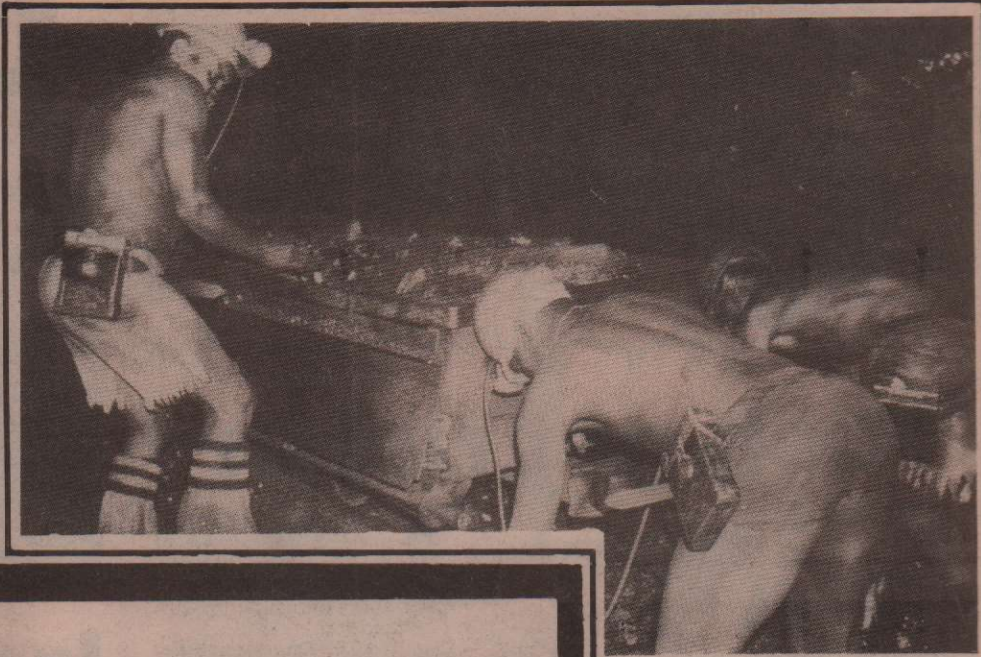


# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST



## 'WE'LL END THE RETREAT!'

By Tony Benn

The new factor at Labour Party conference this year will be the decision taken last Saturday by a representative gathering in Chesterfield to set up the Campaign Forum.

The Campaign Forum is a very significant development which aims to bring together the trade unions, the constituencies, the left groups and the parliamentary Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

I think that from now on you will find that the apparent disarray and retreat of the left over the last three years is over and we will start to consolidate and get ourselves into shape.

Important decisions were taken at the Chesterfield meeting:

\*Next year we will support the women's slate, whatever it is. We shall no longer nominate ourselves, we will endorse whatever the women's slate is;

\*that we will not proceed with bargained slates for the National Executive - up to now we have always tried to get the best deal we could by negotiations - next year we are going to put forward a slate which will be different from the one we are putting forward this year.

\*that we would send Campaign Group News to every parliamentary candidate, and those who support our aims and objectives would be in a position to ask to be associated instead of us sitting down and saying who we will invite and who we won't invite.

And the Campaign Forum itself, puts forward black rights and women's rights and the case for socialism on the agenda in a new way - an Alliance for Socialism - we are going out to get majorities, we are not a self-isolating group.

It is an Alliance for Socialism that is really being launched with clear policies on employment, clear policies on foreign policy. There is a third area which we have still to fill in properly, which is state power, democracy, trade union rights.

We are determined to be more active in the House of Commons. We want to be an effective Commons group and rather better organised. And we have the desire to publish more by giving endorsements to documents that come before us from various constituent elements of the Alliance.



Benn campaigning in Chesterfield.

Photo. John Smith, IFL

## 182 killed for SA profits

South Africa's black gold miners will strike on Wednesday 1 October in protest at the death of 182 miners in a so-called accident at Kinross, near Johannesburg, on Tuesday 16 September. The country's half-million-strong non-racial trade union federation, COSATU, has promised support for the stoppage, which could lead to major confrontation between workers and the government.

The deaths were due to an underground fire. According to management, a gas cylinder exploded, setting fire to plastic foam sheeting.

The miners' union, the NUM, points out that the polyurethane foam used in Kinross has been banned for many years in Britain and South Africa, and that there were no fire extinguishers near the scene of the fire.

The bonus system in South African mines encourages white supervisors to press for higher output at the expense of safety. And black miners have no representation on the safety committees!

South African gold mines are among the least safe workplaces in the world. About 600 people in a workforce of half a million are killed in accidents each year. In contrast, less than 600 are killed each year in all Britain's workplaces put together, with a total of over 25 million workers.

The death rate in South African gold mines has shown no real improvement over 40 years. In 1941 it was 1.96 per thousand workers per year; in 1978, 2.00; and in 1984, 1.62.

Angry black miners disrupted the mining company's official memorial service for the accident victims on 22 September. But South African president PW Botha has responded with typical arrogance. He denounced the "audacity" of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in demanding an independent inquiry into the accident.

The NUM is also currently balloting on a strike over pay.

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# GRAFFITI

## Rich get richer



Henley Regatta. Photo: John Harris

Wealth is becoming more unequal. The top 1% of the adult population now owns 21% of all marketable wealth, up from 20% in 1980.

The figures, published by the Inland Revenue, cover 1984, and show that the top 10% own 52% of marketable wealth. The top 25% own 75%, and the bottom 50% own only 7% of wealth.

Up to 1980 there was a steady trend for the distribution of wealth to look less unequal, partly because heavier taxes have made the rich shuffle around the titles to their wealth within their family circles, and partly because of the spread of house-ownership.

House-ownership has continued to increase in the Thatcher years, but the wealth of the very rich has increased even faster.

## Don't hope too much?

The Tories can hand out £13 billion in tax cuts for the well-off. They can spend £2 billion on the Falklands War and its

aftermath (£1 million for every single islander). A rising stock market can make investors over £30 billion richer over 12

months.

None of that is considered by the Tories too drastic as a way of serving their class interests. But for a Labour government to spend £5 billion on increasing pensions would, according to front-bencher Michael Meacher, be "absurd".

The far-from-revolutionary West German trade unions are fighting for a 35 hour week as an immediate measure against unemployment. But Meacher reckons that it is crazy "to suggest that a 35 hour limit would be reached in a year, or even a few years".

Labour's front-bench seems to spend all its time assuring the rich that a Labour government would not hurt them. Meanwhile the working class get told that a Labour government might perhaps benefit us, but not very much and not very quickly...

## Yankee bribe?

The aid fund for Ireland promised under the Anglo-Irish agreement was set up last week. The USA is contributing £33 million this year, and £22 million in each of the next two years. Canada will provide £5 million, and New Zealand, Australia and the EEC are also expected to put in money.

The main purpose of the fund is to help small businesses and thus to soften the economic bleakness in both parts of Ireland.

Protestant leader Ian Paisley denounced the fund as "Yankee money to try and bribe the people of Ulster". But the mainly Catholic SDLP welcomed it.

Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, said that the Republicans' criticisms of the Anglo-Irish agreement remained but "we have no

intentions of actively campaigning against it. "We will be encouraging community groups to make applications for whatever aid is available through the international fund."

## Cold

16,000 people died because of the exceptional cold last winter. The death rate was 10% above average, and illnesses associated with cold, like pneumonia, accounted for most of the increase.

The pressure group Age Concern has blamed the Tories' stingy system for handing out extra social security money to pensioners faced with exceptional fuel bills.

## Supergrass

A former Protestant paramilitary has exposed the 'supergrass' system in Northern Ireland.

John Williamson told

## Ultra Tory

Still think there might be something in the idea of an anti-Thatcher coalition with the Alliance? Then take note of the SDP conference debate on the miners.

The motion carried by an overwhelming majority criticised the Tories for being soft on the NUM!

The SDP said it was "unequivocally in favour of the UDM", applauded the UDM members' scabbing in the 1984-5 strike, and called on the government to give the same full national recognition to the UDM as to the NUM!

Granada TV's World In Action that he was held on remand for 2½ years. The RUC offered him two alternatives.

Either he could give evidence against a whole list of people whom the RUC wanted to convict - and then he would escape prosecution himself, and be resettled in any English-speaking country he wanted with a house, a job, a car and a pension.

Or he could refuse to cooperate. Then he would either be brought into court, charged with murder, and jailed for life; or released with a tip-off to other Protestant paramilitaries that they should kill him as an informer.

Williamson gave evidence, but was then charged with murder on the basis of a signed confession. He says that the RUC dropped the charge after he threatened to denounce the supergrass system in court.

## LETTERS



RUC confronts Protestants in Portadown (July). Photo: Martin Shakeshaft.

## Ireland: Utopian dreaming

Simon Pirani's article "Placing conditions on withdrawal" is so full of factual inaccuracies, banality dressed up as "theory", circular argument and plain confusion, that it is almost impossible to reply to it in a short contribution. It is worth replying, however, because Pirani's article represents a "theorised" version of a position that has become accepted "common sense" on Ireland in circles far wider than the post-Healy WRP.

Pirani's basis thesis rests, as far as I can make out, upon three fundamental pillars.

1. British imperialism (or is it colonialism? Pirani conflates the two throughout the article) continued to oppress "the whole of Ireland", preventing the completion of the bourgeois revolution.

2. The Protestant community of the Six Counties are no more and no less than an instrument through which Britain continues to dominate Ireland and oppress its nationalist population ("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").

3. The duty of British socialists is to support the nationalist resistance and its demand for self-determination unconditionally (and - in reality, uncritically) "to combat the social-chauvinism which justifies Labour leaders organising the imperialist occupation".

If this is a fair summary of Pirani's case (and I have taken care to ensure that it is, as far as Pirani's convoluted and imprecise prose style allows) then we have to say that he is wrong on every point:

1. The Republic of Ireland is a developed, relatively advanced capitalist state. The Southern bourgeoisie demonstrated its real independence from Britain in World War 2 and is integrated into European capitalism independently of Britain through the EEC.

It is dominated by other bourgeoisies according to the logic of modern imperialism (i.e. it is a relatively weak economy within the framework of international capitalist relations) but it is definitely not a "puppet" bourgeoisie or a colony of Britain. Furthermore, the South (bourgeoisie and working class alike) has little interest in the reuniting Ireland and no serious intention of doing it - Charlie Haughey's posturing notwithstanding.

2. The Northern Protestants are not agents of British imperialism. In fact, they are very effective "anti-imperialists", having thwarted successive British attempts to reform the Six Counties and impose a capitalist solution to the conflict in the North.

In addition, the Protestants were in Ireland for centuries before the "epoch of imperialism", and made up the backbone of the original republican movement. To call them "settlers" comparable with, say the white South Africans, is completely ahistorical and untenable from a Marxist point of view.

3. This is the crux of the matter: do we, as British socialists, have the

Last week Simon Pirani of the Workers' Revolutionary Party contributed an article to SO's discussion on Ireland, arguing that our insistence on Protestant minority rights in a united Ireland reflected "the pressure of social-chauvinism". Jim Denham responds.

right to put forward a socialist programme for Ireland that goes beyond support for the nationalist resistance and the call for British withdrawal and Irish self-determination?

Pirani's answer is essentially "no". All this inconclusive ramblings about the applicability of the 1913 Bolshevik resolution on regional autonomy and his objection that such considerations do not apply to the Protestants (because they are not an oppressed national minority) are really beside the point - what Pirani is saying is that we don't have the right to make such proposals. They must be "worked out by Irish Marxists".

Such an approach is, in fact, an abandonment of the basic Leninist conception of "critical support" for national liberation movements. It is an abandonment of internationalism, which always combines solidarity for those fighting oppression, with criticism of politics that do not put the proletariat at the forefront of the struggle.

It is the response of the guilt-ridden liberal, not the proletarian internationalist - although, admittedly, Pirani has more to feel guilty about than most, having been an apologist for the WRP's shameful vacillations between crude economism and uncritical nationalism on Ireland for many years.

The inadequacy of Pirani's approach is vividly illustrated by the response of his tendency's newspaper (Workers' Press) to the Provos' announcement that all workers engaged in work (direct or indirect) for the security forces (including, presumably, large numbers of Catholics) would be considered legitimate targets.

Plainly, this was a seriously mistaken and fundamentally sectarian decision, and one that the Provo

leadership has now partially retreated from. When civil servants (mainly Protestant) in DHSS offices struck against similar threats to Catholic staff from the Protestant Ulster Freedom Fighters, the Provos should have unambiguously withdrawn their ultimatum and so isolated the UFF. They did not, and a great opportunity was missed.

What did Workers' Press have to say about the Provo ultimatum?

