

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

Chile ENDING THE NIGHTMARE

See centre pages.

Plessey's South Africa

Report from
Trade union militant
Brian Williams
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Terry French

Jailed miner Terry French has been sent from open prison to Wandsworth jail. His wife, Liz French, reports.

Terry went back off home leave on the Monday — and he was in Wandsworth on Tuesday morning! They haven't given a reason — only that he's unsuitable for open prison. Most of the screws in Wandsworth were saying it's because he went to the TUC. It's direct punishment, that's what it is.

He's really cross about this, and he had every right to be. There was no stipulation on his home leave about what he could do and what he couldn't do, as long as he returned there on time.

Terry is now going to be moved to Blenstone in Norfolk, which is over 200 miles away. He could already be there for all I know. I have to ring the prison every day. He was already a week in Wandsworth before I got to know.

I'm campaigning to get him nearer home. It will be very difficult for me to get up there. When he was in the open prison it was easy to get to, there were many lifts. But where he's going now I don't know anybody. They will harass you in any way they can.

I've talked to the Justice for Mine-workers Campaign, the NUM and the South East Region of the TUC. I'm hoping that the TUC will put pressure on the Home Office to get him back into an open prison.

He comes up again for parole in November — but with them saying he's not suitable for open prison they're hardly likely to give him parole, are they? So he'll have to go to August next year.

His first priority when he comes out is to get his job back, and take the campaign up with the rest of the sacked men. He wants to stand for the vacant position of Vice President of the union.

I think that if Haslam wants peace in the coalfields he's really gone the wrong way about it, because he's still victimising the sacked men. He is also victimising miners who endured more than a year on strike by not giving them the pay increase which they are entitled to.

The only reason they were sacked is that they were fighting for their jobs. Every single one of them should get their job back again.

I'm made about it — I thought Haslam was going to come in and bring peace to the coalfields — 'let's get on with what it's about and get coal out of the ground' — but he doesn't seem to want that.

The overtime ban is now spreading. It's already started in Kent. The only way the miners have ever got anything in their lives is to take industrial action, and it looks like they're going to have to do it again.

One of the top priorities in Kent is their grievance about Terry not getting parole. We've still got 49 victimised lads here, and not one miner has got his job back.

At the Labour Party Conference I just hope that the NUM takes up its fight again with the Labour Party to make sure that, if they get back into power, we all get our jobs back. We're still victims of the strike here and waiting for the Labour Party to do something for us.

British company's threat to south African workers

'JAIL IF YOU STAY IN THE UNION'



Plesseys use the racist regime's security forces as a threat against black workers trying to organise in their factories

Thatcher and British big business will tell you that they are against apartheid.

They say that they are attempting to pressurise the white minority regime into making reforms and coming to terms with the demands of the black majority in South Africa.

They are downright liars.

Plessey, a giant electrical and communications multinational based in the UK, with plants across the globe and shareholders including Tory MPs claims to be one of the companies pressurising the apartheid state. The reality is very different.

Plessey South Africa has for years paid starvation wages to its workers in the Cape Town area.

Now, when the workers have decid-

ded to fight back and demand a living wage of R3.9 an hour (the princely sum of £40 a week), Plessey has used every management dirty trick imaginable to smash the resistance of the black workers and their trade union EAWTUSA (the Electrical and Allied Workers Trade Union of South Africa).

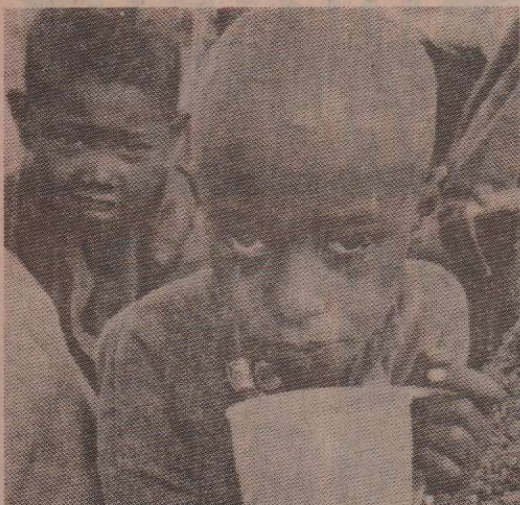
Workers have been victimised. They have faced the threat of the sack, of 180 days detention for being members of their union, of arrest for organising union meetings, yet they have still fought back.

Plessey has used the State of Emergency and the workers' fear of mass victimisation as a way of trying to defeat their struggle and bludgeon the union into submission.

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EEC cuts aid



Little help from EEC

The EEC's budget includes a 10% cut in development aid for the Third World, and 5% in food aid.

Spending on EEC agricultural policy is due to increase, so the Common Market will have even bigger food mountains. But those mountains will stay in stock to keep prices up, instead of being sent to help the starving.

Although rain has relieved the drought in Africa, famine is still widespread. And the rain has brought a new threat with it: a huge plague of locusts.

Polish unionists freed

Last week the Polish government announced that it would release 225 political prisoners.

These include Solidarnosc leaders Zbigniew Bujak, Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, Tadeusz Jednyak and others.

On the same day security police visited over 3000 people whom they suspected of being active in the Solidarnosc underground, and warned them to stop their activities.

The government, it seems, is taking a calculated risk, hoping that it can improve its international image without allowing a real revival of opposition.



Fake unions

Walesa's comrades freed

According to the latest official statistics, the official government-sponsored trade unions in Poland now have 5½ million members.

The most interesting feature of the figures is the geographical spread

of the membership. The lowest rates of membership are in the strongest working class centres of Poland: Lodz, Krakow, Warsaw, Wroclaw. (Information from 'Voice of Solidarity', June-July 1986).

Collapse of Contadora

The Contadora talks seem finally to have collapsed. The attempt to get some sort of Central American peace treaty is at a dead end.

It all started in January 1983, as an initiative by Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico and Peru. After long negotiations, a draft document was produced in September 1984. It provided for all foreign military forces to be withdrawn from Central America, and all Central American governments to cease any support for any armed opposition to

other governments in the region.

This meant that Nicaragua would have to stop any material support for the rebels in El Salvador; but in return the Sandinistas would get at least a formal commitment from Honduras and Guatemala and Costa Rica to stop the US and the contras operating on their territory. So Nicaragua said it would sign the treaty.

This stunned the US, which had played a big behind-the-scenes role in the whole process. So

a few arms were twisted, and the other Central American countries insisted on amendments to the treaty. They wanted to impose an additional condition on Nicaragua — a reduction in the size of its army.

Nicaragua has by far the biggest army in Central America. The reason why, of course, is that it is the only state in Central America facing a large armed rebellion which has lavish backing from the world's greatest military power, the US.

So, there was deadlock. Talks did restart in 1985, producing a draft which was unacceptable to Nicaragua. Another attempt in May 1986 produced a third draft from the government of Honduras, but it still had the demand about reducing the size of the Nicaraguan army.

The Nicaraguans did not reject the draft out of hand, but they demanded modifications, and no agreement could be reached.

Israel accused of torture

Amnesty International, the human rights organisation, has called for full investigations into reports of torture of prisoners in Israeli-occupied territory and under Israeli supervision in south Lebanon.

Amnesty has already appealed to the Israeli authorities, without success, to set up independent investigations and make the results public.

West Bank

It cited the case of Adnan Mansour Ghanem, a Palestinian arrested in Ramallah on the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River. This, it said, was typical of a steady flow of allegations of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners.

He reported being beaten, forced to stand for long periods while hooded

and handcuffed, prevented from sleeping suffocated and subjected to prolonged ice-cold showers. He said he was severely beaten again after complaining of torture during a court appearance.

Lebanon

Amnesty International also asked the Israeli authorities to investigate detailed accounts of torture which former prisoners said was carried out by Christian militiamen under Israeli supervision in South Lebanon. These accounts came from people who had been held in Khiam Prison in the 'security zone' established by Israeli forces adjoining the Israeli border. Former detainees said they were hooded, beaten, and subjected to electric shock during interrogation. Some said they were burned with cigarettes

and suspended by their wrists from a cross-bar. Consistent reports reaching Amnesty International from ex-detainees said the torture was inflicted by members of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army under the supervision of Israelis.

Over 200 people, including teenagers, women and old men, are believed to be held at Khiam. They are denied any judicial process and the right to see lawyers, and are not formally charged. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is denied access to them.

Many

Amnesty International said the case of Adnan Mansour Ghanem, who was deported to Jordan without being charged with any offence, reflected many other reports from the territories occupied by Israeli forces.

TEACHER SACKED

Brent strike suspended

By John Hogan

The NUT won a High Court injunction last week to stop Brent Council holding an enquiry into the case of Maureen McGoldrick, the headmistress who was suspended after allegations that she made a racist remark.

Now the enquiry will proceed with the proper ten days notice, which the council representative told SO had been dispensed with by the council so that the case could be settled quickly.

The NUT then told the teachers at Sudbury Infants, who had been on strike demanding McGoldrick's immediate reinstatement, to return to work.

At the weekend a meeting of black parents and teachers — though not those from Sudbury who had been on strike in support of McGoldrick — is

reported to have condemned the strike and urged the parties to accept the council's disciplinary procedures.

The press has speculated that the strike is a reaction to the Council's anti-racist policy. There is evidence that they way this policy has been handled does form part of the background, but it is also clear that this is not a re-run of the case of the racist Bradford headteacher Ray Honeyford. All reports accept that McGold-

rick and the Sudbury Infant teachers agree with the Council's policy.

The full Labour Group of Brent Labour-dominated council have yet to discuss the case. Councillor Frank Hansen told SO that he wasn't therefore in a position to comment on the specifics of the case.

But Hansen said he did think that an important issue is involved: who decides the outcome of the allegations — the school governors or the council?

Misusing the race issue

By John Bloxam

Over the past year, the Brent East Labour Party has seen the cynical use by members of the local Labour establishment of charges of alleged racism who use the whole issue of race to silence left wing opponents. Two

examples are particularly enlightening.

At the end of 1985 and the beginning of 1986 the selection process for council candidates in Brent was well underway. A left wing woman, Hank Hastings, was seeking selection, which she almost certainly would have gained. But she was seen as a threat to the ruling clique who removed her from the panel of council candidates on trumped up charges of having made a racist remark.

More recently, in fact last Thursday, at the Brent East GMC, the issue of race was again used to attack the left. Over the past couple of months several members of the Brent East CLP have resigned, including the secretary. The GMC was asked on Thursday to nominate people to fill several posts. Only one place was filled, and the rest remained unfilled including that of the secretary.

The unwillingness of members of the GMC to fill EC posts was criticised by the vice-chair, Christine Clavening, who implied that the reason for this, and for the resignations from the EC (almost all of which had been by the hard left) was in response to the recent election of a black chair!

This sort of thing — whether it arises from cynical political calculation or from hysteria or from both — can only do damage to the labour movement and the necessary fight against the racism which is so rampant in British society.

DEPORTATIONS

Union backs anti-racist march

By Payman Rezaei

Last Saturday, 13 September, hundreds of people marched through the Chapeltown area of Leeds in protest against the threatened deportation of Rose Alao and her British-born 7-year old son Brian. The demonstration was organised by her union, NALGO.

Rose, who works for Leeds City Council, came to England in 1979 escaping persecution in Uganda, where five of her relatives had been murdered by political opponents.

Rose was first threatened with deportation four years ago, but was granted a temporary reprieve — which will run out next February. Rose is seeking political asylum.

people as victims of racist immigration laws which force around 250 people a month to leave Britain".

The active involvement of NALGO in anti-deportation campaigns marks a significant step forward in trade unions' response to British racism.

The West German conservative government has, as anticipated, brought in a series of very harsh immigration regulations to 'stem the tide' of political refugees.

Helmut Kohl, the West German Chancellor, speaking at a press conference, said that of the 100,000 people expected to arrive, only 15% would qualify for refugee status.

A new visa regulation will try to deal with the so-called problem countries — Lebanon, Syria, Ghana, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Any shipping or airline company which brings over passengers without the necessary entry documents will be fined.

On top of this any request for asylum based on financial hardship caused by war will not be accepted as sufficient reason. This will affect, especially, those fleeing the Middle East conflict. However, the Vietnamese boat people are not affected.

These measures follow smear campaigns in the right wing press against immigrants, especially since the discovery that the Tamil boat-people picked up in Canada initially set off from Germany.

The press has portrayed the influx of immigrants as a national disaster, and the refugees themselves as criminals.

Race & Class

The police 'banned' Rose from attending and speaking during the march. They also told her not to speak to the press because of a court proceeding that is going on.

NALGO general secretary John Daly was on the march and spoke out against the immigration laws.

