

# SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT

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# About Socialist Viewpoint

OUR July issue has been produced in the midst of rapid developments in the political situation in Britain and internationally.

World events have again been dominated by the explosion of the struggle in South Africa as the white minority regime discards the threadbare velvet glove of its political manoeuvres and swings the iron fist of repression in an attempt to beat back the rising tide of black militancy. We have articles on the new situation and on the need for labour movement action in Britain.

While Reagan's Libyan bombing adventure and the Soviet Chernobyl disaster have helped to discredit nuclear bases in Britain and nuclear power, delegates at the European Nuclear Disarmament conference near Paris met and drew important lessons from recent experiences. We have reports on some of the highlights.

In Britain, the dramatic 2-1 vote by the sacked News International printworkers to reject the sell-out deal pushed at them by Rupert Murdoch and the SOGAT leaders raises against the need for a perspective of escalating the struggle.

We have coverage of this, and analysis of other fights in the unions and at some of this year's union conferences, as well as reports on the continuing struggles by mineworkers in Yorkshire against pit closures.

The political swing against Thatcher reflected in the May 8 elections has brought renewed conflict within the labour movement over the steps to prepare for a possible Labour government. The Kinnock camp's "preparation" involves the expulsion of socialists and the abandonment of radical policies in favour of a new "grey" campaign aping the SDP. The left has been hampered by cynical political manoeuvres that have brought the collapse of the Labour Left Co-ordination. But there are attempts to regroup the class struggle left wing around an expanded, improved

fortnightly Labour Briefing. We have reports on the witch-hunt, coverage of the struggles on the left, and a contribution to the debate on the political preparation prior to the next election.

We also carry an initial response to the new Tory ideological campaign to reassert Victorian notions of the family, as well as a report from this year's important Labour Women's Conference.

*Socialist Viewpoint* is a magazine committed to the fight for a principled, class struggle programme at every level of the workers' movement in Britain and internationally. We see the fight for Trotskyist politics taking shape not through banner-waving ultimatums, introspective sectarian debates in small groups of would-be gurus, or as simply trailing behind this or that "Left" talking trade union or Labour Party dignitary. Rather it must be a patient fight for the independent interests of the working class, and for demands and action which express those interests, in every arena of the class struggle.

With all too little clarity on offer from the various dogmatic left groupings in Britain, we believe that it is possible and necessary to combine debate with policy and programme.

We are sure our readers will welcome the fact that this magazine is the third to be expanded to include more authors and wider coverage. If you feel — as we do — that it offers excellent value, and politics which represent a break from sectarian posturing and a serious contribution to the class struggle, why not help us sustain and improve it further?

Take a few copies to sell in your workplace, trade union, Labour Party or campaign work. Send us your news and information, articles, cartoons, photos, and letters. Ensure your local activities are publicised on our pages. Check with your local seller or drop us a line for further details.

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# Even the hippy convoy couldn't help Thatcher

**THE Tory Party is in deep trouble. That much is clear from the results of the May 8 local elections and the two by-elections that day.**

The swing was not enough to offer Kinnock an automatic majority Labour government. But it was easily enough to bring an end to the era of unbridled Thatcherism that has not only devastated the lives of millions of working class families but by failing to produce the expected economic goods has simultaneously undermined the Tories' own electoral support.

The issues on which voters swung heavily against the Tories on May 8 were ones that offer Thatcher little hope of escape, short of a brazen and embarrassing total U-turn. Anger over permanent mass unemployment, savage health cuts and plummeting educational standards was sufficient to alienate millions of voters, even if Labour's half-baked and mealy-mouthed alternatives did not necessarily take full advantage and win the extra votes. Thatcher's shameless bootlicking to Ronald Reagan over the Libyan bombing (and everything else) has also helped shift public opinion more strongly against US bases and Cruise missiles than Labour's leaders have been prepared to go in their timid pronouncements.

Indeed as Kinnock shuffles to the right with his "grey" campaign of gimmicks and vacuous promises, and ducks the tough questions on potential vote winners such as shutting down Britain's nuclear power plants in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster, public opinion polls show many voters passing him in the other direction. Others, unable to distinguish between Kinnock's fudge and the Alliance's evasion, have clearly plumped for a Liberal or SDP vote as a misguided show of opposition to Thatcher.

None of this is much consolation for the Tories, who may have successfully abolished elections to the GLC and metropolitan counties, but must still face the electorate in the next two years. So far there is little sign of substantial retreat from the line of march which has had some success in driving up the profitability of industry at the expense of the working class.

Thatcher remains adamant that tax cuts to buy votes are the top priority between now and the General Election — no matter what the cost in terms of savaged public services. Norman Fowler is still forging ahead with plans largely to dismantle the Social Security system and slash pension entitlements. Nationalised and newly privatised industries continue their relentless massacre of jobs with thousands more axed in shipbuilding, rail, coal and the extinction of Cornish tin mining.

The crumbling NHS is plainly an embarrassment to Thatcher, and there are few signs here of a surreptitious retreat from some of the more draconian cuts that have been forced into the headlines in London.

Health Minister Barney "Rubble" Hayhoe has intervened to postpone the closure of London's world-famous Westminster Hospital until after the next Election; while after a storm of protest by health workers and influential consultants, a heavy programme of closures at London's Maudsley psychiatric hospital has also been postponed by allowing the health authority massively to overspend. But the sheer scale of the cash crisis facing the NHS as a whole rules out a complete reversal of policy: the extra funds required to stop cuts would leave a gaping hole in Nigel Lawson's sums as he calculates the next tax handouts for the well-to-do.

So what do they have to offer instead? Traditional Tory backwood rumblings about "law and order", and a full-blooded offensive aimed at restoring Victorian morality to match the near-19th century poverty faced by millions of pensioners, unemployed and low-waged workers.

Norman Tebbit — successor to the randy Cecil Parkinson — rants against the evils of "permissiveness" in society. Education Secretary Kenneth Baker proposes new laws to compel teachers to play Canute by combining sex education with moralistic cant about the merits of the loving structures of the traditional "family" unit — despite soaring divorce rates and a mounting tide of revelations of the misery and violence — battered wives and child abuse — behind the happy facade of "family life".

Within these Victorian values there is clearly no room for any form of sexuality other than heterosexuality — and the Tory baiting of lesbians and gay men has accordingly markedly increased. In the case of a recent speech by Tory minister Geoffrey Pattie, an attack on lesbians and gay men as "perverts" was linked to calls for an end to all spending on council housing, and a reduction in education and NHS spending, with the focus on private health care and tax cuts.

Capping it all comes Margaret Thatcher, sharing with Scottish Tory women her blue-rinsed vision of a disciplinarian, property-owning society — which for the countless women living in poverty across the country could only sound like the sickest of sick jokes.

What else are the Tories to do? Their policies prevent them from relenting in their attack on material conditions of the working class: their only hope is to appeal to reserves of primaevial greed, ideological backwardness, irrational fear and narrow mindedness among the electorate.

To do this they need a constant supply of targets for witch-hunting against whom the forces of Tory law and order can show their relentless long arms at work.

One hapless grouping singled out for this cynical treatment was the Hampshire hippy convoy, a column of harmless, if unwashed, dropouts, seeking to enjoy themselves on Salisbury Plain — or anywhere the cops would leave them alone.



With squads of police on hand, bored with endless duty escorting the war convoys of Cruise missiles on their expeditions from Greenham Common, fingering their truncheons, and scenting the prospect of some easy licensed brutality; and with a Chief Constable whose style of rhetoric in interviews appeared lifted from Dr Goebbels, the scene was set for another bit of fearless Tory "law and order".

The hippies were hounded from common land, pursued through country lanes, then roadblocked and cornered into a patch of Forestry Commission scrubland. There they were subjected to a court order to leave. Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, presiding over a sky-rocketing crime wave in the inner city wastelands of Thatcher's Britain, railed cynically against the hippies, branding them ludicrously as "mediaeval brigands", and urged the cops to give them a bit of a beating.

But there was little fight back at 5am. And the upshot of the whole miserable display — a televised column of pathetic, newly-homeless, penniless men, women and children forced to tramp the country lanes, their vehicles seized and destroyed by Hurd's boys in blue, will have roused few, and done little to stir the flame of Tory support.

Meanwhile the ill-fated extra-curricular activities of Paul Channon's daughter Olivia at Oxford have done far more to shed light on the yawning class divisions

widened by every Tory tax handout and cut in grants and welfare services.

When the millionaire Hooray Henries and Henriettas dabble in hard drugs, stirring cocaine and heroin into their champagne, and come unstuck, it is headline news. Yet day after day a tragic toll of working class youth, squeezed out or cast off by Thatcher's scrapheap economy, resorts to the dead-end of hard drugs: week after week ordinary kids unnoticed by the media die in back streets using hard drugs, or damage themselves beyond repair. There are no urgent inquiries, or government interest in them.

In a sick, crumbling, polarised society such as Thatcher has helped create in capitalist Britain, with the evidence of social crisis and decay all around, the attempts to divert middle class and conservative-minded voters with moralistic speeches and backward-looking panaceas ring strangely false. Tory speeches always tend to sound like blasts from the past, with their hackneyed sixth form essay style: now as the popular mood and even sections of the press become visibly more impatient, Thatcher seems to have a lot of lost ground to make up if she is to win a third term of office.

But who are we to gloat? The labour movement too has much preparation to do if a Labour government is to be returned: and major struggles on its plate to force through the right policies should Kinnock obtain the key to Downing Street.





# Botha's show of weakness

**PRESIDENT Botha's announcement of a nationwide State of Emergency in South Africa is a reflection not of confidence but of a weakening grip on the black townships.**

Including a package of measures more draconian than at any time since the Sharpeville crisis of 1960, Botha's new crackdown amounted to a pre-emptive move to head off a one-day General Strike called to mark the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising against apartheid rule.

The stoppage had been called for by the new, confident, non-racial trade union federation COSATU, and supported by the United Democratic Front and the National Education Crisis Committee.

The strike call followed a mounting wave of struggles by black workers against apartheid, which have been met by repression that has taken a toll of over 1,500 lives in 19 months.

On May Day this year a minimum of 1.5 million black workers supported the biggest-ever national

By **HARRY SLOAN**

strike which crippled industries and services in the main cities. Estimates of the support for the "stay away" ranged from 70% to 100% of trade unionists in the main urban areas. Other symptoms of rising black anger include a national pay strike affecting a chain of supermarkets; consumer boycotts in the Transvaal; a rent boycott in Soweto; and a three-day general strike in the new "homeland" of KwaNdebele.

A significant indication of the rising confidence of black trade unionists was the COSATU response to Botha's State of Emergency: leaders immediately called for a one-week protest "stay away", despite the intimidating battery of legislation bearing down on them.

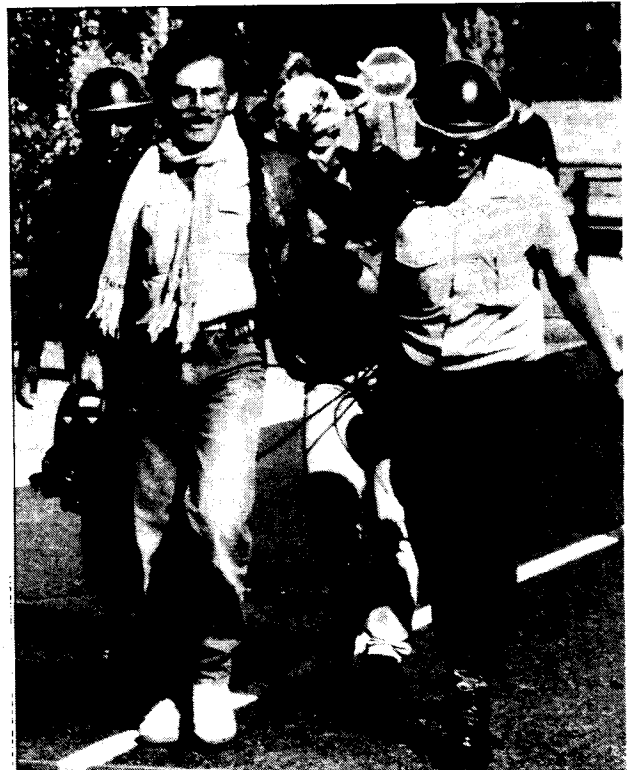
Their strike call was immediately muzzled by heavy censorship designed to gag the media inside and outside South Africa. And trade unionists have been among the groups of black militants and anti-apartheid activists singled out in a

massive series of arrests (which also included academics, students, journalists and priests).

The new press restrictions ban photographs, recording or reporting of any strike, disturbance or boycott or of the actions of the forces of the state. Activists and trade unionists are also subject to the prohibition of writing, recording or uttering any "subversive statement". Already issues of two black newspapers have been seized as this press gag is tightened.

Foreign journalists have also been warned against even referring to the Botha gang as a "white minority regime" (on the specious grounds that it is "elected" — with no black participation — and involves token stooge "representatives" of the coloured and Indian communities). And the police, army and their agents have been given a blank cheque to do as they please, immune from prosecution.

Botha's heavy-handed crackdown has certainly pushed the violent struggle in South Africa even more unavoidably into the world's





headlines, and increased the pressure on European and American governments to impose economic and political sanctions against the apartheid regime.

But he was clearly driven not only by the mounting black struggle but also by the distinct beginnings of the long-expected white backlash, led by the neo-fascist Afrikaner Weestandsbeweging (AWB).

Viciously opposed to all of Botha's belated and half-hearted "reforms" to the apartheid system, which have in no way placated the blacks, the AWB has gone onto the offensive against Botha's Nationalist Party base. Kicking their way into the headlines with the physical disruption of an NP rally in the northern Transvaal, they have exposed the mounting Afrikaner anger at the regime's inability to crush the black revolt. Though their support should not be exaggerated, the existence of these white fascists underlines the fact that the Afrikaners in particular have yet to show the full weight of their reactionary opinion as the crisis develops.

It is significant that National Party leaders have been angry and embarrassed by the apparent support for the fascists shown by local police who held back before reluctantly intervening against AWB thugs. Botha's men are concerned at the extent to which these fascist forces have infiltrated the reactionary military and police hierarchy.

South Africa's murderous cross-border military raids into black "frontline" states last month, supposedly in pursuit of ANC targets, were partly designed by Botha as a sop to the AWB. The raids had little military significance, other than as a gesture of defiance to the international mass media.

Botha's forces have been struggling with increasing difficulty closer to home to stem the black revolt in the townships. After the brutal killing of 20 blacks by police and police-sponsored vigilantes in the township of Alexandra (where over 80 blacks have been gunned down this year) no less than 1,600 troops were sent in with the task of preventing a mass funeral for the victims.

Despite a limited wave of arrests, the occupying state forces did not prevent a mass funeral in Alexandra a week later, which mobilised over 10,000 mourners. And in a display of the growing liberal opposition to Botha, a fleet of minibuses, cars and limousines took 300 whites in a pilgrimage to Alexandra in defiance of a police ban.

The failure of the Alexandra clampdown is symptomatic of the overall problem facing Botha: while under pressure from the ultra right within his party and from more violent opponents such as the AWP and the HNP, he knows that the



armed forces of the state are increasingly stretched beyond their capability to control the black communities.

The system of black councils set up by Botha with the aim of developing a class collaborationist stooge layer of black "leaders" committed to contain resistance to the regime, has collapsed in disarray, with dozens of councillors killed, their homes destroyed, or driven out of the communities.

Black police, drawn from lumpen and reactionary circles, have been singled out for special retaliation by militant workers and youth, and shown no mercy when they have fallen into the clutches of demonstrators. Similar short shrift has been given to those exposed as part of the regime's network of spies and collaborators in the black communities.

Under this pressure, and with blacks gunned down daily by the state, the more subtle methods of co-option, collaboration and limited concessions for a privileged circle of middle class blacks has been



Buthelezi

excluded by the sharpening polarisation.

Botha's gang have instead been forced to revert to the blatant, brutal violence that has never been far beneath the thin veneer of "reform".

Key to this escalating violence has been the fostering of reactionary bands of black "vigilantes" as a tool of the police and armed forces. Confrontations between these forces and militant black youth have escalated in various parts of the country.

In some parts, lumpen supporters of reactionary Zulu leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi have also been used as an instrument of mob violence against trade union or UDF militants — not least in recent mineworkers' struggles in Natal.

The most publicised use by the regime of black squads of right wing thugs was in the recent attacks by 1,000 so-called "fathers" on the KTC Camp inside the giant Crossroads squatter complex near Cape Town.

The gun-toting, police-led "Fathers" plainly had no roots in the KTC camp, where they killed dozens and set hundreds of homes ablaze. This was the third co-ordinated attack on Crossroads squatters, and white police or army officers could be seen in television coverage leading the black gunmen in their attack on the community, which the regime wants to move 25 miles away to another camp controlled by right wing black gangsters.

Outgunned by the combination of overt and covert state forces, the militant young "comrades" of Crossroads were unable to prevent their homes being overrun and destroyed.

But the effort required by the state to accomplish such a setback for one community of militant black shows the scale of the problem Botha faces.

More and more townships, having shed their stooge "councillors", have begun to develop their own form of community control — block and neighbourhood committees, sometimes with their own system of justice. The black majority is testing and stretching the repressive machinery of the state — and showing that a long-term defeat for the apartheid system is inevitable. The question now is the development of a co-ordinated challenge to the central state power, a challenge which is able to link the power of the communities with the industrial strength of the trade unions, and give expression to the clear revolutionary will of millions of black youths who show themselves prepared to die if necessary in order to fight apartheid and capitalist exploitation.

In this context, there is an obvious division of interest and gulf in practice between the rhetoric of the exiled leadership of the African National Congress on the one hand, and on the other many of the militant



black youth attracted to the banner of the ANC as a symbol of rebellion in the townships.

While the ANC leaders, heavily influenced by the politics of Stalinism, cling to their insistence that the "democratic" revolution in South Africa can — indeed must — come before the socialist revolution, the experience on the streets of Soweto and Alexandra confirms that a movement sufficiently strong, confident and co-ordinated to sweep away Botha's apartheid regime would also be strong enough simultaneously to sweep away what would remain of the machinery of capitalist rule in South Africa.