Under the ringing headline "Six Counties: Collaborators have been warned!", Charlie Walsh (WP, 9 August) proclaimed: "For revolutionary socialists, however, the struggle to free Ireland from the jackboot tyranny of British imperialism and its collaborators in Ireland has to be supported all the way down the line."

"It is in this context that the IRA's warning on collaborating with the building of torture centres of the enemy has to be seen, understood and supported".

Such voyeuristic nonsense cannot take the struggle for a socialist united Ireland forward. Actually, it cannot take the struggle for "self-determination" on any basis forward, for as long as the Northern Protestants remain implacably opposed to any moves towards reunification, they can and will impose their own "veto", arms in hand, on the streets.

Our job is to hammer out a programme, including democratic demands aimed to break up the Protestant monolith, to achieve that. Unless it is done, all talk of Irish unity (let alone socialism) is utopian dreaming.

Pirani and his comrades are not arguing against particular aspects of SO's programme for Ireland in this context: in reality they are against us having any programme at all.



N. Ireland Protestants can't be equated with Boers



# Build the Campaign groups

THERE will be much interest at this year's Labour Party conference in Campaign Forum, set up last weekend as a framework for cooperation between the Campaign Group of MPs, Labour Left Liaison, and the left inside the trade unions.

Campaign Forum will both strengthen the Left's fight for commonly agreed goals — democracy in the Party, accountability of Labour's representatives — and provide a framework to help the left define its politics, strategy and tactics in the run-up to the election and after.

Campaign Forum will attempt to build broad Campaign Groups in localities.

## Visible

The watchword must be: left unity in action for common goals — open discussion of the differences within the Left.

The harsh truth is that the Left has been dithering for years. Campaign Forum is important because it should improve left cooperation on immediate practical issues (elections to the National Executive, conference resolutions, solidarity with working-class struggles).

It could give the Labour left a visibility it has not had for quite a while, and thus help us to act as a counterweight to both rank and file demoralisation and the Labour leaders' retreat before the Tories' political and ideological offensive.

Campaign Forum will also have to prepare for Labour in government.

One of the left's central weaknesses during the fight for democracy in the early 1980s — as SO argued at the time — was that it never seriously extended the fight to the trade unions or rearmed itself politically. Most of those who recoiled from the last Labour government's record in office failed to think things through to the point of reaching stable conclusions radically different from the ideas of Labour's old left wing, which had been so feeble and so compromised during the '60s and '70s. The coming to party leadership of first Foot and then Kinnock disoriented the left.

Foot and Kinnock had the support of most of the left, and started out with the same basic policies as the main-

stream left — which they then used to help them prop up and renovate the old Labour establishment.

The growth of the SDP panicked many leftists into the conclusion that they should not go too far, and thus softened them up for Neil Kinnock's message: office is everything.

## EDITORIAL

On top of this, the local government left took power in a number of areas in 1979-82. Whole layers of the left found themselves at local level making — or justifying — administrative decisions and choices based on the limited options allowed by the capitalist system and the Tory government — the sort of 'responsible', 'don't-rock-the-boat' decisions that the Kinnockites were urging them to accept as a programme for a Labour government.

The local government left, led at first by the avowed careerist and 'me-first' politician Ken Livingstone and the muddled opportunistic ex-revolutionary-socialist Ted Knight, turned local government into a huge school of reformism and class collaboration. Often they found themselves, the lefts, playing the role of managers against the workers; they developed an open hostility to trade union militancy.

The left is only now recovering from the disarray created by those developments — which arose decisively from the left's own lack of preparedness and lack of clear goals.

There is some recognition of the problems now on the left. When Campaign Forum was established, it was generally accepted that it should campaign for positive socialist policies and not just be a 'negative' opposition inside the Party. It was also agreed to include the trade union left in the Forum framework, and to build Campaign Groups in the different unions.

## Class

Much, however, still needs to be discussed and filled out. Socialist Organiser does not believe, for example, that putting forward a programme based on a sum of the demands of different campaigns inside the Labour Party — a left version of the 'Rainbow Coalition' — can add up to either a com-

prehensive or a radical socialist programme on which to organise the working class to replace rotting British capitalism with working-class socialism.

Central to any socialist programme, we believe, must be the working class and the fight for working-class control of society.

There are many other issues — for example, Ireland — on which the left needs to begin a serious discussion, and on which it now does little but empty slogan-mongering.

There is another, positive side, best shown in the way so large a part of the Labour Party responded to the miners' strike — despite Kinnock and the Labour leaders. A defeat after a heroic fight is a thousand times better than an abject surrender with no fight at all.

## Strong

Many Labour leftists went through a major school of class struggle in the 1984-5 miners' strike. The left was strong enough to win a major victory at last year's TUC and Labour Party conferences in support of the miners.

Although there were only feeble attempts to organise the left after the winding-up of the RFMC and Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign, we remained strong enough to mount serious resistance to the various attempts at a damaging witch-hunt in the Party.

The left is not strong enough now to stop Kinnock and Hattersley presenting Labour as a new version of the SDP. The situation could be very different after an election, with the Labour leadership trying to run a decrepit British capitalism in severe crisis. The left will have mechanisms to make that leadership accountable which have not existed in the past — mandatory reselection of MPs, annual conference election of the Leader and Deputy Leader.

Kinnock and his faction understand this only too well. Hence the witch-hunt and the recurring moves to gut the democratic reforms. The Labour Party may not yet be safe for a Wilson/Callaghan-type government.

This is the importance of the Labour left trying to reorganise now. Campaign Forum should help the left to unite, to discuss, and to rearm politically — as we failed to do in the early '80s, and still need to do now.



Miners' wives organise during the great miners' strike of 1984-5. Tens of thousands of workers learned about the real nature of capitalism and about the need for working-class struggle during that strike.

## Courts are a trap

It looked as if the left might win one victory against the witch-hunt at this year's Labour Party conference.

The expulsion of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally from Birmingham Sparkbrook Labour Party has outraged many beyond the hard left. The expulsion was endorsed at Labour's National Executive Committee only by a narrow majority, and Birmingham's right wing city council Labour group has condemned it.

### Appeal

So Khan and Scally might have won their appeal to Labour Party conference. But now it seems that the Labour leaders will manoeuvre the issue off the conference agenda.

The reason given is that a conference debate could prejudice the Labour Party's position in the event of legal action. Khan and Scally have threatened to take the Labour Party to court.

This development highlights the short-sightedness of using the capitalist courts in disputes within the labour movement.

It has become common practice for witch-hunted left-wingers — Militant

supporters, Briefing supporters, other leftists like Khan and Scally alike — to go to court. Sometimes the legal action has thwarted the witch-hunters. It has seemed to work.

But any such use of the courts can only mean substituting their 'justice' for the fight for democratic procedures within the labour movement. It contradicts the basic principle of the independence of working class organisations from the capitalist state.

The courts may occasionally favour the left. But they will much more often favour the right. And certainly the procedure of labour movement disputes regularly being settled by the capitalist courts would inevitably favour the right wing.

The current wave of court cases has done very little to stop the witch-hunt. It has provided the witch-hunters with the occasion and the pretext to streamline their procedures for expulsions and propose a new 'Star Chamber'. And now it has given them a let-out over Khan and Scally.

We must stop the witch-hunt — through a mass campaign in the rank and file for a democratic labour movement, not through futile appeals to the capitalist courts.

# Obeying the rule of profit

By Martin Thomas

Back in the early '80s, Labour Party conferences declared angrily that a Labour government would promptly and thoroughly undo the Tories' criminal programme of selling off public assets. And no compensation would be paid when the enterprises were renationalised.

The Tory press howled with horror. The Labour leaders were quieter but no less horrified. They set to work on whittling down the conference policy.

Now, in a National Executive statement to the 1986 conference, they have unveiled the result. The big bang has been successfully reduced to a whimper.

What's left is little more than the renationalisation of British Telecom. Even that will be in two stages.

As a first stage "Labour will make full use of" the 49% government shareholding that already exists. The second stage will come "as soon as parliamentary time permits" (which is probably code for "some time in the distant future").

Even then it won't be very good. All privately-owned shares in BT will be swapped for non-voting shares. Thus — so the argument goes — the prin-

ciple of government control will be established without conflict with BT shareholders.

The National Executive statement claims that this arrangement will block any "speculative gains" other than those already made by people who bought BT shares at privatisation and sold them off again soon afterwards.

So far as I can see, that's just not true. Everyone who bought BT shares on privatisation made a speculative gain of about 50p per share, as the price quickly rocketed from 130p to 180p. Some cashed in that gain immediately. Others hung on to it: and those others will still have their gain after Labour's "second stage".

The only difference is that their gain will be in the form of a non-voting share worth 184p (the current prices) or whatever, instead of a voting share worth the same amount. And the new non-voting shares can be freely bought and sold.

But our leaders are so thrilled by this scheme that they plan to extend it elsewhere. Other nationalised enterprises besides British Telecom will be allowed to sell shares, so long as they are non-voting shares.

This is highly dangerous. The new shareholders will have considerable

control, votes or no votes.

Suppose for example that British Telecom under a Labour government goes for big job cuts. The unions resist and are strong enough to push the Labour government into opposing these cuts.

What will happen to these privately-owned shares? At the first sign that Labour might oppose the job cuts, share prices will crash. This will be both a real difficulty for the enterprise, and a powerful argument for the management to maintain the job cuts.

And aside from that, to sell shares to private investors you have to make those shares profitable for them. Nationalised enterprises will be used as sources of income for the moneyed classes!

In its opening passages, the National Executive document tries to present itself as a radical alternative to the sort of nationalisation programme carried out by the 1945 government. "The failure of public ownership... does not lie in being too radical, but in not being radical enough". There has not been enough workers' control, and not enough public ownership in finance.

In fact, the document mentions new

nationalisations in the financial sector only as a vague possibility, and democratic control over the Bank of England not at all. The basic drive is not towards workers' control, but control by market mechanisms.

Already nationalised enterprises are run very much on the basis of profit. The document proposes nothing strong to change that. The new type of shares it proposes will increase the profit orientation of nationalised enterprise.

And "a balanced economy which the private and public sectors support each other" (which is what the document calls for) can only operate on market, profit criteria when the public sector is much weaker than the private one. It will be weaker, because for the foreseeable future Labour's leaders are not even proposing to restore the public sector to the size it was before 1979.

"The case" for what the document calls "social ownership" is "re-stated" in terms which make the subservience to capitalist market criteria even clearer. Social ownership, it says, is best for public utilities and services like telephones, electricity, gas and so on. Socially-owned industries can make profits "for Britain". And they can discriminate in favour of British suppliers. There is no trace here of the idea of

public ownership being the lever for collective democratic control of the economy, in place of the inhumanity of the capitalist market mechanism.

In such a framework "worker involvement" can only be a means of tying workers to the interests of profit. The document makes this fairly explicit: "a widespread acceptance of responsibility for making the organisation successful is vital".

There are proposals for greater trade union rights to information and consultation, which are useful but vague, but the main, 'democratic' proposal is the old, and failed, one of worker-directors.

The document also includes proposals for a British Investment Bank, talk about new "strategic stakes" for the government in various sectors... and a welcome for the American idea of employee share-ownership plans!

Wrapping it all up are clear warnings not to expect too much: "it will require more than one term in office to complete our programme..."; and not to expect renationalisation under any terms of what the Tories have privatised: "We will not allow our priorities to be dictated by the Tories' privatisation programme".



**Our briefing for delegates**

By John Bloxam

AS at previous conferences, Socialist Organiser will be producing a daily conference briefing for delegates and visitors.

Socialist Organiser has a distinctive voice on many basic political issues facing the Left. For example: our fundamental opposition to both capitalism and Stalinist totalitarianism; our insistence on the need to go beyond sloganising on Ireland and develop a working class, internationalist response to both the Anglo-Irish deal and the danger of sectarian civil war in the North of Ireland; and our advocacy that the South African trade unions should organise an independent workers' party there and fight for a democratic, revolutionary socialist alternative to apartheid.

**Paper**

Since 1979 SO has produced every year a popular daily Conference Briefing. On two separate occasions, last year's conference being one, we have cooperated with Labour Briefing and others to produce a joint Briefing.

This year we will be producing separate bulletins again.

Given the volume of paper that delegates and visitors receive every day at conference, there is a strong case for the left to balance the need for variety with rationalisation. In general the left should present as united a front as possible in the form of a joint left bulletin. This is what SO has pushed for at previous conferences, with some success. This year, however, it has not proved possible.



Those involved in the Campaign Briefing rejected an SO proposal to participate in their bulletin, as well as producing our own. It had, in fact, always been accepted that participation in a joint bulletin would not stop groupings who participated producing their own material.