He said, "NALGO has already won fights against deportation of members Muhammed Idrish and Shahid Sayed and we shall fight for Rose's freedom until we win. NALGO sees these

Stalinist trade

The USSR's recent decision to end the central government monopoly of foreign trade leaves only Rumania in Eastern Europe exercising that sort of central control.

Hungary gives almost all major manufacturing companies the right to trade directly. 273 companies have such rights.

In Poland, 263 com-

panies have direct foreign trading rights — 161 of them privately-owned.

East Germany, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia have been more cautious with between 15 and 25 companies in each country which can trade directly with foreign customers or suppliers.

Socialist Organiser
PO Box 823, London SE15
4NA.

01-639 7965.
Latest date for reports: first
post Monday or by phone,
Monday evening.

Editor: John O'Mahony.
Typesetting: Ian Swindale.

Published by Socialist
Organiser, PO Box 823,
London SE15 4NA.

Printed by East End Offset
[TU], London E2.

Registered as a newspaper at
the Post Office.
Signed articles do not neces-
sarily reflect the views of
SO.

Orange Sinn Fein?

FOR OVER half a century in Northern Ireland the Union Jack was a sacred thing, whether flying from the flagpole at Belfast Town Hall or wrapped around a drunken old lady dancing in the streets to taunt the Taigs. Anyone who interfered with it would feel the full weight of the RUC.

It has been legal to fly the Union Jack in any place at any time — in Catholic/nationalist and Protestant/Unionist areas alike — even when the flaunting of that flag was so intensely resented by the Catholic minority that riots followed.

By contrast, it was illegal to fly the Irish tricolour if doing that would offend or provoke Unionists, which of course it did.

Tricolour

Of course most Catholics considered the tricolour to be their flag — That too-hopeful banner of 20th century Irish nationalism symbolically linked the green with the orange by way of the white of a notional Irish unity. That national unity, so much desired by Republicans such as Patrick Pearse and James Connolly, who flew the tricolour over their headquarters in Dublin during the Easter Rising 70 years ago, never came about in reality. The Northern Protestants remained aloof and hostile.

The Protestant flag was and remains the Union Jack, and the tricolour became and is today not what it was designed to be, the symbol of the unity of Protestant and Catholic, of the descendants of 16th and 17th century settlers with the natives, of 'the Gael and the Gall' — but the banner of the nationalism of the Catholic people of Ireland, and in the first place of the 26 county state. In that 26 county state today, the flag's meaning is sometimes forgotten, and it is often described as



The Anglo-Irish deal is signed. Photo: Derek Speirs, Report

'green, white and gold'.

Now the British government and the 26 county government have decided to downgrade the Union Jack and upgrade the tricolour. As part of a package of petty reforms, the 'provocative' display of the Union Jack for sectarian purposes will be subject to the same legal constraints and sanctions as the flaunting of the tricolour already is.

This will be seen by Unionists as symbolic of the whole Anglo-Irish

agreement. The problem is that it will be a pretty empty symbol.

Of course any move to equalise relations between the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland is to be welcomed. But what this proposal shows more than anything else is the pettiness of both London and Dublin alike in their approach to Northern Ireland.

Here you have a society with 20% unemployment; within that, far higher rates of unemployment in most Catholic areas; and savage sectarian discrimination against Catholics for jobs at places like Shorts engineering works and Harland and Wolffs shipyard. You have mass poverty, and a political system which broke down in 1969 and has proved irreparable ever since.

Petty

Instead of radically altering anything either in politics or society, the two Tory governments go in for petty tinkering like the proposed legislation on the flags.

The proposed reform package is important for one reason — because it has been successfully pressed for by Dublin. This shows how well the Anglo Irish deal has survived the Orange marching season of the summer. Probably it has been strengthened by that test.

The pressure on the opposition Fianna Fail party in the South not to scrap the deal if it wins the 26 counties election due in the next year can only grow in these conditions. Those regarded as Fianna Fail's co-thinkers in the Six County constitutional nationalist party, the SDLP, such as Westminster MP and SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon, are openly demanding of Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey that he too should work the Anglo-Irish deal if he wins the next election.

Robinson

The Orange leaders understand all this, and it has led certain prominent leaders of the Unionists to say publicly that an independent Northern Ireland would be more acceptable to them than the joint London-Dublin rule in the Six Counties which they say — and in part rightly say — is enshrined in the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Peter Robinson, Ian Paisley's deputy, has recently said it, and so has the deputy leader of the Official Unionist Party, Harold MacCusker. MacCusker said this in the House of Commons debate on the Anglo-Irish agreement last November, but has

returned to the theme recently.

The Ulster Defence Association has been for independence since 1979.

Right now all this talk of independence is used as part of a campaign to scare Britain into scrapping the Anglo-Irish Agreement. But there is no reason to doubt that some of the Protestant leaders mean what they say.

Opinion polls have always shown that only a small minority of Protestants favour independence — which, of course, is the opposite of Unionism. Studies by economists of the likely consequences of independence show that living standards would decline by perhaps as much as 50%. And the existing Northern Ireland unit could not survive independence — it would break up.

'Nationalism'

These are the considerations that inhibit the growth of a Protestant movement for independence.

Yet the open discussion of independence by the most bigoted of Unionists is an indication of the way things are going, or may go, in the Protestant community. The Protestants are a hopelessly small numerical minority in the United Kingdom. If Britain remains determined on the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the only recourse for the die-in-the-last-ditch Orangeists will be a movement similar to the IRA, striking primarily at the South. Already there is no shortage of threats to strike at the South, and there are signs of some attempts to organise to do it.

Talk like that of Robinson and MacCusker will help generate such a move, and is helping to harden an Ulster Protestant 'nationalism'.

Partition, which brought the Protestants home rule in Belfast (until it was abolished in 1972) enhanced and reinforced their sense of an identity separate from the rest of the Irish; and a series of conflicts with Britain over the last 17 years, and now the conflict over the Anglo-Irish Agreement, have enhanced and reinforced and perhaps created a sense of an identity separate from Britain.

In face of that, the proposed reforms — though the legislation on the Union Jack will act like petrol on the fire of Protestant resentment — are pretty small beer.

Already the Protestants, with their opposition to the Anglo-Irish deal, parallel and mirror the Catholic nationalists and Republicans. Back before World War 1, when the Orangeists armed to resist all-Ireland home rule, republicans like Pearse and nationalists like MacNeill welcomed it, and said Orange rebellion against Britain had a nationalist logic to it — whatever the intra-Irish animosities and tensions that were driving them to rebellion against a Britain that seemed to be siding with the Irish nationalist majority.

The same logic is there now, and probably growing. Talk of independence amounts to Orange Sinn Feinism.

But there is no way that the two Irish Sinn Feinisms can cohere. In an independent Northern Ireland relations between the two of them would be settled, and their respective territories carved out, by way of bloody civil war. That would be an immense tragedy from which nothing good could come for either socialism or Republicanism in Ireland.

The Anglo-Irish deal, with its inflammatory but petty reforms, offers no solution to the Northern Ireland conflict. In the short and medium term it will not bank the conflict down or extinguish it; it will stoke it up much hotter than it has been for the last decade.

As we said last week, a democratic programme is needed which recognises the two basic democratic rights: the right of the people of Ireland as a whole to determine their own future, and the right of Ireland's Protestant minority not to be overrun by a Catholic-sectarian state.

That means British withdrawal and a united Ireland, with some federal system to give local autonomy to the Protestant heartland areas.

Hands off Bleasdale!

THE Tories and their press have got their hatchets out and are mounting what looks like a coordinated attack on the latest work of Alan Bleasdale, author of 'The Boys From The Blackstuff', the famous drama about unemployment in Liverpool.

Their real target is the BBC, it seems.

Bleasdale's new TV serial, 'The Monocled Mutineer', has been widely praised for its dramatic and artistic power. It is based on the story of a real person, Percy Toplis, during World War 1.

The attacks on Bleasdale centre on the charge that his drama is not — or so they say — a hard documentary history.

'The Monocled Mutineer' does not claim to be a documentary, or a straightforward historical narrative. It is a drama woven round a core of historical fact.

All such dramas, from Shakespeare's time to ours 400 years later, employ 'dramatic licence'. The author has the right to sift and edit the facts, to telescope them and to invent scenes and events as he needs to express the truth as he sees it.

The standard is set by the needs of artistic and dramatic truth, not by the demands of accurate historiography or biography. Such a work is to be judged by whether or not it captures the essence of a historical event, period or episode.

Bleasdale's 'Mutineer' does capture and express most powerfully the fundamental truth about the unimaginable degradation and brutality to which the rank and file of the British Army — like the other armies — were subjected during World War 1. That was a naked imperialist war on both sides, a war of the trenches in which the generals would almost casually throw away half a million and more lives to capture a few feet of blood-drenched mud.

Such a view of the First World War has been steadily gaining ground since the 1920s, and these days it is very widely held. You do not have to be especially radical or left-wing to share it.

But to listen to the Tory press hounds baying at Bleasdale, you would think his view of the First imperialist World War was a perverse heresy and a sacrilege against the universally venerated memory of a holy crusade for freedom and democracy.

Bleasdale himself says that the outcry is designed to secure a 'strong' new chair for the BBC who will bind the BBC utterly to the will of the Tory party and the right wing. Many of these people, believe it or not, now think that the BBC is dangerously left-wing.

Tell that to the makers of the various programmes on Ireland which have been banned, bowdlerised, or re-edited over the years!

But the Tory attempt to trounce Bleasdale and those who let this work appear on the TV screen, for the way they handle events that occurred seven decades ago, probably marks a qualitative new stage in attempts by the repressive right wing to turn the clock back.

Defend artistic freedom from the attacks of the Tory vandals! Hands off Alan Bleasdale!

YOUTH fightback

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- Murder most Fowler p 13

SOUTH AFRICA:

WORKERS FIGHT FOR FREEDOM



RUC clear streets after Loyalist riots in Portadown, 14 July. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft.

Is vengeance socialist?

JEAN LANE wrote in 'Woman's Eye' (SO 282):

"As long as men like (Judge) Miskin see rapists as harmless men who just forgot to ask first, sentences will be light. And as long as women are seen as sex objects for men's enjoyment, rape will continue".

Now of course it is true that sentences handed down by a judge, for rape as for other crimes, can vary according to the moods and prejudices of the judge. Unusually 'light' sentences for rape probably do express the prejudices against women of judges who are usually male, upper-class, and elderly — and sometimes the downright misogyny of some of them.

So far, so much to the point Jean Lane was making — that 'light' sentences express outrageous attitudes to women, rather than a comprehensive humanitarianism on the part of the

judges.

But agitation against 'light' sentences necessarily implies that we advocate harsher ones. Do we? Surely we should not.

Some feminists do, or seem to. But the whole 'sharp condign punishment', 'hang-'em-flog-'em-jail-'em-for-life' approach to crime is more backwoods-Tory than socialist.

Surely we advocate eradicating the social causes of crime and treating offenders humanely.

This need not and does not imply any indifference to defending potential victims against criminals.

Emotionally I can understand the impulse to string up people who commit the scarcely believable acts against old people and children as well as against women which we read about so frequently in the press. I can sympathise with those who want to take

direct action against shopkeepers who sell substances for children to sniff.

The question is, though: do we react blindly and emotionally, or do we keep in mind the horrible social context in which these crimes happen? If rape is generated by the place of women in the whole culture, is the answer to it to demand the head (or, like so many who responded to the Woman's Own survey, the balls) of the culprits?

That isn't the answer. It is blind vengeance of the sort that repels us when it is generalised towards all criminals at Tory Party conference.

Yet if vengeance is the right response to rape, then why would it be wrong as a response to the savage attacks that take place during robberies of old people? Logically it could not be.

TOM O'KEEFE,
Manchester.

Myth of Kronstadt

LAURENS Otter seems incapable of reading what people actually write.

I never said that those who raised a hue and cry over Kronstadt in 1938 were agents of Stalinism. They were a 'People's Front' of Mensheviks, Anarchists, Social Democrats and the bourgeoisie.

I never said that 1938 was the first time the question had been raised. In fact I said that what differentiated Kronstadt from the many other such episodes at the time was that the Anarchists and Social-Revolutionaries flocked to Kronstadt to make political capital out of it.

But it is instructive that such a broad range of groups chose to re-raise Kronstadt in 1938. The reason was that they had all been exposed as bankrupt. The Anarchists in Spain had shown the hollowness of their abhorrence of the state by taking part in the Popular Front government.

The collapse of the post-war boom, and the continued crisis of capitalism, have once again shown the bankruptcy of Social Democracy, and it is no wonder that the Kinnockite Tribune seeks to divert attention away from its own politics by raising the myth of Kronstadt.

