

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

The left and Russia: An open letter to Tony Benn p.5.

HUNGARY '56. See centre pages.



The big rip

off

Five years' jail for throwing a stone

A 23 year old was sentenced to five years in prison this week for allegedly throwing a stone at a policeman during the events at Broadwater Farm, Tottenham, last year.

Police said that photographs showed Clifton Donaldson holding a lump of rock.

He is just one of the many defendants in the Broadwater Farm trials.

Earlier in October Simon MacMinn, a 19 year old mechanic, was the first defendant to be convicted. He was sentenced to 7 years for the relatively minor offences of affray and burglary.

Picket of Old Bailey by residents of Broadwater Farm.

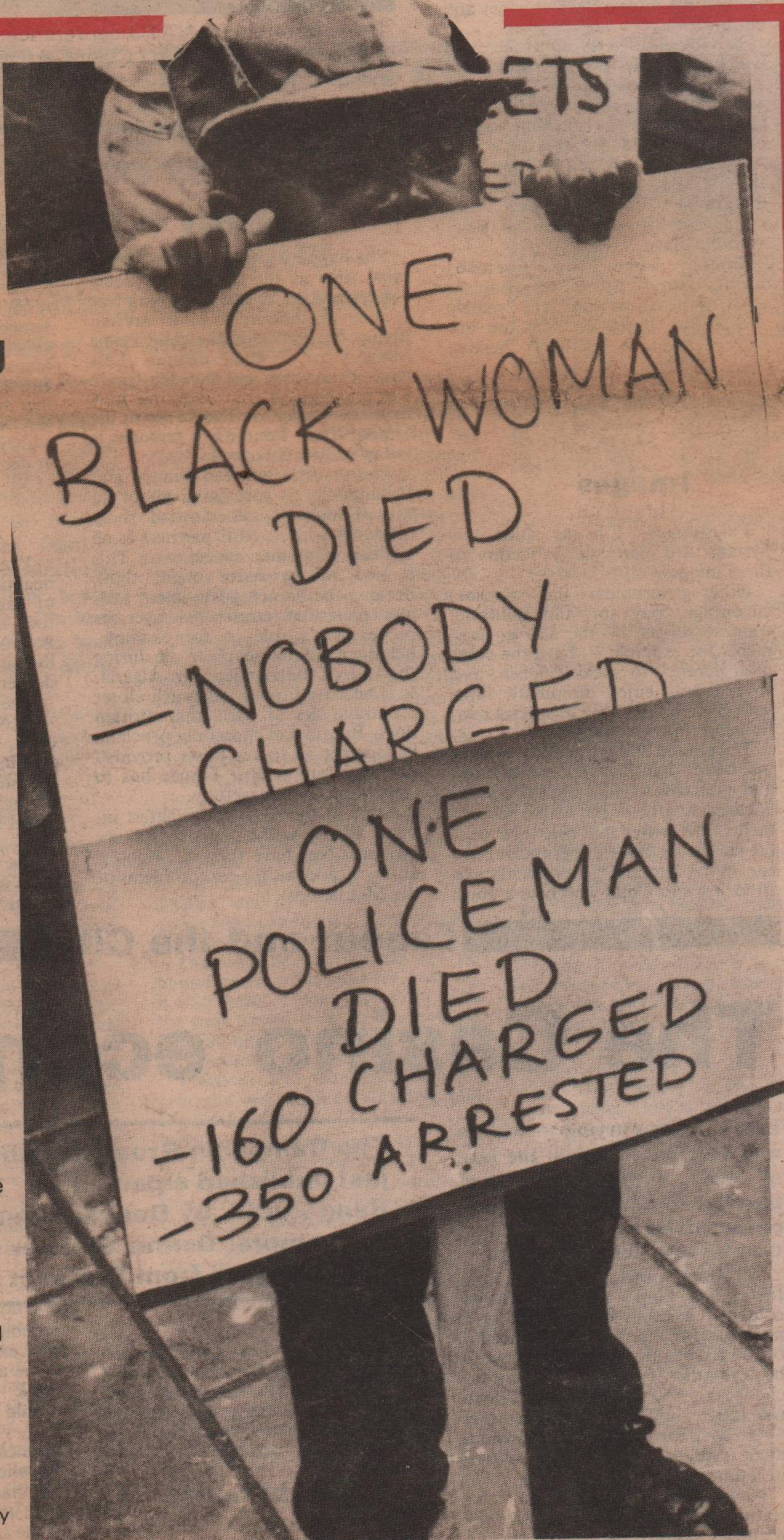


Photo Report

For the City — record profits. for the rest of us — record unemployment. That's what Toryism means in Britain today.