Botha is neither willing nor able to dismantle apartheid: should he make concessions beyond the point accepted by the Afrikaners who are his basic support, he will be elbowed aside by harder-line generals and police chiefs.

The new State of Emergency underlines the scale of the task the black masses confront. It confirms that the search for a "democratic" capitalism in South Africa is a futile quest. Those who nevertheless clearly seeek that objective include church leaders, headed by Bishop Desmond Tutu. Emerging from his talks with Botha after the Emergency had been declared, Tutu admitted:

"We agreed we were both South Africans and Christians and anti-Communists."

Tutu's vain search has been for sufficient concessions from Botha to defuse the black struggle and thus prevent the further development of class consciousness among blacks.

From their own standpoint, the ANC leaders share a similar approach — though in the townships their own militant rank and file supporters appear to have a very different outlook on the struggle. They apparently have access to some of the ANC's arsenal of weapons; the resultant militias and guerilla groupings may or may not operate along the traditional lines of ANC policy.

This division can be no surprise: the ANC, despite its deep roots in mass consciousness, has existed only clandestinely for decades. Over half of South Africa's black population is under 21 and has never heard a direct speech from the old guard ANC leaders. The extent to which they could be schooled and drilled in ANC politics which run plainly counter to their own experience has been severely limited.

There is no doubt, however, that the ANC (not least through the pivotal role played by the jailed Nelson Mandela and the courageous Winnie Mandela, who has broken through state restrictions on her activities) has a substantial lead in popular support over more overtly left-wing rival groupings such as the National Forum.



*Fascist leader Eugene Terre'Blanche*

But time and opportunities can be lost if the mass movement of black resistance does not move beyond the ANC's limited view of the South African revolution. It is vital that revolutionaries recognise the necessity to organise the black working class in its workplaces and communities as a rival, alternative state power to the apartheid state,

and the leading force in the struggle to smash apartheid and the capitalist system it serves.

That means building the block committees, workers' councils and soviet-type bodies to organise and defend the black communities and townships, and to co-ordinate the trade union and community struggles.



*(Above) Tutu and (right) Mandela*



# South Africa: Trade Union action now!

- **WHAT will Thatcher do?**
- **What will the Commonwealth bourgeois governments do?**
- **What will the United Nations do?**
- **What will Reagan do?**

The questions come thick and fast as the rapid sharpening of the struggle in South Africa forces Western governments to take a stand.

Among those most eagerly putting the question are the leaders of the British labour movement. A veritable platoon of union leaders can be guaranteed to turn out in tokenistic support of any lobby or demonstration calling for government economic sanctions. MPs queue up to put down embarrassing questions to Thatcher.

But what are *they* doing to build solidarity with the struggles of South African workers? What will the unions do to stop the flood of South African imports to Britain, the vital exports of technology that helps run the apartheid state, and the super-exploitation of black workers by subsidiaries of British and European-based multinationals?

What are the banking and finance unions doing to boycott the flows of funds to and from South African firms? What are they doing to expose the hidden deals and links that have kept Botha's economy functioning so far?

What are the telecom and postal unions doing: the transport workers, airline unions, and seamen who could take action to cut off all regular communications with Botha's butcher regime?

While Kinnock wrings his hands and urges Thatcher to act, what are the Labour Parties doing on the ground to build a real campaign, to bring the issues home to workers in their estates and workplaces?

To ask these questions is to know the answers: the unions at national level are doing scandalously little or nothing to boycott trade and dealings with South Africa — or even seriously to prepare for a boycott. Their demands on Thatcher are little more than a flimsy disguise for their own inaction. And given no lead from the top, few sections of workers are likely to chance their arms with sectional action.

## By JOHN LISTER

Some have: notably the Portsmouth hospital stores staff who imposed a determined boycott on South African food for hospital canteens — and endured victimisation and intimidation to maintain their action.

But elsewhere, even where unions are theoretically well-placed to enforce a boycott — as in Sainsburys and other food chains which sell perishable South African fruit and large volumes of other foodstuffs — there has been neither a call from the top nor action on the ground.

In contrast, the splendid struggle of the Irish Dunnes Stores strikers shows the major impact of even a small group of workers prepared to stand their ground on a matter of principle.

Of course the demand for government sanctions enables Neil Kinnock and Denis Healey to score points off Thatcher and expose once again the role of the British government in propping up apartheid.

But as reformist leaders no less committed than Callaghan, Wilson or Attlee to working within the framework of British imperialist capitalism, they are in no position to draw out the real essence of Thatcher's racist, imperialist political priorities in South Africa. There extent to which a new Labour government would completely break its economic links with apartheid remains an intriguing question that few have yet seriously asked.

Is it really surprising for black workers in Britain, or the USA to discover that the right wing Thatcher, Reagan and Kohl government are opposed to any sanctions that might hurt their countries' profitable investments and their loans to South Africa?

Perhaps workers should look rather more closely at the motives of some of those who most strongly call for sanctions — but direct that call at governments.

Among them is Bishop Tutu, whose main objective is to defuse a revolutionary upsurge in South Africa which could sweep way not only Botha's brutal regime but also the capitalist system it defends and with it the trappings of the church.

Is it any surprise — having

witnessed time and again the role of the Church as a "moderating" obstacle to socialist revolution — to find Tutu calling desperately upon Thatcher and Reagan to assist him by forcing concessions from Botha?

Similar objectives inspire the social democratic governments and their Kinnock leadership: the last thing these advocates of piecemeal Parliamentary reforms within the system wish to see is the revolutionary uprising of the black workers taking power in their hands: much better the process should be controlled from outside and above by imperialism pulling the strings.

In practice many of the institutions of Western capitalism are already voting with their cheque books — and withdrawing from further investment in an increasingly unstable South Africa. Such "sanctions" are having a real effect on the economy, and have helped the value of the Rand sharply downwards.

But these Western bosses would be equally hostile to a radical black government in South Africa: they could be appeased only by a savagely successful repression of the mass opposition to Botha, or the fostering of a reactionary black government even more committed to its links with imperialism than the neighbouring regime of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

It is entirely wrong for the British workers' movement to hinge its support to the South African workers on the financial calculations of multinationals and banks or the political double-talk of Commonwealth leaders like Rajiv Gandhi or Kenneth Kaunda (or maybe even the Queen?) forcing Thatcher into a grudging change of track.

Now is the time to redouble the fight in every union branch, stewards' committee and Labour Party to raise the call for an active campaign to build a labour movement blockade on South Africa as our contribution to the South African revolution.

When union leaders pontificate and labour leaders remonstrate with Thatcher, they must be put on the spot.

What will *they* do to mobilise British workers in action against apartheid?

# Sell-out deal rejected, but Dean let off the hook

# PRINT: STEP UP THE FIGHT!



BRENDA Dean was visibly shaken. But she was not the only one to be caught by surprise by the near 2-1 vote by all three print unions to reject Rupert Murdoch's £50m bid to buy off the 18-week News International dispute.

Few on the left had correctly gauged the strength of organisation and the success of the rank and file campaign against a deal which had the undistinguished tacit support of the SOGAT leadership.

Subsequent events suggest that even the *Morning Star* wing of the Communist Party, which campaigned strongly for a no vote and clearly wields considerable influence among the strikers, were caught on the hop by their own success — and left stranded without any strategy to advance the dispute at the SOGAT Conference a few days later.

However, much remains to be done to get the fight back on the road following that ballot, the clear message from printworkers — as loud and clear as that from the miners in their marathon struggle — is that the rank and file of the trade union movement is prepared to fight back against the bosses' offensive, despite the weight of legal restrictions, police violence and — in the case of SOGAT — bureaucratic lethargy loaded against them.

The strengths and limitations of the print unions' rank and file show many similarities with the "Scargillite" wing of the NUM which led the way for much of the Great Strike. In its commitment, its readiness to resort to traditional class struggle methods (indeed the percentage of sacked printers involved in picketing exceeds that of the striking miners), and its preparedness to challenge the various attempts to limit the dispute, the left in SOGAT and the NGA has



SOGAT mass meeting in Central Hall during the ballot campaign

developed and strengthened during the fight.

Many militants — including quite serious print union FoCs — have begun to recognise and admit the tactical error of failing to spread the News International fight to Fleet Street, and allowing print jobs to be picked off by one employer after another.

But the political weakness of these same forces — related to the political influence among them of the Communist Party and the *Morning Star* — is in their inability consistently to challenge or develop a coherent alternative to their bureaucratic leaders. Even now they know what must be done, they have hardly begun to organise the fight for these policies within the two unions.

For the CP/*Morning Star*, this approach is no accident: it flows from their long-standing opportunist deals with the largely right wing bureaucratic establishment which gave the CP influential position in the print unions (and now increasingly in the NUJ). This means that while occasionally pursuing different policies on this or that question, CP militants have always pulled back

from the fight to displace the existing leaderships of the print unions.

This same attitude was clear in the aftermath of the latest ballot. With Dean discredited, dismissing press speculation she might be forced to resign; with her line for the strike rejected; and with the Conference as a forum, the scene was set to press home the advantage.

Instead, the leaders of the "no" vote campaign immediately began to retreat from the fight, denying any intention of challenging Dean's leadership. Behind the scenes of the conference a wretched deal was stitched up, under which Dean made a pious statement about the News International dispute being centrally about jobs — in exchange for a unanimous vote for a resolution which hands exclusive control over the dispute to the right wing NEC, and restricts SOGAT to policies for the fight which do not break the law!

Having asserted for the first time the decisive voice of the rank and file over the leadership, the CP/*Morning Star* (with the *Star* selling over 250 copies a day among only 400



conference delegates) led the rush to surrender that influence. Worse than simply restoring the status quo prior to the ballot, the Conference resolution shuts the door on the steps vital to escalate the dispute, which include:

- The resimposition of the instruction to SOGAT's distribution workers across the country to boycott the handling of Murdoch's four titles;
- Mass picketing of the distribution depots to enforce this instruction, backed up by disciplinary action against those scabbing on it;
- Action to mobilise the SOGAT and NGA Fleet Street membership in supporting action to up the stakes and defeat Murdoch.

Instead of this necessary strengthening of the fight, the Conference — doubtless including dozens of delegates from depots which have scabbed from the outset on this crucial dispute — left sacked militants with a handful of banal phrases and a continuation of the largely ineffective individual "boycott" campaign.

Though Dean is now called upon by conference to press demands that the EETPU either call out its scab members at Wapping or be expelled from the TUC, there is little likelihood of SOGAT making this a real fight. NGA leader Tony Dubbins, supposedly committed to a similar policy, could be seen at the Special TUC conference of union executives engaged in friendly banter with EETPU Godfather Eric Hammond.

offer had been clear before the ballot was complete: Dubbins, having been pulled into line by mass meetings had played matters more cleverly than Dean, who plainly hopes that 18 weeks of increasing isolation and top level inaction would have been enough to demoralise sufficient SOGAT members to force through acceptance. But the NGA is equally lacking in any strategy to escalate the dispute — and with its Conference looming is not subject to any concerted rank and file campaign for increased action.

The other union key to the dispute is of course the NUJ, whose Annual Delegate Meeting voted by a narrow majority to urge its NEC to initiate disciplinary action against the 600 NUJ members scabbing on a union instruction not to work at Wapping.

Despite a declaration from the NEC to conference that it would begin action at the first opportunity, the May NEC meeting contemptuously reversed this and voted by a thumping 14-7 to take no action against the four scab chapels.

Behind this retreat lies a refusal by the right wing to confront the big Fleet Street chapels, backed up by another sordid stitch up between the right wing leadership (around General Secretary Harry Conroy)



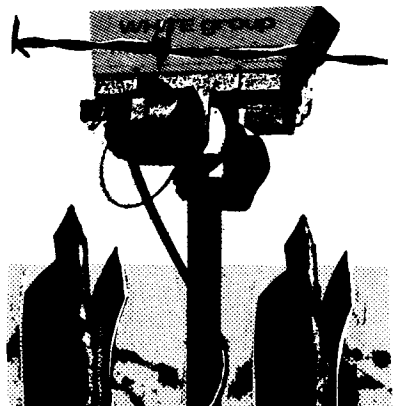
Murdoch

and a cabal of *Morning Star* supporters strategically placed in full-time positions. NUJ National organiser Mike Smith, a *Star* man, has been central to the continuation of NUJ links with and services to the scab chapels, in clear defiance of conference policy. Freelance Organiser Peta Van Den Bergh was placed at Conroy's special request in charge of the NUJ's tokenistic Wapping strike office — where her chief activity has consisted of seeking shift work for the 80-plus NUJ "refusniks" who have pulled out of Wapping.

It is indeed ironic that the *Morning Star* should be campaigning for a no vote in the SOGAT ballot while its comrades in the NUJ bureaucracy work so hard to service the Wapping scabs and divert the strikers from a real fight.

Instead of feeling in any way abashed by their overturn of conference mandates, the right wing on the NUJ NEC has begun to assert its new hard line, openly threatening a witch-hunt of the left wing sponsors of the controversial resolution on Libya passed at Conference.

Their arguments that if carefully nurtured and subjected to Mike Smith's Ruskin College rhetoric the scabs at Wapping might eventually



come out on strike have been shot to pieces by the fiasco of the *Sun* chapel — once lyingly vaunted as a model NUJ "closed shop" and a symbol of "chapel power".

Nineteen weeks after the dispute began, the chapel held a ballot and voted (with knees knocking like castanets) 94 to 80 not to continue working at Wapping. But their vote had nothing to do with the print dispute: it was a pathetic pressure ploy to extract more money from Murdoch.

Amazingly, it worked. Even though their scab FoC (and Prospective Labour candidate for Stevenage) Malcolm Withers admitted that those who abstained or voted against the proposal would probably even scab on their own wretched colleagues and ensure that the paper still came out, Murdoch responded to their plea by trebling his pay offer to an extra £40 per week and throwing in a range of other promises (including a gymnasium and a swimming pool behind the barbed wire!).

Predictably the chapel eagerly accepted the new offer, and the show of resistance to Murdoch collapsed. A similar display of spinelessness can be expected from the other Wapping NUJ scabs — among whom are a dozen or more members of the Communist Party.

Now is the most testing time for the print dispute. Having turned the right way at the crossroads of the ballot, the rank and file have become stuck at traffic lights, where they are finding that their leaders have dug up the road forward.

The same basic line is needed now as was needed — and rejected — at the start of the struggle:

- Trade union action to shut down Murdoch's distribution. Defy the courts!
- Spread the fight to Fleet Street — demand solidarity from other printworkers!
- Kick out the scabs in the main unions SOGAT, NGA and NUJ. Expel the EETPU from the TUC.
- Mass pickets of distribution depots and TNT warehouses. Demand the TGWU take action against scab drivers!
- Revitalise and spread the support committees that have organised local meetings, cash and picketing!

ONE solitary victimised miner who staged a picket outside Yorkshire's Markham Main colliery succeeded in turning back 1,200 of his fellow miners. Management claimed that the day's action had cost £800,000 in lost production — and agreed to talks on the sacking of the miner, Mike Silcock.

# Why the silence on the Middle East?

By JACK GOLDBERG

**SOMETHING** rum is happening in Libya. According to most Western media Gadaffi is in trouble. If the poor man survives a mysterious sickness or terminal depression, he would still have to wrestle with mutineers and power-mad fellow officers or face the wrath of his people.

There is no doubt that under a smokescreen of a disinformation campaign, US imperialism is still hellbent on creating conditions for the overthrow of Gadaffi. But a thicker smokescreen is thrown by the same Western media on several events in the Arab world, many of which directly triggered by the US attack on Libya. Even when those events have been reported, they were purported to be isolated incidents of little consequence.

The reality is quite different. For the first time in many years, the Arab masses were united in their hatred of US imperialism and their condemnation of their bourgeoisies for their co-operation with the imperialist strategists.

While the collaboration between the Arab regimes and US imperialism was by no means nakedly open — Egypt having resisted US prompting to attack Libya — their covert approval of the removal of a boisterous and dangerous neighbour was plain to be seen.

The powerful anti-imperialist sentiment engulfed the entire region and started erupting in many countries. The reaction of the Arab rulers was swift and in many cases decisive.

In neighbouring Tunisia — which a few years back almost merged with Libya — the Army was used to quench peaceful demonstrations in blood. Dictator for life President Bourguiba grasped the opportunity to deliver a powerful blow to his opposition.

Historically tied to US interests, Bourguiba has, for the past few years, been preparing his succession in the face of powerful unrest. Having repressed in blood several bread riots, he has recently unleashed a sharp offensive against the



*Gaddafi*

organisations of the working class, the main trade union UGTT in particular.

This time, he moved against what he perceived to be his strongest protagonists, the nationalist bourgeoisie. Ahmed Mestiri, General Secretary of the MDS (mouvement des Démocrates Socialistes) was arrested and charged with sedition. If convicted, he would be debarred from the presidential election. Bourguiba's plans can still backfire as the trial of Mestiri is becoming a cause célèbre and threatens to fuel more unrest.



*Egyptian Premier Mubarak*

In neighbouring Egypt, the mood of frustration and defiance could have exploded into massive rebellion. The scars of the February uprising were too fresh and the regime still thirsty for blood. During the gun battles that raged through Giza, Ismailia, Sohag, Asgout, the industrial area of Helwan and Madinnt al Nasr, east of Cairo, dozens of conscripts were killed.

The young policemen who rebelled were conscripts attached to the Central Security forces for three years. They total about a quarter of a million and are used to supplement the regular police force. Drawn from the poor peasants, their poor pay was too small to keep them, let alone their families. A decision by the regime to extend their service from three to four years sparked a battle that lasted for several days. To the bloody repression that ensued, the working class responded by demonstrations and strikes.

Despite the crushing of the uprising, Mubarak was only too conscious of the consequences of any collaboration with US imperialism against Libya. This is the simple reason why he declined the invitation.

The final country where the state had to use all its might to crush demonstrations was Jordan. The incident was confined to the University of Yarmouk and only involved students. The ferocity and the precision of the repression lifted any doubts about the preparedness of King Hussein to confront any dissent.

This was followed by a crackdown in the Jordanian Communist Party. While formally illegal since the fifties, the Party has been more or less tolerated. This time 23 of its leading members, including Fayek Warrad, its General Secretary, were arrested.