On the question of the composition of the Kronstadt garrison, Otter provides no real proof that the sailors of 1921 were the same as those of 1917. He refers to a government decree of 1917. But there were many decrees



Lenin and Trotsky with soldiers who had taken part in suppression

issued which, although never formally rescinded, were also not implemented.

I think Trotsky, as creator of the Red Army and Commissar for War, was better placed to know whether the troops were moved to other fronts than is Laurens Otter, and Trotsky says quite clearly they were.

The uprising was a petit-bourgeois reaction to the hardships of the civil war, and against the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The view of one of those quoted

by Otter — Victor Serge — was that the affair could have been averted if the NEP had been introduced one year earlier. Yet according to Otter the NEP was part of Lenin's counter-revolution against which the Kronstadters were rebelling.

Quite clearly the facts are at odds with the myth that Laurens Otter tries to perpetuate.

ARTHUR BOUGH,
Stoke-on-Trent.

Settler states

Rod Quinn's letter (SO282) shows the uselessness of Tony Greenstein's theory of 'settler-colonial states'.

Yes, South Africa is a settler-colonial state and so are Israel and Australia. Tony Greenstein draws the conclusion for practical politics: Israel=South Africa. Rod Quinn adds: Australia=Israel.

The drift of Greenstein's argument is fairly clear. To deal with the 'settler-colonial' plague in Israel, the Israeli Jews must be treated like the whites in South Africa. Socialists should defend individual rights for them, but as a nation they should be submerged in an Arab state, just as the whites will be submerged in a majority-rule South Africa.

I'm not sure what conclusion Rod Quinn intends. Australia's settler population of 15 million cannot possibly be submerged by the few thousand surviving Aborigines. Even after the socialist revolution — and even after making what compensation is possible to the Aborigines for the terrible suffering of their people — Australia will still be a settler society.

In fact — despite all the horrors of European settler-colonialism between the 16th and 20th centuries — 'settler-colonial' does not always mean reactionary.

After all, there are many other settler-colonial states. Take Cuba and other Latin American states: have their nationalisms been always and entirely reactionary? Take the USA: was its war for independence from Britain reactionary?

Australian nationalism is reactionary, but not because Australia is a settler society. And the Australian working class cannot be equated to the

white working class in South Africa or even the Jewish working class in Israel.

When Australian workers reacted to the sacking of their Labour government by Elizabeth Windsor's agent by demanding a republic, that was not reactionary (whatever the nationalist prejudices maybe wrapped around it), but progressive.

COLIN FOSTER,
Islington

LPYS

I thought I would write to tell other LPYS members about how we are building our branch.

A couple of weeks ago we held an all-day gig at the Racehorse pub in Northampton. Twelve bands played. "Brilliant", said the NME, and despite the rain 300 youth attended.

There's very little entertainment for youth in Northampton — unless you want to get ripped off by the clubs, where drinks are £2 a go, the DJs are macho bores (and many black youth don't get in anyway).

There were political speeches and it was a pretty good way to tell youth how crap the Tories are.

Comradely,
PAT MARKEY,
Northampton LPYS

Letters are welcome: send to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. 300 words or less, please, or we may have to cut them.

GRAFFITI

ANTI-NUKE SWING

56% of people in Britain want nuclear power scrapped, while 34% want to keep it and 10% 'don't know', according to the latest Gallup poll.

Opinion has swung massively since before Chernobyl, when only 28% wanted an end to nuclear power. Fully 68% of Labour supporters now want no nukes.

Opinions on nuclear weapons have also changed, though less dramatically. 44% now favour unilateral nuclear disarmament; two years ago it was only 20%.

It's odd that more people should want to



get rid of nuclear power used peacefully, because of the accompanying risks, than oppose nuclear weapons —

which carry all the same identical risks, and more, and are meant to be dangerous! But such is the fact.

Classes and parties

On the face of it, the social pattern of political party support in Britain is very straightforward.

Labour's support is mainly in the working class; the Tories depend on the middle class and some better-off workers; and the Alliance's support is spread more or less equally among social classes.

A recent opinion poll, however, broke down Alliance support into SDP and Liberal. And it showed that SDP sup-

port is heavily weighted towards the better-off — like the Tories' — while the Liberals' support is as much weighted towards the working class as Labour's. The even pattern of Alliance support comes from adding together two very different patterns.

However, the pre-SDP Liberal base of support was more like the overall Alliance pattern of today. Maybe what has happened is this: the creation of the Alli-

ance has broadened the old Liberal base, without changing its social composition much. But within the new, wider, 'centre-party' base, the Volvo drivers and yuppies look towards the social-Thatcherite SDP, while working class people prefer the more populist and radical-looking Liberals.

Laws

According to the Observer last Sunday, the Tories are working on plans for yet more anti-union laws. They have four ideas:

*To insist that ballots must be postal. At present the law allows workplace ballots.

*Complete outlawing of the pre-entry closed shop. At present it can be legal if 85% of the workers concerned vote for it.

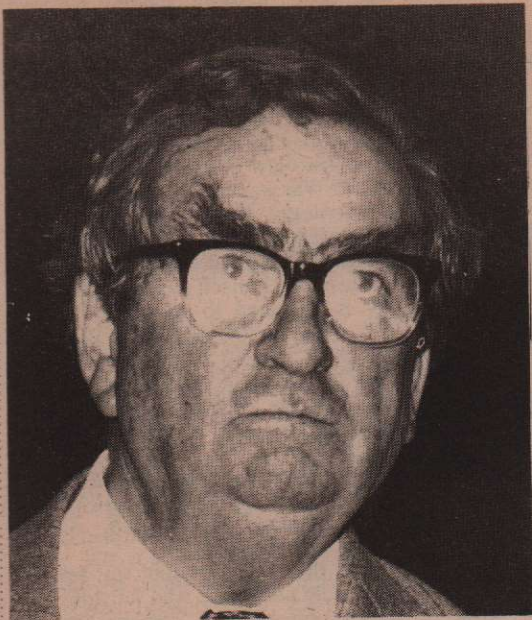
*A legal right to scab. Workers would have a legal right to walk through picket lines even if the strike was fully legal, ballots and all.

*Tighter controls over union finances.

Observer labour editor Robert Taylor reports that the Tories have been emboldened by the SDP's support for stronger anti-union laws and by the retreat of the TUC and the Labour leaders towards accepting legal controls on trade unions.

Scrooge

Victorian values? More like Scrooge! An East London pensioner, disgusted by the measly 40p increase on the old age pension, decided to protest by sending a 40p cheque to Thatcher. Sure enough, the old milk-snatcher cashed the cheque. (Story from Labour Weekly).



Left-wing by comparison...

Free dinners

Remember Dennis Healey talking about "squeezing the rich until the pips squeak"? He never did it, but at least he talked about it.

Today's Labour shadow Chancellor, Roy Hattersley, believes in squeezing the rich only for free dinners for himself. Last week he was flown to New York by City stockbrokers Greenwell Montagu to reassure a US financiers' dinner party about how moderate a Kinnock-Hattersley government would be.

No comprehensive repeal of the Tories' income tax cuts for the rich. No return to exchange controls. No 'generalised reflation'. No 'turning the clock back' on Thatcher's privatisation, except in public utilities; and even there, not outright re-nationalisation, but a formula of mixed public-private ownership. And tax cuts for business.

Hattersley still insisted that Labour's aim was to cut unemployment but he wasn't very clear about how.

Workers' defiance

Plessey's links with the apartheid state

Brian Williams, southern areas secretary of the Electrical and Allied Workers' Trade Union, spoke to Socialist Organiser about how Plessey has victimised trade unionists in their South African factories.

It started when we had contact from two Plessey workers angry at the low pay, bad conditions and victimisations at the Plessey Renak factory. Workers started to join the EAWTU when we won the reinstatement of one of these workers with full pay.

But we still did not have the majority of the workers. What we then tried to do was organise a 'leadership weekend school' to discuss organisational details and fighting the class struggle.

We invited 14 workers from the factory. But on the Friday evening when the workers were supposed to arrive at the seminar area we discovered that the boss at the Plessey factory had told them that they should work the Saturday. Everybody stayed away — they were too scared to come down. We then tried to organise these workers to come to socials and small discussion groups but they were just too scared to be seen with the trade unions.

The majority of the workers at the factory are women, and in our country they are treated very badly with second class status. They have never been allowed to show any initiative. In a very sexist kind of way men have been allowed to do all the work and this was another problem in getting workers in the factory organised.

We eventually got two workers who had originally approached us to a 'leadership weekend'. It had a very good effect on them — they were so fired up with enthusiasm that they spent the whole of the following week recruiting workers in the factory.

By 25 July we had signed up the majority of workers at the factory, which is a very small one. The workers there produce very sophisticated printed circuit boards.

We then arranged a picnic for the workers followed by a meeting where we taught workers our songs. They decided to fight for a living wage.

A shop stewards' committee was elected, also, comprising mainly of women, as the negotiating team. On 28 July the workers submitted the proposals to the Plessey management. On 30 July the workers at the factory stopped production when the Plessey management refused to indicate that they were going to negotiate. This was a very big shock to the management that the



workers had stopped work. Not only did they stop work, they were singing in the factory. The boss had always regarded them as little children.

He was so stunned and shocked that he agreed to negotiate with the trade union, and pay the workers for the time they had taken action. The workers got a tremendous boost from this victory.

Management then agreed to start the negotiations proper on Monday, 4 August, but then on the day refused to come forward with a counter-proposal. The reaction of the workers was immediately to stop work again until management backed down.

Management's counter-proposal was still not good enough, so the workers declared a dispute and also indicated that they would charge management with failing to negotiate in good faith.

Pressure

During that initial period the company also was under tremendous pressure, because the workers had introduced an overtime ban and refused to work a shift system: all the work was piling up. They lost a lot of customers.

A normal working week is 45 hours and just to try to get the orders out on time meant that some of the workers had to work 30 hours a week overtime.

The company tried to recruit University of Cape Town engineering students (whites) to scab. But we organised a workers' committee at the university to assist in opposing the scabs and were initially successful. But we then discovered 14 University of Cape Town engineering students at the factory on a late shift, after the other workers had left. We stopped them going home with a demonstration outside the factory by workers and progressive students from the University of Cape Town. A mass rally was also held at the University of Cape Town, where a resolution was passed, condemning those who were acting as scabs.



Workers at COSATU launch rally. Photo: IDAF.

All this had a tremendous impact on the Plessey-Renak management. They started introducing a private security firm with armed personnel, who came marching into the factory. They started setting up a very high security fence of barbed wire and security cards were being issued. Workers were not allowed to move from one department to another. There was a strong hardening of attitudes by management.

Matters came to a head on 10 September. When the workers arrived at work they discovered some of the white engineering students actually working in the factory. In addition to that the company had also employed a large number of other scabs. The workers staged a walk-out. Management was quite shocked and has taken disciplinary action against those workers.

On two different occasions the security police have intervened inside the factory. Because of the State of Emergency, industrial action of this kind is regarded as illegal. The Plessey-Renak management has exploited the situation and threatened workers with imprisonment for up to ten years, and that they would also be liable for a 20,000 Rand fine if they continued with the militant activity.

Management's threats and intimidation are slowly being used to start victimising people they regarded as leaders and agitators.

The developments at the Renak plant in the initial stages had an important impact on the workers at the other two Plessey factories, Plessey Whiteroad and Plessey Laingsdale.

At Plessey-Laingsdale the bosses' response to the living wage proposal was quite awful. The company started a union-bashing campaign in the factory. Production was stopped. Workers were called, in small groups and individually, to the various managers. They were told that if they maintained trade union membership they could be detained for up to six months and that the security police would take them away. Because Plessey-Laingsdale does work for Armscor (the munitions supplier for the South African Defence Force) the army would intervene if necessary and remove all the workers from the factory. They would be dismissed if they remained trade union members and then they would never get a job at any factory, because the trade union is a militant political organisation. As a result 70 workers immediately resigned from the trade union. We were no longer in a position to negotiate.

One other important element was

that Plessey-Laingsdale is an important part of the military machine in South Africa. They supply weapons and military support equipment to the SADF, which is its main client. The decision to smash the union was not based only on economic considerations — i.e. for a living wage — but also on a calculated political decision, given the strategic nature of the factory.

The company did everything in its power to manoeuvre so that we would become victims of a security police intervention. The most glaring example of this was when the union asked if we could hold a meeting for our members on company premises. They refused us but let the sweetheart union hold their meetings on full pay.

The security police is known for its viciousness and more than five people together constitutes an illegal gathering.