Profits are now at a peak not seen since the early 1960s. Unemployment is still 3.3 million on official figures, 3.8 million on the basis of calculation used before 1982, and 4.5 million by TUC estimates.

The Tories' "answer" is to fiddle the figures to make unemployment seem lower, and to try to intimidate claimants.

Cut

Could you make arrangements to have your children looked after immediately if you were offered a job? Immediately? Tomorrow? Would you be willing to work night shifts?

Answer 'no', and your dole will be cut off.

According to new regulations, to be introduced between now and next January for all people newly signing on as unemployed, you will also have benefit refused if:

- You are 'highly qualified' and are not willing to leave your family and friends to seek work in another town.

- You are unwilling to accept jobs with bad pay and conditions.

According to the Guardian (28 October) the new procedures have been tried out in pilot schemes. The government thinks they are a success because 7.2% of unemployed abandoned their claims, and another 2.6% were refused benefit after adjudication.

The main purpose is to frighten unemployed people into not demanding dole. The unemployed may be depressed and harassed, nervous of dealing with bureaucracies, or un-

'Big Bang' for the rich. But:

- Four and a half million unemployed.
- Eleven million below the poverty line.
- Homelessness up by one third.
- Racist visas and prison camps for black people.
- The law used for strike-busting.

skilled in the English language. They may feel bad about applying for dole because of all they have heard about 'scroungers'.

No matter: for this government, 'success' is measured by how many abandon their claims.

Far more benefit goes unclaimed — because people don't know their rights, or are unconfident about claiming them — than is claimed fraudulently. And fraud by the rich — tax fraud and City fraud — is vastly bigger than social security fraud.

The government estimates social security fraud at between £4.7 million and £135 million. Unclaimed benefit is about £900 million. Tax fraud is estimated by the Inland Revenue at £4.5 billion. About £250 million went missing in one single City scandal, the Johnson Matthey Bank collapse.

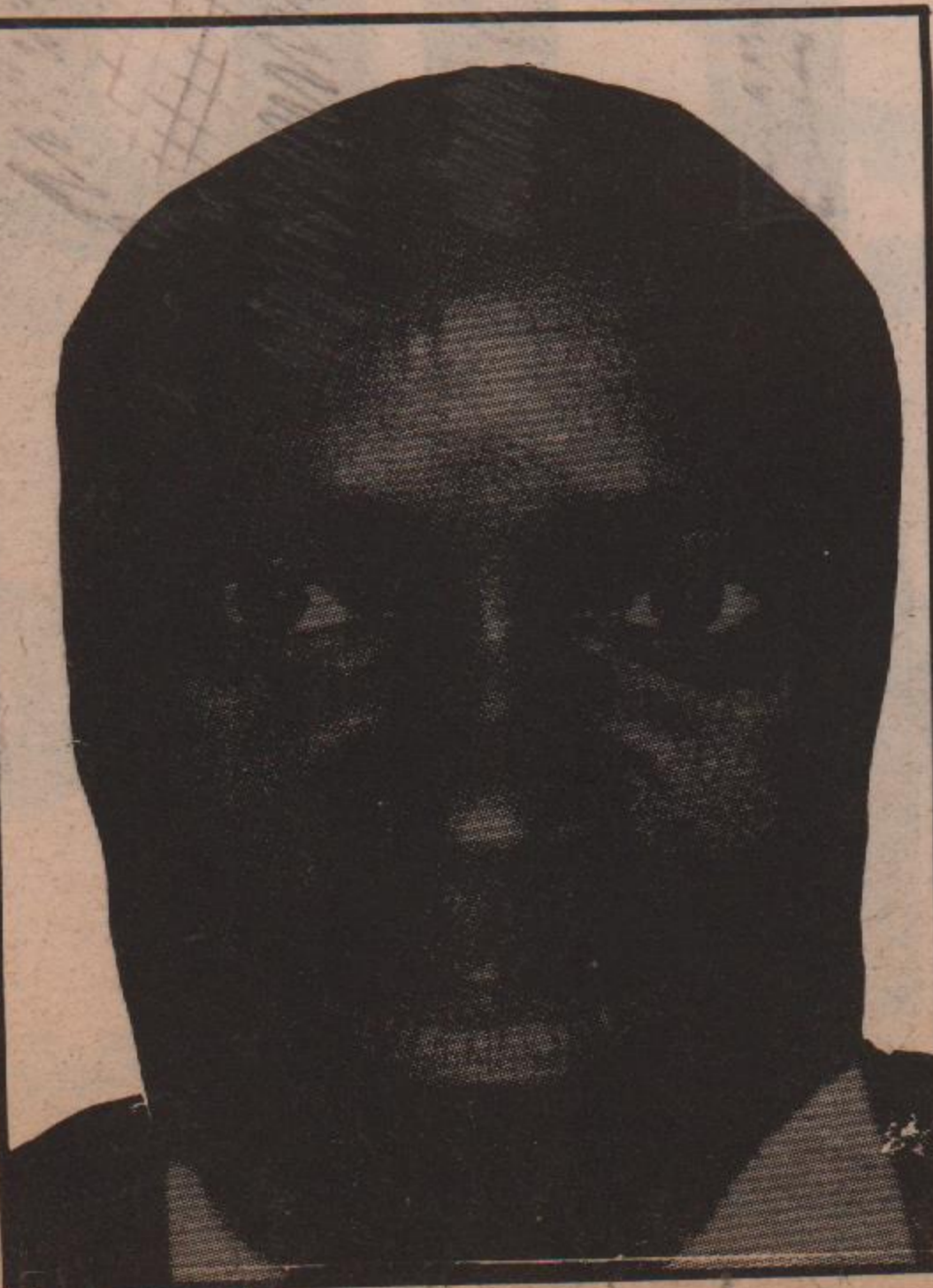
Yet the Tories have a hard hand for the poor, and soothing words for the rich. They serve their class. It's about time we had a labour movement which serves *our* class, and which takes the wealth out of the hands of the millionaire parasites to put it under collective working-class control.