There is no doubt that the anti-imperialist feeling — reminiscent of the Suez crisis thirty years ago — is yet to develop. Arab rulers are conscious of the power of their masses and are fully prepared to meet any act of dissent with blood. Unlike the fifties which saw the rise of radical left nationalist regimes in response to, and to fit into the aspirations of the masses, the movement that may develop today would be spontaneous, powerful, but also shortlived in the absence of a revolutionary party of the working class.



# Postal workers hit back at speed-up

BY GARTH FRANKLAND

**ATTACKS** on working conditions and on jobs have spread from one public service and nationalised industry to another, often as a preliminary to privatisation. In April the Post Office management in Leeds opened up the latest round. The result almost brought on a national strike.

Post Office management tried to cut staff hours worked from 24,500 to 15,500. They later upped this target to 19,500. In response sorting office workers and delivery workers did the basic 43 hours, effectively banning overtime.

Chaos ensued. Post office boxes were sealed up and 720 casuals were taken on as scabs. Staff hours rose by an extra 30,000. The Union of Communication Workers said that known criminals were recruited and no proper training was given. The result was increased backlog and many items of mail going missing.

Leeds was the pilot study for an examination of productivity and staffing levels which the Post Office and the Union of Communication Workers were discussing. The Union's national officials and the management in Leeds had had many meetings over the last years to prepare the scheme. The vicious workstudy and stop watch teams were allowed to operate with the union's national approval. Harry Jones, the UCW's national officer, played a day-to-day role in preparing the productivity deal.

Up to the scheme being introduced the Union had exercised powerful local control over overtime worked and over rotas. All this was to go. Instead work schedules based on a time and motion survey — so detailed that it eliminated thinking time in the mail sort operation — were introduced.



PHOTO: Leeds Other Paper

Leeds postal workers on picket line

The effective power of the union was to be broken. It was to be replaced by speed up. The sweetener was an offer of up to £20 per week. Of course there would be little or no overtime, combined with a possibility of split shifts.

People who had never worked night shift were suddenly to be put on nights without even a show of consultation. Part of the new arrangement of hours was to be 4 hours on Saturday morning, so that workers would only have 1 night off a week.

After a secret ballot the Union staged a 24 hour stoppage. It was a hundred per cent successful. The management refused to accept the workers back unless they signed an "oath of allegiance". The 2,000 refused, a number were suspended, and the strike continued. The UCW took the Post Office to the High Court to seek an injunction so that its

members could return. The High Court refused the injunction, so losing the union members a vital 24 hours to spread the strike.

Despite this, over 10,000 Postal Workers joined the strike, paralysing the mail throughout Yorkshire. There was no clear lead on spreading the strike from the national leadership. However, because of the Union of Communication Workers were holding their national conference in Bournemouth during this vital week it was impossible for the National Executive Council to stich up a deal behind the backs of the members.

As the strike was extended some of the casuals joined it. The government responded with threats of privatisation. The General Secretary of the Union, Alan Tuffin, was under enormous pressure to negotiate a compromise with the Post Office before the strike became national.

So were the Post Office, who are

**"The remarkable thing about the strike was the commitment of the postal workers in West Yorkshire. The Management precipitated the all-out strike by suspending postmen who wouldn't cross the picket lines in Leeds. Their aim is to introduce casual workers in place of overtime.**

**"Postal workers will have to wear plastic tags where all clocking on and clocking off times for breaks, etc.. are recorded by supervisors. Management locked workers in the GPO in Huddersfield and threatened us with emergency powers under the Official Secrets Act to get the Post out. Local postal workers feel betrayed by the union leaders who have given the Post Office what they want; the right to change rosters when they choose and to hire and fire casual workers at will.**

**Postal Worker, Huddersfield GPO, Supporter of Socialist Viewpoint.**

highly profitable and were in a position to make concessions as long as they did not concede over the right to control overtime and over the new work practices.

Tuffin never challenged on any of these questions. After all, for the last 12 months he had been negotiating them away!

The management finally offered, and the Leeds strikers accepted, a bonus scheme of up to £20 per week, along with up to one and a half hours extra unpaid rest time per week.

This was a demand which the management in an advertisement to

staff and in their letter given to all staff members had said they would never concede — but it has to be paid for with the loss of up to £7 bonus.

From June 23, however, the new speeded-up working practices start. The Leeds Postal workers may have won a partial victory; but they could have gained everything. They showed they had real power.

The employment of over 700 casuals in a very short space of time is a new feature of this dispute. Postal Workers are afraid this could mean a growing trend towards the casualisation of the Postal Service.

Many unemployed people refused to take up job offers because they saw it as scabbing. However the recruitment of 700 so quickly makes it even more urgent to establish a strong organisation among the unemployed, linked to the Trade Unions. The "welfare benefits" approach of the Trades Council Unemployed Centres and the Claimants' Union must be superseded by a political struggle against the Tories and unemployment.

## Union conferences '86

# Blood, sweat, and a charge to the right

IT'S difficult to describe the mood of the majority of delegates to this year's NUPE Conference without sounding like I'm exaggerating.

Just two years ago, the last time the union met in Bournemouth, a resolution opposing the Witch-hunt was carried overwhelmingly by the Conference. This year a resolution supporting expulsions was carried by a majority of somewhere in the region of ten to one.

The shift to the right has to be seen as much more dramatic and significant than in any other section of the labour movement. Remember in the early eighties when NUPE was regarded as the "Bennite Union"? Remember when Tom Sawyer was regarded as a left winger on the Labour Party NEC? Remember Alice in Wonderland?

The fact is that the bulk of those delegates who voted against the witch-hunt in '84 were there again this year — baying for the blood of anyone opposing the NEC recommendation. What needs to be looked at by the left is why this has happened.

Much of the union's current position can be seen as going hand in hand with the line of "Keep your head down and wait for a Kinnock government."

The union's refusal to lead a national battle against privatisation, or mobilise support for the Barking Hospital strikers in their 18-month fight, and the ridicule and

## NUPE

By TERRY STRONG

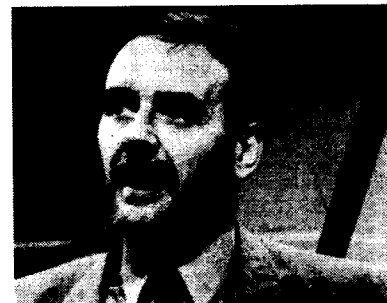
marginalisation of those activists who have fought against the leadership have now led to full-scale centralisation of the union bureaucracy.

It would appear that there is now a certain amount of paranoia amongst the union leaders, a paranoia fuelled by the momentum of the witch-hunt — in particular the witch-hunt against Liverpool District Labour Party — which is virtually Tom Sawyer's personal project.

I don't intend to go through the history of NUPE's role in Liverpool but the union's position was highlighted by an attempt by a number of full-time officials from the Scottish division to disrupt and break up a broad left meeting featuring Derek Hatton on the platform.

Fortunately, Hatton is no mug and he's not afraid to mix it himself. David Skinner, ex-Clay Cross councillor, really hit the nail on the head when he described the wreckers as "Tom Sawyer's boot-boys".

Those same people who rant and rave about alleged intimidation by *Militant* were leading the intimidation of left-wingers at this year's NUPE conference. There were reports of two physical assaults by full-time officers on left wing delegates, including one by a full-



Tom Sawyer

time officer on an NEC member, which apparently went unpunished by the leadership.

NUPE Conference has always been a bit of a rough house, but the level of intimidation and violence this year, and the quarters it originated from fit in with the political lurch to the right and the tightening up of the bureaucratic machinery.

For the left in the union these are tough times: and with the leadership hell bent on securing a Kinnock victory no matter what the cost to the membership things aren't going to improve this side of a general election.

For activists, efforts must now be concentrated on building support at District and Divisional level where structures aren't so authoritarian and where there's actually a good chance of making things happen. It's important that a solid base is created which can be built on after the general election, and which will in the meantime increase the divisional influence of the left in the union. New

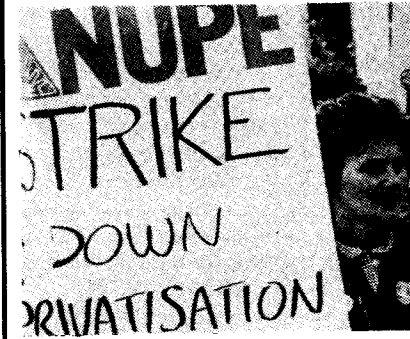


# Union conferences '86

energy also needs to be channelled into the broad left.

The current LCC-style policies of NUPE are built on fairly shaky foundations — resting very heavily on a layer of full-time officials. There is no doubt that through consistent work the left will eventually begin to claw back the lost ground. But this is not going to happen overnight.

Left wingers are advised to pack a crash helmet for next year's conference!



**Extracts from an underground satirical leaflet distributed clandestinely at NUPE conference and aimed at exposing the politics of NUPE's new witch-hunting leadership clique.**

"Welcome to NUPE conference, 1986! This is the first publication of EURO-REVISION and it is hoped that there will be many more to follow.

"EURO-REVISION hopes to span all political views inside and outside the Labour Party, from Communist to SDP in an effort to protect the Union's full-time machine from Militant/Trotskyist criticism and subversion." (...)

"Last year's NUPE conference was a milestone for EURO-REVISION and its supporters in the Social

Democratic, Labour and Communist Parties. NUPE placed itself to the fore of the campaign to rid the movement of Militant and its supporters. Since this time NUPE members were successful in sabotaging Liverpool City Council's campaign on jobs and services. Now, thanks to EURO-VISIONists in Liverpool, the Labour Party is intent on purging its Liverpool proletariat. A tremendous step forward in the battle against 'class struggle'." (...)

"We must live with the times,

comrades. No longer need we rally around sexist, macho slogans like 'Organise, Educate, Agitate' — this must be buried alongside 'red' socialism and cloth cap images of the working class. The new slogan for progress must be 'Contemplate, Negotiate and Pontificate'. Leave the serious business to the professionals and the hard decisions to the members.

"We must hoist the new grey flag heralding the grey and sombre dawn of more years of Social Democracy, and proudly proclaim 'Communists of the CPGB, SDP and Labour Parties work together for a Caring Capitalism'." (...)

"More EURO-REVISIONISTS are needed to work inside the Labour Party to purge it of its red socialists and Militants. Don't worry about being a member of the CPGB — dual membership is now possible if you denounce the lefties loud enough. Blind eyes will be turned. Alternately subscribe to the Labour Campaign for euroCommunism (LCC) who have developed a superb disinformation and propaganda machine to match the Militant menace. They are also looked upon favourably by the Union and Labour Party Leadership. The other advantage is that some sections of the party still look upon the LCC as left-wing."

## Build power of base over APEX!

By RICHARD PAINE

**THE crisis of the trade union movement is partially reflected in the current "merger mania". Union bureaucrats are increasingly being forced by declining membership and other effects of the employers' offensive into abandoning or compromising their previously jealously-guarded "fiefdoms".**

How far the results of the current phase of this process will meet the needs of union members — often frustrated by crippling inter-union divisions in particular industries — will be decided by major battles within certain unions over the next few months. The outcome could well be new clearer political divisions between the larger confederations that emerge, which in turn will potentially put new strains on the "unity" of the TUC.

The rank and file pressure for merger was obvious at the Annual Conference of the staff union APEX,

held in Blackpool from May 3 to 6. A composite resolution, moved by Trafford Park Massey-Ferguson Branch, urged that the union should actively seek amalgamation with "other trade unions of a similar industrial base." Despite the opposition of the APEX Executive Council — determined to manoeuvre cautiously behind the scenes rather than flout their wares in public — the motion was carried by 38,700 to 32,860 on a card vote.

Although the options for APEX weren't openly canvassed at Conference, there are effectively four open to the union:

- merging with the right-dominated General & Municipal (GMBATU), to revamp their weak clerical section MATSA;
- similarly joining the rapidly right-moving TGWU, whose white-collar section ACTSS is also currently a poor relation of its manual sections;
- forming a giant predominantly staff trade union with ASTMS and TASS.

These two — the CP-dominated TASS, fresh from taking over the metal mechanics and tobacco workers; and ASTMS beset by a continuing financial crisis — are in merger talks which could well lead to a single centre/left-leaning union next year.

•amalgamating with the EETPU and/or AEU (previously AUEW). A merger between these two themselves is now, with the election of the right's candidate Bill Jordan as AEU General Secretary, a distinct probability.

It is more than likely that the new 2-year APEX Executive Council — still right-dominated despite the success of left candidates Graham Eastwood (Trafford M-F) and Lynette Savings (Westminster TUPs) standing for the two national seats in this year's elections — will want to become a semi-autonomous staff section within a merged EETPU/AEU. Such an amalgamation would of course strengthen the yellow "business-

unionism" current rapidly developing in the TUC.

The role of socialists in APEX will clearly be to argue against this option, pointing out the openly pro-employer stance of the EETPU maintained by its repressive internal regime. Activists will have to campaign hard against such a merger and in favour of an agreed alternative.

Such a campaign is very winnable (any final decision will be put to membership ballot). But the question is once again that of organising the rank and file. The need to develop an open and accessible left organisation within APEX has been fudged time and time again over the past few years, not least due to the reluctance of the Communist Party to come out openly in favour. As a result the left's progress has been stuttering and limited.

This year's Conference was subdued, particularly so in the debate on accepting government funding for union ballots. The EC's position in favour was carried by an overwhelming majority.

But on occasions Conference bit back. A motion from GEC Coventry demanding that APEX withdraw from all co-operation with YTS was lost by just 37,840 to 32,910. The Executive was clearly taken aback by the strength of feeling from Branches against the Scheme.

The intimidating control exercised by previous President Dennis Howell on Conference debates has been replaced by the more subtle, but no less politically conscious President Ken Smith. This was seen clearly in the emergency debate on the proposed GEC takeover of Plessey.

A motion from GEC Coventry demanding a campaign for an integrated telecom industry, including as a priority the renationalisation of BT, was asked to be remitted to the EC because of their difficulties with that particular clause. Given Kinnock's bleating about the "problems" of renationalising BT, that wasn't surprising. What was surprising was the closeness of the vote when the mover refused to remit. Smith judged the motion defeated on a show of

hands; but many delegates and visitors were of the opposite opinion.

The right wing's hold on APEX isn't as strong as it used to be, despite the rightward shift within the trade unions generally. Having said that, there is still a lot of work to be done by militants in the union.

There is a basis for that work. Roy Hattersley was this year's "guest speaker", and a fringe meeting organised on the same day in the name of Labour Party Black Sections and the Labour Committee on Ireland — with Kevin Scally speaking, recently expelled from Hattersley's Sparkbrook constituency for exposing corruption — attracted upwards of 40 people despite a mysterious last-minute room cancellation.

The merger issue is likely to come to dominate APEX's internal debates over the next year or so (it has hung silently like a huge shadow over them for the past few). The issues at stake are key to the future development of the trade union movement. The left this time cannot afford to fail.

# Animals welcome, but...

**GMBU**

**"THE unemployed are OK — as long as they stay out of our union."**

That was the practical gist of the message from this year's GMBU Conference at Scarborough, which voted on Monday against recruiting the unemployed... and then agreed with General Secretary John Edmonds on the Tuesday that unions should "show they care about the jobless."

The argument against organising the unemployed spelled out the classical bureaucratic objection to organising the underprivileged and oppressed: they are not a good source of contributions income — and if they *did* join, they might take over!

The GMBU not only decided to keep unemployed workers out of the union, but to retain its existing reactionary rule that members made redundant could only hold or retain positions as union officers if they maintained full contribution payments.

Fearing "a change in the balance of our branches", Edmonds warned that an influx of unemployed would cause severe strains and would call for rewriting of much of the rulebook.

# Keep out the unemployed!

The reality is that the union bureaucracy of the GMBU and of all the TUC unions have stubbornly resisted all calls to recruit and organise the 4 million army of unemployed or to take up their problems and demands.

For similar reasons the GMBU, TGWU and other unions have fought shy of any serious attempt to unionise low-paid and highly-exploited hotel and catering workers, who now make up 10% of the workforce but who are almost entirely without union protection.

In exchange for their membership subscriptions, such workers would place heavy demands on union officials to take up a host of grievances and problems, plunging the unions into a succession of confrontations with management. This is hardly in line with the politics of the "new realism". Union bureaucrats have not surprisingly preferred not to recruit such

potentially troublesome youthful, female and black members.

The GMBU's answer for the unemployed? Shunt them into the demoralising and hidebound sidings of the TUC "unemployed centres", where they will be kept isolated from any real trade union or political campaigning. Edmonds also favours an extension of the GMBU's advice service for its unemployed members.

Meanwhile as an adept exponent of the trendy Kinnock style of raising "issues" in non-political fashion, Edmonds got to his feet the following day to argue for unions to broaden their horizons, to show their concern for the unemployed, and to move into territory monopolised by Bob Geldof, Greenpeace and animal rights campaigners. "Bureau-Aid" is on its way.

Perhaps the new slogan for the low paid and unemployed should be "It's a dog's life in the GMBU"?



## JENKINS SEES RED

**WHILE many union leders have been revelling in a marked swing to the right in conferences and postal ballot results, Clive Jenkins found this year's ASTMS Annual Delegate Conference no picnic.**

Time and again the National Executive was battered and rebuffed by conference delegates for policies which it had adopted under pressure from Jenkins.

Jenkins himself suffered the humiliation of seeing Ian Gibson, a relatively unknown hard-left challenger, pick up 17,000 votes in the ballot for the union's place on the TUC General Council — a post Jenkins has held for decades.

And to add insult to these injuries, despite his deliberate witch-hunting of the hard left as "Trotskyists" at last year's conference and again in his election address for the General Council post, Jenkins saw one of the union's best known Trotskyists, Sue Lister, win one of the two National Seats on the NEC, topping the poll in a postal ballot (see interview below).

For Jenkins, who had lurched further to the right in the period since the last Conference, things were never going to be easy. His abrupt switch of line on the General Council on the issue of accepting government money for postal ballots — in line with the AEU, the EETPU and Tory legislation, but in contradiction to TUC and ASTMS policy — had proved influential in tipping the balance towards a wholesale climb-down before the aggressively right wing AUEW.