During the negotiations the bosses hung up on the wall a full-blown colour photo of their hero, P.W. Botha. We objected and the company refused to remove the picture. This is an indication of the political position the company occupies within South Africa.

Proposal

The response of the Plessey management at Whiteroad was very different from the other two factories. When we had signed up the majority of the workers we submitted a proposal for a living wage. They allowed us access to the factory during the lunch period to speak to workers. They made a serious attempt to implement modest increases which represented a 45% increase in the minimum wage and they also made an important commitment to investigate, jointly with the trade union, any allegation of victimisation. Appropriate disciplinary measures were to be taken against any foreman or supervisor or manager who was guilty of victimising workers. It was in stark contrast to what happened at the Plessey Laingsdale factory.

The union also signed up the majority of workers, 122 of the 150 workers in the factory. We also had four other love-me-tender trade unions in the factory of Laingsdale.

A common factor in all the factories was that the workers were earning starvation wages. Only since the union's intervention in the factory did the company start paying the EEC Code of Conduct minimum wage and on the EEC's own definition they are poverty rates.

Plessey South Africa exploits the fundamental lack of human rights in South Africa to suppress the struggle of workers for a living wage.

The EAWTU, Electrical and Allied Workers' Trade Union, a progressive trade union who organised the majority of the workers of the three Plessey factories in Cape Town, has fought against the starvation wages paid by Plessey South Africa.

The Plessey Renak subsidiary responded by victimising workers. Workers hit back with an overtime ban to back their wage demands. The company's response was to employ white 3rd and 4th year engineering students from the University of Cape Town to work as scabs, on a part-time basis. Now armed security have been introduced in the factory, and security cards issued to workers. High barbed wire security fences have been erected.

A high degree of militancy exists among the Renak workers, who have had three short strikes in support of their rights, on 30 July, 5 August, and 8 September. The company has threatened workers with the security legislation which can result in 10 years' imprisonment and a R20,000 (£7,500) fine for illegal strike activity.

Keypoint

Plessey's Laingsdale subsidiary is regarded as a national security keypoint in terms of South African legislation. This means management can use all kinds of legal dirty tricks against the workers.

They are a part of the South African regime's oppressive military machine. They manufacture weapons and military equipment for the South African Defence Force.

The response to the union's majority presence in the factory and its calling for a living wage was a management terror campaign.

Workers were threatened with 180 days in detention, army intervention and dismissal if they remained with the union. Of the 120 members who belonged to the union, 70 resigned in the face of the intense management victimisation campaign. This broke the union's majority in the factory and effectively stopped the union's fight for a living wage.

The workers' union, EAWTU, is asking trade unionists in Plessey UK to support the fight for a living wage in South Africa:

* Organise financial and physical support for the EAWTU

* Refuse to handle contracts linked to South Africa until EAWTU's demands for a LIVING WAGE are met.

* Discuss and organise supportive industrial action to back up EAWTU's demands for a LIVING WAGE: force Plessey to give in.

If you don't work for Plessey, you can still help the fight for a living wage.

If where you work has any contact with Plessey — telephones, telex, mail, supplies, parts, maintenance, etc — break it off until Plessey grants the demands of EAWTU for a living wage.

If, like most workers, you don't have any direct link with Plessey, you can still help the fight for a living wage by raising funds to help the workers' union EAWTU and by sending messages of support.

What you can do

Our lines of communication have been very disrupted. Our trade union office was raided on 13 June. In the early hours of 14 June my home was raided together with a number of other trade unionists in our union. For a very long time we were not able to sleep at home. We had to be constantly on the move. Having to develop some system of communication which would not endanger us.

But we have still grown considerably during the Emergency. In particular we have been able to develop an emergent leadership in the factories that we know can be relied upon in a crisis situation.

There are a number of important things that British trade unionists can do. Our greatest weakness is the lack of financial resources. We are unable to sustain campaigns, not because we lack the capacity to work, or formulate ideas, but because we do not have the material resources.

Our union has started a campaign to organise the unorganised workers.

More than 89% of the workers in South Africa are not in unions. An even

Of those in unions, many are captured within reactionary trade union structures. One of the important by-products of our success in the struggle for a living wage at the Plessey factories will be that workers will see that there is an alternative form of organisation. But we need money and resources to do this!

In my view the Plessey workers will form the backbone and foundation of the leadership of workers in the metal industry in particular. Certainly the leadership of the trade unions in the Western Cape region will be virtually dominated by activists from those factories.

Plessey workers here can establish direct links with Plessey workers in South Africa and share ideas and information about what is happening in their respective plants.

In particular, and this is essential for money and resources, invite workers from South Africa to visit Britain.

Ending the nightmare

At long last a serious political attempt to assassinate Pinochet! It may not have succeeded, but he now knows that everywhere he goes his life is in danger. More important, the Generals now know that they must concentrate on a post-Pinochet scenario. After an initial rallying round, the divisions in the armed forces will grow.

An attempted assassination or even a successful one, does not of course bring down a whole regime. But in Chile the act has enormous symbolic significance: it shows that the spider at the centre of the web is vulnerable.

Pinochet, the spider, plays a key role in maintaining the whole web — unlike the other former military dictatorships in Latin America. Chile's is a highly personalised dictatorship, and although it rests on the armed forces they have no institutional hold on the reins of power.

Pinochet is a Bonapartist figure: with his removal the regime itself crumbles.

Significantly, the assassination attempt is not an isolated action by a small sect. The action was carried out by the Manuel Rodriguez Front, the armed wing of the Chilean Communist Party. It forms part of a mass movement of protest to topple Pinochet.

Shanty town dwellers, students, workers, and many professionals will say "better luck, next time", and feel encouraged to continue the struggle.

The struggle has been difficult: a thirteen year nightmare of torture, disappearances, murder, imprisonment, beatings and exile, poverty and unemployment. It has not stopped since 11 September 1973, when the Chilean armed forces brutally crushed the Popular Unity government's attempt at a peaceful transition to socialism. The battle is far from over yet.

Pinochet is a brutal and tenacious tyrant whose intentions are clear. He is determined to follow the 1980 Constitution which he claims was approved by a plebiscite. That Constitution allows him absolute powers until 1989 when in theory the military choose a new President and Constitution until 1997. This is to be subject to a simple yes or no plebiscite. Pinochet has indicated that he intends to be the Presidential candidate — though some members of the junta may not agree that he should.

Pinochet still has some support. But the regime is increasingly vulnerable. The armed forces are divided. The navy and the air-force would like to

hand over to civilians — provided of course that there are no measures taken against them. But they will not move against Pinochet, and would like to see any changes come with the planned 1989 plebiscite.

The army is the bedrock of Pinochet's support. It still remains a closed book for outside observers. Based on the Prussian model, the army maintains a rigid hierarchical discipline. Any dissent in the armed forces is immediately weeded out by Pinochet who tries to ensure an army officer corps completely loyal to himself.

And it seems the army does see itself as a national security regime, holding back the socialist barbarians beating at the doors.

The armed forces also fear that justice may be done for all their crimes if they go.

One of the problems in Chile is that it is difficult for the bourgeoisie to ensure some form of transition which guarantees the inviolability of the armed forces — as other transitions to elected governments in the rest of Latin America have done (with the partial exception of Argentina). Their problems lie in the nature of the opposition parties and the opposition movement in Chile.

Isolated

The Left here cannot be isolated, nor has it proved possible for a broad-based opposition grouping, controlled by the right or the safe centre, to absorb it and neutralise its demands. Paradoxically this is one of the reasons why it has been so difficult to get rid of Pinochet.

People support him for fear of radical change or as he puts it "Pinochet or chaos". Thus the bourgeoisie constantly wavers: unsure whether if he stays they might face a mass uprising as in Nicaragua or whether if he goes the Left might grow and organise more easily.

Sectors of the Chilean bourgeoisie have moved into opposition to Pinochet: but they remain adamantly opposed to any national opposition front which includes the Communist Party.

The USA which in practice supported Chile for much of the last thirteen years, now opposes Pinochet, verbally at least. The US Ambassador, Harry Barnes, has been vociferous in his denunciations of Pinochet. When he was tear-gassed at the funeral of young Rodrigo Rojas, an American citizen burnt to death by members of the

In September 1973 Chile's army seized power, overthrowing the democratically-elected left wing government. For weeks afterwards the corpses of trade unionists, socialists and communists littered the streets.

But the Chilean workers fought back — and now the military regime looks very shaky.

Phil O'Brien, who recently visited Latin America, reports. In coming weeks he will also be writing about the other countries of Latin America.

Chilean armed forces during the July protests, there were some demands for US sanctions against Chile.

Possibly even Reagan might refuse American support for, say, a World Bank loan, but as with South Africa, the US will not apply sanctions that could really harm the Chilean economy.

Americans too are uncertain about the future in Chile, and will not risk a Marcos or Duvalier until they feel that a change can avoid the emergence of a radical regime. They might take action if they feel change is necessary to control a mass radicalisation as in the Philippines.

Action by the USA thus remains a possibility — important advisors of the Reagan administration are fond of saying that "Pinochet is the Communist Party's best ally", and that "forceful measures will have to be taken" — but it is unlikely that any measures will be taken, at least in the short run.

So it remains probable that neither the Chilean armed forces, nor the Chilean bourgeoisie, nor the USA, will take resolute measures to remove Pinochet. That task remains solely in the hands of the Chilean opposition. But that opposition is divided into two large camps, divided not only over the tactics and strategy of how to topple Pinochet



Fascist mobs on the streets of Santiago 1971

but also, and perhaps more importantly on what should replace him.

The 1973 coup against the Popular Unity regime of Allende had as one of its main objectives the removal of the "Marxist cancer" in Chilean society.

One method was the physical repression of the left-wing parties and their supporters.

However although the number of killed, imprisoned and exiled was large (estimates vary from 15,000 to 30,000 killed and many more exiled) it was not a "Jakarta" or a Spanish civil war. All the political parties of the Left survived.

Another tactic was to isolate the Left completely through tight control of the media (it is no accident for example that the Christian Democrats have been allowed both a radio station and a weekly periodical, apart from the occasional banning), as well as mass sackings from factories, the Universities, etc.

The rigid application of a free-market economy was supposed to atomise the working class and turn it to consumerism, while simultaneously ensuring an "economic miracle". (At the height of its success, Thatcherites such as Cecil Parkinson were full of praise for Chilean neo-liberal policies, saying that such policies were what

they hoped to achieve in Britain). The economic miracle in turn, together with the anti-subversive national security doctrine, were to give political legitimacy to the Pinochet government.

For a time these policies seemed to work. Resistance always continued. Under the umbrella of the Catholic Church trade union groupings, shanty town organisations and human rights organisations maintained a network of opposition. But left wing parties became isolated, and, with the exception of the Communist Party, divided.

For a time too the illusion of a promised economic miracle seemed to materialise as the Chilean economy notched up growth rates of over 6% for four years. The "miracle" was an illusion, based on a few favourable export crops and minerals, and a debt financed consumer-import bonanza: the poor, the majority of the population received few benefits.

Disillusion

When the dance of the millions collapsed in 1982 in Chile — as it did in the whole of Latin America — the disillusion with Pinochet was immediate.

A call by the copper workers for a general strike which under pressure was converted into a call for a day of protest met with an unexpected response, particularly from the young in the shanty towns. The opposition quickly re-grouped. The unions formed The National Command of the Workers (the CNT), the leadership of which was and still is overwhelmingly Christian Democrat, but in which Communist and Socialist union leaders play an important role.

The Christian Democrat party formed the Democratic Alliance, with sectors of the right and the centre right (but not very important ones) and more significantly a grouping of the badly divided Socialist party. The split in the Socialist party increasingly became irrevocable.

Significantly the Democratic Alliance deliberately excluded the Communist Party which then formed its own front, the Popular Democratic Movement (the MDP) consisting of itself, its former ultra-left opponent, the Revolutionary Left Movement, the MIR, and a section of the Socialist party which probably represents a majority of Socialist working class militants.

The reason given by the Democratic Alliance for excluding the Communist party was that party's refusal to disown armed resistance. The Communist party had formed the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front in 1980, mainly it seems with militants returning from a period in the Cuban armed forces. Until 1983 the Front had carried out



Workers rounded up by the military, Santiago 1974

re

hardly any armed actions, but the existence of the Front together with the CP's insistence that the people had a right to armed rebellion against the dictatorship worried the Christian Democrats.

However, there were more fundamental reasons behind the exclusion of the CP. The Christian Democrat strategy is to achieve a negotiated settlement with the armed forces — a settlement which would leave the armed forces untouched as an institution. Such a negotiation would be harmed by the inclusion of the Communist party.