Behind the Big Bang
— turn to page 11.

WORLD Brief

SOUTH AFRICA/MOZAMBIQUE

Clues point to Pretoria



Samora Machel

Who killed Mozambican President Samora Machel? South Africa, of course, denies all responsibility.

And it may be that they are not dancing about in the government offices of Pretoria. Machel had proved himself a pragmatist, prepared to grit his teeth and sign the Nkomati Accord with South Africa in 1984. His successors are likely to be more hard-line.

But there are some odd things about the plane crash in which Machel died, which point to South African involvement.

- It took South Africa nine hours to inform the government of Mozambique of the crash, which took place in South African territory.

- The first message to Mozambique's capital, Maputo, was garbled and grossly inaccurate.

- South Africa's expensive radar system allegedly did not notice the plane's disappearance.

- An experienced Soviet aircrew was inexplicably a long way off course.

If Botha has lost a half-hearted ally, he has also found an extra factor in the deteriorating situation in Mozambique. A desperate economic crisis, civil war — the government has to face South African-backed right wing guerrillas — and now a further political crisis are leaving Mozambique tottering on the brink of collapse.

And the collapse of the Frelimo government for certain would serve Botha, as well as have some demoralising effects on black people in South Africa.

N. IRELAND

Union conference against violence

Last Saturday about 200 people attended a conference in Belfast called by the Northern Ireland trade unions to launch a campaign against sectarian intimidation. The chair of the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions told the meeting that from now on the trade unions must: "Assert the right of everyone, Protestant, Catholic or dissenter, to

security of employment, to live free from violence and intimidation, sectarianism and discrimination".

The question now is what are the trade unions which supported the conference going to do? That is not at all clear. In the past, initiatives of the Northern Committee of the ICTU, like, for example, the "Better Life For All Campaign" have led to little and soon petered out.

Reagan's target: the whole Nicaraguan people

Who are the worst terrorists?

By Sarah Gordon

The Tory government's decision to break off diplomatic relations with Syria is not a 'firm stand' against government-sponsored terrorism. It will do nothing to tackle the underlying reasons why people like Nezar Hindawi decide to blow up scores of people, including those they are supposed to care for. All it will do is stoke up racist attitudes towards the Arabs.

Such attitudes are not new. In the 1970s books about 'the Arabs' got to be big business. Journalists of varying degrees of respectability wrote learned accounts of Arab history and culture.

A book entitled 'Arab Reach', still widely available, explains how there is an Arab plot to take over the world and this was beginning to reach its climax with the four-fold increase in oil prices in 1974. John Laffin's 'The Arab Mind' professed to show that the Arabs are all acquisitive, dishonest and lazy, and that moreover this can be shown from their language.

