

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST



POLAND: The left in Solidarnosc

See centre
pages

Botha out to smash black unions



Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, detained by the Pretoria regime.

Elijah Barayi, president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, detained under the state of emergency

Black miners' defiance

Paul Whetton reports from NUM conference

Two black miners from the South African NUM, Cyril Ramaphosa, the General Secretary, and James Moltatse, were introduced to the British miners in conference. The moment they set foot in the hall, conference jumped to its feet and gave them a lengthy standing ovation.

After each one spoke he was given another standing ovation. When they were presented with tokens there was yet another standing ovation. But there was nothing about standing ovations



Scargill

on the BBC's One o'Clock News. The BBC showed the two black miners walking into the conference hall, and then showed the conference with everybody sitting down and giving quiet applause.

It's quite obvious to me that they took some other clip of conference and slotted it right into the middle of the report of the visit of the representatives of the South African NUM — blatant manipulation in the cutting room!

Strike

Comrades Ramaphosa and Moltatse told the conference that South Africa's black miners have taken the conscious decision not just to confine themselves to the industrial scene, but to now go on to the offensive in the political arena.

They are going to escalate the action to bring about a political change. Despite the arrest of most of their leadership the fight will go on, because there are others ready to step into their shoes.

They said they are meeting the TUC later on today, and they're also going to meet the Shadow Cabinet. They are calling on British workers to express solidarity with South Africa's black workers. They say that if the Tory government will not impose sanctions then they are calling on British workers to impose their own sanctions.

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Free these workers!

Central to the clampdown launched by the apartheid state in South Africa has been the arrest and detention of trade union militants. From the Executive level of the giant Congress of South African Trade Unions COSATU, down to shop stewards, trade unionists have been picked up.

Prominent figures include Elijah Barayi, President of COSATU, Jay Naidoo, General Secretary, and Moses Mayekiso, recently elected General Secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers Union, who was interviewed by Socialist Organiser when he toured Britain earlier this year.

As we go to press both COSATU and the NUM, its largest union, are discussing a full-scale strike to demand the release of jailed trade unionists. This could lead to a major new explosion of working class opposition to the apartheid regime.

South Africa is witnessing:

*a frightening growth of white and black fascism.

*The break-up of the ruling Nationalist Party.

*The development of black vigilanteism in the townships and homelands.

*and serious attempts by black collaborators with Botha to rally support behind a resurfaced

tribal traditionalism.

BOB FINE looks at the situation inside the independent unions and asks how the workers movement will fare under the State of Emergency.

THE formation of COSATU was the high point of unionisation among black workers, giving to the union movement a national base probably more powerful than any previous union federation.

Since the formation of COSATU, membership of the unions has been growing and now stands at 600,000 signed-up members.

Some important industrial strikes have been successful, notably that conducted by CCAWUSA (Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union), against "Pick and Pay" chain stores.

There have been highly successful one-day political strikes involving millions of black workers — May Day and then Soweto Day (June 16).

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Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union, and chair of the Alexandra Action Committee, detained under the state of emergency



West Bank turn

The Palestine Liberation Organisation of Yasser Arafat may decide to make a major turn to South African methods of mass struggle in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

A campaign of civil disobedience in Israeli-occupied territories has been urged by high-ranking figures in the PLO.

From the late 1960s, the PLO's main weapons have been warfare backed by diplomatic pressure on Israel. The Organisation became internationally famous in a series of spectacular 'terrorist' operations in the early 1970s. The PLO's diplomatic offensive reached its high-point when Arafat made a cele-



Demo on the West Bank

brated speech to the United Nations in 1974. 'I have a gun in one hand, and an olive branch in the other', he said.

In fact the PLO has been militarily weak ever since it was suppressed in Jordan in 1970. The ravages of civil war in Lebanon, and an international PLO 'civil war' in 1983

has left the Organisation weaker still: a large section of it is bitterly hostile to Arafat and closely allied with the pseudo-radical Syrian government.

Mass opposition to Israeli occupation, including strikes, have been a feature of West Bank life at least since 1976.

Israel's cover up

Israel's coalition is looking very shaky following a major national scandal surrounding the activities of the security service, Shin Bet.

Two Palestinian Arabs, captured hijacking a bus, died in Shin Bet custody in 1984. Despite a full-scale cover-up, it became clear that they

had been murdered.

But the Cabinet has refused to allow any serious investigation into Shin Bet, and has granted an amnesty to Shin Bet's director, Avraham Shalom, who has now resigned.

Foreign Minister and former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is at the centre

of the scandal.

Opinion in Israel is deeply divided, with those on the right defending the secrecy of both Shin Bet and the intelligence service Mossad from more liberal critics. The government has faced a number of no-confidence motions in the Knesset (Parliament)



'Strike to the finish', the rank and file said. But the leaders thought different.

Petering out

In Belgium the movement against government cuts looks like petering out... thanks to the trade union leaders.

The socialist trade union federation, the FGTB, meets on Tuesday 1 July to plan future action, but it is likely to put off doing anything until September, after the holidays.

In the meantime it will 'negotiate'. But the right wing coalition government has already shown that such negotiations will get nowhere. It has made its offer — slight changes in the cuts package announced in May, so slight that even the less-militant Catholic union federation, the CSC, rejected

them out of hand.

Women workers in the CSC, in particular, are angry about the government's plans to cut married women's social security entitlements.

In May there were five one-day general strikes. But instead of developing the movement towards an all-out general strike, the union leaders let it dwindle away after a great demonstration — the Belgian labour movement's biggest ever — on 31 May.

The FGTB called 'days of action' (it no longer said 'general strike') in Liege on 12 June, in Limbourg and Anvers on 13 June, and in the rest of the country on 20 June. Flying pickets spread

the action on 20 June, and dustmen blocked central Brussels with their carts, but the turnout was lower than before.

With "the holidays and World Cup fever" as the Brussels daily Le Soir put it, "the mood is no longer for strikes". The government's cuts particularly threaten education, and teachers have been militant in the fight back; but now the school year is ending.

Instead of compressing the steam of working class revolt into a powerful blow, the union leaders provided one safety-valve after another. They aimed to keep the workers under control, and, it seems, they succeeded.

\$100 MILLION FOR CONTRAS

US hands off Nicaragua!

By Clive Bradley

Ronald Reagan is a nervous man. The government of one small country in Central America is such a tremendous threat that he is prepared to spend \$100 million to get rid of it.

That is how much the US Congress last week decided to spend on arming the 'Contras', who are trying violently to overthrow the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. After a long battle between the Reaganite right and the 'liberal' wing of Congress, a majority voted to support Reagan's warmongering policy.

\$40 million is to be available to the Contras in September, and another \$60 million by February 1987. It marks a major victory for Reagan, who has been pushing for intensified aggression against Nicaragua in the face of widespread opposition inside the US. Accord-

ing to opinion polls, 60% of people in the US are opposed to support for the Contras.

The International Court of Justice immediately ruled that US backing for the Contras is illegal; but the US Administration contemptuously dismissed the ruling.

Reagan says that the Sandinistas are a threat to 'democracy', and that it is worth whatever it costs to have them overthrown in defence of freedom. The Contras are 'freedom fighters', defending Western democracy.

Reagan may actually believe what he says. It is well known that he is grotesquely ignorant about world affairs, and receives all his information from the right wing

Reader's Digest. But not all the top politicians and generals in America are as stupid as Reagan.

They know what it is they want to defend: profit. Their concern is the freedom to exploit of US-based multinationals — in Central America and elsewhere.

The labour movement must not forget Nicaragua. For years the US has been spoiling for war against the Sandinistas. The Contras will not beat the Sandinistas. An American invasion of Nicaragua is therefore a real possibility.

The invasion of Grenada in 1983 was, at least in part, a trial run for a possible future attack on Nicaragua.

Reagan's Congress victory puts them a step further down the road to a second Vietnam. The US war drive must be fought, and Nicaragua must be defended.

S.AFRICA: 1000 TRADE UNIONISTS JAILED

FREE THESE WORKERS!

From page 1

The unions have been much more political than in the past. COSATU officials have met with the ANC and attacked homeland puppet chiefs like Buthelezi; demanded abolition of the Pass Laws; supported sanctions and disinvestment; and involved themselves in consumer boycotts and strikes in protest against the Emergency.

In short, the unions have presented themselves as part and parcel of a broad liberation movement against apartheid, and no longer simply, or predominantly, as an independent means of economic organisation.

But the unions are under severe attack. Union offices are now barely functioning. Officials go in for a quarter of an hour or so every so often.

And there are other problems. First there are divisions within the trade union movement. Not only between the different federations, COSATU, CUSA and AZACTU, but more importantly within COSATU itself.

The basic line of division is between the "populists" who support or come out of the UDF, and the "workerists", the more working class oriented socialists.

The line is not always that clear but there has been some hard fighting both within COSATU as a national federation, and in the individual unions. It seems fairly certain that at present the initiative lies with the UDF-oriented trade unionists who tend to be more concerned with political profile than with organisational base.

The turn to politics by the unions has tended to take place on political lines set by the UDF, that is without having thought through an independent working class politics.

This has opened the unions up to attack from the right.

On the face of it Buthelezi had a case for his criticisms of the ANC's armed struggles; of the methods of the "comrades" like the burning necklace, and the general endorsement of these methods by the ANC; of the effects of disinvestment on the jobs of workers; and of the authoritarian tendencies running through the South African Communist Party.

It was necessary to prepare a political response to these arguments and an alternative political organisation to Inkatha. The precondition for this was not populism, but independent working class politics.

What is needed is for the socialists in the unions, those who have been seeking an independent working class political line, to organise more boldly. The workers' movement needs its own political voice — sharing the model democracy, accountability and participation of the unions, and attempting to give a distinct working class leadership to the struggle.



250,000 people joined the anti-apartheid rally on Saturday 28 June. Photo: Ian Swindale.

LABOUR PARTY

No nuclear bases!

Tony Benn spoke to John Bloxam about a new initiative

9 Labour MPs have called at meeting at the House of Commons to set up a "broadly-based committee to campaign for a non-aligned foreign policy for Britain". The letter of invitation, reproduced below has gone out to a large number of labour movement organisations.

Socialist Organiser asked Tony Benn, one of the signatories, how he saw the initiative:

"What we're doing is putting a really bold demand on the table and saying, that's what we're campaigning for, whatever government is in power.

"The initiative had many roots. Last year Eric Heffer and I put a paper to the NEC about NATO, and it was defeated. At last year's Conference two million voted to look again at the NATO issue. This year Eric Heffer and I put another paper to the NEC calling for the removal of all nuclear bases. It was defeated.

"We've called this meeting because we are trying to get non-alignment, no US bases and disengagement from NATO on the political agenda. We want to make

them a major item at the Conference this year."

The letter reads:

There is shortly to be a meeting at the House of Commons to discuss the formation of a broadly-based Committee to campaign for the adoption of a Non-aligned foreign and defence policy for Britain.

Invitations are being sent to a number of organisations which might wish to be represented at this meeting.

If there are any other progressive or internationalist groups, which would like to attend, would they please contact us as soon as possible.

We should also be glad to hear from individuals who might be interested to receive information about our work in the future.

This initiative is intended to encourage new thinking about ways in which Britain might help to end the arms race, encourage international co-operation, divert resources from weapons production, including the STAR WARS project, to constructive investment here and in the developing countries, and to end the present cold war propaganda which now poisons the atmosphere.

It is signed by: Jeremy Corbyn, Eddie Loyden, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Brian Sedgemore, Bob Clay, Joan Maynard, Ernie Roberts, Martin Redmond.

Stop the witch hunt, start the fightback

The present Labour Party purge differs from any of the many purges in the party's long history in that it is supported and sometimes organised by a section of Labour's left wing.

Many self-styled lefts have become bigoted and unashamed advocates and practitioners of purge and witch-hunt. The first place in the ranks of 'left' wing purgers is held by Tribune.

As long ago as January 1982, Tribune was calling for a tribunal to investigate "some of the more secretive sectarian organisations". And of course Tribune is prominent in the recent assault on Militant in Liverpool.