In addition the USA wanted the CP excluded, and the PDC hoped that the USA could be persuaded to bring pressure on Pinochet. In this, until very recently, they were mistaken. The PDC also underestimated the difficulties in removing Pinochet.

Since April of 1983, there has been an almost continuous monthly protest. In August of 1983 Pinochet put 18,000 troops on the streets of Santiago, officially killing 32, and arresting over 1200. After that he changed tactics somewhat, and appointed a right-wing civilian, Onofre Jarpa, Minister of the Interior, to conduct negotiations with the Democratic Alliance.

Result

At the same time political parties and political discussion was allowed to come more into the open. The result was the confirmation of the extreme fragmentation of the Chilean political party system which has something like nine squabbling groupings in the right wing support for Pinochet; seven groups in the Democratic Alliance; five groups in the Socialist Bloc, some of whom were in the Democratic Alliance and some not; and five groups in the MDP. Whether he planned it or not the political party bickerings aided Pinochet.

In effect, two political parties dominated party politics: the PDC, the largest political party, and the CP. However the protest movement assumed a sort of semi-autonomy of its own. It was an almost entirely urban movement, based around the territorial unit of the shanty town.

As in South Africa the activists are the young unemployed or under-employed, and it is they who have borne the brunt of the repression. The relation of the shanty town movement to both the trade unions and the political parties was ambiguous, though increasingly over time the shanty town movements have been absorbed by the political parties, particularly those of the MDP.

Each month sectors of the shanty towns would be controlled by the protestors. Every month a dozen or more young people would be killed by the security forces, and many more wounded, imprisoned, sent into internal exile and tortured.

During one protest, police were reported scalping young protestors. It was a grim pattern: after a while it became obvious that, however courageous and massive the protests, in and of themselves they were insufficient to topple the regime. More was needed.

For the trade unions that was a national strike. The initial call had been for a prolonged general strike. It took almost a year for the National Workers' Command to feel it had built up sufficient strength to try and turn the March 1984 protest into a semi-national strike. In March the protest shut down most of the public transport, and many of the shops.

But neither the mines nor industry came out on strike. Fear of reprisals, and fear of being sacked with virtually no hope of obtaining a job kept the traditional proletariat at their jobs.

After a massive May Day rally political divisions within the parties and even the trade unions led to a downturn, which was eventually overcome by a successful march called by Cardinal Silva Henriquez, and a large protest in September.



Books being taken to be burnt.

The CNT called "another national strike for October which this time brought out a large number of the factories but crucially did not close down the copper mines — Chile's main source of wealth. Pinochet responded, as is his wont, with extreme brutality.

He declared a state of siege; in March of 1985 he sacked Jarpa, formally ending the pretence of negotiation; and he had three members of the CP's central committee brutally murdered (a crime for which the head of the police and fourteen other officials later had to resign).

In these conditions action switched to the Manuel Rodriguez Front. Bombings of selected installations became common. The PDC worried that they might be squeezed in the growing polarisation, organised with much international publicity the National Agreement for the Transition to a Full Democracy. The signatories to this agreement included the original members of the Democratic Alliance together with Chile's traditional right-wing party, the National Party, and some groups of the Socialist party and other small left parties.

But again the MDP had not been invited to the discussions, and were just peremptorily asked to agree to the document. The MDP refused to agree to the document arguing that in practice the Agreement would allow Pinochet to continue until 1989, would enshrine in the Constitution a conservative set of economic and social conditions, and would not reform the armed forces nor deal sufficiently with human rights abuses. Some members of the armed forces welcomed the agreement, but Pinochet promptly dismissed it.

Problem

By favouring the National party over the CP, the PDC confirmed that it envisaged limited mobilisations to put pressure on the generals for a negotiated and conservative transition. The problem with this position was not just that Pinochet would not negotiate, but

that the army generals would not break with Pinochet.

The MDP strategy of a mixture of neighbourhood rebellions, prolonged and widespread strikes, and selective military action to force Pinochet's removal was and still is more realistic. The problem was and still is to build up a sufficient correlation of forces to make it effective. By itself the MDP, even though the CP is growing, as recent trade union and student elections showed, lacked the forces to take on the army.

Split

The army somehow has to be split or so demoralised that it withdraws. The assassination of Pinochet with continued protests would demoralise it. Intense pressure by the USA and Chilean civilians might split it if they feared that worse might come.

So what should be done? Unable to come to a formal political agreement the political opposition formed yet another organisation, the National Assembly of Civil Groupings, bringing together trade unions, students, professional groupings, women's organisations, popular organisations etc., which called for a two-day protest and national strike for July.

During that protest Rodrigo Rojas was burnt to death, leading to an outcry in the USA.

But yet again there was not a complete stoppage. The call then went out for a prolonged stoppage, and protest building up to the thirteenth anniversary of the coup on September 11. Pinochet responded by calling for a mass rally in his support. The stoppage was not very successful.

Then came the assassination attempt.

The pressure is now on the army generals and the USA to do something. If not the MDP has issued a clear warning: the armed struggle will grow. It may be a long and hard struggle, but there will be no turning back. It is important that international solidarity be built up to support that struggle.

1973: parliamentary road to a bloodbath

Unlike most Latin American armies, that of Chile had a record of keeping out of politics. For many decades it had been an army of "professionals", loyal to "the law" and "the constitutional government".

The bloody coup of September 1973 proved — again — that the armies of capitalist states stay out of politics only for so long as the bourgeoisie feel that their rule and the stability of their system is not threatened.

Chilean President Salvador Allende, a socialist who considered himself a Marxist, placed his trust in the supposed neutrality of the army and the Chilean state to allow him to carry through a programme of serious reforms. But when the bourgeoisie hurled their "professionals" at his regime, Allende proved no match for the armed might of the army of the Chilean capitalists; and neither Chile's Constitution nor the Army's "tradition" protected Allende or his government.

Least of all did they protect the Chilean working class, which bore the main brunt of the repression.

Almost to the end, as the last phase in the three-year life of the "Popular Unity" (UP) government drew to a brutal and murderous close, Allende continued to trust in 'loyal sections' of the armed forces. Barely two hours before he finally donned a steel helmet and picked up a machine gun he still expressed the hope that the armed forces, "faithful to their tradition", would come to the rescue of the "legitimately constituted government".

When the news broke of the latest attempt at a coup he immediately appealed to the workers to remain in their factories, and rely on the "loyal section of the armed forces". But there was no longer any 'loyal' section of the armed forces. Faithful not to "the Constitution" but to the ruling class and its interests, the armed forces had united to sweep Allende aside, together with his dream of a peaceful Chilean road to socialism.

When he finally did call upon the workers to take up arms and fight for the life of his government, it was too late.

For the Chilean bourgeoisie the coup against the UP government was the culmination of a series of attempted coups and waves of concerted sabotage.

Allende attempted to channel the discontent of the masses into "constitutional" paths — to achieve 'socialism' smoothly and not by a mass working class and poor peasants' eruption to overwhelm the bourgeoisie and their armed defenders. In reality he only gave the ruling class and imperialism time to mount the coup that smashed

his government.

Business strikes, bourgeois mobilisations and attempted coups by small sections of the army heralded the end of the Allende government. But instead of turning to the masses and rallying the workers and poor peasants to prepare to wage a life and death struggle, Allende tried to deal with the growing rightist offensive by compromise after compromise, in an attempt to avoid the inevitable confrontation.

In October 1972 he included military leaders in his cabinet to gain capitalist confidence for his government and induce transport owners to call off an anti-government strike. In effect he was seeking security and stability by putting the 'socialist' government into the 'parole' of the army.

Relying on the 'lefts' in the army like General Carlos Prats, Allende was trying to make Chile safe for his brand of socialism.

But the army and the officer corps as a whole, like all such armies, was and is in business to make and keep Chile safe for capitalism and the capitalists.

In this unstable situation Chilean society became increasingly polarised. On the right, fascist terrorism increased and army officers — and no doubt the CIA — plotted. On the left, workers began to arm. The military was concerned above all by "the constant increase of paramilitary groups" of workers including supporters of the UP government.

The government, especially the so-called Communist Party (which formed the right wing of the government) remained to the last consistently hostile to the development of a workers' defence force. Allende referred to such a development as a case of "the ultra-left linking up with the ultra-right". And the General Secretary of the Communist Party stated "They (the right) are claiming that we have an orientation of replacing the professional army. No sir, we continue to support keeping our armed institutions strictly professional".

Arms control laws were passed to curb these organisations, and frequent army raids on factories would seize arms. Nevertheless it was the Cordon Industriales — armed detachments organised by workers' councils — that put up the main resistance to the army in the industrial belts of Maipu and Los Cerrillos around Santiago.

But the workers were defeated and the Pinochet regime cold-bloodedly slaughtered tens of thousands of workers.

The Chilean tragedy was above all an indictment of all those, like Militant, who preach the idiotic and traitorous nonsense that the capitalists will ever surrender power peacefully.



Allende with workers on demonstration

KEEP UP SALES BOOST!

The best individual performance during our paper sales drive last weekend (13-14th) was — according to returns so far — by Ivan Wels in Nottingham, who sold 28 papers.

Nottingham did a town centre sale on Saturday afternoon, started a new door-to-door sale on the Sunday, and organised systematic visiting of occasional readers. A pub sale on the Friday evening shifted 35 papers, and the total for the weekend was over 129 sales.

Some reports are not yet in, but the best result so far from a door-to-door sale was in Sheffield. Sellers there leafleted an estate in advance, and then visited it at the weekend. They sold 26 papers.

Street sales went particularly well in Durham, where 20 were sold at Peterlee, 16 in Durham city, and six in Spennymoor. Durham sellers also collected

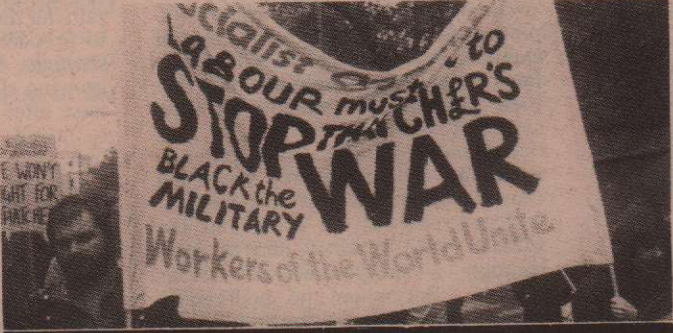
200 signatures for the petition to Neil Kinnock on the miners' amnesty.

Merseyside comrades did a whole series of street sales over the weekend, shifting a total of about 30 papers that way, and then visited individual readers. They plan to continue the two best street sales as regular activities.

Some nine separate public paper sales were done by Man-

chester SO supporters, with a total sale of about 40. In North London, a new street sale at Camden Town underground station proved successful, with a score of eight sales.

There is a lot of work to be continued from the weekend. Rounds of readers to be visited with the paper need to be sifted and made regular, and door-to-door or street sales started last week need to be kept up.



Two day school

Last weekend Basingstoke CLP held a two-day school, Debating Socialism, organised by their political education officer Angela Fraser.

The weekend comprised of meetings on Ireland; campaigning for socialism and South Africa, plus workshops on women in the trade unions, the politics of nuclear power, what is fascism, with a wide selection of videos.

Brian Williams, a South African trade unionist from Plesseys gave a brilliant political and moving account of the struggle in South Africa — he even had us singing and dancing. If your union meetings were like this I bet the attendance would soar.



Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

How hospitals make you ill

FROM TIME to time, there are reports of epidemics among hospital patients, usually elderly, which often claim lives. The notable thing about these illnesses is that frequently they are caught in the hospital.

A worrying complication of this problem is the spread in hospitals of bacteria which are resistant to antibiotics.

This was highlighted recently in the Observer newspaper, which reported that infections by the common bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* (see below) were claiming lives in British hospitals. The *aureus* bacteria were resistant to all usual antibiotics, leaving only Vancomycin (see below) as a treatment.

So how come patients are becoming ill and dying from diseases caught within a place of healing?

Healthy people are covered with 'harmless' bacteria. If these get into the body, for example through a cut, the body's immune system kills them. However, ill people, whose immune system is already under stress, often can't cope.

Opportunistic infections may then occur, sometimes caused by the normally 'harmless' bacteria, and these can even be fatal.

The normal answer is to use antibiotics, like penicillin. But sometimes the bacteria can resist the antibiotics. They start producing an *anti-antibiotic*.

Germs resistant to penicillin make a substance that destroys the penicillin.

If one drug doesn't work, you have to try another one. If the bacteria develop resistance to more antibiotics, your choice of treatment is restricted. And some antibiotics other than penicillin have serious side-effects, such as colitis or deafness.