Discussion about a possible joint bulletin took place in the Labour Left Liaison, which is providing one of the three main elements of Campaign Forum. Clearly the level of cooperation already achieved in LLL has been a positive development; but equally clearly it still has some way to develop. It was not possible, for example, to get full agreement on NEC slates this year.

**Common**

An opportunity for joint work — a common bulletin — has been missed at this year's Party conference. But it's no disaster. Let a hundred flowers bloom is not a bad slogan for a left that is making important strides in reorganising and rebuilding a basic framework for joint work where for a long time one existed only informally. We are still in the early stages of re-arming politically. SO's work at Party Conference is aimed at not only providing a service to delegates and visitors and explaining our own distinctive views, but also as a contribution to that discussion which is developing on the left.

**Winning elections**

By Dennis Skinner MP

The proposal for the National Constitutional Committee wants opposing. There has been no consultation about it at all, no involvement of the rank and file.

It's always been accepted in the party that such constitutional changes should be done by way of an enabling resolution, so that the change only takes place the following year, thus allowing the constituency parties in the country and other affiliated organisations to have a chance to amend the proposal.

What is happening with this constitutional amendment is that it is being put straight before the Party Conference — without consultation. It is being done like that to get it through before the General Election, and in order to relieve those right wing NEC members

who are happy to have long-winded enquiries like the one in Liverpool — but who are not prepared to stay through the night and allow people a hearing.

There is no question that it will be a Star Chamber. The left on the NEC originally opposed it in principle but, when it was going through the NEC, we tried to change some of the details. One big thing that's wrong with it is that there are five trade union representatives to only three from the constituencies and two from the women's sections (who will in fact really be elected by the trade union block vote).

I think the proposal is dangerous and frightening.

One of the other things that has to be campaigned against is this new paper that is going to force trade unions to ballot on industrial action and on their own elections. It is accepting many of the proposals on balloting that came out of the Thatcher government, which we opposed at the time. The most remarkable thing was that when 'In Place of Strife' was brought before the Executive even Jim Callaghan voted against it. So it is an indication of how far the Party establishment has moved to the right. That has to be opposed.

We have to fight to get socialism on the agenda of the Party because, at the moment, a lot of people are keeping their heads down and hoping to win a general election by not talking about too many policies and issues, but crawling to the polling station in carpet slippers. As past elections have proved, that doesn't work — Harold Wilson tried it in 1970 by wanting to play down the issues and win on a few walkabouts. We lost the election.

I spend my time going round the country campaigning for a socialist Labour victory. Last week I was in North Wales, where they've now set up a Campaign Group — they said it was one of the biggest meetings they've had in the area for very many years. It was to discuss socialism. So there is a desire out there to see that we don't go into a general election with a watere! down manifesto.

Our message to the News International strikers is to stand firm against Murdoch, and the Party should be giving full support to people who are fighting in an extra-parliamentary fashion for their jobs. It is one thing to be passing resolutions for the next Labour government to be creating work; in order to be consistent, the Party should be supporting those who are fighting now — Wapping, Silent-night and any other place.

**No laws on union ballots!**

By Eric Heffer MP

The left on the NEC opposed the proposal to set up a new Labour Party appeal court — the Constitutional Committee. We argued strongly against it.

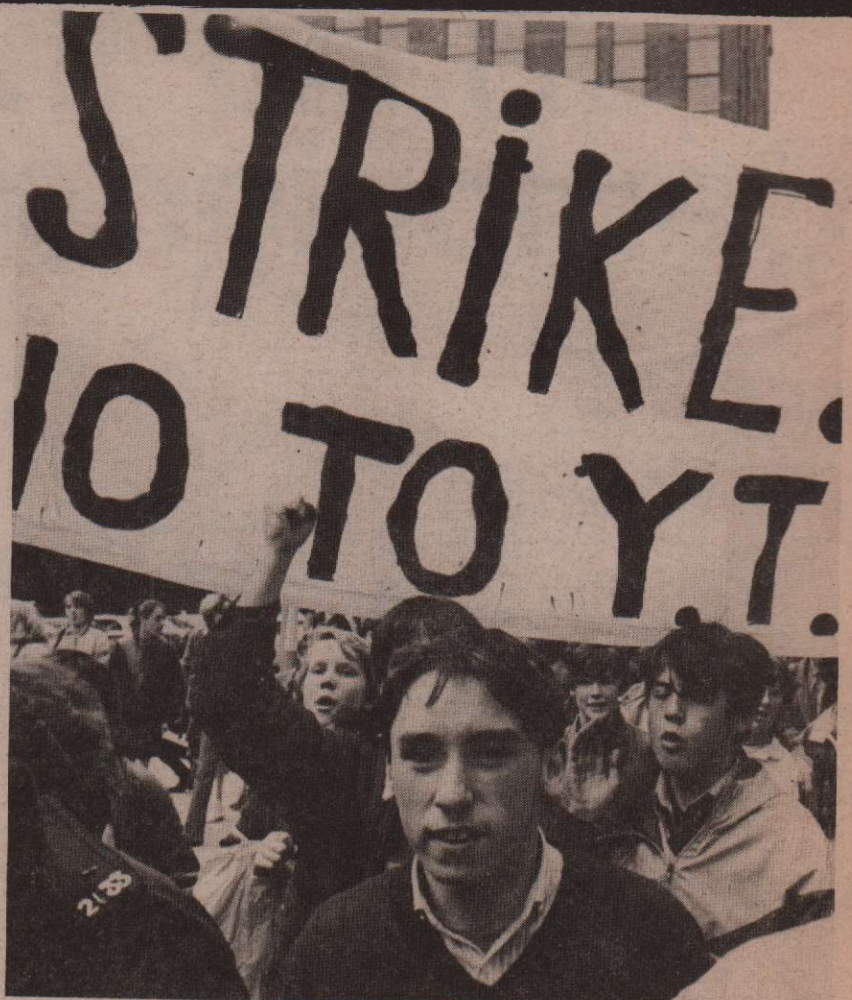
It puts a lot of power in the hands of officialdom because its majority will come from the trade unions. The constituency parties have a representation that is absolutely inadequate — and, after all, most of the disciplinary cases are dealing with people from the CLPS.

As well as that these new 'crimes' are so wide that you could be expelled for more or less anything!

We opposed it very strongly, voted against it and we hope that conference won't accept it either. I hope that the Party membership will not be stampeded into accepting all this business about expulsions.

And I hope that they will fight very vigorously, despite what happened at the TUC, against state interference in the internal affairs of trade unions.

We want to see trade union democracy improved, but that isn't the way to do it. It's disarming workers, before the battle even begins.



The YS must be built, not witch-hunted! Photo John Smith, IFL

**Defend the YS!**

By Mark Osborn

A year ago Tom Sawyer wrote a document. This document was passed at the NEC's Youth Subcommittee in July, and suggests "consultation on the Party's youth work". Sawyer's proposals will dominate the Youth debate at conference this year.

In effect Sawyer has suggested decapitating the Labour Party Young Socialists by reducing the age limit to 21.

There are other proposals like the idea of a unified youth movement consisting of Trade Union Youth Sections, Labour Students (NOLS) and the remnants of the YS.

Here the advantage to the present Labour Party leadership would be that such a movement might be led by supporters of Neil Kinnock, probably drawn from the current NOLS leadership, who could hope to keep control perhaps by using some sort of block vote system to give weight to the Trade Union Youth Sections.

Of course the idea of have one democratic youth section is in principle reasonable and desirable. But the Youth Committee's document means the smashing of the YS.

The LPYS is small and sectarian. It is intolerant of minority

views and is pretty backward on issues like Ireland, autonomy, etc.

So the Sawyer proposals will unfortunately get a sympathetic hearing from many activists and from many who are on the left of the party too.

Despite that the central fact in the present situation is that these proposals are just one plank in a comprehensive witch-hunt.

**Women's slate**

By Sue Rossiter

This year the Women's Action Committee slate represents the views of the Labour Women's Conference as well as those of its own membership.

The conference organised "shadow elections" for the five women's places on the NEC after years of being denied the right to elect their own representatives by the union block votes.

Not surprisingly the "shadow elections" returned more left wing women than usually take up their positions on the NEC.

The WAC slate is based on those results.

In the interests of democracy within the Labour Party we should support the candidates the Labour Women's Conference wants.

**VOTE LEFT FOR THE NEC!**



Socialist Organiser is supporting the seven candidates above for the CLP section of the NEC, Gavin Strang for Treasurer, and the Women's Conference slate for the women's section of the NEC.



# The ABC OF MARXISM

## Market madness

By Martin Thomas

Last week I argued that money, prices and buying and selling are not eternal facts of nature like the air and the sky, but particular arrangements in a particular sort of society.

They are the means by which, under capitalism, a connection is made between the distribution of human labour to produce various goods and services and the consumption of those goods and services.

That connection could be made in different ways, by conscious human control. Under capitalism it happens without conscious control, through the seemingly automatic workings of the market.

If you can't find a job, it's no one's decision: the labour market is overstocked. If your factory goes bust and closes, it wasn't a plot: there just wasn't demand for its products at a profitable price. If you can't buy enough to live decently, you can't blame any individual: the prices were set by the free market.

So the real active forces in the economic system seem to be things — commodities and money, which exchange in definite proportions because of some mystical property in them.

Commodity and money relations also cover up exploitation. For workers it seems as logical that the capitalist pays them a 'fair' wage as that they pay the shopkeeper a 'fair' price for a pound of potatoes.

"The sphere of circulation of commodity exchange, within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labour goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. It is the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham.

Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, let us say of labour power, are determined only by their free will. They contract as free persons, who are equal before the law. Their contract is the final result in which their joint will finds a common legal expression.

Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent.

Property, because each disposes only of what is his own.

And Bentham, because each looks only to his own advantage...

[Bentham was a bourgeois philosopher of the time].

When we leave this sphere of simple circulation or the exchange of commodities, which provides the 'free-trader vulgaris' with his views, his concepts and the standard by which he judges the society of capital and wage labour, a certain change takes place, or so it appears, in the physiognomy of our dramatis personae.

He who was previously the money-owner now strides out in front as a capitalist; the possessor of labour power follows as his worker.

The one smirks self-importantly and is intent on his business; the other is timid and holds back, like someone who has brought his own hide to market and now has nothing else to expect but — a tanning".

Here too the conclusions are of political importance. Bourgeois concepts of human rights, freedom and democracy are not the only ones given by nature.

The working class can develop other values. Under capitalism it does so only partially and occasionally, because "the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class". But in a revolution the working class changes not only social relations but also its own ideas.

Polish bourgeois hege-

process of "democracy in er" as the New York Times described it has been an immense source of satisfaction to the Reagan administration. It is a myth of course that the USA prefers bloody military dictators to safeguard their interests. They support such dictatorships when those interests are threatened: but they prefer to do business with regimes that at least have the facade of elected legitimacy.

### Satisfied

The US has cause to be satisfied. Only the new President of Peru, Alan Garcia, has taken action on restricting payments on the debt, and issuing statements attacking imperialism. The transition to democracy — with the notable exception of Chile — has politically been a remarkably stable affair, more so than most observers predicted.

The process was characterised by a political unification of the Latin

democracy, were channelled into accepting a very self-limiting democracy, a conservative economic programme, and the postponement of essential reforms. Democracy in Latin America has been essentially an electoral affair. And even in Brazil the people who had taken to the streets in their millions to demand direct elections for the President were fobbed off with the indirect election of Tancredo Neves, and are still awaiting the right to participate in direct Presidential elections.

Superficially at least it looks as if a magic conjuring trick has occurred. The bourgeoisie who had supported the military coups which swept Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s are now able to present themselves as the true representatives of democratic values and guarantors of human rights. Long-standing supporters of the military such as President Sarney of Brazil are able to portray themselves as true believers of people's democracy. Privatisation of the State sector has been espoused as democratic, and state enterprises linked to the bad old days of military authoritarian rule.

es cause mass radical pro-

### Debt

In the last four years the debt-caused depression in Latin America can only be compared to that of the Great Depression. The total Latin American debt rose from \$20.8 billion in 1970 to \$360 billion in 1984, 86% concentrated in just six countries — Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile and Peru. Beginning with Mexico in August 1982, a combination of the effects of a rise in real interest rates, a terms of trade loss, an export loss due to world recession, and an oil price rise for oil importers, forced one Latin American country after another to renegotiate their debt repayments.

The cost of such renegotiations have been enormous for the price of renegotiation has been the acceptance of an IMF readjustment programme which was designed to reduce imports and increase exports to obtain the foreign exchange needed to pay interest payments on the debt. Imports were reduced from \$101 billion in 1981 to \$61 billion in 1984.

Although the amount of exports increased substantially, the decline in their prices meant Latin America was exporting the same value in exports in 1984 as in 1981 — \$99 billion.