But the Kinnockites wield a powerful argument that has helped at least to neutralise all but the hard left. Many Party members, and many more Labour voters, are convinced by the idea that Party unity is the number one priority if

the Tories are ever to be replaced by a Labour government. In the interests of Party unity they will accept a purge of those who 'rock the boat', even if in their heart of hearts they are against it.

This, of course, is what the right wing always mean by Party unity: that the Left should keep its mouth shut. An end to internal faction-fighting always entails a factional victory for the right. The right wing makes no, or only small, concessions; the left collapses.

Unity

Unity is essential, throughout the labour movement. But unity does not and should not mean the suppression of debate about current or future tactics and policies. Nor should unity mean the outlawing of political criticism of the leader-

EDITORIAL

ship.

Debate is the life-blood of a democratic workers' movement; and it is right and proper that like-minded groups of people in the labour movement organise to put their ideas across, produce literature, and aim to convince others.

Unity therefore need not entail 100% agreement on policy. It should be unity in action, on things that all currents in the movements do agree about.

So unity to do what? To appease the Tory press barons; not only howling for the blood of Militant and other socialists

in the Labour Party, but who howl for the blood of all socialists all the time?

Yet there is no doubt, surely, that a large part of the motivation behind the witch hunt is precisely an attempt to appeal 'safe' in the eyes of the pulp propagandists in Fleet St and Wapping.

Or unity to fight the Tories? It is the Labour leaders and the witch-hunters who are creating disunity, not the left. If they try to expel Party members, the Party members have every right to fight them. If they try to ditch conference policy, they should be called to account.

Slogan

Years ago, and in the days of Kinnock's American Dream Labour Party, it seems very long time ago, the left of the Party

organised itself to win some important democratic reforms.

There was a slogan then: "Never again" — never again a miserable, anti-working class government like that of 1974-9; never again a Labor government that came to power with radical promises and launched unprecedented attacks on the living standards of its own, working class supporters.

That left has disintegrated. But the choice that we faced back then, in 1979 and afterwards, remains: either we radically transform the labour movement into a real force for socialism — a democratic, active, militant with a small 'm', internationalist movement; or it will go to future, yet more bitter defeats.

The transformation can begin with a serious campaign against the witch-hunt.

Ireland votes to keep ban on divorce

Boosting partition, attacking women

By Pat Murphy

The partition of Ireland and the repressive Six County State in the North was given a much needed boost last week from the voters in the South. That is only one of the many tragic effects of the massive vote against legalised divorce, in last Thursday's referendum in the Irish Republic.

The Irish government is a coalition made up of the conservative Fine Gael and the Labour Party, and is led by one of the architects of the Anglo-Irish Accord, Garrett Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald has long promised a constitutional crusade in Ireland to reform the social laws, and assert the power of secular democracy over the authority of the Catholic Church.

Ironies

The crusade's failure has only served to underline how powerful the Catholic Church is.

In 1983 a referendum ensured that abortion, already illegal, could never be made legal without changing the constitution.

The recent referendum, proposed by the government was intended to allow divorce under fairly tight conditions — when a married couple could show that their marriage had broken down for at least five years.

All that is available now are church and civil annulments after which separated people have no right to re-marry. It had been generally believed that legal divorce would go through easily. But the Church worked hard for a "no" vote. The opposition Fine Fail party campaigned against although it claimed to be neutral. And by two to one the voters rejected the proposal to liberalise the law.



A vote for a Catholic Ireland

To listen to the media afterwards you might think that the most important victim of this defeat was Garret Fitzgerald and his government. It is true that the coalition is now a minority government



Thatcher and Fitzgerald sign the deal

of the minority government, and a general election can be expected in the next few months.

For us, however, there are more important victims. First there are the 70,000 Irish women thought to be affected by the ban on divorce. Women with no rights to maintenance or help, and yet no right to remarry.

United

Second there are the Northern Catholics. Their basic civil and democratic rights can not be won in the mainly Protestant and Sectarian Northern Ireland state. They need to break down that state and create a united Ireland.

The harsh reality is that this united Ireland will not come about without big defeats for the two traditions of Sectarianism. The referendum defeat shows the malignant vigour of Catholic sectarianism.

John Hulme, leader of the main Northern Catholic party, the SDLP, realised this. For the sake of the Anglo-Irish Accord he made a final appeal to Southern voters to say "yes" to divorce reform.

Sinn Fein in a confusion that reflects the populist politics of the movement came out for a "yes" vote, but then went on to explain how they could understand many of their supporters not being able to vote "yes". They evaded the whole issue.

Many socialists who are sympathetic to Irish nationalism will point to the reactionary attitudes of most Loyalist leaders on these issues, and say that it is all really irrelevant. They will be right about

the Loyalists. They will be wrong about the relevance of this vote.

What we were given a glimpse of last week was how the Irish Republic treats a minority. For non-Catholics, separated women, it doesn't really matter who the minority is.

Since the whole of the national question in Ireland today revolves around the problem of a minority, the Northern Protestants, the point could hardly be more relevant.

So last week's vote was one which weakened women and strengthened partition.

One of the ironies of this is that many of the leading anti-divorce campaigners would see themselves as strident Irish nationalists. For us, as socialists, that just underlines the vast gulf between secular republicanism, whose aim was to remove the divisions between people and Ireland; and chauvinist Catholic nationalism.

In its explicit attempt to create "a Catholic state for a Catholic people" that nationalism simply mirrors the Unionist politics of the Unionist founders of Northern Ireland.

Uniting Ireland and uniting its working class are two things that have to go together. If you are not for both you are not for either.

Black workers and the struggle for liberation in South Africa

Available from Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

GRAFFITI
news they
won't print

Fergie in scarf shock

Shock reports from sources close to Buckingham Palace last night suggested that Miss Sarah Ferguson had acquired a new scarf.

The lovely princess-to-be had bought a new, pale blue head-scarf, decorated with dark blue polka dots, according to inside information, checked and double-checked by our own undercover reporter.

We spoke by long-distance telephone to Mr Stanley Gribbs of 62, The Walkway, Pimlico, early this morning. Mr Gribbs who owns a chip shop where Miss Ferguson's dog once used the lavatory and is known to still be intimate with the Royal Family, said: "It has come as a deep shock."

Working for six months incognito as a horseguard's nosebag, our roving investigative reporter Akak Wilson took close-up photographs of Ms. Ferguson's entire wardrobe in order to pin down the precise character of its latest acquisition.

The news follows yesterday's amazing revelations that handsome Prince Andrew has a filling in one of his teeth.

The Palace refused to comment on the claim that Ms Ferguson had purchased the scarf at British Home

Stores. We asked the cash-assistant at BHS, Penge, who said: "I once saw Fergie on television and I feel I can say with absolute certainty that a woman with an upper-class accent did buy a blue-spotted head-scarf one day last week". "It was on the Tuesday or Wednesday," she added.

Speculation has already been rife as to the significance of the scarf's colour. Labour leader Neil Kinnock demanded in the House this morning a public disavowal by the Prime Minister that the blue represented any political choice, and to deny allegations that Ms Ferguson should she ever be Queen would be unwilling to allow Mr Kinnock to be a grovelling and loyal servant.

Reply

Mrs Thatcher refused to reply, causing a storm of claims and counter-claims at the Commons.

The Palace, maintaining a sceptical silence until late last night, was refusing to answer the telephone this morning despite a barrage of calls from newsmen intent on unearthing the truth.

Already a tour of BHS, Penge, is available, price £450 for a day's excursion, c/o Rupert Murdoch, News of the World.

New friends

You may not like Neil Kinnock's and Roy Hattersley's latest ideas about what the next Labour government should do: laws to restrict the unions, keeping inflation down to be a priority over expanding jobs, renationalisation to be postponed indefinitely, 'the importance of high profits' and so on.

But some people like them. According to the Sunday Telegraph, "Invitations to lunch and dinner from leading banks, stockbroking companies and investment houses are flooding into the offices of members of the Shadow Cabinet, especially Mr Hattersley". New Real-



ist Roy is now booked up for lunch every day until October.

Hard work has however been put in to earn all these free feeds. Hattersley has spent months trying to get invitations to bosses'

conferences and meetings.

None of these capitalists, of course, would ever actually vote Labour. But for some of Labour's leaders there is, after all, one thing more important even than votes: the approval of the Establishment.

3 minutes

Every three minutes a worker is killed somewhere in the world by a work accident or an industrial disease. Every second, four workers are injured, according to the Geneva-based International Labour Office.

Government inspectors in Britain — where, thanks to trade union

strength, safety is better than in many other countries — find that most of these deaths and injuries are avoidable and due to negligence or recklessness by bosses.

In other words: every three minutes or so a worker is murdered by capitalism in pursuit of profit.

New proposals being discussed by the SDP would bring the hand of the law down on strikes even more heavily than current Tory legislation.

A SDP discussion document proposed that before striking workers should be compelled not only to ballot but also to go to arbitration. Strikes would be legal only if arbitration had failed and a ballot had shown a majority for action.

Presenting Trotsky

IN REVIEWING THE FILM *Zina*, Bryan Edmonds asked the question, how could Zina's analyst have found a soldier in Stalingrad, sympathetic to Trotsky, to pass on his information and tapes to?

You can tell the reviewer that I asked Ken McMullen (the director) that question, in question time at the Sydney Film Festival.

McMullen's reply was that it was through the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society that he found out that Kronfeld, Zina's analyst, had died in a hospital in Stalingrad, and the passing on of the tapes was actually fictitious, there had been no tapes, but there was general sympathy at the time for Marxism among psychoanalytic circles.

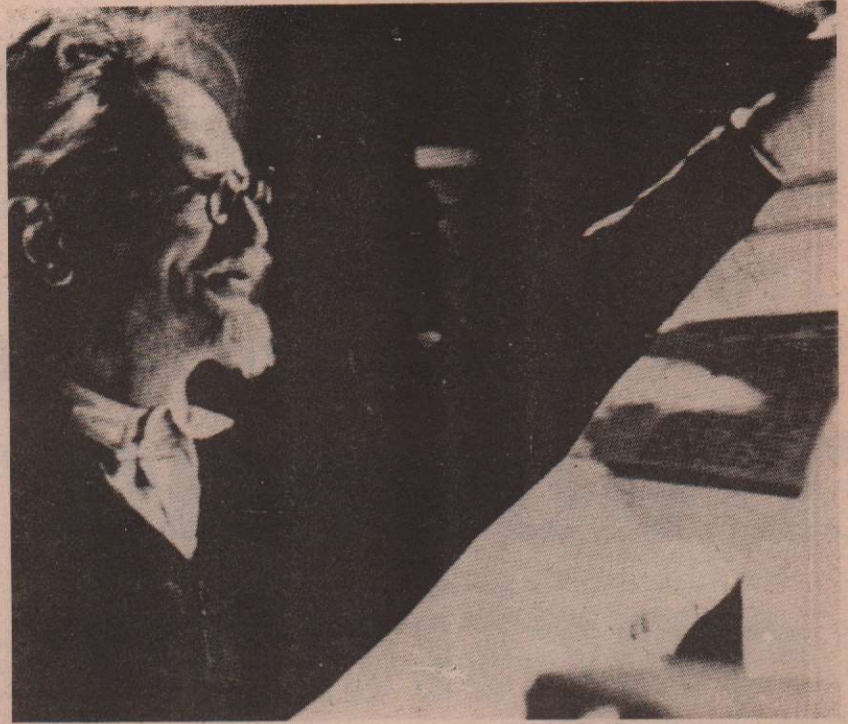
From his reply, I assumed he meant that the tapes were not passed on to a soldier, but that they had already been passed on to another doctor or analyst.

I think *SO's* reviewer may have leapt to a conclusion to say it was to a Soviet soldier that the tapes were passed on.

Apart from that, *Zina* was a very subjective film. McMullen was obviously at least as concerned with the psychoanalytic, subjective experience of Zina and of fascism, as he was with the fact that Trotsky had an objective analysis of what fascism is and what causes it.

So, although the film was certainly highly sympathetic to Trotsky, it was not a film from which one could learn Trotskyist ideas.

In that sense, I found it disappoint-



Trotsky

the crassness of Stalinist social-realism and the repression of debate and investigation of human potential.