Now, hospitals contain a vast collection of ill people, all potential victims of opportunistic infections, and the resistant bacteria can spread like wildfire. Since *aureus* is so common, it can be spread by social contact between patients, through the air (sneezing), on the hands of medical staff or in the food.

Is this just one of those things, or is there a cause and cure for this problem?

The cause of the spread of drug resistance is the excessive and unnecessary use of anti-

biotics. Doctors give antibiotics for virus infections, against which they are useless, and for minor illnesses, like sore throats, which would get better without treatment. The use of antibiotics to encourage animal growth in agriculture has also contributed. Bacteria of different species can swap drug resistance factors, aiding the spread of the problem.

The move to larger and larger hospitals (usually for reasons of economy) is also assisting the spread of resistance.

To reverse these trends would require a health service on a more human scale, with much smaller hospitals, and separate rooms instead of dormitories. Other methods of treating disease and improving patients' immune systems are also needed.

Humans are exposed to *Staphylococcus aureus* from birth, and infections of the skin, nose, throat and gut are extremely common, ranging from 90% of newborns to 50% of adults.

As a result, most people have antibodies to *aureus*, and disease rarely occurs in adults unless their defences against bacteria have become depressed.

Staph aureus is not very virulent. Its most common manifestation is in the recurrent skin infections of acne during puberty. The more serious invasive infections occur as a result of injury (e.g. burns) or operations (an infected suture is particularly efficient at causing a pus-filled wound).

Chronic debilitating diseases such as cancer, diabetes or cirrhosis of the liver are often accompanied by *aureus* infections.

One factor encouraging invasion of the body is *aureus*'s ability to survive being eaten by white blood cells. Their spread is aided by their hardness — they can survive for weeks on dried pus, can withstand half an hour at 60°C, and are quite resistant to disinfectants.

Vancomycin is particularly valuable against antibiotic-resistant *aureus*, but has some drawbacks. Firstly, it has to be injected into your veins. Secondly, it can cause irritation of the veins, fever, or, more seriously, deafness.

How much better if we could rely on our first-choice drug, penicillin, which has virtually no side-effects!

Activists' DIARY

THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER: 'Towards a Socialist Strategy for Europe'. John Palmer. 8pm, Red Rose, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7.

THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER: N.E. Region National Justice for Mineworkers meeting, Gateshead Town Hall (to elect a steering committee and plan a regional campaign).

THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER: Cleveland Campaign Group open meeting with Joan Maynard and Bob Clay 7.30 pm in Middlesbrough Town Hall Council Chamber.

SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER: 'Building Worker' national meeting. Agenda: Job and Area reports; Campaign for the restoration of democracy in UCATT; sales of 'Building Worker' newspaper. 12-5pm, Union Tavern, King's Cross Road (opp. Mount Pleasant Post Office), N1.

SATURDAY 27 SEPTEMBER: 'Escape from Genocide', video about Tamil refugees. 7pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

SATURDAY 4 OCTOBER: Anti-Racist Festival to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle for Cable Street. Assemble 12 noon. Altal Ali Park, Stepney, East London.

All TGWU and ACTTS members who support SO please contact Jim Denham, 021-471 1964 [h], 021-771 0871 [daytime].

Socialist Organiser meetings

PETERLEE. Tuesday 23 September. Speaker: John Bloxam. 7.30 p.m. Eden Lane Community Centre.

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE FRINGE MEETING: Monday 29 September. 'Our Common Struggle'. Speakers include: woman militant from the South African Metal & Allied Workers' Union; Paul Whetton; Lol Duffy.

7.30, Hotel & Guest House Association, 87a Coronation St, Blackpool.

Last weekend we took the first steps to boosting paper sales, which have stagnated a bit since the miners' strike.

We also need to do the same with fund-raising. Visits to occasional readers to ask them about taking the paper regularly can well be fitted in with asking them for donations, and the restart of labour movement activity after the summer holidays is a good time to organise fund-raising events.

Thanks this week to Christine Priestly, £10; other Nottingham readers, £1.20; and Jean Lane, £2.

Total so far, £12722.94, or 85% of our £15,000 target.



Where We STAND

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

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

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

- We stand:
- For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working class based women's movement.
 - Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.
 - For equality for lesbians and gays.
 - For a free and united Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.
 - For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.
 - For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

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

THE CASE FOR LABOUR

FOR A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE TO TORY BRITAIN

Socialist Campaign for Labour Victory pamphlet, 15p plus 12p postage of 10 for £1 post free from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.





Free cigars taste sweeter for René and Francois.

WHY POLICE HAVE GUNS

By Tracy Williams

Over the years we have had Dixon of Dock Green, Minder, Z Cars, Juliet Bravo, Taggart, Hill Street Blues, the list is endless.

None of the programmes I have mentioned attempts to portray the real nature of the police force. None of them shows the brutality and violence that sections of our class face on picket lines, in the street and in their homes.

However, at the weekend I had the chance to see a video recording of a programme, 'May The Force Be With You', originally screened on Channel 4. Presented by Paul Boateng, chair of the GLC's police committee, it examined recent cases of spectacular police brutality.

For example, Southall in 1978. Members of the community had gathered because of their opposition to the National Front.

A first aid and legal advice centre had been temporarily set up in a house, 6 Park View.

Everything was quiet and orderly inside the house when suddenly the police stormed in and viciously attacked those inside. Six young black lads, a young white woman, a white doctor and two white legal advisers. The police dragged them out by the hair, throwing them down the stairs, while kicking them and beating them deliberately over the head, shouting "nigger lovers".

During the Southall demonstration 42 people suffered serious head injuries. Blair Peach died.

on the Box

Russell Broomfield, a striking miner, also told a similar brutal story.

One day on a picket line he met an old school friend and they began to talk about their past. Some people were throwing stones so they tried to move on. Russell then remembered getting charged by two policemen in riot gear who dragged him along the field by his neck. He pleaded with them to stop and they returned his plea by beating him over the head, breaking a truncheon in two.

Later at the police station Russell had to get his photograph taken twice because the first one pictured him covered in blood.

During the programmes, Manchester Chief Constable James Anderton said that he expected the role of the police force to change — that they wouldn't be involved so much in crimes like mugging and house burglaries and rapes but in dealing with cases of people who attempt to "overthrow democracy".

Maybe I'm wrong Jimmy but I never thought that a pregnant woman on a peace convoy was attempting to overthrow democracy or that a striking miner whose family was hungry was "attempting to overthrow democracy" or a legal aid worker sitting quietly in a house was attempting to overthrow democracy.

As Bernadette Devlin once put it, you know you are on the right side when you are facing the police because they usually have their backs to the capitalists and fascists.

Cops with a difference

'LE COP' begins conventionally enough. Two cops, René and Pierrot, wait at a Montmartre, Paris, stakeout for a pimp to collect his weekly take from his 'girls'. Routine work, you might think.

Different

But when the cops grab the pimp, not to arrest him, but to pinch his money, you know you're in for a different kind of police movie.

'Le Cop' has been playing for nine months in London already. It's a genuinely hilarious account of police corruption in Paris.

It's the story of René, an amiable slob, a detective who's been feathering his nest for years by a little corruption here and there. He's not big-time — free meals, a little cash, pay-offs from petty criminals, a few TVs —

Belinda Weaver reviews 'Le Cop', directed by Claude Zidi

but he needs the extras to indulge his passion for betting.

The 'ponies' are his love. He dreams of owning a café near the track, frequented solely by trainers and jockeys.

Awry

René and his long-time partner Pierrot understand each other. But when their robbery goes awry, Pierrot ends up in prison, and René gets a new partner, straight from detective school in the provinces.

Francois is squeaky-clean — no drinking, no betting, no corruption.

He wants to get on in the Force. He religiously studies his lawbooks over the café lunches which he (unlike

René) insists on paying for — much to the proprietor's consternation.

René has been a freeloader there for years, in return for turning a blind eye to the gambling in the cellar.

René's world is shattered. He becomes very depressed. His solution is to enlist the aid of Simone, the ex-whore he lives with, in corrupting Francois.

Fee

At first, it's hard work, and René finds it difficult to keep up to his old tricks with Francois always breathing down his neck. Francois wants to arrest every crim — René is happy to let most go... for a fee.

It's a corrupt world. Everyone is on the make. René tells Francois that he is naive. He can arrest every petty law-breaker if he likes, but the jails are already full, it'll make no difference, and he'll just get himself killed.

So these police are neither the old-style, amiable Dixons of Dock Green, nor the modern ruthless crime-chasers. They are just part of the system, no more, no less.

René is a realist. When Francois triumphantly brings in a bag-snatcher he's arrested all by himself, René lets him go. Francois is furious, but René reads him a police memo. Their area has already exceeded its previous petty crime annual arrest total by 11%, and unless they want to be the district with the worst soaring crime rate, it's time Francois turned a blind eye.

Realise

René has learned the ropes. He knows how far he can go, and he knows how to cover for himself. He wants Francois to play the game his way.

Francois is immune to the baits of money, drink and gambling. But René perseveres in searching for Francois's Achilles heel — and he's finally spectacularly successful.

Has René overdone it? Francois now wants to go well beyond the modest limits which René has always deemed safe.

When a drug dealer, Camoun, turns out to be big-time — doing deals worth \$1 million — Francois and René are taken off the case so that the narcotics police can take over. This 'elite corps' are like the police in more conventional tough-cop movies, and they despise street cops as 'peasants'.

But in fact they are incompetents. Their plan overlooks an escape route for Camoun. Francois's scheme is to nab Camoun on that route... and his \$1 million.

This results in the unlikely sight of a police car, lights flashing and siren blaring, being hotly pursued by drug dealers, guns blazing.

Philippe Noiret's René is a comic gem. Don't miss this film if you want a good laugh — and who doesn't?

Filling the black hole

If, like me, you were hopeless at science and maths at school, you probably feel bewildered by much of the scientific jargon used today. I didn't know a quasar from a laser, a proton from a photon. I thought black holes were pretty apt descriptions of areas of knowledge well beyond me.

I assumed this state of affairs would never change. Then one day, I was given a book called 'Exploring the earth and the cosmos' by Isaac Asimov. I had been clamouring to be told where the universe came from. This was my answer.

It didn't start out by just baldly stating where the universe came from. In fact I was half way through before I realised that I still didn't know where the universe came from. But by then, I'd learned about land and sea travel and exploration, the surface of the

Patrick Duhig reviews 'Exploring the Earth and the Cosmos' by Isaac Asimov [Penguin].

earth, about the oceans, flying, space travel, and so on. The universe came later.

This book has everything — from the largest numbers to the smallest objects, from the hottest stars to the coldest temperatures.

And it is so readable that it can be read on a bus or train and you can still take it in. It is utterly non-boring.

Some bits are harder than others, but no part is so hard that it can't be grasped. It leaves you a little hungry for more information at times so that you feel you want to know more — and that's a feeling I never had in science at school.

The key to the book's success is its

simplicity — ideas are put into simple English. Questions are raised, then they're answered.

The book is divided into four sections — The Horizons of Space, Time, Matter and Energy — so it covers all the bases. It puts paid to a few myths such as time travel and indulges in a little fantasy — particularly about space travel.

It's the kind of book that lets you look knowledgeable when people say things about comets containing organic matter left over from the creation of the universe, or argue whether viruses are living or not. It lets you into the secret about uranium's half-life, and whether you can go faster than the speed of light. It talks about Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, but then doesn't explain it, so that is a spur to go on.

This is a book for people who missed out first time round. Do read it. It may not qualify you to edit SO's science column, but you'll have a lot of fun.

Cash nexus

By Martin Thomas

IN THE last few weeks I've looked at how the working class is exploited under capitalism.

The Marxist alternative to that exploitation is not just higher wages, but the replacement of the whole system of wage-labour. In other words, to replace money as the regulator of life by democratic planning for human need.

Trotsky put it like this:
"Money... is an inheritance from the class society which is incapable of defining the relations of man to man except in the form of fetishes, churchly or secular..."

(However) "Money cannot be arbitrarily 'abolished'... (It has) to exhaust (its) historic mission, evaporate, and fall away. The death blow to money fetishism will be struck only upon that stage when the steady growth of social wealth has made us bipeds forget our miserly attitude towards every excess minute of labour, and our humiliating fear about the size of our ration."

"Having lost its ability to bring happiness or trample men in the dust, money will turn into mere book-keeping receipts for the convenience of statisticians".

Needs

In a fully-developed socialist society, it will be simply 'from each according to his or her abilities, to each according to his or her needs'. Under a workers' government trying to organise the transition from capitalism to socialism, money will have to play some role — but a diminishing one.