He sought to brazen this out by boasting of it in his General Council election address:

**"In 1985 I opposed the expulsion of unions claiming public money for secret postal balloting. I argued strongly and successfully for freedom to claim the money — and for universal secret postal balloting including ASTMS. (...) The tiny groupings of Trotskyists in ASTMS have destested all this."**

So apparently did no less than 17,000 individual members who plumped for former SWP member Ian Gibson, as against the 41,000 who voted to keep their General Secretary on the General Council!

Jenkins' other major policy switch, this time pushed through a compliant NEC, had been to reverse the union's stand on reinstatement and amnesty for victimised miners, throwing ASTMS's block vote behind Neil Kinnock's reactionary line at last year's Labour Party conference.

### ASTMS

By JACK DOBERMAN



Clive Jenkins

ASTMS Conference delegates retaliated against this by carrying not only a vote of censure against the NEC, but also a Rule Change to ensure that policy decisions at TUC and Labour conferences will from now on be in the hands of the elected delegation and not the National Executive.

From there on in the conference became a bruising experience for a heavily discredited Jenkins leadership and the NEC that had acquiesced to his policies. Despite NEC opposition, a radical call for nationalisation of the telecom industry under control of workers and the government was strongly carried; and there were further wounding body blows on representation at the

Scottish TUC and on officer coverage.

So far out of key was the NEC that even its minimal call for increased subscriptions was thrown out. Its support might even have been a kiss of death for the surprisingly defeated resolution in support of the surcharged Lambeth councillors, despite an excellent speech from Ted Knight. On the final day, no less than six paragraphs in the NEC report on the NHS were referred back.

It would be wrong to exaggerate the significance of these reverses. Many were a retrospective slap on the wrist rather than sweeping new policy commitments. The powerful ASTMS bureaucracy remains intact, and Jenkins is by no means on the ropes, let alone down for the count.

No doubt he will try to put the embarrassment of the 1986 Conference behind him. But the paranoid anxiety at the thought of 17,000 "Trotskyists" out there wanting him off the TUC, a Trotskyist on the NEC to interfere with the rubber-stamping of his policies, and the loss of direct control over the casting of block votes at this year's Labour and TUC conferences will not help him rest easy!

**ONE of the most forthright opponents of the postal ballot system for elections in ASTMS has just won the first postal ballot for a seat on the union's National Executive.**

Radiographer **SUE LISTER**, who openly describes her politics as "Trotskyist", had argued in her election address that the Union should have implemented its policy decision to hold workplace ballots, with a postal vote only for isolated individual members.

But she topped the list of 12 candidates in the election for one of the two National Seats on the 24-person ASTMS Executive, becoming only its third woman member. The other seats are allocated by Division and Region.

She speaks here to **SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT**.

**SV:** Why do you think you won this time round?

**SL:** There are a number of reasons — some of them simply organisational. It was an advantage this time that the sitting NEC member was standing down, so the field was wide open. After several years on the Standing Orders Committee I was already quite well known, and I got a lot of

branch nominations, which help people decide in a postal ballot.

When I have stood before under the old system of voting by show of hands at Branch meetings, I basically got the activist vote and the left vote. This time I kept that support but collected more.

One thing nobody took into account is the number of health service members of ASTMS. There are 32,000, and I was the only health worker standing. There is also some crossover of support to other public sector groups, such as universities.

And though there was another woman candidate I obviously got a large percentage of the women's vote. But of course it was not just a sectional vote: everybody received the election address along with their ballot paper, and I made no secret of my position as the farthest left of all 12 candidates. I think the result surprised everyone. But it is the first time the election has been run like this.

**SV:** *What is your function on the NEC?*

**SL:** My constituency is the whole of ASTMS — England, Wales, Scotland and the whole of Ireland. As the National member I am entitled to attend every one of the union's 16 Divisional Councils. It is a 2-year position: I'll have to try to get round as many as possible.

**SV:** *What were the issues that you think won you support?*

**SL:** What was obvious at the Conference was the issue of democracy and accountability. Who do our representatives represent? The main theme was the NEC not carrying out Conference policy. As I point out, even my election should have been by workplace rather than a postal ballot, but the NEC ignored the decision.

Many members were angry to see ASTMS vote two different ways last year on the miners: one way at our own conference and at the TUC; and the opposite way at Labour Party conference. Who decides these policies? Who do they represent? I stood on the platform of a union leadership to represent the activists of the union, not a select few. That won me support.

**SV:** *The Conference raised these same questions?*

**SL:** Yes. It showed time and again how out of touch the NEC has become from the wishes of active members. This was reflected in the Rule Change giving TUC and Labour conference delegations the right to decide policy when an issue raised has not been voted on at ASTMS conference. The NEC last year instructed the delegation on how to vote.



People were generally angry at the NEC not implementing conference policy.

**SV:** *What do you want to do as a woman activist on the NEC?*

**SL:** Obviously now I can take up issues of women at Divisional council meetings and schools throughout the union, though I will also raise many other issues affecting the membership as a whole.

My election has increased women's representation on the NEC by 50% — there are now only 3 women out of 24 NEC members. There are no women's seats, though the NEC has on paper quite a good policy on women, and tried unsuccessfully to establish women's seats at the last Rules Revision conference.

But the problems of women members have never been properly discussed except by women activists. This means they are still not taken seriously in the union as a whole.

I will see it as my job to give support to isolated women activists and to raise issues which up till now have been almost regarded as taboo.

**SV:** *One taboo topic up to now in ASTMS, like many other unions, has been Ireland.*

**SL:** Yes, we've had a bit of progress on that. Last year we had the motion unanimously passed at Conference supporting ASTMS member Maire O'Shea against the frame-up trial she faced. She was later acquitted.

This year a motion was passed which encourages education and open discussion on the situation in Ireland at Branch and Divisional level. Of course this is not a policy on Ireland; we need to follow through to make sure that the discussion takes place, and that there is a motion to next year's conference spelling out a clear policy.

This year there was also an excellent fringe meeting organised by the ASTMS Irish campaign — Associated Staffs for a United Ireland. Over 100 came to hear Bernadette McAliskey and Maire O'Shea. This was a very big step forward on previous years.

**SV:** *What is your policy?*

**SL:** I am well known for calling for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

**SV:** *How do you see the fight in defence of the NHS?*

**SL:** One advantage of a broad union like ASTMS is it gives its health service members an opportunity to link up with sections of workers in industry and elsewhere in the public sector. I will try to promote this to break down the isolation of health workers and strengthen the fight.

**SV:** *What do you think ASTMS should be doing about unemployment?*

**SL:** A strong resolution was passed at this year's conference, and the union

already offer full rights to our unemployed members. They can play a full part in their branches without paying subs — though this applies only to those made redundant: we cannot recruit unemployed workers. We have a Special National Advisory Committee dealing with issues facing the unemployed.

But there has not been sufficient fight against unemployment and in defence of jobs. We must mobilise the union to prevent even more job losses.

**SV:** What would you say are the tasks now of the left in ASTMS?

**SL:** At the moment the left is fairly

fragmented and disorganised: we have seen some people building a "narrow" rather than a Broad Left.

It's quite easy to put down motions at Branches or even getting resolutions adopted at conference: the real fight is to get those policies implemented. The left in general has been very poor at following through on issues even where it has won.

Of course the number of industrial sectors is a problem. Some left wingers build a base in one sector, but fail to follow through the overall fight: others focus on national policies, but don't get them carried out to their own branches.

Up to now the Broad Left has only

really organised to intervene in the annual conference. This makes it difficult to build as an organisation that can function all the year round.

The fight for new leadership in the union must be followed through seriously. The new decision for workplace balloting to replace the old system of voting by show of hands could mean that some — even all of the existing NEC members — could be vulnerable. Next year all but two of the NEC are up for re-election: we could see some major changes.

The left needs to think carefully — and get organised!

## Rail: Spread the action!

**AT the end of June (after we go to press) the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, and the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), are balloting their members in British Rail workshops (BREL) over industrial action against closures and job losses.**

Having already reduced the workforce from 35,000 in 1981 to 22,000 today with the closures of Ashford, Shildon, Temple Mills and nearly all of Swindon and Horwich works, BREL is aiming to axe another 6,000 jobs by 1989. The main places affected are Doncaster, Eastleigh, Glasgow Springburn and Wolverton with the massive "rationalisation" programmes, but 16 regional maintenance depots are due to close with many others hit by cuts.

This latest round of cuts goes beyond what was proposed in the worst of several options put forward in the Serpell report commissioned by the Tories to put the railways on a "competitive" basis. BR management, rather than implement Serpell directly as an overall plan, has chosen to introduce it piecemeal, sector by sector, mainly to avoid across-the-board opposition by the Unions.

The cuts are a further step along the line to the privatisation of BREL. Sealink and the hotels have already been sold off and the plan is to separate the maintenance section (important, but "unprofitable") from the rebuild and heavy repair section which can then be sold off. Next in line are catering and the lucrative commuter lines.

While calling for a "yes" vote in the ballot and urging branches and districts to produce material and call rallies in support of action, the NUR leadership refuses to draw any lessons from their failure to win support from guards for action over Driver Only Operation last year.

### By PETE FIRMIN

While the guards were asked to vote in isolation from other sectors (with guards in some areas already sacked for taking action and the Union leadership proposing nothing in their support) and no knowledge of what sort of industrial action was being proposed, other sectors were to ballot later and separately over action.

Now with job losses and the rundown of maintenance continuing in all sectors, the engineering workers are expected to put themselves in the firing line! Information from BR itself shows, for instance, that the loss of the contract for Post Office parcels will mean around 400 jobs lost on stations.

The Union leaders lack any strategy beyond a knee-jerk reaction to announcements by BR. No demands are put forward which can unify the workforce against job losses, such as a reduction in the working week with no loss of pay

together with a serious campaign to fight the appallingly low rates of basic pay on BR which result in long hours being worked.

While campaigning for strike action by the workshops sector militants on the rail must argue for this action to be spread against all job losses and ensure that management are not again allowed to pick off one section. The recent Guards and Shunters conference showed the way forward by voting unanimously to refuse to move rolling stock blacked by any workshop taking action.

If the workshops vote yes for action, then there must be an immediate move to elect strike committees in each works or depot and co-ordinate these locally and nationally so that they can determine and co-ordinate the action to be taken. These strike committees can then make it a priority to approach other sections for supporting action and begin to roll back the massive job losses on the railways.

## Save shipyard jobs!

**MASSIVE job cuts in the Tyneside shipbuilding industry are to throw another 2,500 workers on the dole, in an area where 20% of the workforce is already unemployed.**

The latest to face the axe have been 1,000 workers at the Swan Hunter yard, who recently staged a militant defence of their established conditions.

But militancy in the shipyards remains surprisingly high despite the devastation brought about by seven years of Thatcherism and the world shipping slump: in Barrow, 5,000 shipbuilders have only ended a three-week pay strike after securing a

deal worth an estimated 14 per cent

Yet unlike the job threats in British Rail which have been met by strong condemnation from union leaders and a ballot on strike action, the latest shipyard sackings have drawn forth no serious response from the unions.

The fight to open up the books of British Shipbuilders and of the privatised, profitable but still job-slashing warship yards, to expose their long-term plans to attack the workforce must be urgently taken up by shipyard stewards, and linked to the fight for occupations backed by supporting strikes across the industry to oppose the redundancies.



# Fighting Yorkshire pit closures

By SUE OWEN

IN the wake of the defeat of the miners' strike, many people must be secretly wondering if it's even worth trying to fight pit closures. As a leaflet put out by the Yorkshire Miners' Campaign Group says:

"Jobs have been lost by the thousand, members have voted to shut their own pits. The NUM is no longer effectively able to bargain nationally because of the UDM split. The rightward drift in the labour movement is influencing all of us... the pressure is on for us to be 'realistic' and just about everything seems to be sacrificed to the sacred cow of electing a Labour Government." Yet many miners want to fight back.

The Yorkshire Miners' Campaign Group started when a number of rank and file NUM members came together in the last months of the strike to try and halt the decline of the strike. They now see their fight as being within the NUM, to rebuild the fighting strength of the union.

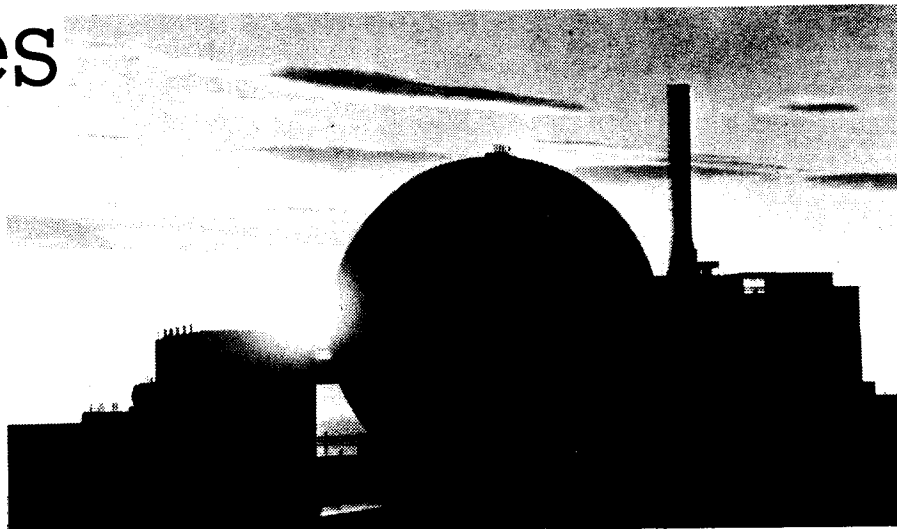
They aim to do this by bringing together activists still keen to fight to boost morale, share ideas and organise against continuing management attacks, such as pit closures.

In the successful fight of Darfield Main against closure last year, the Campaign Group threw its weight behind the campaign of the branch and the community, offering resources, contacts and publicity. For example the entire route of the Yorkshire Miners' Gala march was flyposted with "Darfield's Not Done" posters.

Similarly in today's campaigns against closure at Kinsley Drift and Cadeby: the Campaign Group can reinforce what Branch activists are doing, organising Yorkshire-wide publicity and support and helping to put pressure on the union's Area leadership to take action.

The meetings of the Campaign Group are organised by miners for miners and are democratic and open in atmosphere. Women from Women Against Pit Closures and other women attend.

Inevitably various left tendencies are present and get a fair hearing, but none is allowed to domineer or dominate. Speakers have attended



*Yorks miners have been campaigning against nuclear power.*

from the NUM in Kent and Notts., from other disputes (including the printers and Silentnight) and other struggles (South Africa and Broadwater Farm).

The Campaign Group were the main mobilisers in Yorkshire for the March 2 demonstration for the sacked miners and they have sent busloads to Wapping to support the printers.

At the last meeting I attended, about 50 were present, mostly rank and file miners, including some new faces, and about ten women. The meeting heard Billy Etherington and Ed Fredenburgh from the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign.

There was a lively discussion showing strong feeling in favour of a high campaigning profile for the

sacked and imprisoned miners and against confining activities to fundraising.

The contrast between the rank and file enthusiasm at this meeting and the sterile bureaucratic rhetoric at the previous day's National Justice for Mineworkers' Campaign meeting was quite remarkable. As the Campaign Group leaflet says:

"The evidence is clear... the network of activists that was thrown up by the strike still exists if only in patches and without a united voice. A handful of committed union members can begin to turn the tide at each branch and help rebuild the fighting spirit of the union as a whole."

## Todd pressed by hard right

By BILL PETERS

**IT looks as if the hard right majority in the leadership of the TGWU is far from satisfied with the speed with which Ron Todd has been moving in their direction in recent months.**

These pressures emerged as a remarkable confrontation at the quarterly meeting of the union's General Executive Council last week. Todd was snubbed when the meeting refused to accept his nominee for both the Labour Party National Executive and the General Council of the TUC — Bill Morris.

Morris's candidature for one of the T&G's four automatic seats on the General Council was defeated in favour of Wilf Jowett, TGWU Vice Chair. The union will thus be represented by Todd himself, National Chair Brian Nicholson and Larry Smith. Rather than elect Morris onto the Labour Party NEC the Executive took the decision to reduce their representation from two to one; that will be Eddie Haigh, who already holds the job.

Arguments by the right wing that they wanted lay elected representatives instead of appointed full-time officials would be convincing if they could be taken as honest, but the trend in the union which they control is towards less democracy not more, making it look like an argument of convenience.

At the same time the Executive failed to endorse two of Todd's nominees for vacant positions as Regional Secretaries — major unelected positions in the TGWU. Thus his moves to begin to staff the union with people of his own thinking have received another blow. It looks as if the positions will now go to right wingers.

The meeting appears to have been bitter and some of the media claim that Todd's resignation was demanded and quote him as replying:

"I am not going to resign. You will have to carry me out of this chamber."

Todd, however, is elected for life and cannot easily be removed. But George Wright, the right wing candidate defeated in last year's ballot for General Secretary (and who is reported to be keeping his distance from the present confrontation) is convinced that once Todd goes he will get the job.

## Bells ring for bus jobs

**THE toll of jobs and services to be slashed by privatisation of bus services is likely to exceed 10,000, according to the latest set of figures produced by the National Bus Company.**

Management claim record losses of £85m for the corporation, which is to be carved up and flogged off in small parcels by the government. Private bids already in would produce cuts of up to 20% of the 50,000 workforce. New NBC plans look to a more immediate cut of 1,700 jobs. Whole areas could lose services altogether.

**The official balance sheet shows every sign of having been carefully manipulated by management to suit their purposes in pruning back the service prior to privatisation.**

Bus staff fighting for their jobs, pay and conditions should challenge these figures, and demand a full trade union inquiry into the finances of NBC and the implications of privatisation as part of a campaign to halt the asset-stripping.

# When a "victory" i

By KEVIN LEE

**THINLY veiled as a way to avoid Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) being taken to court, the NEC has issued a letter through its Director of Organisation, Joyce Gould, calling on CLPs not to start any new disciplinary action.**

**A victory?**

No — they are merely told to wait until the NEC has drawn up guidelines on how to expel people properly. Now every Party in the country is to receive these details and thus anyone with an axe to grind or a score to settle will have the ability to start expulsion proceedings.