However this substantial trade

even with the debt crisis Latin America is about to enter its phase of the construction of the bourgeois democratic hegemony comparable to Europe and Japan after the Second World War.

If that does happen then it will occur in circumstances very different to that of Europe and Japan who constructed a consensus around rising living standards for all. It would be an hegemony based on a despair about the feasibility of more radical alternatives, and a fear about the return of the military. It would be a negative acceptance of the present. It is hard to believe that that is stable.

The possibilities for left-wing alternatives should arise.

But in general the left in Latin America is in general disarray. Years of repression have taken their toll. Also many left-wing group flirtation and even participation in the guerilla struggles of the '60s and '70s have cost them dear. Outside of Central America no guerilla group was able to develop a mass base — indeed the foco theorists tended to despise such painstaking work.

There is a widespread distrust of militaristic adventures, and of those who supported them. The Communist Parties of Latin America with the exception of Chile — are divided and with relatively little influence. There is thus a huge vacuum on the left — waiting to be filled.





Labour must support Wapping strikers. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, IFL.

# First task: stop the Star Chamber plan

By Vladimir Derer (secretary, Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and Labour Left Liaison)

The immediate task for the left at Labour Party Conference is to get accepted emergency resolutions on the NEC's constitutional amendment on disciplinary procedures. It is very likely that the Conference Arrangements Committee will try to rule them out of order, for this would ensure that the NEC's proposals would go through without much opposition.

As the proposals had first become available to Party members only last week, the NEC is asking for them to be accepted on a take-it-or-leave-it basis and without any prior discussion.

The emergency resolutions are asking that Conference should be given the opportunity to choose between alternative options — at least on the most controversial aspects of the NEC's proposals. This concerns both the composition of the new body, the NCC, as well as its powers.

The NEC, disregarding the General Secretary's suggestion, has given the trade unions a decisive majority on the proposed new body. Since practically all the cases coming before the NCC will concern CLPs, the demand that there should be at least parity in representation of CLPs and trade unions is more than reasonable. The NEC believes that trade union representatives would do no more than rubber-stamp the NEC's recommendations, so they insist on giving the trade unions an absolute majority.

The NEC would retain the right to interpret the Constitution. This means that those parts of it which refer to the eligibility for affiliation (Clause 2 of the Party Constitution) of Labour Party pressure groups — such as Militant, LCC or CLPD — would be wholly dependent on the views that the NEC of the day takes on the desirability of the activity of these groups.

Should it, for example, think that these activities bring the Party into

disrepute' or that they have 'branches in the constituencies' or 'have their own programme, principles and policy for distinctive and separate propaganda' (what pressure group worthy of its name does not have these things?) the NEC can outlaw the group and deprive its supporters of Party membership.

The emergency resolutions argue that the power to interpret the constitution should be given to the NCC. Where the Constitution is ambiguous, and capable of conflicting interpretations, NEC decisions based on its own interpretations of the constitution would be referred to the NCC, which could recommend that they be not acted upon until the Constitution is clarified through appropriate Constitutional amendments.

Another controversial issue coming up are the expulsions of Khan and Scally from Birmingham Sparkbrook CLP. 34 resolutions and amendments have been submitted asking for their immediate reinstatement. The NEC may try to keep this issue off the agenda, as a defeat on it would clearly embarrass the Party Leader and his Deputy, both of whom voted for the expulsions.

The vote in favour of expulsion was carried by a majority of only one, with Hattersley and Cure — who recommended expulsion on the Appeals and Mediation Committee — taking part in the final vote — quite contrary to the now accepted principle of natural justice.

It is therefore essential to ensure that any attempt to prevent debate on both the above issues is frustrated and a possible reference back on them won.

Among other important issues coming up is clearly nuclear energy and US bases. It is vital to keep the question of bases separate from withdrawal from NATO, even though the two issues are clearly linked. It is just possible that the bases issue can be won.

Not less important is the demand that attempts to change the present reselection process is frustrated. The Party leadership clearly hopes to undermine the present accountability of Labour MPs by rushing through proposals for 'alleging widening Party

franchise, but which would in fact restore MPs' freedom to ignore conference decisions.

25 resolutions and amendments are asking for a moratorium on debate on this subject until after the next general election.

Also on the agenda are the demands for positive discrimination in favour of women and black people. Labour women's demands for the right to elect their own representatives on the NEC is as elementary as the Labour Party black members' demand for the right to self-organisation in Labour Party black sections.

Both these demands were defeated at recent Labour Party conferences. Much work should be put into persuading trade union delegations that these demands are fully justified and that their implementation is vital if the Party is to appeal to these constituen-

cies is to be at all credible.

It is important, however, to win the vote on the principle first before making any detailed proposals regarding the future structure of women's conference or the exact place of black sections in the Party constitution.

Finally under economic policies there is likely to be a composite resolution demanding that Labour's future economic strategy must be closely tied to a significant extension of public ownership.

This demand is the same as the one embodied in the 1973 Party Programme, to nationalise 25 companies, on which first Wilson and then the Labour government in 1976 went back, and which has now been completely abandoned.

CLPD has now produced a pamphlet on public ownership and this will be available at the conference.

## Three issues

By Tony Benn

I think that the biggest issue in terms of resolutions is energy policy, and I hope very much that the Conference confirms its decision last year to phase out nuclear power and, after Chernobyl, the case for that is a very strong one.

I think that the second issue in terms of importance — it is hard to put the different issues in terms of real priorities — will be the question of whether the conference accepts the new industrial relations legislation, which is really very dangerous for the labour movement because it is 'In Place of Strife' reappearing, looking better now than it did in 1969!

In 1969 the whole framework of law was generally more positive, and that was seen as a retreat from trade union rights; this one is presented as a gain over Thatcher legislation.

I think that the third issue which will be on the fringes of the Conference, and will appear in some shape or form, will be the question of defence and foreign policy and the question of NATO membership. I am not saying it will formulate itself in quite that way because I am not sure how the composing will come out. But on Thursday the Campaign Group are publishing their pamphlet 'Peace through Non-alignment', by Ben Lowe, for which myself and Jeremy Corbyn have done the introduction. 'The case for British withdrawal from NATO'.

The whole desire for unity and victory in the general election will come out — it will illuminate the whole conference, nobody will want to rock the boat. Under that there will undoubtedly be an attempt to change the whole composition of the National Executive Committee, certainly in respect of the Women's Section and the Trade Union Section. We have to keep our eye out for that.

## Good, bad and Owen

As someone who has contributed in a modest way to the profits of Benson and Hedges Ltd., I took a personal interest in the very public death of Pat Phoenix.

This morbid fascination was fully catered for by the tabloid press, hanging about like vultures waiting for good old Pat to pop her clogs.

Good she was as well. A lifelong Labour supporter, she had posed for photographers alongside Michael Foot at a time when being associated with Worzel was not exactly guaranteed to boost your street credibility.

The death-bed drama was undoubtedly her finest performance, and to the extent that she was aware of it, I am sure she did not object to the media's close attention.

Even so the despicable Peter Adamson, spilling his guts to the Sun as she lay dying was thoroughly nauseating: "Len weeps for Elsie" was the headline. How much Adamson was paid for his intimate revelations, I do not know.

Elsie and Pat merged into one as the tabloids awaited the inevitable end: her brilliant last act was marred only by the presence of the priest who doubled up by marrying her to Anthony Booth and administering the last rites at the same time.

I was pleased to read in the Sunday press that she later "fired her priest" for "being too morbid".

If Pat Phoenix was the week's Goodie, then Raz Koumba Balogum was the Baddie. He denies that upon hearing of Assistant Chief Constable Malcolm Popperwell's heart attack his immediate response was "I hope the bastard dies". Balogum had just witnessed 600 of Popperwell's brave lads charging into the St Pauls district of Bristol to clear up its drugs and vice problems.

This bold operation had involved smashing men and women over the head with riot shields and cops chanting "Come on monkees; come on gorillas".

**Press GANG**

By Jim Denham

Of the 70 people arrested, two were finally charged with possessing small amounts of cannabis.

"This man is a disgrace to his colour" exclaimed Tuesday's Mirror — referring to Balogum of course, not Popperwell or any of the boys in blue. Now, whatever you may think of the remarks attributed to Balogum (personally I find them quite understandable under the circumstances) I fail to see why they make him a disgrace to his colour.

Presumably this was the Mirror's way of proving that his outrage was not directed against all black people — only those who have the affrontery to get angry when they come under attack, and to hit back — if only verbally.

The other person of the week was, of course, Dr Death, who bestrode Harrogate like a Colossus. Too much of a Colossus it seems for Shirley Williams and Roy Jenkins.

Shirley completed that the Doc was tending to dominate the show just a trifle, while Roy suggested that he might just be an ecenty teency bit too right wing to be entirely agreeable.

The Daily Mail spoke up for the Doc: "Whether from muddleheadedness or envy Mrs Williams is turning truth on its head. Surely only the stature of Dr. Owen conceals how limited or passe is the limited talent at the disposal of the fledgling Social Democratic Party."

It might seem strange at first that the true, blue Tory Mail should express such admiration for the leader of the SDP. But, after all, back in the '30s the same paper expressed similar sentiments towards another dynamic, thrusting, charismatic ex-Labour Party member: Oswald Mosley.

I am not suggesting any other historical parallels between the two, of course.



# Downgrading struggles



Picket of NF pub where racist attacks are planned

A.Sivanandan's article 'Race Awareness Training and the Degradation of the Black Struggle' (Race and Class, Spring 1985) tries to trace the recent history of Britain's black communities. He tells how anti-racist struggles have been degraded into 'ethnic' ones.

For Sivanandan the first generation Asians and Afro-Caribbeans were forged into a single black community by a common culture of resistance to racism in Britain and a common identification with the anti-colonial struggle abroad.

British racism in this period denied them basic needs in housing, schooling in social and welfare provisions. The ensuing battles against these common problems led to common interests as black people.

Sivanandan sees the British state's main efforts from this period onwards as being focused on a successful attempt to break down the cohesion of the black community.

The first efforts in this direction were Home Secretary Roy Jenkin's 1966 policy statement setting out the way that blacks were to be integrated into British society. This would be done 'not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance'.

## Cynicism

The abject cynicism of this guff was shown within two years with the passage of a new Immigration Act and the withdrawal of British Passports from the Asians of Kenya by the then Home Secretary Jim Callaghan, just when they needed them because they were being driven out of Kenya.

But this 'multi-cultural' framework was to remain official policy for some time. Its basic framework was to deny the reality of racial exploitation and oppression.

It was all due to cultural misunderstandings. Integration was possible if these cultural barriers were broken down.

Along with the setting up of the state-sponsored Community Relations Commission (CRC) the 1968 Race Relations Act set up urban funding for the most deprived areas. This was the beginning of the now very profitable — for some — race-relations industry.

By 1971 the Tories had further restricted all primary immigration and set up special police units to track down illegal immigrants.

But the resistance to racism had by no means been extinguished. Sivanandan argues that the struggles of the

# Race & Class

By Payman Rezai

'second generation', mostly around creating a social and educational infrastructure, tended to differentiate between the Afro-Caribbean and Asian — mainly because of the distinct way each group experienced racism.

Alongside this black workers were no longer concentrated in a few industries. This was shown by the industrial struggles of black workers (1972-74), in the East Midlands, where for the first time attempts were made to get union support to fight trade union racism.

More well known are the clashes of black youth with the police throughout this period. Mainly these clashes were sparked by the systematic racist harassment of blacks by the police enforcing the 'sus' laws.

In 1975 the Labour government again tried its 'multi-cultural' approach, this time significantly increasing urban aid to £7 million. But 'equal opportunity' legislation only touched the cultural fringes of discrimination, and assisted the emergence of a black middle class.

Once again 'equal opportunity' pointed to racial disadvantage as the root of the matter and (of course not) institutional racism.

Sivanandan traces the rise and fall of the National Front (and the ANL), the coming in of the Tories and the 1981 riots. By 1982-3, the aftermath of the riots, urban funding was increased to £270 million going strongly against the trend of Thatcherite cutbacks.

In the second part of his article Sivanandan analyses the development of Racism Awareness Training (RAT) and how it charts the down-hill road from serious anti-racist struggle to personal-psychological therapy. I'll discuss it next week.

# RACE & CLASS

Available from the Institute of Race Relations, 247 Pentonville Road, London N1.

# Forging link overthrow

Brian Williams, Southern Areas Secretary of the Electrical and Allied Workers' Trade Union, has just been on a successful tour to get the backing of Plessey workers in Britain for their brothers and sisters who work for Plessey in South Africa. He spoke to SO. The article 'Stop the Killings', at the bottom of this page, is reprinted from the EAWTU journal 'Sparky'.