JANET BURSTALL, Sydney

Committed to destroying the Jewish nation

TONY Greenstein (*SO* 272, 5 June) gets very excited because I put the description of him as an 'anti-Zionist' in quotation marks; that, he writes indignantly, is to say that he is "an anti-Semite masquerading as an anti-Zionist".

But this is just bluff and bluster by Greenstein, who doesn't even try to answer the serious points I made.

Greenstein — like much of the hard and soft left — is committed to the destruction of the state of Israel and its replacement by a 'secular democratic state' (SDS). In reality, this means commitment to the defeat and destruction of the Jewish nation in Palestine.

Compromise

Some advocates of the SDS think it is a benign compromise in which Jewish and Arab Palestinians could co-exist as equal citizens (that is what most supporters of *SO* used to think). But as I've argued at some length in *SO*, the SDS is no more than a seemingly benign mask used in the West by those who pursue the military conquest and destruction of the Jewish nation.

That Israel's apologists sometimes equate any criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism should not blind critics of Israel to the fact that an 'anti-Zionism' that proposes to treat the Palestinian Jewish nation as a bad and illegitimate nation which does not have the right to exist; an anti-Zionism which sets itself the goal of destroying the Palestinian Jewish nation and will be satisfied with nothing less — such an 'anti-Zionism' is certainly a form of anti-semitism.

It is distinct from earlier Christian or racist strains of anti-semitism, but nonetheless it too is comprehensively hostile to Jews. Since the big majority of Jews, critically or otherwise, support Israel's right to exist, the hostility to Israel inevitably spills over from Israel to engulf Jews everywhere.

Extreme and active hostility to Jewish Zionists (who are treated quite differently from other Zionists) is now, for example, an established feature of college political life.

And we should keep in mind that 'anti-Zionism' has long served in Russia and Eastern Europe as a thin disguise for the old anti-semitism that has never ceased to be a force there.

Tony Greenstein does belong to the 'smash Israel' current, and thus I put 'anti-Zionist' in quotes. But I'm concerned with drawing out the logic of what Greenstein and other socialists say about Israel, not with casting aspersions on their motives.

It's a shame that Greenstein takes refuge in the pretence that I'm branding him as some sort of old-style anti-semitic instead of answering the charges I do level against him.

Inverts

And isn't it strange that he so neatly parallels and inverts those Zionists who avoid thinking about our specific criticisms of Israel by branding the critics as anti-semites? Greenstein too is concerned not with thinking about the issues, but with getting hold of a moral blackjack and wielding it.

JOHN O'MAHONY.

Lesbian and Gay motion

LCLGR MODEL RESOLUTION
1. Conference notes that the 1985 Party Conference adopted policy:

a) instructing the NEC to draft a lesbian and gay rights policy on the basis specified in the resolution.

b) calling on all Labour local authorities to adopt and implement policy to prevent discrimination against lesbians and gay men, and

c) instructing the NEC to campaign publicly and among Labour Party and trade union members on lesbian and gay oppression.

2. Conference reaffirms this policy and calls for a clear commitment to legislation on the lines of this policy to be part of Labour's manifesto for the next election.

3. Conference notes that, in spite of the policy adopted at 1985 conference, some Labour local authorities have actively rejected inclusion of lesbians and gay men in equal opportunities policies, while others have taken no action.

4. Conference therefore instructs the NEC to take more vigorous steps to make clear in public the policy of the Labour Party on lesbian and gay rights and to campaign to educate Labour Party and trade union members on this policy.

(Note: resolution wording should be changed slightly so as not to be ruled out).

LCLGR Conference Campaign
86: Contact Peter Purton, 01-574 2420 (home) or 01-561 9400 (work).

Send letters to *SO*, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

A woman's experience on a demolition job pt 4

I would recommend a building yard as a fairly good school for learning new skills, and as a high class academy for dealing with sexist quips.

I noticed that men never call us "woman" unless it is prefixed with the words "The little . . ." But there are many other terms used which either stand us on a pedestal, out of reach - "lady" - or lay us on our backs - "the bit of stuff".

This last one was used by Kevin one day when talking about his girlfriend. I said:

"Oh, you mean your bit of fluff?"

"Yeah," he smiled.

"The bit of skirt?"

"That's right".

"The bit on the side?"

"Ha, ha."

"The little woman?"

By this time Kev realised that I was taking the piss. The next day when he was talking about her again, he stumbled over what to call her. I tried to help. "The bit of stuff?" He said, "Well, what should I call her?" I asked him what her name was "Mary", he said. "Well that's as good a name to use as any."

Another day, as we were laying hard core for a car park, Kev raised his shovel above his head and slammed it into the ground shouting, "Who's shagging my missus?" The others were laughing at his antics until I said, "I suppose it depends on who she asked." The idea that she might have had a say in it didn't occur to them. Women don't do things. We have things done to us.

Injured

Occasionally, however, some of the men would feel compelled to tell me how reasonable they are really. "I do the washing up sometimes", or "I help around the house sometimes". Always accompanied with an injured or self-righteous expression.

Dave, the brickie, one day told me how he would hate to live alone as I do. I asked him if he thought he would be lonely. But he said no it wasn't that. It was more the thought of having to cook and clean for himself.

I asked him if he ate food.

"Of course I eat", he said.

"Well, how can you eat if you don't cook?"

"I've got a wife and two daughters at home to do that", he said.

"So you need nursemaiding then, a big capable man like you."

Not liking this idea much he admitted that despite having three women in the house he did occasionally turn his hand to a bit of housework now and again.

"So what do you want?" I asked. "A medal?"

While sitting in the tea-room one day it struck me that I must be the only one there who made her own sandwiches and washed her own overalls. They all had another "her" to do it for them - for free.

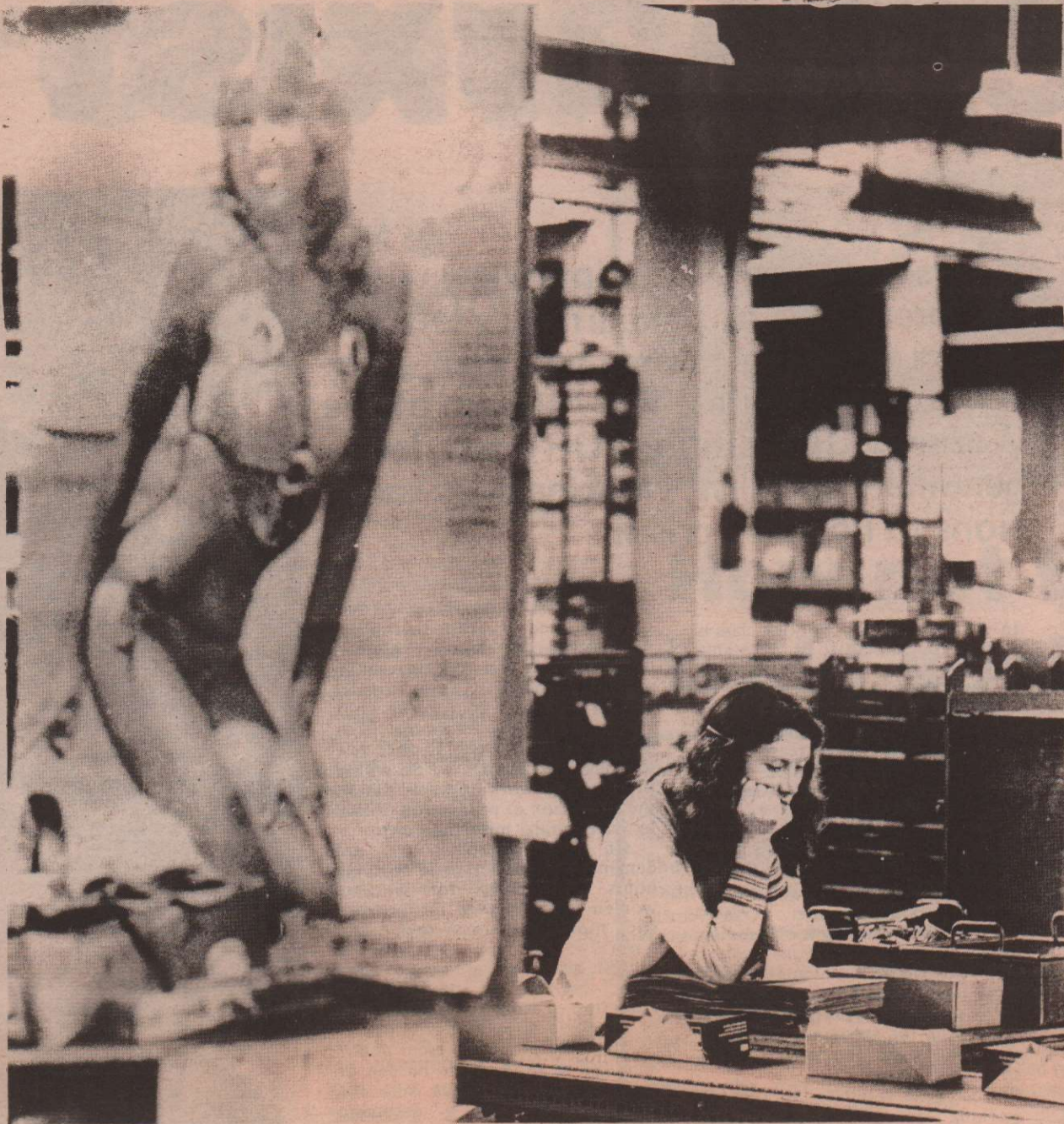
I heard tell of a woman in a similar situation to mine who used to open her snap-box every day and say, "Oh, god, not cheese again. Couldn't he do any better than that?" I wish I'd thought of that one.

Women have a very specific place in our society. And it isn't in a builder's yard. Its servicing the men who work there - domestically and sexually.

When men are confronted with the reality of a woman who does work there, they become full of contradictions. While they were raising scaffolding or lifting great slabs of sandstone around with me they were drooling over and yelling at any "bit of stuff" that walked past. "Get 'em off darling".

They would constantly pass comments about the way women looked and dressed. Criticising the smallest detail that didn't fit in with the fantasy on the front of Vogue or in page three of the Sun.

The women that walked by were either over-dressed or didn't cover up enough. Had on too much make-up or were too plain. Were too fat or didn't have enough to get hold



'The little woman'



By Jean Lane

of. All this despite the fact that many of them had beer guts, tattoos or were constantly showing the "builders bum" as they worked.

Such stupendous arrogance never ceased to amaze me. The weakest and most simple minded of them felt unquestionably better suited to the work than any

woman.

The ugliest or worst dressed felt able to criticise any woman that walked by. Where do they get their confidence from? What is it about having a prick and balls that makes them feel superior?

Of course, to "have balls" means to have strength or "guts". Whereas to have baby-making equipment is a sign of weakness. What do men call each other if they behave like fools? - "cunt" or "tit".

'Natural'

When you explain that you don't want babies then you're not "natural". The possibility of having a choice not to use this equipment doesn't arise. Because, as I said before, we have things done to us. We don't do things ourselves.

I was often bombarded with questions in a genuine wish to understand why I didn't fit in with their "norm".

"Why are you working here? Wouldn't you prefer an office?"

"Would you like to sit behind a typewriter all day? Well neither would I!"

Then, "why don't you want kids?"

"Because I want my time to be

my own."

"But women should have kids. They're nice. You can teach them things and play with them."

"Do you clean up the shit or stop the crying?"

"Well, why won't you marry?"

"And have someone like you around telling me to clean up the shit and not to work on a site?"

The inevitable conclusion was "I don't think you like being a woman. I think you want to be a man."

"What? And behave and have attitudes like yours? In my book that would be a definite step down in the world."

It was hard to combat their ideas without getting personal. But then they are always personal to us. They want to tell us what to wear. They want to tell us what we can or can't do. They want to categorise us; to push us into a role. And if we reject that role we are unnatural and a threat.

Usually the response to that threat is laughter and jibes; to belittle us. But sometimes, depending on how insecure the man is, it gets nasty.

There came a time at our yard when the joking stopped and the nastiness began.

Race & Class

By Payman Rezaei

Britain's racist prisons

If you have a black face, then you are more likely to end up in jail.

Ten per cent of prisoners in England's jails are black, though blacks are only 5% of the population. Analysis of the figures reveals that in similar circumstances courts are more likely to jail blacks than whites: in other words, racism plays a role here.