You might think the Party leadership had other things to do with its time and money. Like building recruitment (the Party lost 10,000 members last year), campaigning against unemployment, or challenging the Tories.

But no. According to *Militant*, the Party has spent up to £100,000 on the Liverpool Inquiry, extra NEC meetings, publication and circulation of reports, legal fees, etc.

When we get the appeals for funds at Labour Party Conference in October, the question must be raised — couldn't this money have been better spent?

As for *Socialist Viewpoint's* opposition to the use of the courts to stop expulsions rather than building a mass labour movement campaign — we've been proved right in Stevenage, where the new Party General Council states that the court injunction applies only to the old Executive and have mandated the new one to carry out a legal expulsion.

Of course using the courts alienates many unconvinced Party members, because they see people using Tory courts against "their" Party. The logical conclusion could be calling on the police to enforce the court-ordered "right" of a socialist to attend Party meetings. This is surely stretching the "workers in uniform" line a little too far!

Kinnock's claim that the expulsions will win votes from people who are put off by the "loony left" in the Party is also worth further consideration. The local election results show that where Councillors took a stand in defiance of the Party leadership, such as Lambeth, Bernie Grant's ward in Haringey, and Liverpool, there were swings to Labour.

In Islington, the "hard left" North

Constituency did well — the "soft left" South lost seats to the SDP. In Tower Hamlets, the Party had been discredited by years of corrupt, right-wing rule: and the Borough was lost to the Liberals.

Obviously not all results can be interpreted in this way, in the simplistic and banal way *Militant* do. But Kinnock's attempts to win over the "popular" press are clearly misguided. Surely he must realise that while the *Sun*, *Mail* and *Express* will vilify the left wing, and support Kinnock in his attempts to expel them, they will never support Labour in a challenge to the Tories.

Even his pet paper, the *Mirror*, has brought in bigoted arch-Tory columnist George Gale.

So what are the tasks that face us now?

● Firstly, to ensure the unity of the left in defending *Militant* supporters, Black Sections, *Briefing* and other Party members under attack.

● Secondly, to defend the right of socialists to organise in the Party — in the same way that Labour Solidarity, the Fabians, and the Labour Co-ordinating Committee do.

● Thirdly, to work in the unions to reverse the appalling series of votes for mass expulsions at formerly sympathetic union conferences such as NUPE. The TGWU delegation to Labour Party Conference must be forced to defy the rightward lurch on the General Executive, and carry out its union's Conference policy against the witch-hunt.

● Fourthly, an ongoing campaign needs to be built up to co-ordinate the defence of threatened comrades, publicise the injustices and organise lobbies of the NEC and Party Conferences.

No one wants to spend time on internal Labour Party disputes when there is so much to be done — in support of the printworkers; in combatting racism; in fighting hospital closures and many other immediate and long term campaigns.

But if we fail to halt the witch-hunt, every serious socialist in the Party is potentially under threat. Many policy gains of the past few years are also under threat. Organisational gains such as reselection of MPs could be next in danger.

If the Party leadership and right wing succeed in mass expulsions then the Labour Party really will be heading on the road to becoming an SDP Mark II. We must continue to build the base the Left has in many constituencies with recruitment on socialist policies in areas where

## A blueprint for Kinnock?

# " is not a victory

people can judge the Labour Party on its record as a campaigning organisation. In this way we can ensure that CLPs feel strong enough to refuse to expel anyone witch-hunted by the NEC.

Hattersley has shown us how the right wing are panicking — where the Deputy Leader of the Party feels so threatened that three members of his constituency, Birmingham Sparkbrook, should be expelled with Hattersley casting the decisive vote. He cannot be allowed to get away with such attempts to stamp out opposition.

The lessons to be drawn must be made clear to *Militant*. A united, broad-based campaign is needed to oppose the witch hunt; one that relies on mobilising a mass base in the labour movement rather than appeals to the Tory courts.

# Behind vote for NATO



Felipe Gonzalez

# Hattersley's cash limits

**SICK of Tory cash limits?  
Longing for a Labour  
government to restore the  
services cut, the jobs lost and  
the conditions destroyed in the  
public sector?**

Roy Hattersley has other ideas. He has already announced that a Kinnock government would insist upon "strict financial discipline", and echo Nigel Lawson's commitments to borrowing limits by enforcing a "rationally calculated ceiling to public borrowing"

Of course none of Hattersley's pronouncements, which are geared to the modest Kinnock-Hattersley goal of (eventually) creating only 1 million new jobs to share among the 4 million unemployed, represent democratic policy decisions. He has already adopted the arrogant, elitist attitude towards the determination of economic policies which

distinguished Denis Healey in the grim years under Wilson.

Even David Blunkett, soft left NEC hand-raiser for the witch-hunt, has felt obliged to protest at Hattersley's one-man policy-making methods. In return Kinnock and Hattersley have agreed to give periodic reports on their latest policy decisions to the NEC's Home Policy committee!

All this of course is light-years away from the schema for creating "A Million Jobs a Year" as advocated by the recent pamphlet from the Campaign Group of Labour MPs — which (among other evasions) tactfully left out the question of how to dispose of Kinnock-Hattersley.

Come to think of it, whatever happened to that pamphlet? And why is the Campaign Group apparently leaving it up to Blunkett to make the running in calling Hattersley to order?

**THE ruling Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) won a majority for its pro-NATO stand in a national referendum on March 12 this year.**

Of those who voted (60% of the population), 52% voted yes to remain in NATO, 40% voted no. This was a severe blow to the international Peace Movement.

The main lesson of course is the scandalous switch in line by the PSOE leadership. In opposition, the PSOE had been firmly against NATO, issuing a booklet "50 Questions on NATO" to explain its position. Once in power, the PSOE leadership changed its line.

The referendum was only held because of the pressure of public opinion which right to the last minute was clearly against NATO.

The PSOE pro-NATO campaign was a very dirty affair, using every trick in its power. The two channel public television (there are no other channels) run by government appointees did not even try to look impartial. The newspapers were no better.

The managing director of *El Pais*, for example, also happens to have the contract from the state to publish school textbooks and has recently become joint owner with the government of the radio station SER. Local PSOE-led Councils put as many obstacles as possible in the way



of anti-NATO meetings and poster campaigns.

Four sports stadia were denied to the Peace Movement, but miraculously became available for Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez. At Real Madrid football ground, the Peace Movement meeting was mysteriously cancelled by the manager. Shortly afterwards a contract was signed whereby the government financed new facilities at Real Madrid ground.

The Phone company (whose president is a PSOE leader) put up pro-NATO advertising in all phone booths.

The Peace Movement was faced with the combined opposition of the PSOE government, the banks, the business world, the military and the Church. With such a range of class enemies, they did remarkably well to get 40% of the vote. It was a fantastic effort by hundreds of thousands of activists to create a new and independent movement.

In contrast to the PSOE meetings of hacks in the local HQ, the Peace Movement campaign held huge demonstrations, music festivals,

caravans of cars and marathons in addition to hundreds of seminars and discussions.

During the last few days of the campaign, Gonzalez pulled out all the stops. He introduced a new factor — fear. Government ministers almost hysterically bullied the Spanish people with threats of unemployment and dire economic consequences if Spain left NATO.

Reminiscent of General Franco, Gonzalez stated: "It's either me or chaos." Foreign Minister Ordenez claimed that NATO was very much linked to the EEC and Spain's EEC membership was threatened.

A YES voting slip was mailed to every voter, Peace Movement leaders were censored and slandered. Anti-NATO posters were suddenly covered with public announcements which "coincided" with the referendum.

Nevertheless, 7 million Spanish people still voted for the anti-NATO position. The Peace Movement has maintained its momentum and gathered strength and experience. Its annual march from Madrid to the

US main air base at Torrejon on May 11 attracted 100,000 people, the largest number ever.

On April 15, after the American bombing of Tripoli, a 2,000-strong picket gathered outside the US embassy in Madrid.

The deceit and toadying of the PSOE government were clearly shown during the Libyan bombing. Spanish ports were used by the US sixth fleet; US airbases in Spain were used for the planes refuelling the F111s coming from Britain to Tripoli.

Gonzalez's PSOE — a social democratic party — had a radical programme before the general election. It even called itself a "Marxist Party".

After the general election, it switched lines in both domestic and foreign policy — under pressure from international capitalism. Mitterrand's French Socialist Party did exactly the same with some very reactionary consequences.

In what way will Neil Kinnock's Labour Party be any different? That is the question facing the British Labour movement and the British Peace Movement.

# Tory hypocrites try to turn back the clock

**SUE ARNALL responds to the latest directives on sex education in schools.**

**SO the Minister of State for Education wants teachers to speak about love and family responsibility instead of teaching the "mechanics of sex". What does he think goes on in schools?**

I have been teaching since 1973 and I have never come across anyone in charge who is willing to support the teaching of sexuality as something to be enjoyed outside of marriage.

At times I have come across the idea that unmarried teachers are somehow unfit to teach sex education, since they will have no personal experience of it! Or if they have — they won't be able to admit it!

I have occasionally encountered staff being forced to resign because of extra-marital "affairs" becoming public knowledge. I have never seen a lesbian or gay teacher being encouraged to teach the children that their choice was a valid and welcome option.

As it strikes me that the status quo serves the Tory ideologues admirably. Children in primary



school are encouraged in sex-role stereotypes which result in docile girls and macho boys.

We have made valiant efforts to

introduce non-sexist children's books, to encourage girls into science and technology, and to fight discrimination: but we are in a tiny minority and our efforts have only really scratched the surface. Even the Equal Opportunities Commission's surveys have demonstrated how little of real importance we have as yet achieved.

So girls still tend to have ambitions to be married first, have a career second. Boys still predominate in the fields of science and industry. And where sex is concerned, the sex education they receive at school encourages girls to say no, take precautions as a last (difficult to obtain) resort, to feel ashamed if they become pregnant, and to see sex as basically only respectable within marriage.

I would say the government are blowing the whistle on our tentative attempts at liberal sex education teaching: but they are also saying something more subtle about the family itself.

Single parent families are increasing, and costing the Welfare State a great deal of money. The Government also considers the stable family to be an essential part of authoritarian, God-fearing, law-abiding society — home cooking, respect for your betters and all.

They also know that it is women in the main who are rejecting these Victorian values and initiating divorces. Perhaps, they think this comes from ideas girls pick up (against all the odds) about equality, basic human rights, self-help and the confidence to seek a life of their own, leading them to break out of violent or unsatisfactory marriages?

The Education Secretary's answer is to try to set the clock back at least thirty years, and to demand teachers instill the idea that marriage is for life, and is the only acceptable context for sexual activity.

Perhaps he does not read the popular press or follow the evidence that fewer and fewer people in practice respect these norms, fewer and fewer women will put up with oppressive relationships to save the DHSS money, or even in order to create the Tory ideal of social stability, no matter how much they are lectured by a sermonising Tebbit, Baker or Thatcher.

Education has always been expected to perform this role of social control — the religious element being built in from the beginning.

Some of us have attempted to breach this straight-jacket by encouraging girls to think for themselves, reject the double standards of sexuality so odiously displayed by the ruling class from Parkinson to Fergie, and the sexuality as a matter of personal choice.

Loving relationships (where they can be found) are of course to be



encouraged, especially within the context of collective responsibility for class, sex and international comradeship.

Do Mr Baker and the DES seriously expect that one directive can turn back the tide? Do they think they will suppress the demands for honest sex education made by the various lobbies from the Family Planning

Association to the Equal Opportunities Commission?

I wouldn't expect us to notice much difference at the "chalk face". But nevertheless Kenneth Baker's latest Papal Bull needs to be countered as yet one more Tory attempt to drive the women of the working class back to the kitchen sink.

**WHILE Thatcher, Tebbit and Kenneth Baker harp on about reinforcing the "traditional values of the family" while demolishing the prospects of millions of families breaking out of poverty and unemployment, Scottish Tories appear to have some different ideas about what the family spirit is all about.**

**Their conference at Perth,**

**visited by Thatcher, began with a resolution tabled by the Scottish Federation of Conservative Students calling for the legalisation of incest.**

**These young ultra-right headbangers also advocated abolition of the welfare state and legalising prostitution. Victorian values with a vengeance.**

# Labour Women: the fight in the unions!

By ANNA WAGSTAFFE

AT a time when the Labour Party is moving rapidly to the right with the likes of Meacher, Blunkett and Livingstone throwing their lot in with Kinnock's new realism, and with the purge within the Party at the same time being extended beyond the ranks of Militant supporters to all sorts of left activists, 1986 Labour Women's Conference continued along the leftwards trajectory it started on four or five years ago, passing with ease resolutions which stand no chance of gaining even a simple majority at any foreseeable Annual Labour Party Conference.

Among the major victories of the 1986 conference, the 3-2 vote for Irish unification, abolition of the Unionist veto and withdrawal of troops; and an almost unanimous vote for an emergency resolution which includes the demand for British withdrawal from NATO serve best, perhaps, to illustrate the enormous gulf between the politics of Labour Women and those of Annual Conference, where historically these demands have been defeated year after year.

Perhaps a more telling indicator of the extent to which the right wing Kinnockite offensive has failed to find real resonance among the women represented at Conference, however, came with the votes on the witch hunt. For while Conference voted, again by 3-2 to oppose the witch-hunt being carried out against "supporters of Militant, the Labour Committee on Ireland, Black Sections and other socialists within the Party", it voted overwhelmingly in favour — against the platform recommendation — to expel all members of the "bosses' union", the UDM. Taken together these votes represent a total rejection of the Labour leadership's electoral strategy of building support among certain sectors of the bourgeoisie at the expense of retaining socialist policies.

There is no doubt at all that these latest developments in Labour women's policies represent a victory for the increasingly beleaguered hard left within the Party. But the question to which we must address ourselves is what exactly the significance of that victory is.

One suggestion that often arises over this issue is that women's "special oppression" and particularly the fact that since 1979 they have borne the brunt of Thatcher's anti-working class policies results in a higher level of militancy among Labour women compared to their male counterparts — which would imply that any organised opposition to Kinnock must look to base itself among the women of the Labour Party if it is to succeed. While the point is no doubt valid to a certain extent, it is nonetheless inadequate as a full explanation of the major political gulf between the two conferences. Far more to the point, it must be recognised, is the absence of the union block vote at Labour Women's Conference.

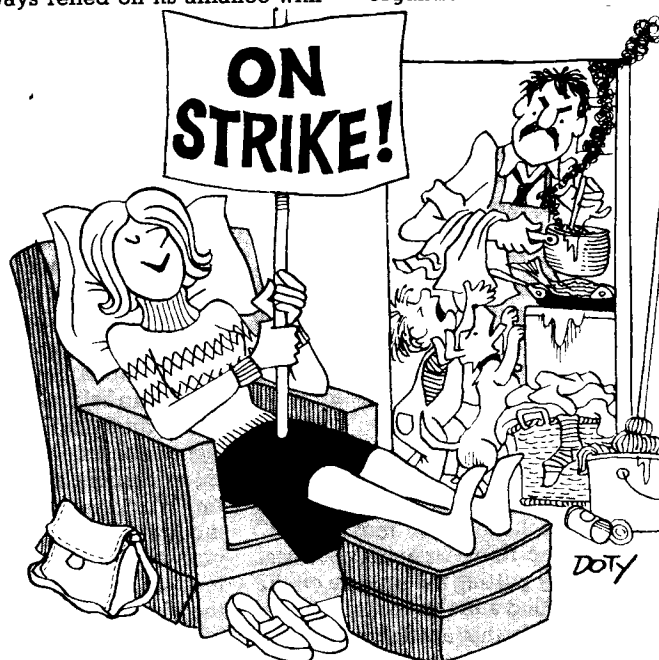
The right wing of the Labour Party has always relied on its alliance with

the union bureaucracies — which to all intents and purposes control the block vote — in maintaining its influence within the Party, and Kinnock is no exception. However, because of the differences in delegate structure between the two conferences, the mighty T&G, for instance, which wields around one million votes at Annual Conference, is limited to a maximum of only 20 votes (one per delegate) at Labour Women's Conference, while NUPE, representing half a million women — a substantial sector of the female workforce — had only 9 at Conference.

Thus while the victories of the left must, of course, be welcomed, the fact that they were gained by effectively *bypassing* the major organisations of the working class must be recognised as greatly reducing the significance of those victories.

For while many left wing activists within the Labour Party are always tempted to view the union block vote as nothing but a bureaucratic dead weight on the Party and its development, the truth is that the close political links between the unions and the Labour Party have always been one of the major strengths of the British labour movement.

These links not only represent a historical rejection of pure syndicalism and a recognition of the need for unions to play a political role, but, furthermore, the decisive importance of the trade union block vote in formulating Labour Party policy and voting in the NEC forces left wing activists within the Labour Party to go beyond the confines of the largely petty bourgeois Labour Party membership and to take up the political struggle within the organisations of the working class, to





confront the union bureaucracies, and in doing so to confront directly the central problem of the crisis of working class leadership.

What we must now address ourselves to, therefore, is the question of resolving the problem of the inadequate representation of Trade Union women at Labour Women's Conference — a problem which, though increasingly recognised by Constituency Labour women, has tended only to be formally raised at Conference by right wing union bureaucrats using it as a tactic to attack the demand for Labour Women's Conference to be given political power within the Party (e.g. the right to send resolutions to Labour Party Conference, the right to elect the 5 women's places on the NEC, etc.).

The process of seeking to resolve this problem will inevitably lead to Labour women having to confront, some of them for the first time, the struggle for union democracy (including of course the fight for appropriate measures and structures to ensure proper representation for women *within* the unions) in an attempt to avoid simply bringing into Labour Women's Conference the bureaucratically controlled union block vote as it currently operates at Labour Party Conference.

If greater representation for the unions is secured in some form — as would seem inevitable in the next few years if we are to avoid the unions pulling out altogether — then in order to ensure that Conference maintains its commitment to its current radical policies, these policies will first have to be fought for and won within the unions. It is almost inevitable that during this process, a shift to the right in Labour Women's Conference will occur. However, maintaining radical policies should not be seen as the primary goal.