"The whole question of the overthrow of apartheid cannot be separated from the question of capitalism. To understand apartheid it is necessary to see how it is linked to capitalism.

"The central aspect of apartheid is racism, and racism that has been institutionalised, expressing a deliberate and calculated state policy.

"Capitalism in South Africa essentially developed along racial lines. That is as racial capitalism.

"Even if apartheid were to be removed, workers would still be exploited, earning starvation wages and for the ownership of the means of production to be placed in the hands of workers.

"The organised working class has to recognise that the only way it can satisfy its ultimate objectives is by fighting against the principal enemy which is capitalism, recognising that apartheid is but the form in which capitalism developed.

and living in poverty, because the struggle against apartheid as such, as a concept, as racism, does not address itself to the need for an overall radical change in society,

"The fight against apartheid and

capitalism is therefore one fight.

"What is important is that the trade union movement at the present moment is the stepping stone to the formation of a working class political movement, and to establishing a new order in society.

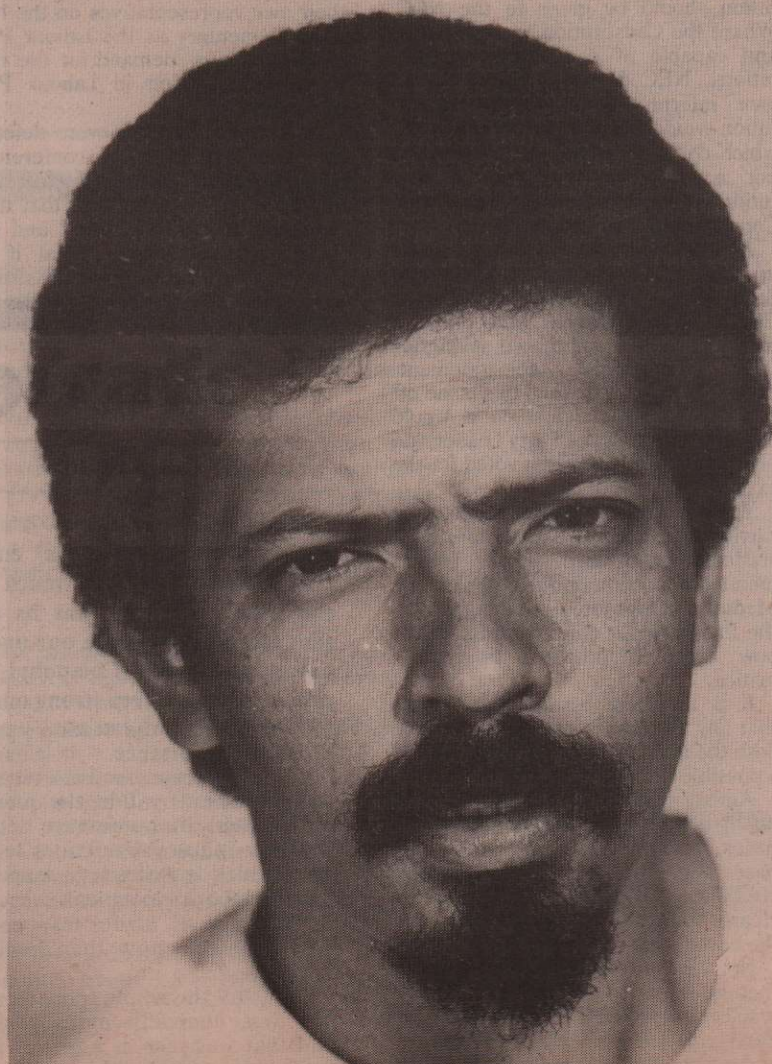
"It must be recognised that the bosses will not hand over power, the freedom of workers cannot be won through negotiation.

"Workers are going to have to pay a very heavy price to liberate themselves and our country from the clutches of apartheid and capitalism."

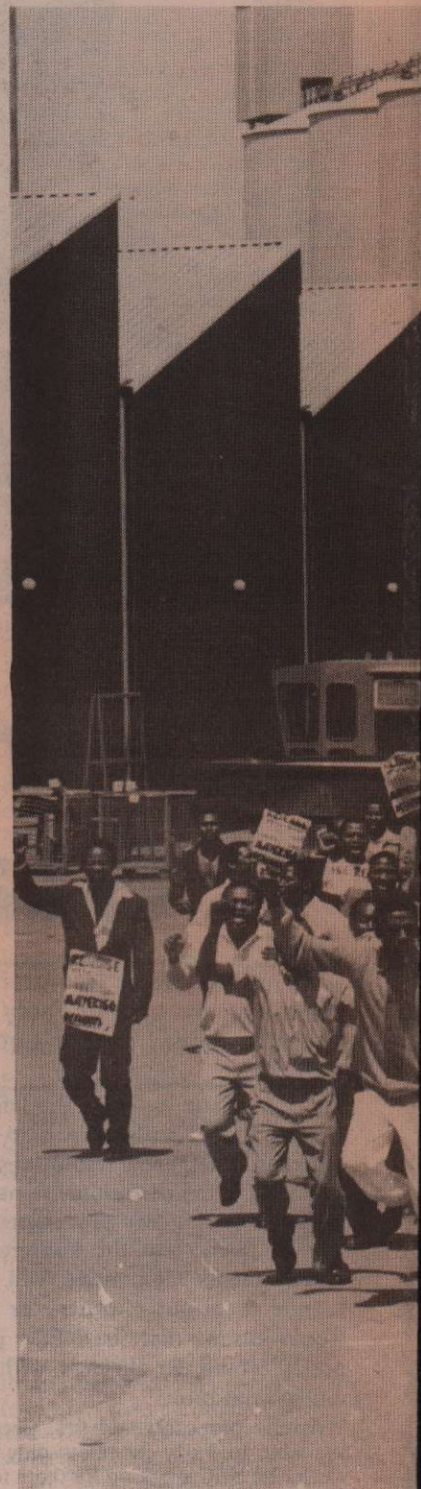
"The request for support from the oppressed black workers in the Plessey Plants in Cape Town to the workers in Plessey's major British plants was a success.

"For the first time in the history of Plessey workers worldwide contact has been made in such a direct way between British and South African workers.

"A very good, sound relationship has been established which will be to the enrichment of the struggle of Plessey workers against capitalist exploitation and the effects that it has on them and their families".



Brian Williams, Southern Areas secretary of EAWTU



# Plea by Sto

On 28 April 1986 two union members were travelling home from a building site. As they drove past Crossroads their vehicle was suddenly stoned. The vehicle picked up speed, skidded and slammed into a tree.

While Rashid Abrahams and David Ndude were seriously injured and trapped inside the vehicle a petrol bomb was thrown in.

Rashid Abrahams was burnt alive and died an agonising and painful death. David Ndude who was very seriously injured with 90% burns on his body eventually died six days later in a slow, tortuous way.

Why? Why should anyone kill two workers, two victims of exploi-



# ks to capitalism



## French action

Direct links established between EA TUSA and French trade unionists helped win the reinstatement of a sacked trade union organiser. The union's journal, Sparky, tells the story:

"A French company, CGEE ALSTHOM was charged with an Unfair Labour Practice after Cecil Theys, a union member, was denied entry to his place of work at Koeberg Nuclear Power Station on 12 November 1985.

The union tried to resolve the matter in South Africa directly with the company. However it became clear that the arrogance of the local French bosses would not allow a settlement to be reached.

The union's Southern Leadership then planned its action. A strike by union members at the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station was seriously considered. After lengthy discussions it became clear that the best tactic was to mobilise our overseas allies.

The union determined to score a victory looked to France for assistance.

Contact was made with our international network of allies to mobilise worker action and support in France.

Workers in Paris went on strike to force the French bosses to reinstate our union member.

The company then sent one of its top people from France to South Africa to settle the matter which was concluded in the office of Legal Resources Centre, Cape Town.

Result: a victory for the union. Reinstatement with full back pay from 12 December to the beginning of March 1986.

Sparky comments: The union will go to any length to protect union members who come to us for help.

No compromise! No betrayal!  
No sellout of workers!

## S. African Trade Unionists op these killings!

tation and oppression? And finally victims of the madness where the oppressed would kill oppressed and exploited would kill exploited.

They did not die in vain. We will not allow that. Their deaths gave birth to our commitment to a Stop the Killing Campaign which was initiated by our union.

The response to the call to end the violence that was dividing organisations and communities against each other was amazing.

The union along with a large number of progressive organisations are totally committed to the Stop the Killing Campaign.

However even though COSATU (Western Cape) attended the first meeting as observers the Stop the Killing Interim Committee has received no official response regard-

ing COSATU's (WC) position, no reply to its written request to meet with COSATU regional executive has been received. Some of the organisations who attended that first meeting were quite impressed with the honest and concerned comments made by the COSATU Western Cape chairperson.

UDF, on the other hand, has not replied at all to the verbal and written requests to join the Stop the Killing Campaign. Stop Killing Interim Committee has also not received a reply to its letter requesting a meeting with the UDF Western Cape executive.

The Gardens region of the UDF is the only UDF affiliate to come forward and actively participate in the campaign. We hope, of course, that the whole of UDF eventually

decides to become full campaign participants.

Meanwhile progress has been slow because of the State of Emergency but our union remains committed to the Stop the Killing Campaign.

We declare that our noble objectives for a free society should not be disgraced by such shameful acts of terror against three victims of oppression and exploitation.

"Our sense of justice must be greater than that of our oppressors, not worse".

The union condemns:

1. Necklacing and all those involved in these murders.
2. Kangaroo courts as structures of terror that does not have mandates from workers and our oppressed community.

# Fabianism

## Woman's EYE

"In order to change the conditions of life we must learn to see them through the eyes of women".

Trotsky

By Jean Lane

Last weekend I went to a political school organised by the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party. If you think that Basingstoke is a back-of-beyond, Tory area where the class struggle is unheard of and the Labour Party talks about the state of garden fences and dog shit on the pavement, think again.

The weekend was cram full of controversial debate about the state of our labour movement; Labour's role in Ireland, sexism in the unions; the struggle in South Africa; and the need to change the Labour Party into a party that can lead the working class with class struggle socialist policies.

Of course, Basingstoke, like anywhere else, does have its fair share of Labour Tories. One workshop was given by a local member of the Fabian Society. After all the excitement and enthusiasm of two days of debate, this one rang with a dull thud.

### Active

Can you imagine spending years of your life being "active" in the Labour Party under the self-denying principle of not being allowed to raise political issues? This was the claim. Or of reckoning your achievements on how many Fabian MPs you managed to get into Parliament?

Or of seeing your political role as one of gradual change by getting positions wherever you can (that's what he said) and of "re-evaluating the effects of Labour's policies for the future"? The Campaign for Jobs and Industry was mentioned with much pride, though the miners' strike was not referred to once — the real campaign for jobs and industry.

"We are unashamedly reformist", we were told. "We believe in gradual change".

It was pointed out to him that far from the Fabians being non-political, the effects of their actions was to be the right wing lackeys of the Kinnockites in our party, which did not effect gradual change at all but placed a block on the struggle of the working class to achieve socialism.

In answer to this we were informed,

"we do not live in a perfect world. Things cannot happen overnight." Overnight! They had 300 MPs in 1945. What did they do with them? What changes have they made?

Did they use Parliament as a platform to promote socialism? They claim to be socialists. No, they wrote pamphlets, re-evaluated, "raised the intellectual credibility of the Labour Party" whatever that means, but did nothing to bring the struggle for socialism any nearer.

It was also pointed out to him that far from being pacifists, as the Fabians claim, their idea of socialism gradually evolving meant that we have to accept capitalism for a long time. This means we have to endure violence for a long time.

The 1945 Labour government was not pacifist when it came to imperialist wars. When the Tories came back into power they had to cut the defence budget!

### Mainstay

The Fabians have written manifestos for and been the mainstay of Labour governments which have overseen investments propping up apartheid in South Africa, crushed workers' struggles in Britain, set the police on anti-fascists in Southall, London, where Blair Peach was killed by the SPG, and so on.

To this we received the immortal reply, "Well, I accept that Labour's record on Ireland and on the police has not been whiter than white, but it has been better than the Liberals and the Tories hasn't it!"

Well, actually, on Ireland, no. The Home Secretary remembered with the most hatred by the Catholic community is Mason after the removal of political status of the republican prisoners.

Everyone I spoke to after the workshop had found the presentation smug, patronising and ineffectual. Much the same in fact as the attitude of the Labour leadership to the working class.

Behind it was the idea that socialism (of god knows what sort) can be benevolently handed down from on high. No thank you very much. Not your kind of socialism and not handed down.