And no wonder. Hardly any magistrates or judges are black. Only one police officer in 200 is black; only one in 100 even in London, where the population is 18% black.

Convicted of the same crime, a well-off white person with a 'respectable' background is more likely to get off with a period of probation than is a working class black person.

The idea that 'it's the only language they understand' is still strong among the punishment-awarding classes of this country.

Britain in any case stands out internationally - especially since the Tories took office - for its slaphappiness in handing out prison sentences. It jails three times as many people in proportion to population as Holland, for example.

There is no evidence that this stops crime. On the contrary: one half of all prisoners released after serving more than three months are convicted again within two years.

Most people in British prisons are simply unlucky. The big majority of them have been convicted of relatively minor crimes which do not make them a great danger to the public. Nearly 50,000 people are in prison at any one time, but only 250 people a year get sentences which (with normal parole and remission) mean more than six years.

And, according to a government survey, one in every three men born in 1953 had one or more convictions for 'serious' offences by 1981. Take into account that the police solve only about one third of crimes reported to them, and that many crimes are not reported, and it is plain that almost everyone (almost every man, anyway) could end up in jail just by getting caught and meeting unsympathetic police or magistrates.

The prison system does not stop crime. But it is a powerful machine for brutalising and beating down the sections of society which it hits hardest. This operates worst in the United States, where the jail population is even larger (proportionally) than in Britain, and the racist bias is even worse: jail is a personal experience, or an immediate threat, for a vast proportion of young inner-city black men.

It seems that Britain is going the same way.

YOUTH fightback

Where it comes from

How to destroy it

RACISM

20p plus postage from 33 Hackworth Point, Rainhill Way, London E3.

The marxist und

As for what we in the POR are doing, the easiest thing for me to do here is to refer you to a recent document of ours: the POR's Programme of Current Struggle. We published this as a special edition of our national bulletin "Przelom" (Breakthrough) and we have been distributing it throughout Poland.

On the one hand it reflects the experience of the POR and what we are doing, or want to do, in the factories; on the other hand, it represents the strategy we are proposing for the movement as a whole. We are campaigning for a united front around the two main slogans of the programme: the defence of living standards and the defence of the national economy.

The first of these questions is of course the basic axis of our work. There are a number of elements involved here. The first is pay. We see two major problems in this regard.

The first is inflation, which has hit all working people very hard since martial law. In fact, they are still suffering the consequences of the unprecedented price rises at the beginning of '82, when many basic necessities went up several hundred per cent. This has been compounded by inflation of 20-30% every year since.

The concrete effect of all this has been a substantial increase in the number of working class families living in absolute poverty, and a situation where the vast majority of working people get by from month to month, but have no savings whatsoever and no chance of replacing worn-out consumer durables, improving or regenerating their homes, taking vacations, etc.

This second part of an interview with a representative of Solidarnosc's left wing covers their programme and their activity in the factories. The Alliance of the Workers' Opposition (POR) calls for genuinely socialist, working class solutions to Poland's crisis.

In other words, the working class is being condemned to a vegetable existence.

The second problem is that of wage differentials. The strategy of the ruling bureaucracy since martial law has been to increase these radically, in line with their overall policy of "divide and rule", setting worker against worker.

Our reply to the first problem is to demand automatic cost-of-living adjustments, otherwise known as a sliding scale of wages. (Our demands are rather broader, in fact, since we are calling for a sliding scale of wages, pensions, social security benefits, students' grants, etc).

As to the second problem, we are calling for automatic additional increases for the lower-paid in all wage settlements.

The next question is that of working time. Since martial law, the state power has mounted an intensive campaign to increase working hours, introducing compul-

sory overtime, a return to the six-day week, the legally enforced lengthening of the working week in selected enterprises, the broader introduction of continuous shift systems, etc. The enormous paradox here, of course, is that few workers have enough to do within the standard working week, due to the disruption of production caused by bureaucratic mismanagement.

On this question, we are demanding a reduction in working hours, particularly for working women and those in the heaviest and most hazardous jobs, who normally also have to work the longest, since they are employed in "key" branches of industry. This reduction of working hours cannot, of course, involve any loss of pay.

The state power's present policy amounts to shifting the burden of their own incompetence onto the working class, in a desperate attempt to increase the rate of exploitation.



Illegal Solidarnosc demonstration un

advantage of the opportunities these councils present, although this attitude seems to be disappearing.

A notable example of what can be done is the struggle waged by two workers' councils - one in Torun and one in Bydgoszcz - at the end of last year. Apart from taking up the questions of pay and conditions, these councils also put forward two more advanced demands.

The first was for workers' councils to have the right to organise themselves in regional federations, and the second was for the establishment of a second chamber in the Sejm (parliament), to be composed of workers' council representatives. The state power was forced to mount a big propaganda campaign against them, even publishing attacks on them in the press, although the usual policy is to maintain a wall of silence on this kind of thing.

Housing

Another issue we're paying a lot of attention to is housing, which is undoubtedly the number one social problem in Poland. Up to now the opposition has done very little on this, which we think is a big mistake. The POR is involved in organising struggles around this question, and these have had a big response.

We've also managed to draw other sections of Solidarity into

Struggles in the factories

Most of the struggles you've mentioned don't get reported in the West. The media is much more interested in the latest statements of Lech Walesa or Cardinal Glemp. Could you tell me some more about what is going on in the factories, and particularly what the POR is doing?

The struggles in the factories are mostly economic ones; pay and conditions are the basic questions, although protests over the victimisation of people because of political activity are not uncommon.

The form these struggles take, and their duration, vary greatly. The most frequent are probably short, spontaneous strikes, lasting from half an hour to three or four.

Longer strikes also occur, but they aren't typical, since the management usually gives in at once, or calls in some local Party official, in which case he gives in.

Security

The biggest problems normally come afterwards, since the factory involved automatically receives special attention from the security police, and anyone identified as

playing a leading role in the strike is likely to be harassed.

If there's no well-organised clandestine organisation in the factory it is hard for the workers to defend themselves, since spontaneous action now becomes much more difficult. Nevertheless, the vast majority of protest actions end in success, the management is often reluctant to provoke any new conflict - apart from anything else, their superiors would conclude they aren't in control of the situation - and the workers themselves come out of these struggles with greater confidence in their own strength.

Small

Please don't think on the basis of what I've said that the workers are striking all over Poland today. The strikes I'm referring to have involved a relatively small percentage of Polish industry. Still, they have to be placed in the context of the defeat the workers' movement suffered with the imposition of martial law [in December 1981].

What we are now seeing is a revival of the combativity of the working class, although this process is only just beginning.

Another element in the situation



Poland's left press

is the activity of the [official] workers' councils that enjoy the confidence of their workforce, that is the ones in factories where the Party executive didn't manage to rig the elections. These councils

have often become the forums for opposition within the factory, and many have taken a firm stand in defence of the workers' interests.

Unfortunately, some sections of Solidarity still hesitate about taking

ergground



der martial law.

rk on this.

The first thing I should explain, however, is the importance of the problem. Getting a flat is the biggest problem facing young people in London. Many young couples, including ones with two or three children, have to share a flat with parents, grand-parents, brothers or sisters, etc. And the brothers or sisters are often married, with children of their own.

The prospects of getting a flat are very remote. It has been estimated that, in certain cities, if the rate of housing construction stays the same, those at the bottom of the housing list will get a flat in twenty or thirty-five years' time!

On the other hand, the select social elite have no problems. Those with money — owners of private businesses, for example — can afford to build their own luxury flats. Those with contacts — friends in the bureaucratic apparatus — are given flats by their place of work or admitted into subsidized "co-operatives", building detached houses for the privileged few.

A full solution to this problem is possible through social control of the management of housing resources and of the construction industry, and a workers' plan for housing construction.

For the moment, we are demanding a general freeze on rents, the abolition of rents for those in substandard housing — in some cases, payment of an additional hardship allowance to these people — a property surtax on the villas

and the penthouses of the private businessmen and party apparatchiks.

We are also involved in more immediate struggles against the latest rent increases, helping to organise rent strikes. This particular form of struggle can be launched easily, involves little risk of victimisation, and usually proves very effective.

What we have often also found is that many people who might hold back from other protest actions are willing to get involved in struggles on this question, which simply reflects the scale and depth of the problem.

Living conditions

I'd like to cite one more interesting fact here: a recently-published official report on living conditions in 1984 stated that only 69% of working-class families had their own flat. The corresponding figure for civil servants was 97%!

Finally, I should also mention certain other questions we're campaigning around, such as the fight for equal opportunities for youth. This involves the question of child benefits and of guaranteed minimum grants for all those over school-leaving age in full-time education — and we demand increased funding for the social services, at the expense of the bureaucratic apparatus, the army, police and security services, etc. Both these questions involve the defence of living standards.

What is Solidarnosc?

In August 1980 one of the greatest events in the history of the international working class took place. The workers in Stalinist Poland organised a powerful strike movement which, after a month, forced the government to grant Poland's workers the right to organise a free and independent trade union.

No other Stalinist state had ever granted such a right, or tolerated independent workers' organisations for long.

Everywhere in the Stalinist states the "trade unions" are not unions at all, but agencies of state control over the workers. Their job is to police and regiment the workers, not fight for them or express their interests.

In Poland a small underground free trade union movement had existed since the mid-'70s, organised by Lech Walesa, Anna Walentynowicz and others.

After the August strikes a mass free trade union replaced the state union in Poland, which rapidly fell apart. The free trade union movement mushroomed after August 1980, and soon it had 10 million members.

In fact Solidarnosc was more than a mere trade union. The workers who created it wanted revolution in August 1980, and they were probably strong enough to have made a revolution then.

The reason they didn't was because a Russian invasion would be sure to follow the overthrowing of the Stalinist regime. The Polish workers remembered the terrible Russian invasion of Hungary in 1956 and the repression that followed.

So instead of taking over, Solidarnosc compromised; and the regime too "compromised" for a while. The result was a trade union movement which became the focus for all opposition currents in Poland.

In fact it was also in effect a political party, which increasingly challenged the bureaucrats' right to rule Poland.

It was an unstable compromise. No Stalinist state can tolerate an organised working class movement. Any such a movement must immediately begin to challenge and try to encroach upon the ruling bureaucrats. Stalinism is necessarily a regime of police tyranny over the working class.

The Polish Stalinist state — and behind the scenes, the Russian — carefully prepared their blow. After 18 months of a free trade union, martial law was declared in December 1981. Solidarnosc was outlawed.

But they weren't strong enough to destroy Solidarnosc, despite Jaruzelski's boast this week at the so-called Congress of the so-called Polish Workers' Party. Solidarnosc exists in the underground.

Solidarnosc is a great mass movement and within it many political trends exist. Conflicting proposals are discussed about what system should replace the bureaucratic rule of the Stalinists.



Derek Hatton. Photo: Ian Swindale.

How not to build socialism

All serious socialists must condemn the Labour Party leadership's expulsion of Liverpool councillors and party activists because of their association with the Militant newspaper. However, as Baz Hardy argues, it would be wrong to react to these attacks from the right by holding up Liverpool as the example of what a fighting, campaigning socialist council should do.

LIVERPOOL'S MILITANT-dominated Labour Party kept control of the city council last May. Naturally, Militant presented this result as a 'victory', despite the fact that Labour's vote was down by over 16,000, and the Liberals' up by more than 11,000.

Of course the attitude of Labour's national leadership towards the council had not helped to bring out the Labour vote. Expelled District Party chair Tony Mulhearn was right to condemn Kinnock and Hattersley for their attacks on the council's anti-rate-capping stand and their witch-hunt of Militant. These attacks were widely used in Liberal and Tory election propaganda.

But Liverpool council has been run on the basis of sectarian political dogma and worked to give narrow organisational advantages to Militant. That has offended sections of the working class community who really should be voting Labour. Mass Labour abstentions have occurred in Liverpool precisely because of Militant's sectarian approach.

Racist

Many in the black community regard our council as racist. In Granby ward, the independent black candidate, Delroy Burrows, polled 427 votes — way above any recorded by the Communist Party or the Greens, and in a ward where the labour candidate disagreed with the council 'line' on race.