It should, after all, be remembered that nearly every resolution we pass — most immediately those concerning the NHS, public ownership of industry, the minimum wage, working conditions, equal pay, etc. — should we win them through Annual Conference, with its block vote, will ultimately only be *brought into effect* and will only *remain* effective as a result of the practical mobilisation of the working class — i.e. industrial action. Thus being forced to win these policies at Labour Women's Conference through *winning support* within the unions rather than through *bypassing* them, really means being forced to take up the battles in the organisations that will really count.



"No, it's Labour Left Liaison, Neil, not Larry's Left Liaison..."

# A Labour Left by any other name...

By JENNY FISHER

**LABOUR Left Co-ordination is dead — Long Live Labour Left Co-ordination! — or, rather, long live Labour Left Liaison, as the newly empowered Crown Princes see it.**

What is it then, which has torn apart the co-ordination, and instituted the *liaison*? And, *does it matter?*

Well, it does matter very much, for the consequences will be felt in the labour movement for many months to come. As for how it happened, let us begin at the beginning.

You will remember that the LLC was an umbrella body, seeking to co-ordinate unity in action between various campaigns and journals on the left. Its strength lay in the way it was able to unite such different bodies around practical initiatives; to identify the journals and pressure groups that were covering the same ground as the various international campaigns and autonomous organisations of the specially oppressed, and to initiate the liaison and co-operation that would strengthen campaigning work by prior organisation and support.

The political basis of involvement in LLC was clear enough: it combined all

those who were continuing to support the kind of left policies the Labour Party leadership were moving away from — those who were to be the target, directly or by implication, of Kinnock's speech at 1985 Annual Conference in Bournemouth.

The political limitations were also clear. It would not be possible for LLC to develop a comprehensive "left" programme of platform, because the single issue campaigns amongst its participants brought together activists around those issues who would not necessarily agree on political questions outside those issues and which, therefore, didn't make such policy. Any kind of "programme" for LLC would have had to have been thrashed out between the various left publications, and carried through on the basis of mass abstention by most participants.

Still, single issue campaigns can — and did — support initiatives which advance the cause of those Kinnock wishes to drive out the Party; and some of LLC's achievements are listed in the statement printed with this article.

LLC's highpoint in terms of successful activity came at the Bournemouth Conference; and the campaign to eradicate it began shortly after. Supporters of *Socialist Action*, who had not joined in activity with LLC at Bournemouth, now arrived — with their

suitcases and their Youth Paper.

One of their first actions was to suggest, *à la demand*, that they have a place on the secretariat — a small band of comrades responsible for sending out the agendas of meetings and to whom the performance of certain tasks arising from the meetings, such as sending out agreed press releases or booking rooms for meetings, were delegated. The "functionary" nature of the Secretariat was explained: no matter, *SA* repeated, *it would be wrong to exclude them politically*.

It was pointed out that the Secretariat meetings were open, and *SA* sent a representative to the meetings, so they could see the nature of its work and how it was completely directed by the main, monthly, meetings of LLC, with all participating organisations present.

It soon became clear that *SA*'s complaints about the Secretariat were not rooted in a desire to stick stamps on envelopes in a politically different way; but were made because they wanted a *completely different kind of left organisation*.

They wanted to see the existence of a grouping on the left which would attack the phenomenon of Kinnockism on the terms, in the way, *SA* thought best. Respecting the autonomy of single issue campaigns or organisations of the specially oppressed is subjugated to demanding political agreement *first* on strategy and tactics on where the left as a whole should be going. The quest for unity in action around issues that arise, recognising the need for organisations involved in such activity at the same time not to compromise their own political identity or programme is sacrificed to the alternative goal of carving out a distinct political niche, occupying it, and organising initiatives on the basis of that framework.

If *SA* had just wanted to establish co-ordination with other forces on this narrow political basis, fair enough. The problem lies in the fact that they smashed LLC in the process. Either they felt their grouping should exist *rather than* LLC; or they felt the only way of establishing their grouping was by metamorphosing LLC — and hang the "side effect" of killing it off. Either way, it is a cynical opportunist way of getting your own politics across at the expense of any other necessary political tasks.

The *method* used by *SA* is also worth commenting on: for it is one of the oldest sectarian tricks in the book and one which will be depressingly all too familiar a memory of the past to many supporters of *Socialist Viewpoint*. It relies upon identifying those you want to make into your allies; nagging at them that there is a conspiracy to silence your/their views; mentioning the word "democracy" many times... until you have whipped up enough people into believing that there is a conspiracy so that they don't look at the facts and draw conclusions from them any more, but will bend any facts to fit the conspiracy theory. As the victim of this method, you may produce facts to prove your innocence till you're blue in the face; all you are doing is adding to the weight of evidence *against* you, for the conspiracy theory is always there first.

So, May 31 was the last LLC meeting. CLPD had presented a paper, hailed by

*SA* as a more democratic structure for LLC, because the Steering Committee was comprised of "bigger campaigns" that represented "big forces"; regardless of the fact that, by the inclusion of *SA*, *Socialist Organiser* and one seat for *Briefing* on that Steering Committee it represents a Steering Committee chosen on a specific political basis. It also ignores the fact that when you appoint a Steering Committee on a political basis so that that Steering Committee can "represent" *all* the participating organisations, you are removing power from the hands of the monthly meetings attended by *all* participating organisations.

Even so, why will the demise of LLC affect "the whole of the labour movement for months to come"? The answer is that the work *SA* have done in LLC is mirrored in a number of other campaigns: the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign (where they diverted the Campaign away from political campaigning for the sacked and jailed miners towards fundraising activities *only*); the Labour Committee on Ireland (where their representation, mainly newly-joined to the Committee, voted to dilute the LCI's campaigning work — and, incidentally, blocked with the soft left Labour Co-ordinating Committee to stop LCI affiliating to LLC); and the National Conference Against the Witch Hunt (where they have consistently been arguing for the Conference to be a one-off "educational" event, with no ongoing

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**The undersigned delegates and observers to the Labour Left Co-ordination regret its winding up as an umbrella organisation for the left campaigns and tendencies in the Party.**

**In its one year of existence the LLC was able to co-ordinate united activity and campaigning around a number of vital issues: in support of the debate on lesbian and gay rights at '85 annual conference; supporting positive action for women and Black people in the Party; opposition to the witch-hunt; a joint bulletin at annual Conference and joint fringe meetings at regional, youth and women's conferences.**

**All these activities were made possible by the goodwill of its participants and their preparedness to act on a consensus basis as equal participating organisations. Unfortunately a minority of organisations — *Socialist Action*, *WAC*, *CLPD* — insisted that the LLC could not proceed unless it changed its basis into a two tier structure with "larger" organisations comprising a steering group and "smaller" organisations relegated to a subordinate role. The composition of this steering group was arbitrarily constructed to include some campaigns and tendencies but to exclude others. As no consensus could**

be found for resolving this difference, all organisations of the LLC agreed on its dissolution.

Perhaps the clearest example of *SA*'s political direction at the moment on the question of challenging Kinnock. There was disagreement in LLC as to whether it was tactically wise to challenge Kinnock at 1986 Party Conference: but *SA* stood out in being *against any challenge to Kinnock in the foreseeable future*. It is quite clear they are taking the organisational measures necessary to back up their political views.

It is not, however, just whether to challenge Kinnock *as leader*: but also, *how* to challenge Kinnock's political drift. Here, again, *SA* have made clear what they intend to do.

The LLC made an approach to the Campaign Group of Labour MPs earlier this year, with the idea of co-operating in some form of regular communication with CLPs. At the time, the Campaign Group were steering clear of giving any "Campaign Group franchise" to any left paper, after getting their fingers burnt on the *Herald* issue: *Socialist Action* had also made clear that should the Campaign Group be interested in some form of publication, they would stop publishing *Socialist Action*, in favour of selling that publication.

Somehow, whilst the LLC was

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**be found for resolving this difference, all organisations of the LLC agreed on its dissolution.**

**For our part we remain convinced of the necessity for left unity and co-operation wherever and whenever possible. We will continue to work with others on the left around definite objectives and issues, particularly around opposition to the witch hunt. We would urge all the campaigns and tendencies on the left to continue such co-operation through democratic and non-exclusive forms.**

**Davy Jones, former LLC Secretary  
Walter Woolfgang\*, Labour CND  
observer**

**Nadine Finch, Target Labour  
Government**

**Theresa Conway\*, LCLGR  
delegate**

**Jeremy Corbyn\*, Campaign Group  
of MPs observer**

**Narendra Makanji\*, Target Labour  
Government delegate**

**Anita Patel\*, Black Sections  
delegate**

**Basil Hinton\*, LCI observer**

**Steph Grant\*, Labour Women for  
Ireland delegate**

**Jane Prust, Labour Briefing**

**Jane Kelly, International**

**Jenny Fisher, Socialist Viewpoint.**

**\*in a personal capacity**

conducting a feasibility study, SA and Vladimir Derer of CLPD (in a personal capacity) approached the Campaign Group with a feasibility study for a paper — which they took some steps to *not mention* to others in the LLC, and which resulted in *Campaign Group News*.

*Campaign Group News* is continuing production, still with the heavy support and involvement of the two who made the initial approach — at the expense of any united left involvement with the Campaign Group. Further to this, the *Guardian* has now reported (June 17) a new umbrella group being set up — between the Campaign Group, the forces in SA's new Liaison Committee — and the *Labour Left Co-ordinating Committee*. Its projects will include continuing and expanding the paper, and various other activities.

SA is clearly taking the organisational steps necessary to back up their political views — and to make sure any opposition to Kinnock is wiped right off the agenda. Any forces supporting SA's new venture — in any of its various wings and guises — should be clear about the nature of the project: it will involve any challenge to Kinnock, or *Kinnockism* being on the basis of SA's political views. That is what they mean by "a more democratic way of operating". Is this really the best way forward for those Kinnock attacked at Bournemouth, and whom he is now trying to throw out of the Party?



## END Convention

**THE 5th European Nuclear Disarmament Convention was rather smaller — 650 participants from 38 different countries — than previous**

### Conventions.

It was planned that way — mainly because of the weakness of the French CODENE Peace Movement, which has been attacked by both the French Socialist and Communist Parties, who argue for the French independent nuclear "deterrents".

At the same time there are no US bases or prospective Cruise or Trident missiles in France, protests against which have led to the mass Peace Movements growing elsewhere in Western Europe.

The main theme of the Conference was supposed to be "European security" and Europeanisation. What this means was not clear to our correspondent DAVE SPENCER, or to most other participants.

One basic argument seemed to be that we should use our influence with our "partners" in the socialist Parties and Trade Unions to make Europe independent from the USA, to undermine NATO and the EEC from within, as it were.

Most activists seemed utterly bewildered by this argument, however, since it flies in the face of their experience over the last five years.

The crucial point is not to put faith in our "partners" in government or in ruling positions, but to put so much pressure on them by extra-parliamentary activity, that they are forced to carry out their promises.

This is particularly the case with the British Labour Party coming up to a General Election.

However, much useful and important information came to light during the Convention itself: a number of the key issues are summarised in Dave's reports.

## Friday May 23

## City lets it all hang out

SO what was special about May 23? Even readers who are assiduous watchers of *Newsnight* and its commercial complement may well ask.

It was the great day in the city when Lloyds celebrated its last hours in its old premises before the move to its bizarre new headquarters. And, in expectation, you could hardly cross a road without bumping into a television crew.

Strangely, however, nothing whatever appeared on the screens about it, nor was there even a line in the *Financial Times* to mark the event. Why was this? One curious trade unionist rang up a friend who works in the area and asked if the whole thing had been a flop. Not so. Very much the reverse: the event had been one which put the football hooligans in the shade!

There were city gents (and almost everyone in the city,

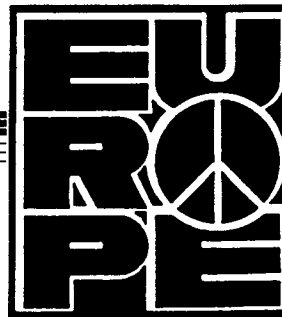
except the lowest orders, is a gent) literally lying drunk in the public gutters. Others were parading around dressed solely in their shirts, panties and tights.

Underwriters were squirting anyone and everyone with aerosol paints; more were letting off fireworks, mainly in a horizontal direction (which resulted in some new business for hospital accident units).

One gent was dropped 30ft from a balcony by some other gents; and sundry others wiled away a few hours sexually harassing and assaulting women in public places.

Of course enough "champers" was flowing to float several of the ships that British Shipbuilders are not going to build. If — even at this distance in time — you can detect the rustle of the crisp and crinklies as they pass from hand to hand, you have probably made a very good guess as to why the media were totally mute over such a great day for the city.





É V R Y • 1 9 8 6

# "Une affaire Murdoch à la française"

**WE had no sooner stepped off the train at the Gare du Nord station than we met Paris printworkers leafletting the public about a threat to 1,000 print jobs in the area.**

Apparently, the owners of two large newspaper and magazine publishers "Imprimerie Moderne de Paris" and "Cino del Duca" plan to close their Paris printworks and open up together and with a third firm — Paul Dupont — in Noyon (Oise district) in works which have been closed for 18 months for modernisation. The leaflet made the link with the decimation of the French steel industry in Lorraine and blamed the government for having a master plan for industrial and community destruction and the deliberate creation of unemployment. Recognise the pattern?

The leaflet, printed by the CGT branch in the Del Duca works ended by declaring that they would not allow "une affaire Murdoch à la française". Exactly what they are going to do to prevent this was not made clear. But obviously they knew about Murdoch and they understand about French government strategy to encourage attacks against workers' jobs, living standards and communities — and that this strategy is common to all European governments.

So where then is the European Trade Unionists' Convention to discuss these problems? Every day the managers of multinationals phone each other up long distance and jet set to high level meetings — why can't rank and file trade union militants make their own connections?

During the miners' strike, British miners who travelled abroad got a tremendous welcome — this is because people recognised that the miners were fighting on behalf of the working class against the class enemy which is well organised and European and world wide. The problem of course is that there is no mass political expression for this class solidarity — the leaderships of the Social Democratic parties and the Stalinists do not have a class struggle or internationalist outlook.

International links will have to be built from below.

One of the strengths of the END Convention in this respect is that the Independent Peace Movements have been formed as protest movements outside the party political arena and their natural inclination is to make links with other protest movements and struggles of the oppressed. Most of the participants, especially the younger comrades, have a very healthy scepticism towards spokespeople from Social Democratic or Communist Parties who have after all betrayed so many times in the past. An example was the very professional speech to the Convention from Audrey Wise representing the NEC of the British Labour Party. She outlined the Labour Party's anti-nuclear policy and promised enthusiastically that it would be carried through. The French chair caught the mood of the Convention when she said, "Perhaps we ought to keep Audrey here in France as a hostage until after the British election and the policy is actually implemented."

Ron Todd's letter was an invitation to representatives, particularly trade unionists, to a conference next Spring to be hosted by the TGWU to discuss arms conversion.

This is seen by leaders of the British END as crucial to implementing the Labour Party anti-nuclear policy after the General Election — that is, how to transform those industries involved with nuclear weapons and power into making more useful products. In Britain over half a million workers are engaged in the weapons industry. At the same time 390,000 workers have lost their jobs in the private sector alone over the last few years and this is bound to increase with the proposed updating of UK "defence" systems into the hi-tech area.

The whole question of what to do with the arms industry in the event of unilateral nuclear disarmament and the cancellation of the exporting of arms is an absolutely crucial one. It raises the issue of the socialist transformation of society — since how else can one control the arms industry plus develop a non-nuclear

energy policy without controlling the means of production. Ron Todd's concept of arms conversion is interesting, along the same lines as the Lucas Aerospace alternative plans — but it does not tackle the central question of ownership. If the next Labour government does not tackle that question it will not be able to implement its non-nuclear defence policy.

A Dutch delegate whose IKV Peace branch had collected money for the miners on the streets of The Hague asked me what Ron Todd's attitude and that of the Labour Party had been to the miners' strike. When I replied "Less than enthusiastic", she said, "If they did not fully support the miners who were fighting against government policies of unemployment and nuclear power, how are they going to get rid of a hundred American bases?"

The answer is of course that they are not — as Spanish participants pointed out from their experience with their Socialist Party Prime Minister Gonzalez. Before the election he was against NATO — after the election he supported NATO and allowed US bases in Spain to be used during the bombing of Libya.

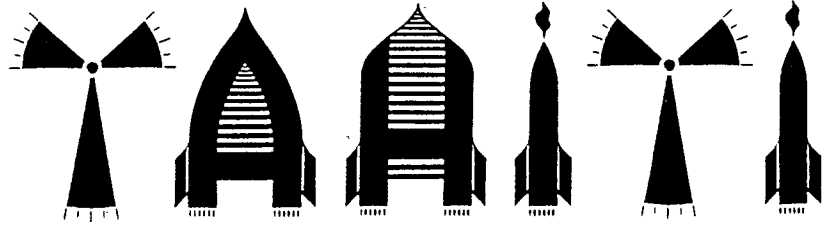
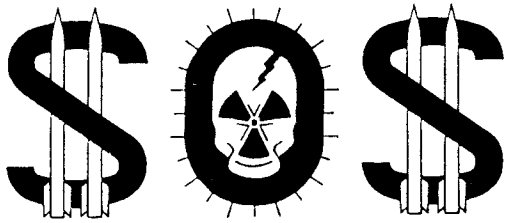
Once again the END Convention shows the need as well as the base for building an independent class struggle socialist movement.

## Polish

**THE Polish Independent Peace Movement (Wolnosc i Pokoj) was formed in April 1985 as a result of protests at the case of Marek Adamkiewicz, who was jailed for refusing to do military service.**

Students at a number of universities went on hunger strike demanding that military service be made not compulsory. The youth in East Germany have achieved this change in the law. Since then many Polish young people have been imprisoned or heavily fined for sending back their army identification papers.