We cannot be satisfied with this so-called gradual change which actually means rattling on our class. Nor can we be satisfied with a Labour government which is just "better than the Tories". Well, it wouldn't be difficult, would it?

So far as most of us could see, spending several years in the Labour Party on this political basis would be one colossal waste of time. Unless, of course, you're in it for yourself.

But as far as fighting for socialism is concerned, the best reason for being a member of the Labour Party is to fight to change it. To make it our party, not the party of a bunch of patronising, self-satisfied hack politicians who think they know what we want and are bent on running capitalism more smoothly than the Tories can.



16 pages of news and analysis of South Africa from a socialist viewpoint.

50p plus 18p post from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



# Build the Campaign groups

HERE will be much interest at this year's Labour Party conference Campaign Forum, set up last weekend as a framework for cooperation between the Campaign Group of MPs, Labour Left Liaison, and the left inside the trade unions.

Campaign Forum will both strengthen the Left's fight for commonly agreed goals — democracy in the Party, accountability of Labour's representatives — and provide a framework to help the left define its politics, strategy and tactics in the run-up to the election and after.

Campaign Forum will attempt to build broad Campaign Groups in localities.

## Visible

The watchword must be: left unity in action for common goals — open discussion of the differences within the left.

The harsh truth is that the Left has been dithering for years. Campaign Forum is important because it should improve left cooperation on immediate practical issues (elections to the National Executive, conference resolutions, solidarity with working-class struggles).

It could give the Labour left a visibility it has not had for quite a while, and thus help us to act as a counterweight to both rank and file demoralisation and the Labour leaders' retreat before the Tories' political and ideological offensive.

Campaign Forum will also have to prepare for Labour in government.

One of the left's central weaknesses during the fight for democracy in the early 1980s — as SO argued at the time — was that it never seriously extended the fight to the trade unions or rearm itself politically. Most of those who recoiled from the last Labour government's record in office failed to think things through to the point of reaching viable conclusions radically different from the ideas of Labour's old left wing, which had been so feeble and so compromised during the '60s and '70s. The coming to party leadership of first Foot and then Kinnock disoriented the

Foot and Kinnock had the support of most of the left, and started out with the same basic policies as the main-

stream left — which they then used to help them prop up and renovate the old Labour establishment.

The growth of the SDP panicked many leftists into the conclusion that they should not go too far, and thus softened them up for Neil Kinnock's message: office is everything.

## EDITORIAL

On top of this, the local government left took power in a number of areas in 1979-82. Whole layers of the left found themselves at local level making — or justifying — administrative decisions and choices based on the limited options allowed by the capitalist system and the Tory government — the sort of 'responsible', 'don't-rock-the-boat' decisions that the Kinnockites were urging them to accept as a programme for a Labour government.

The local government left, led at first by the avowed careerist and 'me-first' politician Ken Livingstone and the muddled opportunistic ex-revolutionary-socialist Ted Knight, turned local government into a huge school of reformism and class collaboration. Often they found themselves, the lefts, playing the role of managers against the workers; they developed an open hostility to trade union militancy.

The left is only now recovering from the disarray created by those developments — which arose decisively from the left's own lack of preparedness and lack of clear goals.

There is some recognition of the problems now on the left. When Campaign Forum was established, it was generally accepted that it should campaign for positive socialist policies and not just be a 'negative' opposition inside the Party. It was also agreed to include the trade union left in the Forum framework, and to build Campaign Groups in the different unions.

## Class

Much, however, still needs to be discussed and filled out. Socialist Organiser does not believe, for example, that putting forward a programme based on a sum of the demands of different campaigns inside the Labour Party — a left version of the 'Rainbow Coalition' — can add up to either a com-

prehensive or a radical socialist programme on which to organise the working class to replace rotting British capitalism with working-class socialism.

Central to any socialist programme, we believe, must be the working class and the fight for working-class control of society.

There are many other issues — for example, Ireland — on which the left needs to begin a serious discussion, and on which it now does little but empty slogan-mongering.

There is another, positive side, best shown in the way so large a part of the Labour Party responded to the miners' strike — despite Kinnock and the Labour leaders. A defeat after a heroic fight is a thousand times better than an abject surrender with no fight at all.

## Strong

Many Labour leftists went through a major school of class struggle in the 1984-5 miners' strike. The left was strong enough to win a major victory at last year's TUC and Labour Party conferences in support of the miners.

Although there were only feeble attempts to organise the left after the winding-up of the RFMC and Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign, we remained strong enough to mount serious resistance to the various attempts at a damaging witch-hunt in the Party.

The left is not strong enough now to stop Kinnock and Hattersley presenting Labour as a new version of the SDP. The situation could be very different after an election, with the Labour leadership trying to run a decrepit British capitalism in severe crisis. The left will have mechanisms to make that leadership accountable which have not existed in the past — mandatory reselection of MPs, annual conference election of the Leader and Deputy Leader.

Kinnock and his faction understand this only too well. Hence the witch-hunt and the recurring moves to gut the democratic reforms. The Labour Party may not yet be safe for a Wilson/Callaghan-type government.

This is the importance of the Labour left trying to reorganise now. Campaign Forum should help the left to unite, to discuss, and to rearm politically — as we failed to do in the early '80s, and still need to do now.



## Star who didn't sell out

By Tracy Williams

Pat Phoenix was taken into hospital four weeks ago with lung cancer. She was critically ill and the media held onto her every wheezing breath until she finally died last week. Why was Pat's case so compulsively interesting?

Well, it touched on our own fears of death and lung cancer, but also I think because Pat's death was close — domestic, personal.

Pat played Elsie Tanner for 23 years and personally I don't think it stretched her acting capabilities enough, but stereotyped her to the degree that Pat almost became Elsie and vice versa.

I don't like Coronation Street, but Elsie was one of the best-portrayed characters. Elsie was raw and earthy and Northern, her accent as uncultured as the Salford cobbles and as tough as back street bricks. Elsie Tanner had guts.

But, we should be wary of glamourising or romanticising — Elsie was no Joan Crawford or Amazon. At the end of the day Elsie was a victim of working class conditions, too tired, too frustrated to contemplate overthrowing the state or whatever.

Miners' wives organise during Tens of thousands of work capitalism and about the no that strike.

## Courts

It looked as if the left might win one victory against the witch-hunt at this year's Labour Party conference.

The expulsion of Amir Khan and Kevin Scally from Birmingham Spa Brook Labour Party has outraged many beyond the hard left. The expulsion was endorsed at Labour's National Executive Committee only by a narrow majority, and Birmingham's right wing city council Labour group has condemned it.

## Appeal

So Khan and Scally might have won their appeal to Labour Party conference. But now it seems that the Labour leaders will manoeuvre the issue off the conference agenda.

The reason given is that a conference debate could prejudice the Labour Party's position in the event of legal action. Khan and Scally have threatened to take the Labour Party to court.

This development highlights the short-sightedness of using the capitalist courts in disputes within the labour movement.

It has become common practice for witch-hunted left-wingers — Militant

## on the



Elsie just wanted a decent slice of the cake (though she never managed to get it) and the largest gin and tonic to swill it down with; a new lipstick, the most "decent" man around and a few bob in her purse — she didn't unite with her class but competed often with them.

For a socialist it's easy to say, "Elsie, it wasn't worth it, queen". She was a victim. Elsie didn't have any real education, either formal or political. She didn't have economic stability. She didn't have anyone to help or guide her.

She got just a shabby house, a few hair rollers, a poorly paid job. Like many working class people all her energies went into making ends meet and making the best of it.

In comparison Pat Phoenix was well off, but like Elsie, so we're told, Pat suffered emotional ups and downs with the men in her life (who doesn't).

It would have been easy for Pat Phoenix to sell out and become yet another exclusive, elusive star and turn her back on her class — like the Thatcherites Jimmy Tarbuck or Lulu. But she didn't. Pat Phoenix was a staunch Labour supporter throughout her life.

In Manchester in 1983 Pat refused to stand up for the singing of Land of Hope and Glory — she campaigned and canvassed for Tony Benn in the 1984 Chesterfield by-election. She went on many demonstrations — in Liverpool at a massive Labour Party and trade union rally against unemployment Pat stood up on the platform and said: "I'm just here to stand up and be counted like the rest of you".

Pat Phoenix will appear on TV in the near future in her last screen role, ironically playing a dying woman in "Hidden Talents" on Central TV.

My sympathies to Pat's friends and comrades.

## of pro

nationalisations in the financial sector and dem...  
**THE CASE FOR LABOUR**



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

## Behind the cold war

Colin Foster reviews 'The Making of the Second Cold War' by Fred Halliday (Verso, £6.95).

Fred Halliday's book is useful but politically it is not very good.

He gives a clear summary of the military facts of the arms race, and of world politics since the late 1970s. This second edition of the book (the first edition was published in 1983) takes the story up to early 1986.

On detailed questions Halliday is thoughtful and often acute. But what do all the details add up to? What do the facts mean? What's it all about?

Halliday's answer is that the Cold War is based on "the Great Contest" between "capitalism and communism" as represented by the USSR. He is careful to note that "The use of the term communism is not intended to suggest that the Soviet Union has attained what Marx or Lenin have described as the communist organisation of society"; he is critical, and indeed the book's cover quotes a Stalinist reviewer denouncing Halliday for "anti-Soviet snarls".

Yet his criticism is expressed as regret that the USSR has not "been developing forms of socialist democracy at home and adhering to a

clearly distinct military policy [from the USA's] internationally", as if the USSR's rulers could reasonably be expected to reform themselves in such fashion!

Halliday's detailed narrative ties the Second Cold War most specifically to the US's conflict with revolutionary movements in the Third World. For him, this is inseparable from the "Great Contest". The USSR's "ideology and social interests" tie it to anti-capitalist revolution, and the contrary orientation of China, with the same "communist" structure, is a marginal aberration.

## Distinctions

I'm not convinced: but for all that Halliday's examination of Third World revolutions is valuable. Too often both left and right speak of such revolutions as simply one expression after another of some single world-historic Force or Process or Tide. Halliday analyses, draws distinctions, differentiates.

Between 1962 and 1974, he points out, there was only one revolutionary seizure of power in the Third World. The Portuguese revolution of 1974 and the Vietnamese victory of 1975 opened a new period. Between 1974 and 1980 there were 14 Third World revolutions.

Since then there has been none: partly, maybe, because of the US counter-offensive, but also because those 1974-80 revolutions were almost all against colonial regimes or old-fashioned dictatorships of a sort which are now very rare. That wave of revolt was the last phase of the post-1945 'colonial revolution' and future revolutions will probably be different.

## Classes

Different in class terms? Halliday does not pose the question that way. Though he identifies the USSR as "a contrasted social system, representing different social interests and classes", he does not say which social and class interests they are which define the USSR and link it to Third World revolutions. His own, quite sober, picture of the reality of the Stalinist states contradicts any idea that it is working class interests that dominate: but what other class is he talking about?

## Combatted

The vagueness here also affects Halliday's conclusions. He ends the book with an insistence that Cold War II and its causes can be combatted by political action: but what action, by what forces, he does not indicate.



Pamphlets from Socialist Organiser - 'The Case for Labour', 15p, and 'Lessons of Liverpool', 20p. Add 18p for postage, and order from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

## THE CASE FOR LABOUR



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## Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

# Waves, wind and jobs

Supporters of nuclear power in the labour movement have made much of the supposed job losses and shortages of electricity if the industry was closed down.

An article in the Autumn edition of New Ground, quarterly magazine of Socialist Environment and Resources Association) exposes the fallacies in their arguments, using the CEBG's own figures!

The author, David Ross, shows that the CEBG has spare capacity of about 7000 megawatts (MW), even on the coldest winter's day, while electricity generated by nuclear plants amounts to about 5000 MW. Thus, there would be at least 2000 MW in reserve, even if nuclear plants were shut down immediately with no alternative methods brought in.

Looking at some of the alternatives, namely wind and wave power, often pooh-poohed by government and industry spokespeople, Ross reveals that the CEBG's own experts state (in a booklet called Alternative Energy Sources) that these could supply sizeable chunks of the UK's energy needs.

Wind generators situated in only the most suitable sites, placed off-shore to avoid disturbing the environment, could generate enough electricity to satisfy our total needs. Wave generators alone could supply more than enough power to replace all existing nuclear plants. The Department of Energy estimates the cost of such electricity at 8p per unit, somewhat expensive. But the CEBG booklet admits that this figure would be halved, using a Norwegian invention. The Norwegian experimental wave power station is already producing electricity at 4p per unit.

The CEBG expert also believes that tidal energy could produce 6% of Britain's energy needs, comparable to the 10% now met by nuclear power. Even without considering geothermal (hot rocks and springs) power, solar power, burning refuse, conservation measures, use of "waste" heat from power stations etc., it is clear that there need be no difficulty in replacing nuclear energy.