The vote for Delroy Burrows was, therefore, a significant protest vote, which should be very worrying for genuine anti-racist socialists.

Another problem confronting Liverpool socialists has been the council's refusal to grant several groups of workers their pay increases! A dispute about paying members of GMBATU who make school dinners is still continuing, causing problems for those families whose children are entitled to free school meals.

Liverpool parents on subsistence income levels are being refused compensation because the council 'can't afford it'. Their children are presumably expected to starve in order that 'socialist' economies can be made. But the 'Militant' councillors' fat expenses have not been subject to the same rigors! Derek Hatton logged up in excess of £11,000 expenses this year, not counting his travel warrants and the cost of his chauffeur-driven trips to the Grand National, and many other

private exotic excursions.

Liverpool council pledged that jobs and services would not be cut, but cuts are being made by the back door.

The council has more than 500 unfilled vacancies, and takes at least four months to fill a post.

Part-time and former employees have gone without pay increases and/or full pay entitlement for many months.

The abysmal refuse collection service — bins are now emptied once a fortnight, if you are lucky — is the most obvious example of cuts in council services. A Labour candidate came across a dead rat wearing a 'Vote Labour' sticker in one of the back entries during the election campaign.

Militant blame all this on the collapse of trade union support for the council. They do not understand that the situation is largely of their own making, and that their sectarian politics have effectively played into the hands of the right wing. It is not at all clear that they have any strategy right now, except to pass the responsibility for making cuts on to the Liberals.

They are just hanging on waiting for the moment when the courts disqualify the 47 Labour councillors from office, on or after July 7th. Then they will be able to cover up their own record as Liverpool's rulers in streams of rhetoric blaming Kinnock for his treachery. But in generating the grotesque series of fiascos in Liverpool, Kinnock's treacherous attacks on the council played only a secondary, though important, part.

The central responsibility rests with Militant. Militant has run Liverpool like the old-fashioned corrupt Tammany Hall Labour right wing ran it, only adding left posturing and left rhetoric, and a vicious, factional narrow-mindedness that even the old Catholic bigots never quite matched.

The Liverpool experience provides a tragic example of how *not* to build socialism at the local level. A mass movement of thousands of workers could have been organised and galvanised around an anti-capitalist political programme. It wasn't. Neil Kinnock could, with justice as well as hypocrisy, denounce 'the Marxists' for making Liverpool workers redundant.

The sectarian course pursued by Militant has served only to produce demoralisation.

Militant's record in Liverpool must be accounted for, and we can only hope that genuine socialists who supported Militant in the past will participate in the process.

Where We STAND

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

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

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles

and workers' struggles world wide, including the struggle of workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their anti-socialist bureaucracies.

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

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.
For equality for lesbians and gays.

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

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

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

Activists' DIARY

SATURDAY 5 JULY. Socialist Teachers' Alliance AGM. 11-5, Central London Poly, New Cavendish St. Contact: Martin Allen, 29 Greenhill Park, NW10. 01-961 6503.

Labour Briefing Local Government Conference. 2pm. Lambeth Town Hall. Registration £1. Open to Labour councillors and LP members. Details: 01-732 1872.

Lesbian and Gay Festival Carnival Parade, Hyde Park to Kennington Park.

SATURDAY JULY 5-26. Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign march, Manchest-London. Tel: 061-795 3870. c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Manchester M15 5AL.

TUESDAY 8 JULY. CND Lobby of Parliament. 'No to Star Wars, Yes to Nuclear Disarmament'. 2.30-10pm.
THURSDAY 10 JULY. Islington rally for print workers. Speakers: Tony Dubbins, Dennis Skinner, John Lang, Ann Lilburn, Martha Osamore. 7.30 pm. Red Rose Club, 125 Seven Sisters Rd., N7.

SATURDAY JULY 12. BLOC Conference, Fight Privatisation. Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. Credentials: £3 per trade union delegate. BLOC, PO Box 464, London E58PT

SATURDAY 12 JULY. Third World First conference for trade unionists. From 10am at University of London Union. £2.50/£1.50. Contact: Third World First, 8 Lower Clapton Rd, London E5.

TUESDAY 15 JULY. Public meeting called by Brent East and Brent South CLPs: 'Support the Sacked Miners'. With Paul Whetton and a speaker from Women Against Pit Closures. 7.30, Anson Hall, corner Walm Lane. Nearest tube Willesden Green.

TUESDAY 22 JULY. Campaign Group of MPs Public Meeting 'Which Way for the Left?' Speakers include Margaret Beckett, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and Dennis Skinner. 8pm. Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill. Admission £1.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER MEETINGS

BASINGSTOKE
Thursday July 3. 'Where we Stand'. John O'Mahony (SO Editor). 7.30 p.m. Chute House, Church St.

IMPLEMENT PARTY POLICY

Petition now out reminding the Labour leaders of the 1985 Labour Party conference resolution on the miners and stating 'We believe that the Labour Party should actively campaign for the above rightful demands in the run-up to the next General Election'.

Copies from G. Scott, 34 Newcastle Ave., Horden, Peterlee, Co. Durham.



Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

The hidden AIDS epidemic

So far, 30,000 cases of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) have been reported in 92 countries. According to the Director General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), this underestimates by at least three times the true number of cases — some 100,000. In addition, between five and ten million may have been infected by the AIDS virus.

Many of the undetected cases must be in Africa. At a conference on AIDS in Paris a fortnight ago, Josef Kapita, head of the Infectious Diseases Clinic in Kinshasa, Zaire, spoke of a "hidden epidemic". He estimated that 6% of Africans now carry the virus with the rate in some cities reaching 24%. Central Africa has the highest rates, with between 20 and 25% of the population infected in Zambia, Rwanda, Malawi and Uganda.

Sterilised

Those most at risk of infection were either prostitutes and their clients or poor people attending badly-equipped clinics or hospitals where equipment was not sterilised properly.

Unlike Europe and America, where AIDS mainly affects gay men and drug injectors, in Africa, men and women are equally affected. There is no explanation of this difference at present, but at least terms like "gay plague" are becoming less common.

AIDS VACCINE PROBLEMS
Research continues at full speed to understand the AIDS virus and the way it operates. The main goal is a vaccine for which there would be a lucrative market. This fact lies behind the unseemly tussle between French and American scientists over who discovered AIDS virus first.

The latest discoveries pose a bit of a problem for the development of a vaccine. US researchers have been finding out what the virus's genetic material does. They do this by making mutants that lack certain genes.

With one particular gene missing, for example, the AIDS virus cannot reproduce but can still kill white blood cells. Another mutant could reproduce but couldn't kill white blood cells. In this mutant the researchers had

knocked a bit off the end of the gene that makes a protein for the coat of the virus. This results in a damaged coat protein and somehow this stops the virus killing the white blood cells.

In other words, the normal coat protein seems to poison or damage white blood cells.

This is where the problem arises in the making of a vaccine. Vaccines usually consist of the coat proteins of viruses injected into the body. The white blood cells are stimulated to produce anti-bodies. These are ready to react against the coat proteins of any subsequent infections of that virus and destroy them.

Unfortunately, though, it seems that a vaccine of AIDS coat proteins may actually kill the white blood cells, rather than stimulate them.

If these problems cannot be overcome, the future may be bleak. The drugs industry may decide to run down its AIDS research if there is little prospect of a fairly certain profit, particularly since AIDS victims seem to be mainly poor, black or disadvantaged in some way. AIDS may become even more of a political question than it is at present.

TORIES LET SAFETY GO HANG

Tory cash restrictions on the Health and Safety Executive and the Factories Inspectorate have had their inevitable effect.

In the three years 1981-4 alone, the rate of fatal and major injuries in manufacturing industry rose by over 20% — from 71 to 87 per 100,000 workers.

In some of the most dangerous industries, the rise was even greater. In construction, the rate shot up nearly 50% in three years — from 164 to 233 per 100,000 workers.

Over the same period, there was a decline by a quarter in reports of "dangerous occurrences". These are accidents with a "high potential for injury" and are legally required to be reported, whether injury actually occurs or not.

This supports the theory that employers are less bothered about safety now that they are less likely to be subject to the scrutiny of government inspectors.

Fighting FUND

The biggest items yet to come in our programme of new offices and equipment are new machinery.

We've already bought a small printing press — used, for example, to do mobilising leaflets for the South Africa demonstration on 28 June — and a new process camera. Now we need new typesetting equipment and possibly a new folder.

A number of comrades are giving loans towards the typesetter, thus enabling us in effect to get it by 'hire purchase'. But the loan repayments will be £400-plus per month, and we'll need fund income to cover that.

This week has been a slow one: more donations will be coming at the summer school, at the weekend. Thanks to Christine Priestly, £10; Julie Blackmore, £2.30; other readers £3.65.

Total so far £11,640.03 (77%). Send contributions to SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



Socialist Forum — no. 2 on Ireland, and no. 3 on Afghanistan, 50p each plus postage.

Socialist Organiser magazine back numbers. Available from PO BOX 823, London SE15 4NA. Miners 75p; 'Illusions of Power' 60p; add 20p post.

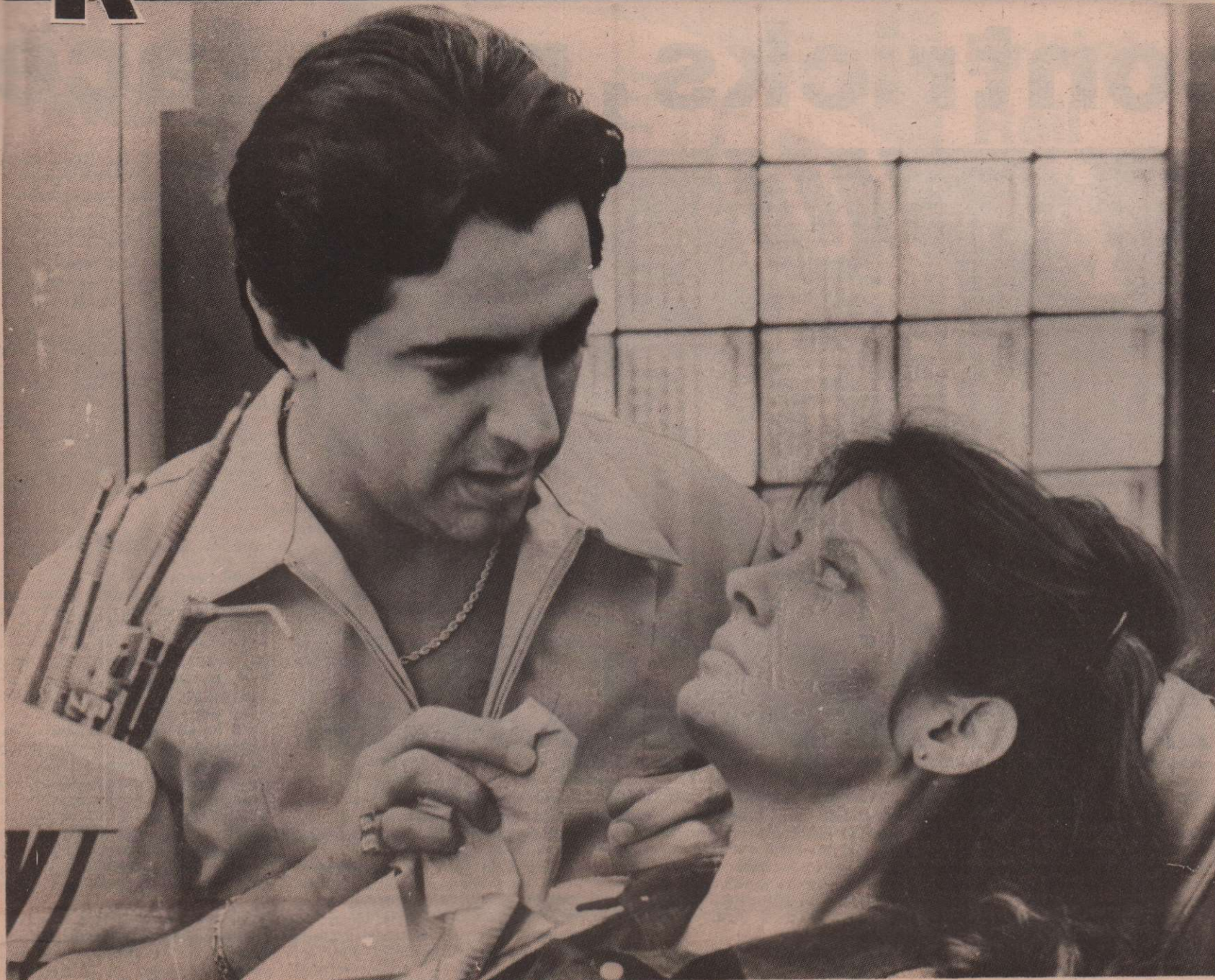
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Amorous dentist Bruce Eckstein [Joe Mantegna] checks the teeth of Judith Singer [Susan Sarandon].