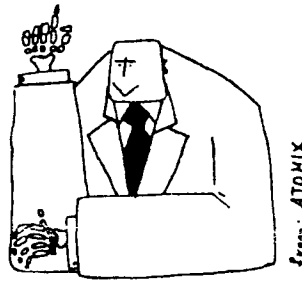
On February 19, 1986, two leaders of WiP, Jacek Czputowicz and Piotr Niemczuk, were arrested in Warsaw and accused of belonging to a



**THE reason the French Peace Group CODENE hosted the 5th Convention was to give it a boost since it is only weak. Why this is so became clear straight away, when it was announced that the British END President Peter Crampton and the passengers in his car had been stopped at Dieppe docks on his way to the Convention and detained.**

He was accused of introducing subversive literature into France, namely copies of the book "Denuclearise the Oceans" which referred to French atomic bomb testing in the Pacific Ocean. The END bookstall was thus impounded, including Peace badges and T-shirts. Attempts to protest to the French media were met with a blank wall. This wall of course included the French Communist Party and French Socialist Party which both support the French independent nuclear deterrent and the expansion of nuclear power and thus harass the French Peace Movement at every step. The press in the rest of Europe carried the story of the Dieppe arrest, but not in France. The same blanket of silence was the response to the Chernobyl disaster — no mention of the nuclear clouds floating over

ABSOLUTELY SAFE!



from: ATOMIX

France — after all, France gets 65% of its electricity from nuclear power. The French mass media paid no attention to the END Convention, unlike every other END Convention held elsewhere in Europe.

Oscar Temaru, Mayor of Faa'a in Tahiti, spoke of the terrible effects of French nuclear testing on the health and lives of Polynesian people. Two hundred and fifty seriously ill Tahitian people are at this moment in French hospitals being tested for cancer. They are sent by aeroplane to come and die in France. Again a blanket of silence by the French media — and still there are no medical statistics on the cases of leukemia and cancer in the area.

So much so that Oscar has put together an exhibition which he transports in a lorry from town centre to town centre in France to get the message across. In Lyons the exhibition was vandalised by the fascists. The links have become clear to Oscar — it is not just a question of nuclear weapons, it is also a fight against racism and a fight for the independence of Tahiti and other territories from French colonisation.

At the moment the Tahitian economy is 90% dependent on the French army. Traditional ways of life — fishing and agriculture — have been destroyed. There have been the effects of at least 50 Chernobyls in Polynesia. The people are never informed about when and where the tests are to take place. They were never asked what they thought about the French starting tests in Polynesia after leaving the Sahara when Algeria gained independence. The Tahitians had welcomed the French with garlands of flowers, in fact they received everyone with garlands of flowers — that hospitality has been betrayed. Their friends from Green Peace had had their ship "Rainbow Warrior" sunk by the French secret service in Auckland harbour. The struggle is a bitter one, but Oscar Temaru promised that his people would fight to the bitter end.

## pacifists oppose Bujak arrest

criminal organisation. Messages of support for these two comrades were sent to the END Convention from Lech Walesa, Jacek Kuron, NSSZ Solidarnosc Abroad and the Charter 77 Group in Czechoslovakia.

Like the other Eastern European Independent Peace Movement, WiP stresses that there can be no peace in the world without democratic rights. The WiP Manifesto states:

"There can be no peace where there are systems of state repressions and ideological coercion, where individuals are denied their independence and initiative."

And later: "No action against war can be effective as long as we do not oppose political systems which survive by practising internal violence against their own citizens."

In addition to stressing human

rights in Poland, WiP also supports the fight for human rights throughout the world and in particular the rights of political prisoners and an end to the death penalty. They also support those fighting for national liberation and for minority cultural rights.

In opening the first session, the chairperson paid tribute to three fighters for peace, incarcerated in their countries' jails — these are Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Mahmut Dikerdem in Turkey and Zbigniew Bujak in Poland. There are of course many others.

Zbigniew Bujak, a leader of Solidarnosc NSZZ, living underground since 1981 was arrested on June 1 and charged with subversive activities threatening to undermine the constitutional government of Poland. Last January

Zbigniew made the link between freedom and peace. He said: "We want a peace which rests on the respect of peoples and human rights, the recognition of nationalities and the freedom of culture."

In Western Europe, Social Democratic governments sell out the workers' interests before the International Monetary Fund and its NATO war machine.

In Eastern Europe, Stalinist governments repress the basic rights of the workers and threaten future generations with bureaucratic disasters like Chernobyl.

END's demand to go "beyond the blocs" is only a first step; it is necessary to discuss how to go beyond the established mass parties of the working class.

THE HIGHER  
HE REACHES...

...THE  
LOWER  
HE GETS



## Turn back the GREY TIDE!

The right wing of the labour movement has been getting away with murder: policies and principles have been slaughtered. Kinnock, Hattersley and a cabal of union bureaucrats have been setting the agenda and setting the pace towards a new witch-hunt.

New alignments have helped the "new realists". Urging on the process of ditching and diluting Labour's policies have been:

- The new *Tribune*
- The new *Livingstone*
- The new *New Socialist*
- The new *Marxism Today*

All these elements are central to the new grey election campaign (never mind the politics, feel the breadth!).

But beneath the thin veneer of "new" politics lurks the same old reality: Kinnock's gang are limbering up for a period of Wilson-style Labour government pledged to capitalist policies, and certain to attack the working class.

We can't yet stop the careerist bandwagon which Kinnock is driving, or stop some former left wingers jumping aboard. *But we don't have to concede the initiative to the right wing.*

We can begin to organise the hard left to fight back in defence of socialist policies, class struggle methods, and the demands of the oppressed.

That's why we need the new, fortnightly paper to be launched in the autumn, which will expand and improve upon the present *Labour Briefing*.

The new *Briefing* will argue for the policies which the labour movement needs to fight back against Thatcher and combat Kinnock's retreat.

**Our aim is to stop the rot. Our allies and audience are the most militant forces in the trade unions, the Labour Parties, women's campaigns and struggles, black struggles, the Lesbian and Gay movement and among young people – anyone committed to the fight for a socialist solution to the crisis.**

The new paper will be tighter in focus, harder-hitting in its line, but broader in scope than the present *Briefing*. It will still be democratically run, and offer a forum for debate as well as a basis for organising the left. It will be basic reading for activists, but understandable to workers on picket lines and first-time readers.

The campaign for the new paper was launched at a 200-strong conference in May. Now we need YOUR support to help raise the funds and assemble a network of sellers and supporters.

If you agree that it is time we fought back against the witch-hunt and the right wing rampage, we urge you to:

● **Join our "500 Club" scheme: pay £1 per week towards the Launch Fund of £8,000 – and be entered for a weekly £25 Draw! (See standing order form alongside)**

● **Make a donation to the launch fund: send cheques (payable to Labour Briefing No. 2 account) to: Launch Fund, 162 Millfields Rd. London E5.**

● **Pledge a regular sale of the new paper in your workplace, Labour Party or neighbourhood. Order your copies of our Pilot Issue (out July 15th) from Millfields Rd.**

● **Tell your local comrades about it: organise a Launch Meeting, with a speaker from *Briefing* (write in, or tel. 01-533 2593).**

● **Subscribe to the paper – £12 per year.**

● **Order copies of our *Turn Back the Grey Tide* leaflet to spread the word and promote the new *Briefing* from 39, Talia House, Manchester Rd. London E14 9HB.**

**CONTACT US for any further details. TOGETHER WE can Turn the Tide!**

## Briefing 500 Club

### Win £25 in a weekly prize draw!

Pledge us only £1 per week, £4 per month for the Fund to launch the new fortnightly *Labour Briefing* newspaper. Our aim is to enlist at least 500 supporters, to enable us to launch the new paper by Labour Party conference 1986, and to sustain its regular publication as the paper of the hard left in the labour movement.

As soon as we have 200 supporters signed up, we will begin a weekly draw for a £25 prize payout. When we reach 400 supporters we will double the prize money to two £25 lucky number prizes.

To enter the draw, simply complete the Bankers Order form and send it to Labour Briefing. As soon as we receive it, your number will be entered for the first draw: we will forward the form to your bank. A Supporters' Club card will be sent to you in acknowledgement, showing your lucky number.

**This money is entirely separate from other *Labour Briefing* finance, and will all be earmarked for the launch fund target of £8,000 to set up the fortnightly paper.**

Sign up now: and when you join the 500 Club why not order extra forms to take round your local Labour Parties, trade unions and other campaigns. Help us build the base for the fortnightly!

### Bankers Order form for Labour Briefing 500 Club

Please complete every section of this form, and then return it to: **Labour Briefing, c/o Jane Kelly, 26 Crofton Rd. London SE5.**

#### Bankers Order

To: .....

..... (bank name, sort code)

At (address) .....

.....

From: ..... (your name)

(your address) .....

.....

My account number is: .....

Please debit from my account each month the sum of £4, in favour of Labour Briefing No 2 account, Co-operative Bank, Stratford E15, Code 08-90-76, Account No. 50349957.

Starting on .....(date)

Thereafter on .....(date) of each month

Signature .....

Dated .....



# Transitional demands and the fight against Kinnock

By JOHN LISTER

**NOBODY** now believes that Neil Kinnock intends to carry out a radical left wing programme. Even Norman Tebbit's crude Tory "red scare" campaign has been floundering for lack of credible allegations.

The consolidation of the Kinnock-Hattersley leadership since their election as the union bureaucracy's "Dream Ticket" in 1983 has centred on scrapping one by one the more radical commitments which Labour Party conference had begun to demand in the period 1979-82.

There can be little doubt that Kinnock's political aspirations are little different from those which motivated Harold Wilson in his pledges to bring about a "white hot technological revolution" within the framework of British capitalism in 1964, and his subsequent hollow pledge to "Get Britain back to work" by reformist measures in 1974.

Already Roy Hattersley has begun airing his demands for cash limits on the expansion of public services, and has been canvassing with some success amongst the union leaderships for agreement on a package of wage controls. Kinnock has abandoned any pledge to repeal the Tories' battery of anti-union laws — and enlisted none other than the NGA's Tony Dubbins to back him up. Renationalisation of the sectors privatised by the Tories has been relegated to a "low priority", while pledges to restore health, education and other services and the necessary crash programme of house building and repairs to create useful new jobs have all been carefully hedged by warnings of the need for "responsible" management of the capitalist economy. New nationalisation is virtually ruled out. There will be no rash commitments to restore the civil liberties and democratic rights destroyed by Tory legislation, no timescale for the abolition of the racist Immigration and Nationality Acts, and only guarded promises to increase pensions, student grants and benefits.



So why do we want a Labour government returned despite these policies? And what kind of programme should the left be putting forward for the workers' movement? Is the answer to Kinnock's right wing line simply to counterpose propaganda calls for wholesale and total nationalisation of the economy, and then denounce Labour for not carrying it out?

The reason for wanting the defeat of the Tories and the return of a Labour government is that it would offer us the best hope opening up a favourable new situation for a development of mass working class action around the many needs and demands of those in work and the millions on the dole.

Seven years of Thatcher's offensive, met by the TUC's succession of miserable betrayals, retreats and the traumatic defeat of the Miners' Strike have not by any means crushed the fighting spirit of the working class as a whole — as the tremendous resistance of the printworkers to Brenda Dean's sell-out has shown. Though numbers of days lost in strike action have declined to the level of the 1930s, militancy is repressed rather than extinguished: even in the

past few weeks we have seen postal workers, shipyard workers, textile workers and others erupt into action, despite the timidity of their official leaders.

If the Tory government, linch-pin of the employers' offensive, were to be ousted, and a government at least pretending to respond to workers' demands were elected, the stage would be set for a new upsurge of militant action in which the union structures at workplace level could rapidly recover their lost confidence and fighting capacity

We could not of course expect any carbon copy of the great upsurge of the mass action which followed the re-election of Wilson in 1974. The major defeats inflicted upon the shop floor organisation of the working class by Thatcher, and the strengthening grip of the new layer of right wing bureaucrats now moving into the leadership of key unions, make the conditions very different.

Heath's government had been battered by an almost continual succession of major strikes and struggles, at the centre of many of which was a powerful shop stewards' movement constructed during the preceding years of boom-time in the traditional industries — cars, docks, engineering, construction, and road transport.

Today many of these industries have been devastated by a decade of recession and rationalisation, with the stewards' committees themselves further gutted by management victimisations and attacks, waves of voluntary and compulsory redundancies, and the political degeneration of an old layer of convenors and stewards into the politics of class collaboration and bureaucracy. The two biggest defeats which rocked and finally toppled the Heath government were delivered by the miners; now Thatcher has confronted and defeated the NUM, and a new backstabbing campaign to isolate and weaken Arthur Scargill is being waged by the right wing of the NUM bureaucracy.

Nevertheless, the latent anger and militancy of the working class continues to develop, while the fact that greater numbers are again looking to a Labour Government to answer their problems can be seen from local election and opinion poll results. Faced by the predictable arrogant



refusal by Kinnock-Hattersley to concede to their basic demands, there is every reason to believe that workers will feel encouraged to take the road of struggle to force the new government into line.

This certainly happened under Wilson in 1974. The incoming Labour government refused to repeal Tory wage-controls, and dragged its feet over repeal of the hated Industrial Relations Act. It was confronted by mass action by health workers and others demanding a living wage, and by the threat of a national strike by the AUEW which was faced with sequestration at the hands of Heath's National Industrial Relations Court (the AUEW action forced instant panic measures to repeal the Act).

Other struggles gained mass currency — the call for the freeing of the Shrewsbury building workers, jailed for alleged picketing offences; the call for the lifting of all penalties on the Clay Cross councillors surcharged for fighting Heath's so-called "Fair Rents Act".

In view of the fact that Thatcher has gone further and faster than Heath in destroying democratic rights and working class living standards there

are clearly many more issues which would emerge under a Kinnock government — not least a wholesale revival of the campaign to scrap Trident, kick out Cruise missiles and remove US bases.

When large numbers of workers begin to take action on their own demands, that creates the best conditions for a real discussion on the way forward and the necessary policies to solve their problems. The "armchair socialism" that takes root in a period of relatively low morale can be challenged by a determined agitation around demands and issues which seek to raise the political level of the fight.

For the most part this did not occur in the period after the 1974 election: the reason was the inadequate, sectarian, propaganda politics of the Marxist left which had for the most part become acclimatised to slogan-mongering under Heath, and lacked any convincing, coherent alternative programme to that of Wilson.

Indeed much of the left remained oblivious to the yawning gulf that separated their maximilist calls for nationalisation and "socialist policies" from the thinking and ac-

tions of the working class.

Not only was Wilson opposed to nationalising the commanding heights of the economy: but the key force that would need to be mobilised if nationalisation were not to be a repetition of the Attlee government's measures to nationalise coal and rail was the working class itself.

To achieve this, the day to day problems and struggles faced by the workers had to be linked with the

fight for socialist solutions.

This was not the first time in history that a gap had existed between workers' spontaneous consciousness and the socialist programme: it is a central strategic problem in the fight for revolutionary leadership in the mass workers' movement. It has been addressed by Marx and Engels in the demands included in the Communist Manifesto; by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the October 1917 Revolution; by the Communist International in the Theses and resolutions of its first four Congresses; and, in the most directly accessible form, by Trotsky and the Left Opposition in the fight to establish a basic revolutionary continuity in the founding of the Fourth International in 1938.

Trotsky characterised the basic problem as finding the "bridge" between the daily struggles and existing consciousness of the working class and the necessary level of organisation and political consciousness if the workers are to overthrow capitalism.

In words which strike familiar echoes 48 years later in 1986 — in which the position of the 1938 Comintern has since been divided between the Eurocommunists of the Communist Party and the traditional Stalinist supporters of the *Morning Star* — Trotsky explained the need for a series of demands to serve a central political function:

"It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of



transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.

"Classical Social Democracy, functioning in an epoch of progressive capitalism, divided its programme into two parts independent of each other: the minimum programme, which limited itself to reforms within the framework of bourgeois society, and the maximum programme, which promised substitution of socialism for capitalism in the indefinite future. Between the minimum and the maximum programme, no bridge existed. And

indeed the Social Democracy has no need of such a bridge, since the word socialism is used only for holiday speechifying. The Comintern has set out to follow the path of the Social Democracy in an epoch of decaying capitalism: when, in general, there can be no discussion of systematic social reforms and the raising of the masses' living standards; when the bourgeoisie always takes away with the right hand twice what it grants with the left (taxes, tariffs, inflation, 'deflation', high prices, unemployment, police supervision of strikes); when every serious demand of the proletariat, and even every serious demand of the petty bourgeoisie, inevitably reaches beyond the limits of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois state."

(The Transitional Programme)

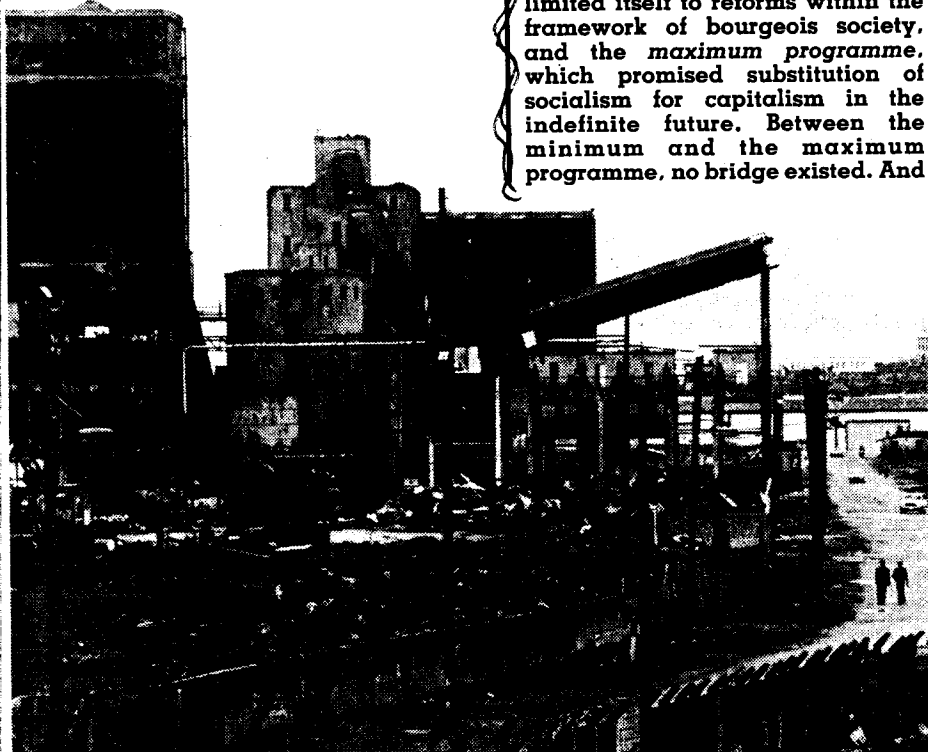
What issues do these transitional demands address? Again the central demands focus on familiar questions and appear ideally geared to the current situation facing the British labour movement:

- defence of living standards;
- development of serious class struggle politics in the trade union;
- challenging the bosses' ikon of "viability" with demands for the abolition of business secrecy and the opening of account books and plans to elected trade union committees;
- the fight for workers' control in the workplace and in whole industries — and the development of a workers' plan for production;
- mobilising behind the demand for nationalisation of separate groups of capitalists, and of banks and the finance houses;
- defence of picket lines and working class neighbourhoods;
- the fight against imperialism and war;
- the organisation of local organisations of working class power to challenge the power of the capitalist state;
- and the fight for a genuine workers' government.

