angry and was going to go to the office and give them a piece of my mind. But I did not because the workers there are just following their instructions. Anyway, we could not come to any amicable agreement and I am still waiting for a reinstatement decision from my tribunal.

I was angry though at the fact that, although Retford is only a small town, there were 20-30 other people also waiting for interviews. Young and old people coming into the Job Centre, looking at cards, shaking their heads and then walking out. God knows what it must be like in places like Liverpool. It really brought it home.

I was extremely pleased that Sammy

WHETTON'S WEEK



Thompson won the election for Vice-President, which underlined the support for the policies he campaigned on. In particular he argued that changes in working practices are the prerogative of the national union, and that the issue of the sacked miners needed to be raised more forcefully. All the sacked miners will be more than pleased with the result.

The South Wales leadership claim they are being picked on after their vote to support six day working at Margam. That is wrong, because the 800 jobs promised for Margam will cost the national union thousands of jobs in the future by accepting the Coal Board's dictat. The Coal Board are attacking the NUM in South Wales because they see them as the weak link at the present time.

Neil Kinnock has got a bloody nerve publicly congratulating the

South Wales leadership on their stand, and patting people on the back for going against their union's conference decision. Kinnock sees that as admirable practice because that is what he does himself.

When the NUM negotiating team recently met Coal Board boss Sir Robert Haslam, Arthur Scargill put to him the union's demand for a four-day week. Haslam replied 'Are you living in the real world?' Of course he is living in the real world!

With today's technology, unemployment, and the need to stop working class communities being disrupted, the demand is quite logical.

But that is not Haslam's world, with its concern to make a profit and set the mining industry up for privatisation.

Two weeks ago the UDM members at Newstead pit in Notts voted to close their own pit 163-131. The 100 NUM members at the pit did not take part in the vote, because we are not going to have our name put to the decision

to close pits. In fact, the NUM members on a show of hands agreed to fight the closure, although some of the steam must have been knocked out of them by the UDM vote.

Nevertheless, the vote showed a sizable group of UDM members prepared to fight closure, and it is those people who must be prime candidates to recruit to the NUM.

There has still been no movement after the UDM ballot rejecting the Coal Board's pay offer. I am convinced the whole thing is orchestrated between Lynk and the Board. The Board would make an offer; Lynk would rattle the sabre and have a ballot; the Board would chuck a few more pieces of silver on the table and then Lynk would recommend acceptance. Lynk can then say 'it was not me, it was the members'.

We are still recruiting from the UDM, after a short period of things going quiet after the sackings. In fact we are looking in the next few months for two or three Notts pits toppling over and going majority NUM.

Paul Whetton is secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

WORKERS' LIBERTY

The Retreat from Class

Workers' Liberty No.6 (April-May 1987) out next week. Articles include Vladimir Derer on the Labour Left today, Bob Fine on the Freedom Charter, Janet Burstall on 'Is Nicaragua Socialist?', Clive Bradley on AIDS, Martin Thomas on the working class in the Third World. 44 pages, available from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA, price 90p and postage.