Whodunnit, who am I?

In solving the murder in *Compromising Positions*, the heroine Judith, played by Susan Sarandon, doesn't just find out whodunit; she also finds out who she is and what she wants.

A former journalist, Judith has settled into the role of well-off Long Island housewife and mother. But when her philandering dentist is murdered, Judith is drawn into amateur sleuthing by insatiable curiosity and the old

Belinda Weaver reviews 'Compromising Positions', now on general release.

reporter's desire to get the story.

In most detective stories, the sleuth, amateur or professional, does not change his/her personality in the

course of the case. Sleuths are generally portrayed as determined and frighteningly competent individuals.

By contrast Judith is careless and

slightly daffy, constantly being floored by the seamy details she uncovers. But she becomes determined, persevering with the case in the face of her husband's opposition. At the end, she's back at her old career, reporting on another murder.

It's not a solemn rite-of-passage film though — it's often hilarious.

From the legions of discarded mistresses sobbing their way through the dentist's funeral to the wisecracks of Judith's more worldly friend, Nancy (Judith Ivey), the film provides a good few laughs to balance the scary bits.

Minor

The minor characters are all well-drawn — each makes a definite impact. The film is full of characters whose quirks are individual but believable.

The actual solving of the murder is a disappointment — we find out who, but not why. Since clues and suspects have abounded, this is a bit of a letdown.

Unlike most murder mysteries, the film is more concerned with the effect of the murder on Judith's life than with the murder itself. The murder woke her up and offered her the chance of excitement and work, as well as the possibility of a new romance with the detective on the case, played by Raul Julia.

It's also a new twist that the heroine chooses achievement through work rather than the thrills of an affair.

"Compromising Positions" is not great storytelling, but it's a light, funny film, which can pleasantly while away an evening.

Good speaker

The speaker aggressively pointed his finger at the crowd in mock rage. Dressed for the occasion in grey suit and red tie, (red for militant; grey for bureaucrat)

He clutched the microphone like a rock star, Shouting in a voice trained to sound sincere, It rang out loud and suitably unclear.

"Colleagues, the members of this union have had enough! We've had enough Tory attacks on the living standards of working class people! We've had seven years of mass unemployment and cuts in living

By Gary Scott

standards. It's time to stand up and fight."

He waited for the applause to subside. The militants applauded loudly, Boiling for a fight. Two older, more experienced trade unionists — Burnt out and cynical, Assessed his performance. "He's not a bad speaker that lad He's still a bit wild-talking about strike action at the drop of a hat. But he'll settle down". "Aye, they always mellow. When they get older."

The speaker wound up. "I'm not advocating strike action. We aren't asking you to do anything at the moment. All we are asking you to do is reject the government's pay offer."

The more moderate members were re-assured. As they all made their way back to work, The militants anticipated action. The moderates were happy they weren't going to get any. "He's a good speaker, that lad. He'll go far." "Aye, aa didn't agree with anything he said, But he spoke well."

Bad taste telly

By Tracy Williams

Saturday night after the anti-apartheid demo, sunburnt, tired, covered in newsprint from selling papers. All I wanted to do was go home, sit down with a nice cup of tea and a ciggy and watch the telly. Nothing too demanding though because I'd been surrounded by a bunch of lefties all day long. And nothing too late and boring either — otherwise it's another night of waking up, fully dressed with the "Christ, where am I, am I late, what time is it?" feeling.

So, I scanned the papers and settled for the new series of *Clive James on T.V.* Despite what I think about Clive James (though I don't think about him that often) I was glad to see the show back on the telly once again.

Another round of bad taste telly from around the world to laugh at, be amazed at, and be shocked at.

As in the last series, James showed clips from a Japanese T.V. programme centred on endurance tests.

Four women were lowered on a board into vats of water. The first one contained newts, the second frogs, and the fourth eels. Well, I'm sure you're just fascinated by now as to what happened next. What were they supposed to do with them — swim with them? catch them? eat them? No, none of these, in fact, and wait for it — nothing other than putting them down their knickers!

Well, I've had a few odd-looking things down my knickers, but I draw the line at newts, frogs or eels. What on earth are these people doing, and what's the prize, for crying out loud?

Women featured strongly in this episode and what struck me most was a

on the

Box

clip of a woman being counselled by an analyst of sorts (and let's face it, America's got more sorts of analysts than a bag of liquorice all sorts). He was trying to get her to stop eating because she was "overweight".

So, sitting calmly in front of hamburgers, chips and chocolate milkshake, he asks, "Do you like hamburgers?"

"Yes".

"Well, go on, eat it, take a bite, I know you like them."

The woman proceeded to take a bite, and the next thing you know, she's shaking like a bowl of jelly with electric currents being shot into her.

I've heard of some unfortunate women who are reduced to having metal guards on their mouths to stop them eating solids, but this deeply brutal measure takes the biscuit, or should I say the Ryvita?

Yes, we're clearly back in the West one again, where women are supposed to be appealing, sensual, reliable, daring, mysterious, earthy, and most of all, *thin*. If you are not, they try to make you feel ashamed and repulsed. You are punished both mentally and physically for not having or even projecting the "correct body image".

And let's not forget it's theirs, not the nearest male's, the media's or the capitalist's, but *theirs*.

The world is obsessed by women's bodies. If you are not the ideal figure — and god only knows what that is today (in the '60s, it was straight-haired, flat-chested and mini-skirted, in the '70s, curly-haired, large-chested and long-skirted) — don't worry, because there are many tricks and packages to leave you hairless, deodorised, perfumed, groomed and all tucked in.

Yes, tucked, because being tucked is essential, especially in the bra industry where you can get bras that lift, tuck and separate. Separate? Separate from what, your own body?

Can you imagine the situation, coming home at the end of the day, kicking off your shoes, and putting your bust on the dressing table till the next day.

Anyway, I'll get back to the telly programmes. I'll say one last thing. What the Americans watch today, we'll be watching tomorrow, so watch out!

Old contricks, new face

Jim Denham reviews "Trade Unions: the new reality" by Peter Carter, which outlines the Communist Party's perspective for the trade unions.

I gladly paid over my £1 for this little pamphlet, "Trade Unions: The New Reality", and looked forward to a rattling good read.

Not that I expected to agree with what I read — quite the opposite, in fact. But I did expect to be confronted by some challenging new ideas. After all, the author, Pete Carter, is the National Industrial Organiser of the Communist Party (CP).

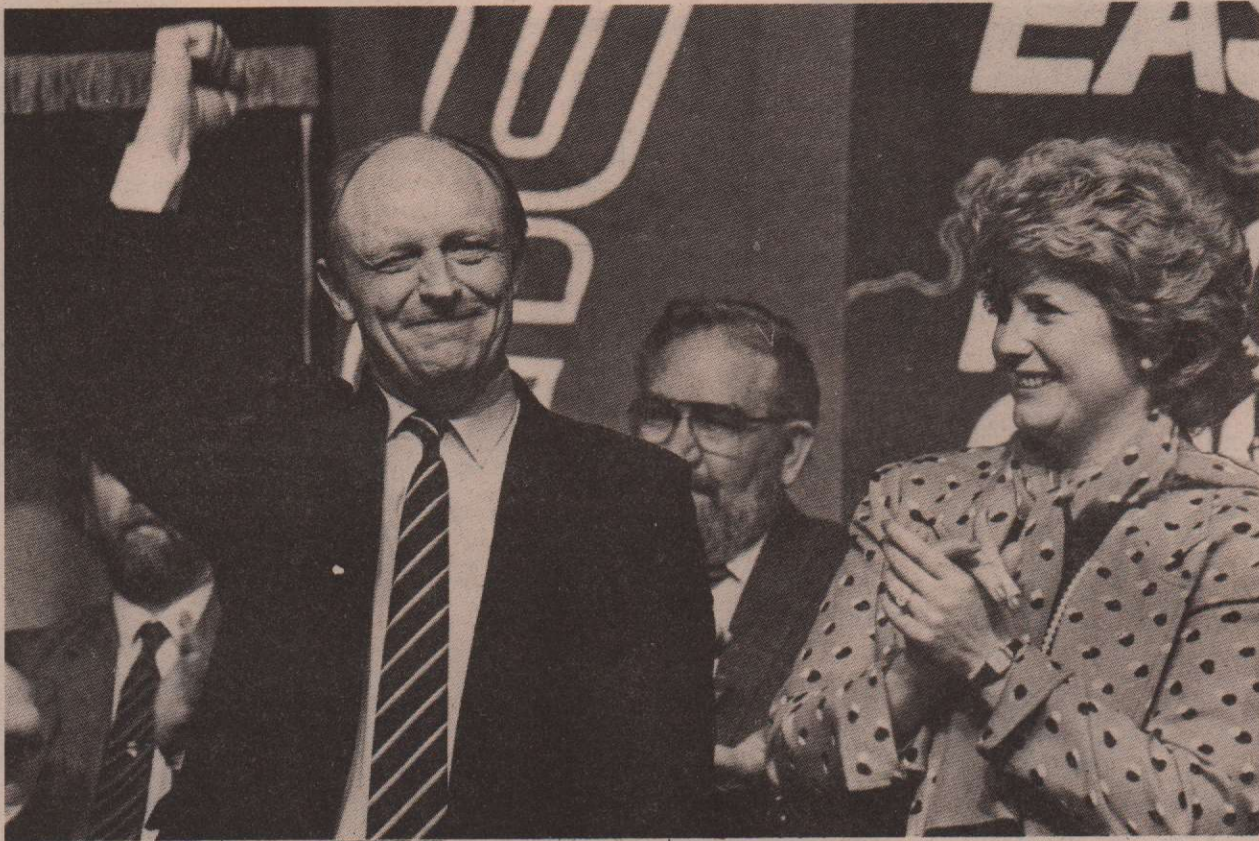
His pamphlet is based upon a report made to the CP executive earlier this year.

It is also worth noting that Pete Carter is not some muesli-chewing sociology lecturer, but an experienced trade unionist with an honourable record of struggle in the building industry.

"Trade Unions: The New Reality" is a great disappointment from any point of view. Carter addresses the crisis of the trade union movement and in particular its failure to develop a coherent response to what he calls "the Thatcher project" which he rightly defines as an attempt "to impose a new vision on British society in which socialist values are entirely absent, and support for collective responsibility is replaced by individual greed." The crisis is real and the failures obvious. A serious rethink of trade union strategies is long overdue. But Carter's answer to the problems of our movement is neither new nor socialist, as we shall see.

Banal

A lot of the pamphlet is simply banal. Take the section on New Technology, for instance: "For the trade unions to rise to the challenge of new technology and industrial restructuring, a profound shift is required towards a much more strategic outlook. This needs, firstly, a preparedness to anticipate and assess the possible paths of technological change and identify the more desirable options. Secondly, careful attention must be given to the social goals which the trade unions should seek to realise



Kinnock and Dean, practitioners of new realism. Photo: Andrew Wiard.

through new technology."

I presume all that means "new technology on our terms not on theirs."

Elsewhere, his reliance on jargon makes it virtually impossible to work out what exactly Carter is driving at. His favourite technique is to make a demonstrably true observation, and then to tack all sorts of vague and ambiguous ideas onto the end of it.

The section on women, for instance, correctly draws attention to the under-representation of women within union structures, and to the sexism that permeates the whole movement. But what are we to make of this stew of half-baked notions?