Why, then, were the demands of Trotsky's programme not taken up by most of the British Marxists who in 1974 saw themselves as the revolutionary vanguard?

The forerunners of today's Socialist Workers Party, the International Socialists, had already become bogged down in tail-ending the politics of militant trade union stewards in building their "rank and file" groupings. The IS explicitly rejected any transitional demands.

By 1974 the Workers Revolutionary Party had completely discarded the programme of transitional demands its predecessor the Socialist Labour League had raised during the 1960s and embraced a sectarian perspective of one-by-one recruitment to a "mass revolutionary party". The



Kinnock will inherit Thatcher's industrial wasteland.



1972: strike to release imprisoned dockers

WRP's campaigning slogans under Heath had reduced themselves to the glib, ultimatic call for the nationalisation of all basic industries, banks and finance houses, and the demand for a "General Strike to bring down the Tories and re-elect a Labour government, pledged to socialist policies." Once Labour was catapulted back into office in the wake of Heath's defeat by the miners, the WRP found itself without any coherent programme or policy.

When a minority within the WRP around Alan Thornett began to argue for a return to the demands and the method of Trotsky's Transitional Programme, they were slandered, vilified, isolated and expelled. The WRP, far from adopting transitional

demands, lurched further towards ultimatism with calls for a general strike to bring down the Labour government, and the barely veiled megalomania of demands for a "workers revolutionary government".

While the International Marxist Group in 1974 was formally committed to a policy of arguing for a sliding scale of wages and other transitional demands, it did little in practice to popularise or push these policies into the trade unions and workplaces.

The opportunity was lost in 1974-79 to link the necessary programmes and method of intervention with a rising tide of working class struggle. The Wilson betrayals forged ahead regardless — running into confrontation with increasing sections of the rank and file in the unions and the Labour Party itself. Then Callaghan took over and Denis Healey's fourth phase of wage controls plunged the movement into the 1978-79 "Winter of Discontent".

While the upsurge of rank and file revolt within the Labour Party following Thatcher's victory in 1979 began to break down some of the sectarian aloofness of the Marxist movement towards struggles in the Labour Party, it did not resolve the problem of political perspective.

The left ferment of the "Bennite" movement which culminated in the Deputy Leadership election of 1981 had many strengths: but it did not — and could not — spontaneously resolve the problem of a coherent political alternative to Labour's traditional reformist programme. Now the divisions have sharpened within the old Bennite current — between the careerist "Livingstonite" wing following the Kinnock gravy train, and the hard left: but the discussion on a fighting programme for the working class has yet to be carried through.

If we want to oppose Kinnock's project of managing capitalism with an alternative scenario of a fight for socialist policies, then we have to decide *what* socialist policies, and we have to begin at once to raise and popularise them within the workers' movement.

We have to make clear that while the fact of a Kinnock government would open new possibilities for struggle, the *actions* of that government will be actions which *attack* the independence of the unions and *attack* the workers. That is nothing new: it is the track record of every Labour government, as they have attempted to tinker with a bankrupt and exploitative capitalist system.

Marxists and the "hard" class struggle left must be ready to build and support a whole range of struggles and campaigns which will break out spontaneously after the fall of Thatcher, which will include:

- opposition to wage controls;
- opposition to Trident, Cruise, Polaris and NATO: US bases out;

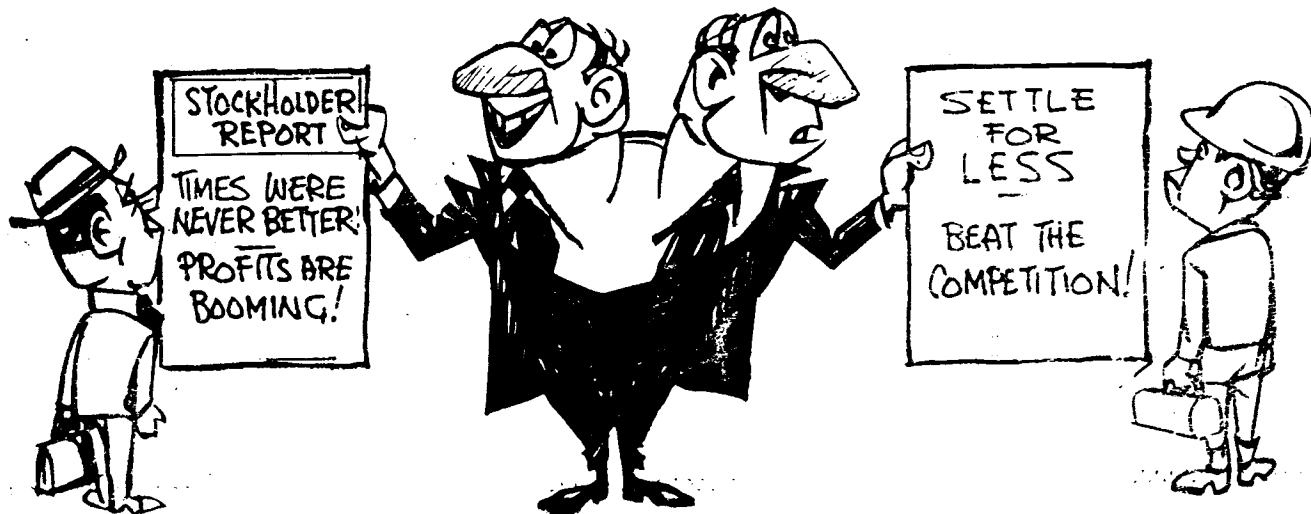
- demands for the repeal of the anti-union laws;
- fighting for the repeal of Immigration-Nationality Acts;
- opposition to continuing redundancies and speed-up in the factories and workplaces;
- calls for a big increase in pensions and state benefits;
- demands for the reinstatement of and amnesty for victimised and jailed miners and class struggle militants;
- restore services and standards cut in NHS, education and social services;
- demands for the disbanding of the brutal police detachments (SPG and IRU) built under Labour and unleashed by Thatcher against pickets, demonstrators and black youth;
- calls for a restoration of local democracy and an end to ratecapping.

These policies would amount to a wide-reaching series of demands that Labour act to halt the present attacks on the working class. Other demands would also need to be advanced to enable the best elements of the working class to challenge the essentially *capitalist, imperialist* character of the Labour leadership and a Labour government:

- For a crash programme of useful public works — housing; hospitals; community care; schools; colleges; transport; infrastructure; energy research; childcare; social services — to create new and worthwhile employment for 4-5 million jobless youth and adults at trade union rates of pay.
- For a shorter working week without loss of pay!
- For a statutory minimum wage to raise the income of the low-paid, enforced by trade union monitoring in each area.
- Smash the EEC Common Agricultural Policy and EEC subsidies to capitalist monopolies! Link up with European unions and workers' parties to oppose the bosses' EEC machinery and develop real internationalism.

- Troops out of Ireland and the Malvinas! US troops out of Grenada!
- Britain out of NATO! Disband all British bases overseas; expel all US bases from Britain!
- Break all trade, diplomatic and military links with apartheid South Africa and its stooges! Full support, including arms, to those black organisations fighting for self-determination in Namibia, and for democratic and socialist demands in South Africa.
- Full support for the Nicaraguan government against the US war drive. Support for struggles for national liberation in El Salvador and elsewhere.
- Support for the Palestinian struggle against the Zionist occupation, and for a democratic secular state of Palestine.





Hospital workers (above) faced the struggle against the building strike

None of these demands goes so far as to call for the socialist overturn of British capitalism. But each of them is in conflict with the interests of British imperialism, and each of them — with the possible exception of withdrawal from the Malvinas — will be resolutely opposed in practice by Labour leaders in government.

Yet it is also necessary in fighting for a socialist programme to look further at the situation which will confront a new Labour government, and the forces which will drive it into conflict with the working class.

A Kinnock government would face an instant flight of capital — unhindered by any constraints. Sterling's value would plummet, bringing a soaring rise in inflation as the costs of imported goods and materials went sharply up.

Kinnock would also inherit mass unemployment, substantial poverty, a built-in deficit on manufactured goods, dwindling oil supplies, and a crumbling infrastructure of housing, schools, hospitals, sewers and roads. Substantial state-owned industries will have been privatised — on a scale well beyond any reformist scheme for repurchasing the shares.

Against Kinnock's inevitable reformist rationalisation for retreats and class collaboration it is necessary to equip workers with demands and a perspective for struggle which leads forward towards socialist conclusions.

● To stem the flight of capital, the traditional Labourite efforts at exchange controls have always proved impotent. Only workers' control of the banking and financial sector — the opening of the books, and the exposure of the hidden deals and swindles — coupled with the nationalisation of the finance houses can create the machinery that will control the sharks and speculators.

● To combat the inflationary effects of the falling pound, workers must demand the protection of their pay packets through a sliding scale of wages, providing point for point in-

creases in take-home pay to match the rise in prices as monitored by trade union committees. Any other answer to the inevitable currency crisis simply surrenders in advance to the IMF and turns into a fresh attack on the workers. This has been a stumbling block of each previous Labour government.

● The threat to axe jobs in any one industry or workplace must be met by firm trade union opposition and the demand for work sharing on full pay, to divide the available work between the whole existing workforce. Eventually a socialist society will seek to

plan such a division of necessary work to ensure that all workers have the right to paid employment. The work sharing must be carried out under the control of elected trade union committees, and with full rights and wages intact.

● To meet the problem of mass poverty, afflicting the unemployed, pensioners and millions of low-paid workers, an immediate big increase in state benefits is required: these benefits too must be protected against inflation. The growing scale of this problem — particularly the expanding population of elderly people

**"What is the sense of the transitional programme? We can call it a programme of action, but for us, for our strategic conception, it is a transitional programme — it is a help to the masses in overcoming the inherited ideas, methods, and forms and adapting themselves to the exigencies of the objective situation. This transitional programme must include the most simple demands. We cannot foresee and prescribe local and trade union demands adapted to the local situation of a factory, the development from this demand to the slogan for the creation of a workers' soviet.**

**"These are both extreme points, from the development of our transitional programme to find the connecting links and lead the masses to the idea of the revolutionary conquest of power. That is why some demands appear very opportunistic — because they are adapted to the actual mentality of the workers. That is why other demands appear too revolutionary — because they reflect more the objective situation than the actual mentality of the workers. It is our duty to make this gap between objective and subjective factors as short as possible. That is why I cannot overestimate the importance of the transitional programme.**

**(Leon Trotsky: A Summary of Transitional Demands)**



workers (top) entered the battle in 1973. Building workers faced hundreds of police when they demonstrated in Shrewsbury against the trial of builders whose charges arose from the strike of 1972.



and mass unemployment created by the crisis of capitalism — cannot be resolved within the present system. To create the extra wealth and work required demands an *expansion* of production, and switch from production for profit to production for need. This in turn points to the need to *expropriate* the key industries and socialist planning in place of capitalist anarchy or Kinnock-Keynesian tinkering.

- The development of a *workers' plan for production* to cater for unmet needs and create new jobs should be called for as part of the fight to show the need for a *socialist, planned economy*. Included in this plan should be research and development into alternative sources of energy to replace oil and potentially lethal nuclear power.

- Only by breaking from the current economic and trading relations and the unequal, imperialistic relationship with the oppressed countries of the "Third World" can the terminal decline of British manufacturing industry be halted. New markets must be found on a new basis: this means the overturn of capitalism.

- The massive scale of the Tories' privateering raids on nationalised industries means that the *repurchase* of anyone of them is virtually impossible. Yet these industries are central to the economy and (BT, British Gas, etc.) major monopolies in their own rights. The need to *expropriate* rather than *repurchase* these industries, compensating only the smallest and poorest shareholders on the basis of their original stake can clearly be exposed by trade unions opening the books and publicising a

simplified explanation of their accounts and profits since privatisation. In doing so, the general case for expropriating banks and top monopolies becomes even clearer. The fight for "open the books" investigations by unions in each of these industries, and for policies of sit-in, seizure and expropriation can thus be popularised. The threat to jobs in many privatised firms is another angle that can and must be used for propaganda and agitation around the demand for expropriation.

- On the shop floor in industry, workers' inquiries should expose the extent and impact of speed-up, job losses and attacks on union rights since 1979 as the basis for demanding full restoration of living standards and working conditions. That this demand conflicts with capitalist profitability is an argument not for surrender but for socialism.

- Against the racist and anti-union violence of the police and the threat posed by the armed forces, workers must counterpose demands for the disbanding of these armed bodies of capitalist repression, and their replacement by workers' militias and community self-policing. Similar demands must be made for the replacement of the bosses' courts, judiciary and civil service hierarchy with elected, accountable figures and institutions.

- The demands of women for free, universally available contraception and abortion on demand link in with the need for a massive expansion of the NHS. Similarly the call for systematic screening of all women at risk for cervical and breast cancer,

and the investment in an urgent programme of research into prevention of these killer diseases underlines the need for a major shake-up of health services. A programme of real community care, with an expanded workforce of NHS and social service staff on improved rates of pay is needed to lift the burden of caring for sick and elderly relatives from the shoulders of millions of women in the home: a major programme to provide state nursery facilities that will offer every woman the right to work and leisure; a crash programme of house building and repairs — all are vital for women but require spending that will not be allocated while capitalist priorities prevail.

These — and many other policies relating to the special needs of women workers, Black people and ethnic minorities, the disabled and the elderly — must be campaigned for primarily through agitation and propaganda at the base of the labour movement. They will be rigorously opposed not only by a Labour government but also by trade union bureaucrats, and others who shrink from revolutionary implications.

While it is necessary for us to have policies and demands relating to all these issues, the *key factor* in the exposure of the real character of the Labour government in office and the construction of a hard left/revolutionary wing in the labour movement will be the extent to which the interests of the working class can be shown to be counterposed on a day-to-day level to the policies and ambitions of the Labour leaders.

While we press for the widest possible support for class struggle policies

and for campaigns around particular transitional demands (most obviously those on protection of living standards and job creation), we must emphasise, in sharp distinction to the *Militant* school of politics, that the socialist revolution in Britain requires a working class mobilised in its workplaces and localities to challenge the power of the employers and the state, and to build their own organisations.

We do not simply address demands to the government for parliamentary action or legislation from above: we must *organise* at workplace level to force a hostile, bourgeois Labour government to act in workers' support. If the workers do not act for themselves, there can be no socialist revolution.

Our goal is to foster the spirit of working class independence and anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist resistance that can show workers through their own experiences the need to break from Kinnock's lukewarm reformism and take the road to revolution.

Our alternatives to Labour's class collaboration are alternatives *for the workers*, to be fought for *by workers*. We offer the alternative of class struggle, consciously carried through to the level of mass action to expropriating the monopolies and the banks, seize the power, smash the existing machinery of the capitalist state, and establish workers' power. It depends therefore centrally on the development of struggles at the base of the workers' movement in which the class issues can be clarified and the class collaborators discredited and pushed aside.

That is the relevance of the Transitional Programme and its method for Marxists in Britain today. It is a method which deliberately sets its face in opposition to every variety of sectarian abstention and armchair abstraction: it is a road to revolution based on involvement in the front lines of every struggle in the labour movement and every rebellion of the oppressed.

The challenge is in the fight to take these demands and this class struggle perspective not only into the existing circles of left wing activists in the workers' movement, but into the wider rank and file of the trade unions and the broader ranks of the working class. A base must be built above all where the organised left is presently at its weakest: in the industrial struggles of health workers, factory workers, miners, white collar and technical staff, teachers, civil servants and all manner of trade unionists.

Unless there is a fight to popularise these demands and mobilise around them, the miserable experience of the missed opportunity of 1974 could be echoed, and history could repeat itself as both tragedy and farce.



"Neither monetary inflation nor stabilisation can serve as slogans for the proletariat, because these are but two ends of the same stick. Against a bounding rise in prices, (...) one can fight only under the slogan of a *sliding scale of wages*. This means that collective agreements should assure an automatic rise in wages in relation to the increase in price of consumer goods.

"Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing section of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the crumbs of a disintegrating society. *The right to employment* is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is being shorn from him at every step. Against unemployment, 'structural' as well as 'conjunctural', the time is ripe to advance, along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of a *sliding scale of working hours*. Trade unions and other mass organisations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in the solidarity of mutual responsibility. On this basis all the work on hand would then be divided among all existing workers in accordance with how the extent of the working week is defined. The average wage of every worker remains the same as it was under the old working week. Wages, with a strictly guaranteed *minimum*, would follow the movement of prices. It is impossible to accept any other programme for the present catastrophic period.

"Property owners and their lawyers will prove the 'unrealisability' of these demands. Smaller, especially ruined capitalists in addition will refer to their account ledgers. The workers categorically denounce such conclusions and references. The question is not one of a 'normal' collision between opposing material interests. The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralisation, and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish."

(Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Programme*)

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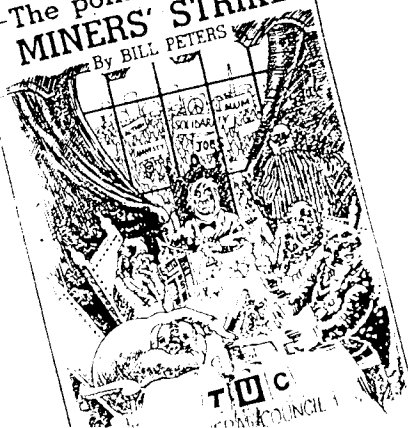
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