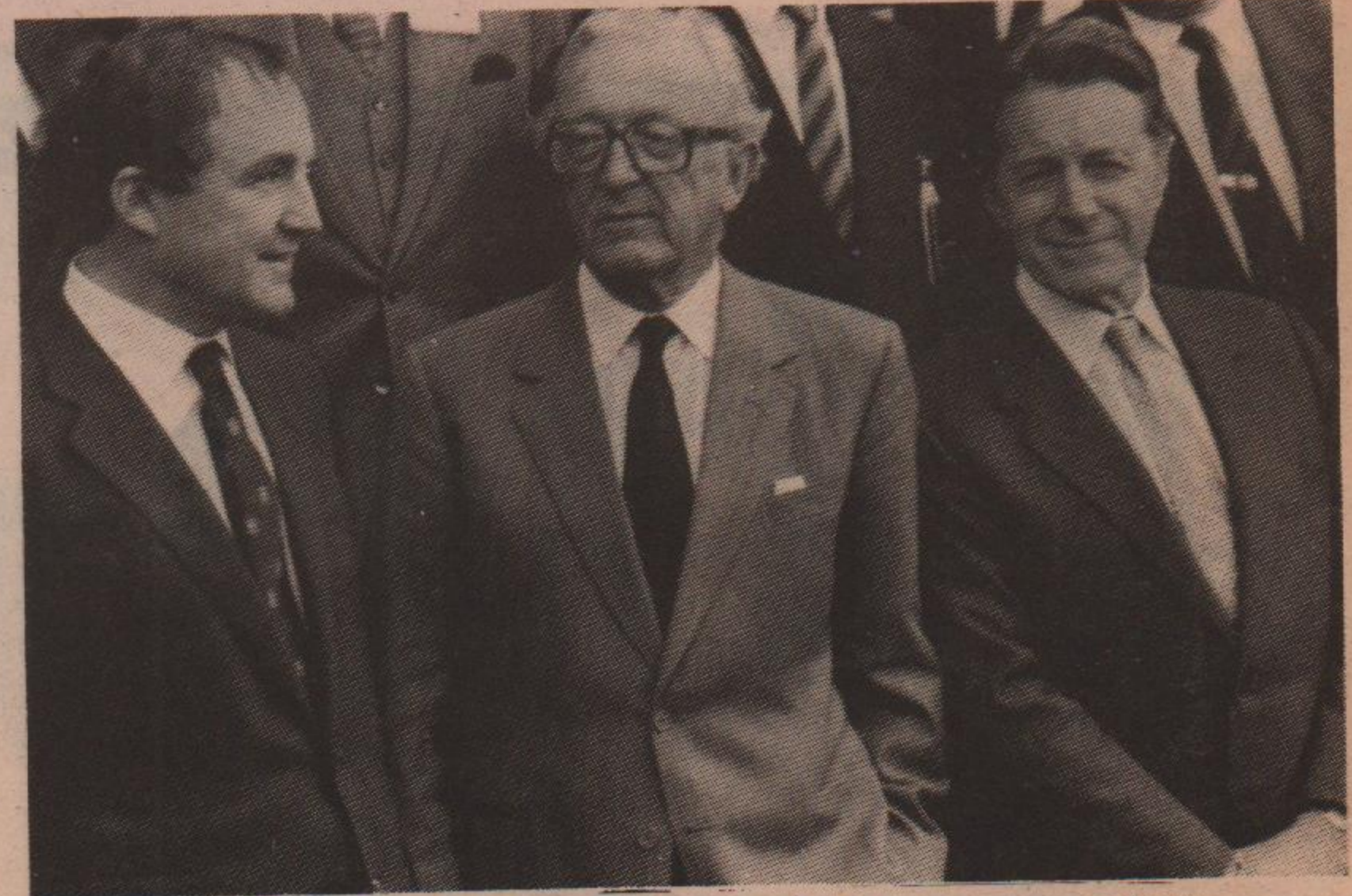
These were the pseudo-sophisticated attempts. Racism towards the Arabs is in fact extremely widespread, based on common images of Arabs as lascivious sheikhs, lazy thieves, homosexuals, and murderers. Now the image of the Arab as terrorist is equally buried onto popular consciousness.

Images

Palestinians, Libyans and now Syrians are particularly victim to these images.

Other governments that sponsor, encourage, pay for and militarily train terrorists — the US government, for example — have the common decency to speak English, and so not only enjoy diplomatic links with Britain but enjoy a 'special relationship' into the bargain.

The United States government goes one better than just supporting thugs and mercenaries like the contras in Nicaragua; it helps put whole governments into power that rule their people via the methods of permanent terror. What is more, governments like Pinochet's in Chile who owe a good



Three terrorists at NATO conference: Defence secretary George Younger, NATO Chief Carrington and Caspar Weinberger

part of their existence to CIA patronage somehow manage to carry on their terroristic forms of government in the name of resolute opposition to terrorism.