But what about jobs? Figures of 150,000 job losses are regularly bandied about by Labour Environment spokesperson John Cunningham or the EETPU's Eric Hammond.

Well, it so happens that the

skills and techniques needed for constructing, say, wave power stations are just those available in some of Britain's declining industries. Vickers Engineering and Shipbuilding have submitted a design for an Oscillating Water Column generator which could produce power at 4p per unit. Sitting on the ocean floor, it would need 700 steel tubes, each 80 metres long, weighing 2300 tonnes. Vickers already employes 12,500 workers in Cumbria, where Sellafield is sited, and would be well placed to offer alternative jobs to some nuclear workers.

Another design for a wave-generator by Sir John Cockerell, inventor of the hovercraft, could employ the workforce of Consett steel works for five years.

Wind generators could supply employment for the skills of the aerospace industry, while geothermal power would utilise drilling and mining skills; etc., etc.

In the meantime, the knowledge of the nuclear industry could be put to good use trying to devise safe ways of disposing of the dangerous radioactive waste and equipment left by Britain's brief excursion into nuclear power.

\*\*\*\*\*

The rest of this issue of New Ground contains much of interest to socialists and trade unionists.

Jake Jackson, research officer for GMBATU, outlines the threat to workers' lives and health posed by Tory cuts in health and safety and lists priorities for Labour to strengthen the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Two articles establish food additives as a socialist issue. In one, Melanie Miller describes the threat to workers' health in food factories and details strike and other action taken by food workers.

On nuclear power, an update on Chernobyl paints a grim picture of future illness and death. Another article outlines the nuclear debacle in Brazil and India, as Western nuclear companies try to find new markets for their unpopular wares.

New Ground 11 is available from SERA, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG. A year's sub is £3, or for an introductory copy send 5 17p stamps. Membership of SERA (including sub to New Ground) is £9 (£8 by bankers' order).

## Activists' DIARY

Conference Fringe meetings, Blackpool. For more details see Socialist Organiser Conference Briefing.

**SATURDAY 27 SEPTEMBER.**

5.15pm. WAC briefing for women delegates. Roscrea Hotel.

8pm til late. National Justice for Mineworkers 'Heroes' Concert. Norbreck Castle Hotel.

**SUNDAY 28 SEPTEMBER**

10am. CLPD Conference Rally. Opera House Stage, Winter Gardens.

1.30pm. Briefing meeting. Station Hotel, Talbot Road.

**MONDAY 29 SEPTEMBER**

Lunchtime. Campaign Group of MPs on Nuclear Power. New Clifton Hotel.

LAW 86 meeting. Station Hotel.

7.30pm. WAC meetings, Station Hotel.

Socialist Organiser meeting Monday 29 September. 'Our Com-

mon 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.**

Socialist Organiser meeting, Hotel and Guest House Association, 87a Coronation Street.

7.45pm. Labour CND meeting. Baronial Hall, Winter Gardens.

**TUESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER** Lunchtime. Campaign Group meeting on Full Employment. Hotel and Guesthouse Association.

5.30pm. Lesbian and Gay Socialist meeting.

8pm. Black Sections Meeting. Norbreck Castle Hotel.

**WEDNESDAY 1 OCTOBER.**

5.30pm. LCI meeting.

7pm. Campaign Group of MPs Rally. Knowle High School, St. Anne's.

**THURSDAY 2 OCTOBER**

Lunchtime. National Justice for Mineworkers Meeting. Central Library Theatre.

5.30pm. Labour Left Liaison meeting. Roscrea Hotel.

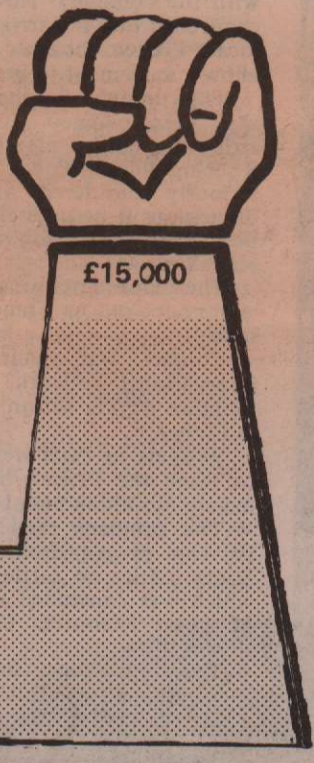
Next week our new typesetting equipment will be delivered - the last major instalment of our programme of new premises and new equipment.

You won't see the effects immediately - we'll have to phase in the new machine gradually - but the improvement should be clear over time.

This purchase has been financed by loans, and we'll have a heavy burden of repayments. So keep up the fund-raising!

Thanks this week to Kirsty Semple, £30. Total so far £12752.94, or 85% of our £15,000 target. Send donations to SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

## Fighting FUND



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.

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- 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.

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# Wapping sell-out

With another Murdoch "final offer" now ready to be put to News International strikers by way of a ballot, the national leadership of SOGAT are not even bothering to disguise their willingness to capitulate.

This became crystal clear at the meeting of all chapel officials in News International last Thursday, with SOGAT general secretary Brenda Dean.

A report was given of the so-called 'intense' seven days of negotiations which brought forth nothing more than the previous offer in May. Printers will not get their jobs back; no union recognition; and a de-unionised plant, dominated in fact by the EETPU.

The local officials were amazed to learn that this wasn't even up for negotiation — it was another take it or leave it performance! This does not say much for the 'intense negotiations'.

The General Secretary also explained the NEC's decision that this offer should go to ballot, which amounts to

By Carol Hall, SOGAT, acting MoC Times (Personal capacity)

them washing their hands of the responsibility they have been elected to discharge. They are, in reality, saying to the strikers who have courageously fought for eight months: 'go sell yourselves out'. That is what Dean means when she says that the members will decide.

The FoCs/MoCs were resentful at what Dean and the NEC had done. One after another called for the General Secretary to face the members and explain why she had the audacity to place this shabby deal in front of them.

All this was to no avail because the General Secretary made it clear from the outset that this meeting was for information purposes only. The local

officials were to have no influence whatsoever on whether or not the offer should be put to ballot.

## Simple

The strikers' viewpoint is very simple: they wish on principle to reject this disgusting offer. However, they know that after eight months the kidology can take place no more. Unless there are real steps to take the strike forward — proper escalation, not rhetoric — more and more people will abandon the dispute, leaving a dwindling force outside the gates of Wapping.

So new proposals to fight the dispute must be put forward alongside the call for rejection.

\*A democratically elected strike committee, accountable at mass meetings to strikers, which would breathe new life into the fight, taking it into Fleet Street and every other shop in

London.

\*The blacking of all Murdoch's titles, such as 'Elle' magazine.

\*The blacking of copy being transferred across the wire to Fortress Wapping. Bemrose scab colour pre-prints need to be turned away by other Fleet Street houses.

\*The call for a 24 hour day of action, of rallies and demonstrations — a Wapping day.

\*A rota system in every house in Fleet Street to build the pickets on certain days in the week.

## Confidence

These are things that could carry the strike forward and give fresh confidence to the strikers. If these things were really fought for we could move on to a total 24 hour shut down of Fleet Street.

This is the way victory can be snatched from the jaws of defeat.

MINERS

# Durham strikes

Following a solid ballot vote last week for one day lightning strikes, the mechanics at Murton walked out on Monday and closed the pit down. NUM members at the pit respected their picket line.

Last week, the 8500 Durham NUM members voted 68% in favour of a weekday overtime ban on a 75% turnout.

The NUM EC meets again this Thursday, and there will be big pressure on the NEC to move to a national overtime ban. A Yorkshire Area Council resolution demands a ballot on an overtime ban.

A South Wales miner from

SHEFFIELD

# Keetons solid

By Dave Barter

IN the 12th week of the dispute at the Keetons engineering factory in Sheffield, one member of the strike committee described their attitude to management in negotiations as "put up or shut up".

Although strikers describe management's response so far as "pathetic" the workers are out for nothing less than victory — 38 AEU members back inside the factory.

Tower Lodge NUM told Socialist Organiser that he and many others had been "appalled" when the NUM EC on 12 September had

made no moves on a national overtime ban. The South Wales Area is in the ninth week of their 'coal cutting' overtime ban.

KENTURE

# Extend action

By Dion D'Silva

The workers sacked from Kenure Plastics, Feltham, after trying to negotiate a decent wage for a 60

hour week, continue to picket five days a week.

The management is still refusing to negotiate with ACAS or the local council and has said that it will close the factory down since it is losing money.

Redundancy notices have been handed out to the remaining workers, mostly women, stating that the factory will close on 26 September.

## Boycott

There are six other Kenure factories all producing plastic mouldings. These are used in the manufacture of BMX bikes and IBM computers. As yet there has been no concerted effort to gain support from workers in these factories or to organise a boycott of products.

Donations to: Kenure Workers' Support Fund, c/o 18 Staines Rd., Hounslow TW3 3JS.

NOTTS

# Fight this closure

Last Wednesday, the Coal Board in Nottinghamshire announced the closure of the Hucknall-Babbington complex. An NUM member in Hucknall — who cannot be named because of the likelihood of victimisation — explained the reaction.

The pit is 124 years old. There is plenty of coal in there; the Coal Board lie when they say it cannot be got out profitably. There are a lot of geological faults but they have been there for the last fifteen years. 1300 men work at the pit, 120 of them in the NUM.

The main attitude in the pit seems to be take the money and run. It's disgraceful.

The NUM is opposed to all pit closures. We cannot sell our jobs and, speaking for myself, I do not want to move. A transfer to Harworth, for example, would involve a trip of 40 miles.

Lynk is frightened that he is going to lose members over this. His members will take the money. The UDM might say they are going to fight it but what with? At the end of the strike there were just 44 out at Hucknall.

# Notts pits under attack

Last week's announcement by the Area Coal Board that they were closing Hucknall pit in Nottinghamshire wasn't a surprise. We've known for a long time that they would be coming for the Notts pits. They've only held off for so long to give the UDM a chance to build itself up.

Now that they have thrown the gauntlet down, what will the UDM do? I think that Lynk, Prendegast and the rest will put the thing out to a ballot and when they get their no vote will turn round and say: 'we were prepared to fight, the membership wasn't'. The same old story.

The importance of Hucknall goes beyond the jobs about to be lost. This closure means that the attack is now beginning in the Nottinghamshire coalfield.

The threat is to the whole soft underbelly of the coalfield — those pits the Coal Board say are unprofitable.



Paul Whetton is the secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

The tragedy is that if the membership had stood beside us in 1984-5, we'd have won and this attack would not have come. Now it is here and they have got nowhere to run.

I am sure that the NUM branch at Hucknall will be deciding their response and then the Area Council will come in. I hope that they will say that they are prepared to argue the case and then stand up and fight for it.

But we are in a hell of a situation, being such a small minority. We are not allowed a voice. And any action we take would lead to the Coal Board picking off ringleaders and sacking them.

The issue for the NUM is this: how in these circumstances are we going to stop the closure programme that will sweep through Notts?

We need to start the campaign now, saying bluntly and clearly that the NUM in Notts is prepared to stand up and fight, even while the UDM stands — or crawls — behind the bosses.

I believe that the decision by both the Durham Mechanics and the Durham NUM to take action expresses the feelings of the rank and file in all the coalfields. The lads may not be prepared for a major strike; they are certainly prepared, though, to fight the Coal Board over its vindictive and intransigent attitude.

Haslam's propositions are little different from what MacGregor said no movement on the sacked miners, an imposed pay deal — the old "grind-them-into-the-ground" attitude. The response from the rank and file says

that the willingness to fight is there. What we have to do is coordinate that fight.

I think the Coal Board are doing as much as they feel they can get away with before a general election. They know what the Labour Party has at least promised. We will be looking for scalps and will not accept the Nuremberg trials defence from Coal Board bosses — "we were only following orders".

We want to sack the bastards who sacked us.

At the Labour Party Conference, I hope that the smoke about the UDM will have blown away. They should recognise that there is one union for one industry, and that it is the NUM. Let's stop all this hedging bets because of so-called marginal seats.

Even the Kinnock-Hattersley leadership must remember that it was the 1972 and 1974 miners' strikes that got a Labour government elected.

The danger is that the consensus line will dominate Conference and that

SSiN

# Organise students for Labour

SSiN is the left faction in the National Organisation of Labour Students, which is run by the Kinnockite Democratic Left. We also organise in the National Union of Students

The spill-over from one to another is quite great, since NOLS runs NUS which has over 1.25 million members and that's important at any time.

It's especially important now with the Tory attacks on students and the whole working class, and with the looming general election.

In the last election Labour did incredibly badly amongst the young voters; for SSiN that's no surprise.