The major means of production will not be bought and sold. Some basic necessities will be distributed free. Until enough of everything is produced for everyone, and a general spirit of social solidarity is developed, workers will receive wages and buy food, clothing, and other consumer goods accordingly. But as the sphere of free distribution is extended, so the role of money will dwindle.

Crush

Under capitalism, in contrast, money is all-powerful. It can buy everything; or lack of it can crush the brightest hopes.

As Marx put it: "It transforms fidelity into infidelity, love into hate, hate into love, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master, master into servant, idiocy into intelligence, and intelligence into idiocy."

In previous societies people generally worked until they had produced enough to live on — and then stopped. In many societies the desire to be richer than other people was looked on as weird and immoral. But in capitalist society money represents everything desirable society can offer.

It turns reality on its head. It is not that money is considered valuable because it can be exchanged for the products of human labour; the products of human labour are considered valuable because they can be exchanged for money — because they are 'worth' £100, £1000 or however much. Sometimes one even speaks of people as 'worth a million'.

One of the basic messages of Marxism is that the role of money in capitalist society, and the way it organises relations between people, are not facts of nature, but social structures which can be changed.

Since its split last year with its long-time leader Gerry Healy, the Workers Revolutionary Party has been rethinking its politics and discussing with other socialist groups.

This week we publish an article from Simon Pirani of the WRP on Ireland, as part of a discussion which will continue.

Socialist Organiser's last major statement on Ireland ('Ireland After the Accord' by John O'Mahony, Socialist Organiser, April 10th) falls into the fatal trap of attaching conditions to the demand for British withdrawal.

"We are in favour of British withdrawal but as part of a political solution which actually allows self-determination", says O'Mahony, that 'solution' being 'a federal united Ireland — in which the minority areas will have autonomy — combined with the closest link between Ireland and Britain acceptable to the Irish majority'.

Thus O'Mahony responds to the pressure of social-chauvinism, so powerful in the British Labour leadership.

These conditions are necessary, according to O'Mahony, to defend what he calls 'a natural Irish minority', the Protestants, 'which according to democratic norms would have every right to special treatment as a minority by way of having autonomy in its own heartland areas.'

This minority, he claims, 'partly for reasons for protecting itself against the Irish majority — allied with a powerful section of the British ruling class against the Irish majority'. This is a distortion of Irish history, throughout which Britain has not only (from the mid-1880s) lavished economic favours on Belfast, but also (from 1787) given the sectarian Orange gang arms, uniforms and legal protection. It was British colonialism that spawned religious sectarianism, not the other way round as O'Mahony suggests.

'Socialist Forum: Ireland '69-'85', published by Socialist Organiser, takes this unscientific methodology still further, claiming that in Ireland 'the basic problem is the split bourgeoisie' (page 21). The basic problem in fact was British colonialism, which had taken a hold on Ireland for several hundred years, and had encouraged sectarian divisions for decades, before the native bourgeoisie emerged. Surely the great problem of the Irish working class is that forcible partition took it into the imperialist epoch with one of the most basic tasks of the bourgeois revolution — national independence — not yet carried out. This gigantic historical fact throws some doubt, to say the least, on Socialist Forum's base statement that 'Ireland has had its "bourgeois revolution"'.
This 'analysis' is bad enough. Still worse is Socialist Forum's absurd claim (page 35) that 'as a general principle Marxists favour regional or provincial autonomy for markedly distinct areas within a state, together with the most decentralised possible local government.' A quotation from the Central Committee of the Russian Social Democratic and Labour Party (Bolsheviks) resolution of 1913 is used to prove that the 'federal united Ireland' slogan and calls for 'autonomy' are 'Marxist'.

The RSDLP resolution was a programme of 'democratic' demands (it calls, for instance, for a 'democratic republic' in Russia, rather than socialism) advanced by the Bolsheviks as a means of putting the working class at the head of the 'democratic revolution' at that time. The reference to 'wide regional autonomy and fully-democratic local government' referred to the specific conditions in Russia, which had a host of national minorities quite

Placing conditions on withdrawal



Protestants rally against the Anglo-Irish deal. Photo: Derek Spiers, Report.

unlike any other European nation. (The Bolsheviks continually faced the problem of these minorities' rights after they took power, and Stalin's reactionary insensitivity to them caused one of his major conflicts with Lenin in 1922).

Furthermore, the resolution's reference to fully-democratic local government is not a 'general principle', but a particular demand, flowing from the general principle of support for the self-determination of nations and for the rights of national minorities.

Demands regarding local government in Ireland would have to be worked out by Irish Marxists, also proceeding from this general principle — but under conditions which are in no way comparable to Russia, firstly because the Protestants are not an oppressed national minority but in fact have been given privileges over a long period by Britain to encourage sectarianism, secondly because the national question only arises in relation to the oppression (and partition) of the whole of Ireland by Britain.

Of course any socialist programme for Ireland would have to have into account the problem of the divided working class, demand the total freedom of religion, the rights of divorce, abortion, etc., and show the way forward for the working class to achieve these things.

Emphasis

But it is completely wrong for British Marxists in Socialist Organiser to make 'autonomy' for Protestants a central part of their programme. In Britain our task is to put more emphasis on Irish self-determination than Irish Marxists would, to combat the social-chauvinism which justifies Labour leaders organising the imperialist occupation.

British Marxists have something to learn (with due regard to the limitation of historical analogies) from Lenin's 'The Right of Nations to Self-Determination'. There he attacks Rosa Luxemburg not for opposing the reactionary nationalism of the bourgeoisie in Poland (the oppressed nation), but because she opposed the inclusion of the demand for Poland's right to secession in the Marxist programme in Russia (the oppressor nation).

Of course Socialist Organiser is not the first British organisation to 'forget' the national question in elaborating a 'Marxist' policy on Ireland. The Socialist Labour League, forerunner of the WRP, which always lyingly boasted that it was the 'only' organisation calling for the withdrawal of British troops, actually called for troops to be withdrawn while at the same time supporting the partition of Ireland by imperialism.

In December 1968, and again in July 1969, the SLL called for, in policy statements: 'A workers' and farmers' government in Northern Ireland, breaking from Westminster, posing unity of action immediately with the workers of the South and of Britain'.

In 1970, this partitionist rubbish was quietly dropped. But the SLL continued to stress exclusively that the achievement of socialism in Ireland was dependent on 'working class unity', counterposing this rigidly to the demand for a united Ireland, i.e. national self-determination. Only since last year's split with G. Healy has the WRP seriously considered this position.

Principles

At the heart of this discussion is the question: how do Marxists develop our theoretical principles to approach specific problems in the class struggle? Lenin's attitude to national struggles was based on the understanding that two opposing tendencies were at work under capitalism: firstly the awakening of national movements, creation of nation states and the struggle against national oppression (this predominates in the beginning of capitalist development); secondly, the breakdown of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life generally, politics, science, etc (this tendency characterises a mature capitalism that is moving towards its transformation into socialism'). (See 'Critical Remarks on the National Question', chapter 3).

Marxist principles — working-class internationalism on one hand; right of equality of languages and national self-determination on the other — are based on these conceptions.

The particular problem in Ireland is that while capitalism is very definitely

in the second, imperialist stage, the Irish national question — which posed itself for solution long before many nations had reached the first stage of capitalist development — is unresolved. Furthermore, the northern 'loyalists' who were first financed and armed by the British two hundred years ago to prevent a national uprising led by the petty bourgeoisie, are still being used for that purpose today, after the problem of national oppression has come and gone in many other countries.

Vital

These particular circumstances make it more, not less, vital for British Marxists not to place conditions — either of 'autonomy' for Protestants, or even 'working class unity' — on their demand for Irish self-determination.

Socialist FORUM
Number 2

Ireland 69-85

**A socialist
view of Ireland**

**Available from SO: PO
Box 823, London SE15
4NA, 50p plus p&p.**

Paxman

By Paul Suff

The dispute at Paxman Diesels, Colchester, continues and we have now been locked out for twelve weeks.

Talks were held this week between management, union officials and the works council. The company had always refused to meet the works council before, and had only wanted to negotiate with the full time officials. This we've refused because we believe they'd botch a deal together and sell us out.

The talks were held on Thursday and Friday but management have still refused to put any more money on the pay offer let alone agree to compensation for us being locked out.

We've made it very clear that we want compensation before we will agree to go back to work.

In the last few weeks we have attempted to step up the dispute. Instead of sitting back and waiting for support and money to come in, we've been out and about the country spreading the word.

We've had a good response to our appeals and money has been coming in from all over the country. Last weekend we had a visit from some Kent miners whose great struggle we had supported.

Further information can be obtained or speakers arranged by contacting the Secretary, Paxmans JSSC, 77 Artillery St., Colchester, Essex CO1 2JQ.

Keetons

More than 150 supporters of the Keetons strikers, including Labour MPs Martin Flannery and Richard Caborn, demonstrated at the factory on Monday 15 September.

The scab haulage firm, J.J. Shepherds, has stopped deliveries to Keetons under pressure from solidarity action taken by workers at other Sheffield engineering and steel firms. Workers at Shardlows, Laycocks and Sheffield Forgemasters have refused to have any dealings with Shepherds. This pressure has resulted in management asking for talks — after ten weeks of refusing to meet stewards.

The strikers are in a position to hold talks on their own terms. As one striker put it after Monday's demonstration, "management never thought we would stay out this long. We'll not go back until we've won."

Send donations and messages of support to Keetons Strike Committee, AEU House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield S1 3HE. Tel: 0742-769041.

Wapping: no sell-out!



Brenda Dean. Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report.

Bitter experience during the 34 week old News International strike has taught the workers to look to the Financial Times first to find out what is happening between Murdoch and the trade union leaders.

On Monday, the Financial Times outlined the bosses' latest 'offer', to be put to the leaders of the four main trade unions "in the next two days".

No closed shop at Kinning Park; plant negotiations through a works committee elected from the scab EETPU and non-union dominated workforce; a toothless National Joint Council with union national officials and bosses' representatives.

Carol Hall, SOGAT Acting MoC Times (in a personal capacity), gave her reaction to the latest negotiations:

"The present negotiations prove a major point, that Murdoch wishes to see the dispute over. He has been staggered by the resolution of the strikers over the last eight months. The half yearly profit figures indicate the effect we have had.

"However the problem remains the same. That is, Brenda Dean and the national leadership remain just as determined to wring a deal this time round. This sums it all up. Without a leadership willing to fight, support and lead the dispute, the responsibility has fallen on the rank and file to shoulder the burden. The one cry from Dea is: the members will decide through a ballot. But they do not have the right to capitulate; it is the job of the general secretary to lead".

Labour Research reports that the government's stated intention to hold down pay settlements has had virtually no impact on the pay round just ended.

Agreements reached between August 1985 and July of this year provided increases on basic rates of 6% or above for half of the ten million workers covered in the Labour Research Department's analysis of the bargaining round.

More significantly settlements in the public sector have been running ahead of private company and industrial agreements. This is a reversal of last year's position, when private sector settlements were higher than public sector agreements.

Company profits have risen almost three times as much as pay settlements.

Who's the Pink 'Un?

By Jim Denham

Did you know that the Financial Times is controlled by Communists? I must confess that this news came as something of a shock to me. But it must be true because Norman Tebbit said so. Norman, you may remember, also exposed the Church of England as a Marxist front organisation, so he obviously has a nose for these things.

And if sceptics should want proof that the Pink 'Un is now in thrall to Moscow, just take a look through some back issues of Marxism Today and notice how many of its contributors turn out to be FT journalists. Even that famous wine column was written by the FT's resident beaujolais expert. Of course some cynics might say that this says more about the pinkness of the CPGB than it does about the FT's commitment to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

What I can vouch for, from personal experience, is that the Pink 'Un is essential reading for the trade union activist. A few years ago myself and one or two other malcontents used to produce a fortnightly bulletin that went into BL's Longbridge plant to the annoyance of management and senior stewards alike. People were amazed at the accuracy of our information on company policy, and even speculated that we had a mole in BL management.

The truth was that we lifted most of our "scoops" from the FT, which invariably gave out the lowdown weeks before any information was released either by the company or by union officials. I'm glad to see that our unwitting informant Arthur Smith, the "Midlands Correspondent", is still at his desk following motor industry developments with a gimlet-eye.

Graham Day, the new Chief Executive of the Rover Group (nee BL cars), is not a happy man, according to Smith. "New elements in the market, such as Nissan, would increase competitive pressures and make life very difficult. He did not expect any improvement in the overall share held by UK car assemblers." Not exactly an

earth shattering revelation, I agree: but where else have you ever heard the big boss be anything other than "confident" or "optimistic"?