"The labour movement is deeply patriarchal, organising itself in ways which preserve and legitimise the hierarchies of capitalism, valuing in its formal and informal culture traditional definitions of masculinity, and even confusing these with militancy, and oblivious to moral, social and cultural questions."

Every so often, however, we are given a fairly clear indication as to what Carter is really advocating.

He pays some lip-service to "increasing rank and file involvement", and proposes the kind of

democratic reforms that Socialist Organiser and others have long fought for (often in the face of opposition from the CP): election of officials; increased participation of members in debate and decision-making; full accountability of leaderships to the members; and so forth.

But his real concern is quite different, and it surfaces throughout the pamphlet: he wants a deal between the union leaderships and the next Labour government. The

UNION FOCUS

government must promise to introduce a set of "positive rights that take the place of legal immunities and a pre-1979 situation", as well as establishing a system of 'labour courts' and 'A Charter of Working People's Rights'.

In return, the unions "must recognise the difficulties such a government will face in the early days in office, as it tries to rebuild

Britain's social and industrial base in new conditions after what could be almost a decade of devastating Tory rule."

Just what form such "recognition" of the government's "difficulties" would take is not spelled out, but you don't have to be a genius (or even the National Industrial Organiser of the CP) to make a guess. You could even go one better than Carter and suggest a nice name for such a deal: how about "Social Contract"?

Former Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson and the union leaders who put together his "Social Contract" in the mid-'70s would surely be willing to let them borrow the name.

Carter, of course, realises that there will be a lot of resistance to such a deal. He devotes more space to attacking the "hard left" (he names the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, the Communist Campaign Group, the Morning Star and Militant) than he does to the right wing.

He accuses the 'hard left' of operating on four rigid principles: "no compromise, no retreats, no sacrifice, and socialism as the immediate answer to the pressing

problems which the labour movement has to tackle here and now."

Now, I wouldn't accept either Carter's definition of who makes up the 'hard left', or his description of its 'principles'. But I certainly hope he's right that there is going to be a whole lot of opposition to any re-run of the "Social Contract disaster."

Having named the "baddies", Carter proceeds to tell us who the "goodies" are: "Important examples of this approach are the Labour Co-ordinating Committee and individuals such as Rodney Bickerstaffe, Tom Sawyer of the public service union, Jimmy Knapp of the rail union, Ken Livingstone and David Blunkett of the Labour Party."

Cuddly

All good cuddly lefties, of course: just as Harold looked not to Frank Chapple, but to left wingers Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon to force through the Social Contract, so Neil Kinnock will very likely look to Sawyer, Knapp and the cuddlies for his industrial salvation.

"Trade unionists", says Carter, "will be familiar with many of the arguments outlined in this pamphlet. They have been discussed for many years. There is nothing new in many of the ideas advocated, so why all the fuss?" He is right to say there is nothing new in most of his ideas. The fuss is because someone who calls himself a "Communist" advocates such ideas so openly.

In practice, of course, the Communist Party (including the old Tankies at the Morning Star who denounce Carter bitterly) has long engaged in bureaucratic deals with employers and governments at the expense of rank and file trade unionists willing to put up a fight. Carter's crime is that he theorises such practices so comprehensively.

Us "baddies" on the "hard left" do need to develop a coherent strategy in the face of the "New Realism" of the TUC leaders. We need to face up to some unpalatable truths about the weaknesses of "traditional" trade unionism that have been so effectively exploited by the Tories since 1979.

But Pete Carter's banal, pretentious little pamphlet will only be of use to us in so far as it represents a sort of manifesto for a current that could become even more dangerous than the Hammond/Jordan "hard right": class collaboration with a left face.

How revolutions rise and fall

A struggle over wage demands, or something equally limited, can turn into something different and more revolutionary just by growing beyond a certain size. Or so I argued last week. How and when does this happen?

The ordinary workings of capitalism brutalise, atomise, and subdue working-class people. (Exactly how they manage this is something I'll look at in a future article). But even the most stable capitalism generates something else too: workers' collective resistance.

Bargain

At the heart of capitalism is a bargain between capitalist and worker: so much pay for so many hours work of such-and-such intensity. The terms of this bargain constantly change, and, within very broad limits, are fixed by nothing other than relative force.

Thus a struggle. And, since capitalism needs large, concentrated workforces, thus workers combining together for that struggle.

A highly repressive capitalism can force workers' collective resistance into fragmen-

The ABC OF MARXISM

By Martin Thomas

tary, clandestine forms for a period; a prosperous, flexible capitalism can bargain adroitly to keep the struggles small-scale and localised.

In times of disarray and ferment, however, these mechanisms for splitting up the working class tend to fail. The breakdown of stability may come from many different causes (war, economic slump, divisions in the ruling class,

collapse of some old and over-rigid structure), but sooner or later it will come.

Once the struggle embraces the whole, or a large part of, the working class, it takes on its own logic. It paralyzes capitalism and thus drives the workers to substitute their own, collectivist, organisation of production and distribution. It pits the workers against the armed forces of the state and impels them to develop their own defence guards.

Aware

It makes workers aware that they are part of a class which can act collectively to change the world. It releases resentments, dreams, aspirations, long bottled up.

How far the logic of the struggle develops, and what form its instinctive, spontaneous drive to reconstruct society on collectivist lines takes, depends on many things. On the adroitness and strength of the ruling class, of course; and, more importantly for us, on the organisations, structures, leaders, and ideologies which the workers find to hand.

Belgium today is pressing towards an all-out general strike; it probably will not happen, because the trade unions are dominated by conservative leaders. In France in 1968, the workers overwhelmingly rejected the settlement to the general strike negotiated by the Communist Party; but they lacked an alternative organisation to propose more radical objectives, and so after about a week they started drifting back to work anyway. In Italy in 1920, the factory councils movement was defeated because the Socialist Party leaders would do nothing to coordinate it into a fight for state power.

Force

Reflecting on the Italian experience, Gramsci wrote: "The decisive element... is the permanently-organised and long-prepared force which can be put into the field... Therefore the essential task is that of systematically and patiently ensuring that this force is formed, developed, and rendered ever more homogeneous, compact, and self-aware".

PO pay swindle

By Pete Keenlyside

HARD on the heels of their sell-out over productivity, the Executive Committee (EC) of the Union of Communication Workers have done the same with this year's pay claim.

The deal they are now recommending includes a 5.8% increase on basic rates. But for most postal workers the cost of living is going up by much more than that.

In Manchester, bus fares have just gone up by 15%. Our basic wage of £107 before tax is regarded as being on the poverty line for those with families, and many have to claim FIS.

The Post Office is making millions in profits as a result of the various schemes to make us work harder. They are developing a more and more elaborate management set-up — all on high wages — as a prelude to privatisation. Yet those of us at the bottom who do all the work are forced to do long hours of overtime just to make ends meet.

Year after year we've accepted lousy wage deals, and now Alan Tuffin (on over £30,000 a year) wants us to accept one that will take us up to the princely sum of £113.26 per week.

The worst thing about this year's offer is that yet again the executive have caved in over the claim for a reduction in hours. Our basic week is 43 hours. It has been in force since 1965, and a reduction has been part of the union's annual claim for about 15 years.

The offer on holiday entitlement must be some sort of joke. One day extra for those with less than five years' service! Presumably management and our executive think that working for the Post Office is such fun that after five years you don't want to go on holiday.

This year could and should have been the year we took on the Post Office. We are working in conditions that are nothing like what we had when most of us started in the job.

There is a feeling of growing frustration among the membership. We are losing control of the situation. The will to fight is there.

That militancy needs to be built on. We need to campaign for a massive no vote at branch meetings called to vote on the offer. We've waited this long — we can't wait longer.

5.8% is nowhere near enough. 10% would be nearer the mark. And we want an immediate three hour reduction in the working week.

But that's only the first step. Even the best policies are pretty useless with the bunch we've got leading us. They are experts at snatching defeat out of the jaws of victory.

We need to start building now a leadership from within the rank and file that is prepared to take on the management.



SOGAT leaders look to Hammond instead

Wapping anger

After the union's conference, SOGAT's leaders have predictably followed up their fine words with a new bout of secret negotiations to make peace with Murdoch. And the man they've chosen to send to talk to Murdoch for them is none other than arch-scab Eric Hammond!

They've done nothing else, not even a nod in the direction of the limited promises they did make. The flagging boycott campaign hasn't even had a face-lift.

Strikers are angry about this. A mass

meeting in Bethnal Green last Saturday unanimously passed a resolution calling for an end to secret negotiations, and demanding that FoCs/MoCs attend all future negotiations.

The same meeting also unanimously called for:

*a national levy in support of the strikers;

*a boycott of all Murdoch's work being handled on Fleet St.;

*stepped up picketing, both on Fleet St and at Wapping, particularly mid-week;

*and a renewed appeal to EETPU members not to cross picket lines.

Left wins in CPSA

By Trudy Saunders

In the midst of a growing desert of reaction, a left-wing oasis has appeared. John MacCreadie, a supporter of the Broad Left has beaten the moderate 'Broad Left 84' candidate, and the even more moderate 'Moderate' candidate to become General Secretary of the CPSA.

After what seemed like a 100-years rule by the former general secretary, Alistair "I'm on £24,000 a year so stuff you lot" Graham, the recent election result is a big victory for socialists everywhere. It is also a clear indication that CPSA members are prepared to fight to defend jobs and to win higher wages and better conditions. It also shows that the majority of CPSA members are not convinced by the "new realism" politics of the moderate "left".

General Treasurer of the CPSA was won by Broad Left '84 candidate and former member of the Communist

Party Chris Kirk.

The election results for both elections have been close.

General Secretary John MacCreadie (Broad Left)	20,424
John Ellis (Moderate)	20,303
Geoff Lewtas (Broad Left 84)	14,740

General Treasurer Chris Kirk (Broad Left 84)	19,904
John Raywood (Moderate)	19,188
Eddie Spence (Broad Left)	19,180

The moderates have been threatening all along to challenge the results of the elections should Broad Left win. It is highly likely the sour grape bunch will do so. Everyone is waiting with baited breath to hear charges. Perhaps it will be that John MacCreadie is a Militant supporter!

No union, no safety

By Mick Sidaway

After organising themselves against a vicious anti-trade union management, workers at Peter Ward Engineering have now been out on strike for eleven weeks.

In this small firm, employing 11 people, they had to put up with:

*Compulsory overtime (under threat of dismissal);

*No first aid facilities.

*16-17 year olds were forced to work a 14 hour day (again under threat of dismissal).

*There was total disregard for health and safety, for example they had to work with electrical equipment in wet weather.

*Overtime pay for work already worked was lost if the worker was late or sick.

So nine workers joined the GMBATU and asked for union recognition. This was refused. On March 31 overtime was banned. On 7 April the bosses responded with a

threat to sack the workers. Four days later Steven Riley was sacked. His fellow workers downed tools in protest and Steve was reinstated. Management asked for a list of demands and a meeting was arranged.

The following day management came back with a three point plan.

*The overtime ban was to be lifted.

*Forget about the union.

*Accept that two men would be sacked.

If these items were agreed, pay would be raised "considerably".

The shop steward refused these terms.

On April 16 Steve Riley and Paul Schofield were sacked. Told that the men would hold a meeting the bosses said no, not on their

property. They would be sacked if they went out to hold a meeting. They held the meeting and all the workers were sacked without notice.

The strike is not official yet and some TGWU drivers are using this as an excuse to cross the picket line. The GMBATU should come off the fence and mobilise for the mass pickets as well as making it official.

Help is needed on the picket line at 6.45 am at P. Ward Engineering, Gleadless Road, Sheaf Bank, Sheffield — bring your banners.

Donations are also needed. Make donations out to P. Ward Engineering Strike Fund. Invite a speaker to your trade union or Labour Party branch.

Help us stop supplies to the factory. All correspondence to: P. Ward Strike Committee, C/o SCCAU, 73 West St., Sheffield, South Yorks, S1 4EQ.

British Rail bosses step up squeeze

By Rob Dawber

JUST AFTER we go to press, the result of a railway workshop ballot should be known.

Local reports from Sheffield and Doncaster so far indicate an overwhelming 'yes', though this may not be typical of the whole country.

Whichever way it goes the immediate prospects are dire. If we vote no, management have a green light to press ahead with any cuts they want, despite the promises they made to influence the vote. If we vote yes they will immediately step up their campaign of intimidation against workshop members.