Unless Labour does something about its policies it is not going to shake up society. In fact, though a Kinnockite government is unlikely to act in the interests of the working class, it will be a far better government for us than Thatcher's, even though still a government which manages capitalism.

Already Kinnock and Hattersley have been working to reassure the City that capitalists will be looked after by Labour and the Party's 'new image' is designed to give credibility to the private and semi-private assurances which Labour leaders have been giving.

For us the election campaign should be starting now. Labour should be at the forefront of supporting strikes, organising pickets of councils which are making cuts, going on to the estates and holding public rallies to organise anti-Tory campaigns.

In that way we can bring in new people who want to fight for socialism, who will see their role as defending working class living standards and not as being passive cheerleaders for Kinnock.

SSiN believes that fighting inside the Party is more effective than standing outside and booing from the sidelines. We have to argue for our politics inside the whole working class movement, and challenge those people who run Labour as a Party of would-be benevolent capitalism.

During the rest of the year this column will tell people what SSiN is doing to organise the left in NOLS and NUS. It will carry articles about current student debates on questions like the Middle East, South Africa and so on.

For more information about SSiN write to 54A Peckham Rye, London SE15.



# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

IRELAND

## Still logjammed

Last week it looked for a while as if there would be some movement away from the political stalemate in Northern Ireland.

Sir Frederick Catherwood, a Conservative Euro-MP who has been holding private discussions with all the Party leaders in Northern Ireland, proposed

that the Anglo-Irish conference should not meet for two months and that in that time there should be Unionist-Nationalist talks on the setting up of a form of Northern Ireland government in Belfast which would be acceptable to a majority of both Catholics and Protestants.

John Hume, the leader of the consti-

tutional nationalist SDLP commented that this should not be difficult since the Anglo-Irish conference anyway meets only about once every two months.

### Surprise

The surprise was that the leaders of the two big Unionist parties, Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party and James Molyneux of the Official Unionist Party did not immediately rule it out and at first it looked as if they might agree to give it a try.

But then they changed tack and insisted that the Anglo-Irish agreement had to be formally suspended and its headquarters at Maryfield closed down before there could be any negotiations.

This would be completely unacceptable to the SDLP, and to the British and Irish governments.

It may be that Paisley and Molyneux were hauled back into line by their own more uncompromising supporters. That is what happened on the eve of the Unionist Day of Action last March when Paisley and Molyneux emerged from discussions with Thatcher talking about compromise only to be forced to publicly eat their own words when they got back to Belfast.

Meanwhile the death toll from sectarian assassinations in Northern Ireland rises almost daily. Paisley, for the first time that anyone can remember, issued a firm condemnation of the Protestant sectarian assassins.

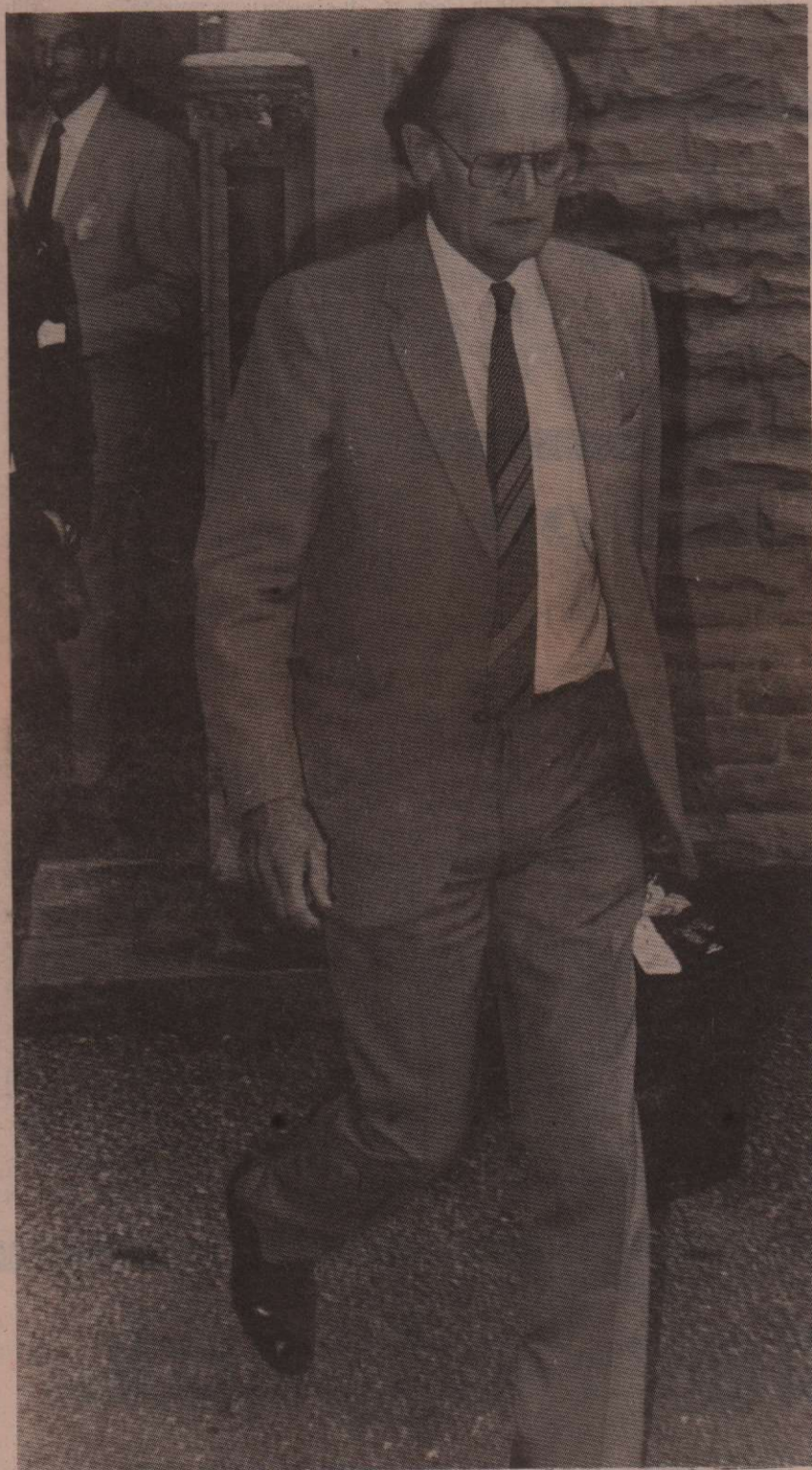
### Significant

The Protestant reaction to Sir Frederick Catherwood's proposals is significant because sooner or later some centre-stage politicians will be persuaded to take their political lives in their hands and try to work out an agreement with the SDLP within the Anglo-Irish agreement.

That will speed up the polarisation within the Protestant community, freeing from restraint those who are prepared to resist the Anglo-Irish agreement by violent means. There are many such people and some of them are talking openly about striking at the South — as the UDA did murderously by setting off bombs without warning in Dublin back in 1972.

## Labour and Nuclear Power

1986 will be seen as the year the nuclear controversy dominated labour movement debates. In the year of Chernobyl, an incredible 184 motions on Labour's conference agenda are on energy policy, 183 against nuclear power and just one, from Copeland (which includes Sellafield), calling for keeping it.



Mr John Baker, Chairman of NIREX, dashes from a secret meeting with the Council near Fulbeck, Lincs., 12 September 1986. Photo: Nigel Clapp.

It seems inconceivable, that conference will not vote to phase out nuclear power quickly. And yet... a certain anti-nuclear majority at the TUC conference was subverted. During secretive stitch-ups, NALGO was persuaded to ignore its own policy and vote for a delaying tactic of a moratorium on future plants and a safety review of existing ones. An anti-nuclear majority of over a million became a pro-General Council one of just 60,000.

Will things go differently at Labour Party conference? Here, the game is slightly different. Kinnock and Cunningham are trying to head off not a vote against nuclear power — that is a foregone conclusion — but a two-thirds majority which in theory at least guarantees the policy a place in the election manifesto.

Despite overwhelming opposition to nuclear power amongst CLPs, the real battle is for the trade union block votes. With the switch of ASTMS, firefighters and cine-technicians, the two-thirds should be easily won. However, cynics will remember how union leaders have sometimes "accidentally" voted the wrong way or missed the vote!

Trade union delegations will have the utmost pressure exerted by a Labour leadership keen to appear moderate and "realistic", who talk of reducing dependence on nuclear power but only over several decades!

During that time the world could see several Chernobyls, according to current estimates.

On the plus side is the support for phasing out of such as Heffer and Benn. The latter worked with the nuclear industry as Minister for Technology and was lied to, misled and pressured by them.

The arguments against nuclear power as it exists at present threaten to become overwhelming. Not only have we been close to disasters several times in its short life but dozens, if not hundreds, have suffered and died from radiation-linked diseases. These include the leukaemias and thyroid cancers caused by leaks, deliberate and accidental, and the cancer deaths of nuclear workers, whose compensation claims are always settled out of court.

Mountains of waste accumulate with no method of disposal. The problems of dismantling retired nuclear power stations has yet to be faced.

The use of "civil" plutonium for atom bombs has gradually been exposed despite the lies and evasions of Her Majesty's Government.

Even the economic case for nuclear power has been severely dented. After the promises of free electricity (!), costs turn out not much different from conventional sources.

But the double crux of the debate will be the questions of jobs and alternative energy sources. The working class needs serious answers to these questions. Such answers exist (see Science Column) and must be convincingly presented.

## Careerism is the problem!

An article in last week's issue of Labour Weekly (757) by Peter Hain and Graham Allen calls for better facilities for MPs. The two PPCs argue that improved facilities would allow the Parliamentary Labour Party to carry out the jobs the Party wants them to do.

They also call for a democratically run Parliamentary Labour Party as opposed to the present system which leaves the decision making in the hands of those "Parliamentary Labour Party members who form the government."

Hain and Allen say that unless their conditions of a desk, telephone, an office, two secretaries and a researcher, all paid for out of public funds, are met "there could be an action replay of the 1960s and 1970s Labour governments where ministers become distanced from the Party" and "the result would be disillusion, rebellion and eventual political disaster".

"The PLP itself", they say, "should prepare the necessary motions to enact this policy immediately upon coming into government". They may be right when they say that poor facilities and an undemocratic Parliamentary Labour Party are causes for Labour's policies not being implemented in Parliament. But I suspect the main reasons are a lack of commitment to socialist policies by most Labour MPs and an unwillingness to take a leading role in fighting for a socialist society.

The Parliamentary Labour Party tends not to be made up of the best working class socialists elected because of their record in the fight for

By Lol Duffy (PPC Wallasey, in personal capacity)

socialism! That's for sure. Many Labour MPs, and PPCs, see the goal of getting to Parliament and beyond that maybe achieving a place in government as the pinnacle of their 'political' careers.

Think of those stalwarts of socialism who have been Labour Party MPs in the past. Ramsey MacDonald, David Owen, Shirley Williams, Reg Prentice, — and now being serialised in the scab Murdoch Times, Robert Kilroy-Slick.

The action replay of the 1960s and 1970s Labour governments is indeed on the cards, but not because of the lack of Parliamentary facilities. It is because the Labour Party has failed to learn — or refused to learn — the lessons of past Labour governments which ran this bent capitalist system at the expense of Labour's own working class supporters.

The fight for more democracy in the Labour Party, which was stepped up after the defeat of the last Labour government, could have led to greater democratic control of Labour MPs and therefore to a more answerable Labour government. But that campaign has now been ditched by many who initially supported it in favour of the election of a Labour government at any cost and by way of the presentation of a respectable image.

The fight for democracy and socialism has been replaced by the drive to out-SDP the SDP. We must continue to fight for socialism in the Labour Party. The big lesson of the last years, when so many former left-wingers have given up, is this: the struggle for socialism in the Labour Party, and throughout society, can only be won by those with strong political commitment.

No amount of desks, telephones and secretaries will improve the politics of a careerist.

Pat Phoenix was a good socialist who was always ready to speak out for working people on platforms for jobs and peace, social justice and internationalism.

Her courage and her commitment will long be remembered and we mourn her passing.

TONY BENN



Photo: Morning Star

### SOCIALIST ORGANISER MEETING

Labour Conference Fringe Meeting  
Our Common Struggle

Speakers

A woman militant from the South African Metal and Allied Workers Union

Carol Hall, Wapping striker and acting MoC at the Times SOGAT

Paul Whetton, Notts NUM member and Bevercotes branch secretary, recently victimised for his trade union activity

Lol Duffy, Wallasey PPC

Unmesh Desai, Newham Monitoring Project and Anti-Fascist Action

7.30 p.m. Monday 29 September

Hotel and Guest House Association, 87a Coronation Street