Down at Dagenham too the bosses are showing signs of panic: on Wednesday the 10th, the FT reported that "Mr Derek Barron, Chairman and Chief Executive of Ford of Britain, yesterday called for close monitoring of the EEC of cars produced by Nissan in the UK...He was commenting on Monday's announcement, two years ahead of schedule, by Nissan that it will proceed to production of 100,000 cars a year by 1991 in Washington, Tyne and Wear, and perhaps eventually to 200,000."

It seems doubtful that Mrs Thatcher will take much notice of this kind of bleating. She has always disliked British motor industry bosses (apart from Michael Edwardes, of course) and suspected them of being in league with the unions against her. Nissan's set up, in

should be followed by General Motors' decision to phase out most truck production by Bedford, its British subsidiary. If that did not pour enough cold water on the Daruma celebrations, then the FT had a further solemn stricture to deliver: "If the principal intention is to evade European import barriers it is likely to result in low value-added 'screw-driver' plants, while subsidies of the scale of the £100 million which the UK has offered Nissan are bound to distort the European market." Distorting the market! We can't have that! And from a Tory government as well!

The point about this little Cook's tour around the FT's coverage of recent motor industry developments is to illustrate the basic value of the Pink 'Un: it understands how capitalism works, and it understands only too clearly that a British motor industry has no future. It expresses doubts about the Nissan enterprise because such Anglo-Japanese collaboration could "distort" the Europeanisation of the industry that the FT wants to see — as exemplified by the recent Ford UK-Fiat truck link-up. It criticises Thatcher from the standpoint of the rational European capitalist. Such objectivity is of value to socialists but we should not mistake it for socialism — that's Norman Tebbit's error.

Of course it is true that many FT journalists are indeed socialists — of a sort. Like Professor Hobsbawm of the CP, John Lloyd (who recently resigned as the Pink 'Un's Labour Editor to take over at the New Statesman) and Philip Bassett (Lloyd's successor as Labour Editor and — surprise, surprise, — now a regular contributor to the New Statesman) have set themselves up as a sort of unofficial industrial relations "think-tank" for Neil Kinnock. They can criticise Thatcherism from a rational — even humane — standpoint. But it is a standpoint that urges collaboration between unions and management, for the smoother running of the present set-up. They can tell the truth about the country's economic shambles and expose Thatcher's pretensions with impunity because the proles don't read the FT. The Pink 'Un remains the internal bulletin of the ruling class: the fact that its Labour and Industry team moonlight for Kinnock is a warning for us, not a cause for celebration.

NALGO vote

By Nik Barstow

Britain's biggest ever union ballot on strike action went down to defeat last week. Over 300,000 of NALGO's half a million members in local councils voted — and narrowly rejected action on the union's 12% pay claim.

But the vote was not a disaster. Over 45% voted for action, and rejection of the employers' 5.9% offer — a much higher vote than many activists expected.

The vote for action was as strong as it was because the claim wasn't just for a percentage rise, but for a minimum increase of at least £900. The lowest paid 'white collar' council workers (mainly women and young workers) are the majority of NALGO's members but it is rare that their interests are central in the union's national campaigns. The 'yes' vote campaign, which pushed the need for a flat-rate rise at low pay levels could be the start of a change.

The 'yes' campaign was a step forward too, because there was a campaign on pay for the first time in years. The drawback was that the 'industrial action' the 'union' leaders

campaign for was a programme of "rolling strikes" involving branches in up to three days action a month — like the unsuccessful tactics pushed on teachers by union leaders in their pay struggle.

NALGO's leadership say that the vote "is the launch-pad for a 'yes' vote next year". They could be right — but only if union activists build on the lessons of this year.

We must work to bring the low-paid members to the centre of the fight by pressing for a straightforward flat-rate claim next year. Percentage deals have only really helped the top bureaucrats (this year's 5.9% deal means school leavers on the low grades will get £180 a year more — the top officers will get over £1,000!) and can't build a real fight.

The active members of most NALGO branches aren't in the lower grades. We've got to change that. The left must start building branches that involve the rank and file rather than just stitching together election machines to win union posts.

To do that branches need to be tackling low pay locally — forcing councils to stop putting young clerical workers on the very lowest grades of pay.

We can build on the 45% vote and win next time — if we start now.

Press GANG

Tyne and Wear, is much more to her taste.

The FT reported the opening ceremony in some detail: "Clearly delighted, Mrs Thatcher welcomed the announcement by Mr Yutaka Kume, President of Nissan, that Phase 2 of the Washington project is to go ahead. This will involve expansion of production from 24,000 to 100,000 cars a year...Mrs Thatcher had to observe Japanese customs by performing the Daruma ceremony. The Daruma — Japan's national good luck symbol — is an egg-like head which always returns to the upright position when knocked off balance...Yesterday Mrs Thatcher opened the Daruma's second eye, symbolising that the gods had now been officially invoked to bless Phase 2."

The FT was less enthusiastic: Thursday's editorial noted that "it is an ironic coincidence that the announcement by Nissan of Japan that it would accelerate plans to assemble cars in the UK

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST



Kinnock for chair? No!

MONDAY's Guardian carried a report that Labour leader Neil Kinnock intends to stand as vice-chair of the Labour Party this year, with the intention of becoming chair in 1987.

This move would be designed to stop Dennis Skinner being elected, which is what would happen if established practice is followed.

Labour Party National Executive (NEC) member Eric Heffer, who was Party chair in 1984, comments:

I read the story in the Guardian with great interest, because nothing has yet been said to the NEC about the matter.

These stories keep appearing in the press. As I said at the NEC recently, in the old days we never used to take much notice of such stories, but nowadays I find that the stories are usually proved 100% correct.

Never

Such a thing, as far as I know, has never happened before. For the leader of the party also to be the chair would be a concentration of power which, even on a temporary basis, I do not think would be right.

I think it's a serious matter. They are two separate offices and they should remain separate. Are they now going to talk about changing the rules, or even abolish the NEC?

It's a serious matter, and I just hope that the Party doesn't stand for it.

Miners fight back



Miners and supporters protest outside Wandsworth Jail last year demanding the release of Terry French. Photo: Andrew Moore.

The new British Coal boss, Robert Haslam, is in trouble.

British Coal had paid an 8% rise for 1985 to members of the UDM scab union, while refusing it to NUM members. Haslam decided, over the heads of the NUM, to extend this 8% to all miners — but without backdating for NUM members.

Anger

Haslam calculated that the 8% cash-in-hand would be sufficient to damp down the growing anger in the coalfields. He was badly mistaken.

NUM loyalists lose about £350 through their increase not being backdated to 1 November 1985. But they are also angry about blatant discrimination — UDM members have got their backdating.

The other main source of bitterness is Haslam's hard-faced attitude to the 450 sacked miners. Some concessions had been widely predicted, but he made none.

The day after Haslam's announce-

By John Bloxam

ment, a special conference of South Wales miners voted "overwhelmingly" to maintain their seven-week ban on overtime coal-cutting, and indicated that they wanted the action spread nationally.

No proposal to spread the action was put to the NUM executive (EC) meeting on Friday 12 September, but the option was left open. The EC decided to approach Haslam for an immediate meeting and reconvene on Thursday 25 September. Haslam has now agreed to meet the full NUM EC on 22 September.

The NUM leaders are moving cautiously. The Scottish Area leaders don't want to move at all, and others fear that a full overtime ban would not get wide support, because it could substantially hit earnings and open the way to the bosses laying off certain pits.

Similar concern has led to the South Wales overtime ban being restricted to coal-cutting; and the ballot now being

held in the Durham Area calls for an overtime ban only on weekdays (Monday-Friday).

But there is still considerable pressure for action. Alongside this week's ballot of Durham's 8500 NUM members, the 2500 strong Durham Mechanics are balloting on a recommendation for one-day selective strikes.

Halt

Like the Area NUM, they are demanding a halt to the closure of Seaham colliery. This coming the weekend the Lancashire Area is meeting on the overtime ban issue.

Last Monday, delegates from the biggest coalfield, Yorkshire, unanimously decided to call for a full national overtime ban if the NEC got nothing from Haslam. Resolutions calling for an immediate Area ban were withdrawn in favour of this.

A delegate told SO: "There was a lot of feeling for some kind of action, but they don't want to pre-empt the national level. They want to get the national thing off the ground first".

Test for UDM



I met Terry French in Brighton at the TUC and then saw that they had moved him to the high security prison at Wandsworth 'because he didn't suit an open prison'. What a load of bullshit! When he got his weekend leave they saw him involved in political activity; their political response to that was to bang him away in a closed prison.

Terry is obviously a political animal, who will not be browbeaten and will always stand up and speak his politics. That's what he did on his weekend leave and he had every right to do it; the heavy handed response of the prison authorities is an attempt to shut him up. They'll never manage it.

Now they're coming for the Notts pits with the threatened closure of the Hucknall-Babbington complex. Until now the Coal Board has deliberately left Notts alone, but we were all aware that it was going to happen sooner or later. So what are the UDM, the bosses' organisation, going to do with the threat to jobs, pits and mining communities? This test would not have been in the offing if those UDM men had backed the strike.

Perhaps the UDM thought they were going to be looked after. But only as long as it suited the Coal Board!

There's now action being taken or planned in various coalfields, mainly in response to the imposition by the Coal Board of a wages deal. The money might be acceptable, but the Coal Board's decision to impose it and refusal to backdate it clearly shows them to be vindictive and vicious towards the NUM.

Coming from Notts, our priority would be Coal Board recognition of the NUM here, but we also recognise that

we are part of the national union and there are other priorities. We can understand that the wages issue and victimised miners have got to take top priority, but recognition shouldn't disappear from the list altogether.

Whatever response is decided on should be nationally coordinated — we don't want one Area operating an overtime ban, then stopping it, then followed by another Area.

I wouldn't trust Coal Board chairmen any more than the Prime Minister — not at all! Maybe we'll get some concessions from new Coal Board chief Haslam but we cannot rely on that — we have to look to the rank and file to force the issue. We can't sit back and wait for Haslam to throw a few crumbs to satisfy us. We've got to take the initiative and coordinate our response.

We had a bloody good week in Skegness, a very welcome holiday for all the sacked miners, wives and kids.

It was very interesting the number of miners from other Areas who came up during the week and expressed solidarity.

Support Sinn Fein visit!

Recently, newly elected Sinn Fein councillors wrote to several councils in Britain asking if they could visit. One of those councils was Manchester. When approached, the City Council agreed to meet the Sinn Fein councillors.

Backlash

Following that decision there was a backlash to block the planned meeting. This opposition in the Labour Party, whipped up by the Manchester Evening News, was not surprising. What some people may find surprising is that Militant organised jointly with the right wing to block the visit.

Over the last couple of years Manchester City Council have hosted a lot of different guests. Tory ministers have come and gone, dignitaries from Stalinist states have popped in, and

By Tony Dale

members of the Royal Family have been seen chatting to representatives of the Council. Yet it is only when Sinn Fein is mentioned that Militant start denouncing the City Council for their choice of guests.

Militant will come out with fine words about workers' unity and use socialist rhetoric to oppose the visit. But they are only acting as a left cover for people who want to write off the Northern Ireland Catholic revolt as a terrorist plot.

Sinn Fein are the leadership of a large section of the Catholic working class in the North who are justly fighting for a united Ireland. They are democratically elected councillors. Their visit obviously has an overtly political side to it — they will be putting over their view of what is happening in Ireland. But also they will

be using the visit to see how Manchester City Council runs its services — hopefully they won't pick up the bad lessons.

Too often sections of the Labour left have latched onto the Irish question to gain (or keep) left credentials. This is very clear in local government — Ken Livingstone is the obvious example. Too often this left jumps on the Sinn Fein bandwagon, closing their eyes to the complexities of the situation in Ireland and becoming mere parrots for Sinn Fein nationalism.

Opposed

This ventriloquism has to be opposed, but not by denouncing dialogue as Militant do. Ventriloquism no — but dialogue yes!

Last Wednesday, 10 September, the Manchester City Party voted by a big majority that the Sinn Fein visit should go ahead.

S. Africa

From page 1

If they are not to be defeated the Plessey workers of South Africa need the help of every trade unionist and labour movement activist in Britain.

*Support EAWTUSA's campaign against Plessey.

Send messages of support and donations to EAWTUSA.

A victory for the Plessey workers against management victimisation would be a signal to Botha and his friends like Thatcher that despite the State of Emergency and massive repression the struggle of the black workers of South Africa cannot be defeated.

British workers can deliver the solidarity to make that victory possible. The time to do it is now.