According to as yet unchecked reports, four workers have been sacked in Doncaster for trivial offences, in a re-run of the management provocation that preceded the guards' ballot.

British Rail (BR) knew that the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) campaign for a yes vote will not really commit the union leaders to take action. Rather it adds power to the elbows of the negotiators, who want it all confined to a boardroom table chat.

Therefore BR will test the strength of any 'yes' majority with sackings and intimidation to see if they can push through their programme of cuts and closures despite the formal vote.

BR have let it be known in personal letters to all staff that a yes vote will leave each of them liable for the sack. Such is their democracy!

Any amount of money has been spent in workplace meetings and leaflets telling us why we should vote no. But requests for meetings to put the union case have been denied.

A yes vote will be good given the great difficulties. It will signal that those currently bearing the brunt of BR cuts still have some fight in them. And on that we will build.

Paxman's lock-out

By Paul Suff

Over 600 workers have been locked out by a Colchester engineering firm, Paxman Diesels, a subsidiary of GEC, for refusing to lift an overtime ban.

The company told the workers to work normally and lift their ban or they would not be allowed to work. This is the second time in four weeks that the company has thrown its workers out.

Overtime was banned in response to the company's 0% pay offer. The company responded by sacking the manual workers and threatening to sack the technical staff. After a week the workers returned when the company withdrew the sacking notices and promised a wage increase.

They offered 3%, tied to production agreements, one of which meant a loss of tea breaks. The offer was rejected at a mass meeting, and the overtime ban reimposed. Then the company issued lock-out notices.

There is now a 24 hour picket on the gates and 150 technical staff are refusing to cross the picket line. Only a few clerks are working.

Messages of support and donations can be sent to Paxman's Dispute Fund, 10 Hammond House, Winn St., Colchester, Essex.

SOCIALIST STUDENTS' CHAIR SPEAKS

This year student politics has been significantly affected by accusations of anti-semitism directed at left wing student groups, particularly Labour Students (NOLS) and the SWP student societies — SWSS. In recent articles in the Guardian and Sunday Telegraph, SSiN and SO have also had accusations made against them.

Jane Ashworth of SSiN spoke to Adrian Cohen, the Chair of the Union of Jewish Students.

"Since the mid-70s there has been a 'campus war' aimed at de-legitimising Israel and Zionism. As a spin-off Jewish students' activities have been de-legitimised, which has sometimes led to banning Jewish Societies and other infringements of the rights of Jewish students. Jewish students are smeared with collective responsibility for every action of the Israeli government; with being racists.

"There is no willingness to listen to us. For instance, NOLS has, over the year, taken kneejerk reactions, accepting any apparently pro-Palestinian positions without looking to see if they might be classically anti-semitic.

"Without saying that anti-zionism equals anti-semitism the kind of attitude which defines all Jews as oppressors marginalises anti-semitism and marginalises Jewish students.

"When UJS responds to this marginalisation, i.e. not being given a hearing or having to put up with comments at conferences like there is a "disproportionate number of Jewish students present"; or that we are a "powerful lobby"; or when the Labour students stall at Scottish NUS conference hands out a pamphlet together with the General Union of Palestinian Students about the creation of Israel which doesn't mention the holocaust, but won't give out UJS holocaust material as well, we are accused of intimidation.

"There is a closed circle; our objections are analysed in stereotypes, 'Zionist thugs', perhaps, or that we 'manipulate history'.

"Jewish organisations have been left out of the NOLS handbook and when I wrote to the NOLS chair objecting to this and to the pamphlet I received a letter from the Chair explaining it away because NOLS had no policy on anti-semitism.

And this is in the context of an attempt to no-platform me at the anti-racist conference where I was the guest speaker on anti-semitism. Jane: The Guardian says that Linzi Brand lost because she was Jewish. How far do you think that's true?

AC: To an extent Linzi was identified with UJS. She didn't have a Zionist profile, but a Jewish profile.

"It's very hard to quantify how many didn't vote for Linzi because they didn't want to vote for a Jewish candidate.

"There is some evidence that there was anti-semitism on conference floor. These people may or may not be believed.

"From UJS's point of view Linzi's election was not an issue, she may well have lost because of political issues or perhaps she did not make as good a hustings speech as Simon Pottinger, perhaps one group stabbed her in the back. I don't know. Everyone is alleging that someone else is to blame."

She lost a number of votes because she is Jewish but I couldn't give a figure. I wouldn't come out and glibly say she lost because she was Jewish. It was a factor, I should imagine.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

Summer School 4-7 July

From 1.00 p.m. Friday 4 July to 4.30 p.m. Monday 7 July, at Manchester University Student Union, Oxford Road, Manchester. Four days of debates, workshops, forums and videos, plus a social, creche facilities, and free accommodation.

No Labour anti-union laws!

Alan Fraser looks at Labour's plans to shackle the unions

ON MONDAY 25 June a joint TUC and Labour Party liaison committee meeting endorsed a new document on future industrial relations legislation should a Labour government be elected.

The document, entitled 'People at Work: New Rights, New Responsibilities', has apparently received Neil Kinnock's blessing. At the moment it has yet to be circulated to the labour movement, although as usual the capitalist media have managed to secure their copies.

Guardian

The Guardian carried an article on 24 June outlining some of the main proposals.

Union members who are denied pre-strike ballots or a chance to vote for their executive will be entitled to complain to an 'independent' body, presided over by a legally qualified person and with the power to issue an instruction to a union.

This is different from the Tories' approach, the document says, because it would make the courts a last, rather than first, resort.

The document also says that employers should lose their right to sue unions for damages and to seek injunctions to stop strikes.

It wants the need for ballots to be written into union rule-books and constitutions, with union members rather than employers being able to enforce this. Members would be able to sue their own unions for breach of contract.

At the moment the Tories' 1984 Trade Union Act says that



'Freedom and Fairness' for big business from Kinnock. But what about the workers? Photo: Jez Coulson, IFL.

unions must hold secret ballots:

1. For internal elections;
2. Before strikes or other industrial action;
3. On political funds.

An employer or an individual union member can take legal action if these requirements are not met. The Tory strategy is designed to isolate militants, undermine union democracy, and weaken and shackle unions that take action.

But the strategy announced by Kinnock and the top trade union bureaucrats is merely a modification of the 1984 Act. They are offering the sweetener of removing the employer's right to sue for damages, but what they propose is a scab's charter.

We saw this during the miners' strike. The most damaging court cases against the NUM were brought by its own scab members, helped and financed by Tories and business people.

Fear

Kinnock and the right wing fear that under a new Labour government, after eight miserable years of Thatcher, workers' confidence will be lifted, leading to justified demands such as the shorter working week, decent wages, restoration of cuts, and the creation of millions of jobs. Many workers will be prepared to go on the offensive to fight for these demands.

But the right-wing strategy of reviving British capitalism means that these demands will have to be contained. Secret ballots by law are intended to enable Kinnock to do this.

Secret ballots are designed to isolate individuals away from their workmates, to encourage doubts and fears, and to give maximum weight to the ruling-class media as against workers' own discussions. To strike requires courage and the confidence which comes from collective strength. Secret ballots are being used as a political weapon against strikes.

They promote individualism as against collectivity. Kinnock and the strategists of the right wing understand this.

Both Eric Heffer and Tony Benn have already criticised the new document as unwarranted interference by the state in union affairs. They are absolutely right.

Any legislation by a future Labour government should ensure that unions are fully independent of the state.

The document is due to be recommended to TUC and Labour Party conferences this autumn. This means that ordinary rank and file members will have no time to analyse the document and put forward a serious alternative.

Union branches and Constituency Labour Parties up and down the country must now begin to organise to get this document rejected and to put in its place a positive alternative. This alternative must include the repeal of all the Tories' anti-union legislation, including the 1984 Act.

There has been a debate in the labour movement about whether to go for 'positive rights' for trade unions, or revert to 'immunities', but it has been conducted among the bureaucrats with the help of their legal beagles. That debate must be taken out to the rank and file.

We must endeavour to have a positive strategy based on militant struggle against capitalism.

Black miners' defiance

From front page

The media has blown Arthur Scargill's presidential address up out of all context.

I happen to believe that Scargill is quite right to call for industrial action in order to defend our rights. He laid it on the line — our union is still under attack and the only way we're going to defend ourselves is industrial action. I can't see anything wrong with that — in fact, I can't see any other option.

We're not going to be able to do it by talking. The only thing the Coal Board and the present government understand is industrial action.

Unite

The Scottish NUM has an amendment on the agenda, calling for mine-workers to unite. Notts rank and file miners have no dispute with the sentiment behind this call. However the Notts Area has put in an amendment adding to the call for reunification 'providing they are acceptable under the terms of rule 30'.



Unity is necessary, not just for us in Notts but for the national union as well. However, some individuals we will not accept under any terms — Roy Lynk, Prendergast and Greatorex.

They have openly helped the employer, and the Tory government in the attempt to smash the NUM. They have helped get miners sacked.

And it just doesn't stop with those three leaders. Lynk, Prendergast and Greatorex exist in every branch. Branch officials and committee men have cooperated with the Coal Board in attempting to intimidate, harass and victimise those who have dared stand up and say 'I remain loyal to the NUM'. There's no way we're taking them back.

It's all very well for those in Scotland, and other areas, where they only had small numbers of scabs. They should remember that in the event of a merger in Nottingham followed by union elections, we would end up

with UDM branch and Area officials because we are in a minority. We would be trampled underfoot.

The arbitration now being talked about involves either the TUC or the Labour Party. But only last week the TUC kicked us in the teeth on a technicality, when the NUM approached them for financial assistance. They could have loaned us the £500,000, but didn't.

If the Labour Party were consistent, they would not only expel the UDM leaders, but also the two Labour MPs who have gone to great length to court the UDM.

The Belgian mineworkers have sent visitors to the conference. There are no official overseas delegations to this year's conference because of the receivership, but rank and file miners have still come. They led the recent strike there and, when it was over, the union sacked them. So all the pits came out again, marched on the union offices and got them reinstated.

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NORTHERN IRELAND

Orange disorder

JULY is the height of the Orange marching season in Northern Ireland. On 12 July every year many tens of thousands of Orange men and women march through the towns and villages of Northern Ireland. They march to pipe and drum bands, behind colourful banners.

They march to celebrate a great event in British history, an event which was simultaneously a terrible catastrophe for the Catholic people of Ireland — the victory of the Protestant King William over the Catholic King James at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

Dutch William was the servant of the British Parliament, and his victories over James marked the decisive triumph for constitutional government in Britain.

For the Catholic Irish who fought on King James' side, defeat was absolute and terrible. For a hundred years afterwards, the Anglo-Irish Protestant parliament in Dublin imposed a system of systematic discrimination, spoliation, and outlawry on the entire Catholic people of Ireland, a system known to history as the 'Penal Laws'.

That system was very like South Africa's apartheid, except that in theory a Catholic could convert to the official Protestantism and escape its rigours.

Those who will march on 12 July are the heirs of '1690', particularly of the poisonous sectarianism that was its fruit in Ireland.

In July 1986 they march believing themselves to have been betrayed and sold out by Margaret Thatcher, who last November signed the Anglo-Irish agreement giving the Dublin government a say in the running of Northern Ireland.

Protest

In protest at the Anglo-Irish agreement, the Protestants have organised strikes and demonstrations and disruption of every part of the civil and political machinery of Northern Ireland that they can lay their hands on.

The Protestants elected to the Northern Ireland assembly in 1982 refuse to accept London's right to dissolve it, and it now meets at Belfast's City Hall. Some of the Protestant political leaders talk of civil war.

It is likely that there will be serious violence this July as Protestants try to defy attempts to re-route some of their marches away from Catholic areas. If that happens, it is important for the labour movement to understand what it means: that the present system in Northern Ireland is unjust to both Catholic and Protestant communities there; that it is untenable; and that British rule — and the presence of the British Army — should be replaced by a democratic federal united Ireland, a united Ireland in which Ireland's natural minority, the Protestants, will have full minority rights.

Because of our summer school this issue of Socialist Organiser runs for two weeks, not one. No.276 will be dated 17 July.