Hypocrisy

The hypocrisy goes further. At the same time as the Syrians are being condemned as World Terrorists No. 1, their neighbours in Israel are enjoying the fruits of the new Prime Ministry of Yitzhak Shamir. Less than forty years ago this gentleman was bombing Brits in Palestine; now he is the bastion of democracy in the Middle East. Yesterday's terrorist is today's Elder Statesman.

The conflict between France and Britain tells us something about all this. France is reluctant to show solidarity with its EEC partners as all civilised gentlemen expect it to. This is not as the naive might think because the French government feels any pangs of conscience over its predecessor's role in for example, helping a million people to die during the war of independence in Algeria. It is because France has much closer economic ties to Syria than Britain does. Britain can cheerfully proclaim its opposition to terrorists provided that they are Arabs; France has to tread a bit more carefully.

None of them has the slightest interest in the well-being of ordinary civilians. Nor have they the slightest ability to address the real problems of the Middle East.

Governments or organisations or individuals who believe that in some way the mass slaughter of innocent people is a blow against oppression — or imperialism — have an absurd view of the world. But if we cannot sympathise with their methods we should at least try to understand them.

Palestinian Arabs have suffered a terrible wrong at the hands of the Israeli state. Following the war of 1948, tens of thousands of Palestinians were displaced from their land and never allowed to return. In a further war in 1967, the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip, along with Sinai and the Golan Heights, fell under Israeli military occupation.

Cynical

Years and years of cynical 'peace negotiations' — cynical on the part of capitalist Arab states like Egypt too — have driven Palestinians living in refugee camps, or whose parents live in refugee camps, to turn to desperate measures.

The actions of small groups like Abu Nidal's, which was behind Hindawi, are chauvinistic and can do nothing to alleviate the plight of the Palestinian people. But until their plight is alleviated, groups like Abu Nidal's will probably continue to exist.

The Tory government's actions have done nothing to get to the root of this problem.

Labour and the City

The Casino economy

Labour is now trying to win its way back into office in the face of mass unemployment, and therefore we have to consider the economic side to a greater extent than we have done previously.

All we are hearing is the National Investment Bank, but no statutory controls. It seems to me a bit of a nonsense for the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, Roy Hattersley, to be saying that if we had statutory exchange controls they would be able to ride rough-shod over them in minutes — because this same Labour government is advocating state intervention in union ballots.

Now if it is possible to have statutory controls in one area of the economy, why is it not possible to have statutory controls over the export of capital? Or other aspects of

The Campaign Group of Labour MPs has just published a pamphlet: 'The City, Big Bang 2000', by Dennis Skinner and Brian Sedgemore. Dennis Skinner spoke to John Bloxam from Socialist Organiser.

the City?

I would like to hear statements being made before the election about whether a future Labour government is going to do anything about interest rates, or is it just going to allow the free market to operate?

Shipbuilders

They have been in double figures for more than seven years. I would like to see us intervene there.

In order to make sure that British

shipbuilders, for example can compete and pay decent wages there has to be an intervention by the state. Think preferential interest rates should be used for that purpose.

If you are going to shift the balance away from the glorified betting shops in the City of London then you have to give preferential treatment to the manufacturing base as to the service economy. In that way would not be too long before you would be able to see the numbers of people in employment increase.

Youth Fightback conference
Sheffield University student union,
Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th November.
Major discussions on: Defending the YS; South Africa; Women's Liberation; Fighting racism and fascism.
Details: Mark, 01-639 7967.



Youth Fightback, paper of the left wing in the Labour Party Young Socialists. Latest issue includes features on Ireland, Central America, and more. Price 25p plus 18p post from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

DEFEND SINN FEIN!

Sinn Fein councillors from Northern Ireland have been touring Britain at the invitation of some Labour councils. The hysteria that met them is one measure of the political bankruptcy and dishonesty of the Tories, Liberals and right-wing Labour councillors who staged the anti-Sinn Fein demonstrations and the gutter press which

reported their antics.

Here you had the elected representatives of a sizeable segment of Northern Ireland's Catholic population. They came to talk to their British opposite numbers. They came to learn about the way Britain's municipalities are run and to teach those who would listen the facts about the conditions under which the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland live.

They aren't soldiers but people

EDITORIAL

elected to look after the day-to-day concerns of those who elected them. They do, of course, support the military campaign of the IRA.

But then those who

demonstrated against them, abused them, and pointed toy guns at them, support the British Army and the RUC who have, over the last 15 years, shot down innocent Catholics, run internment camps and torture centres, and conducted campaigns of assassination against Republicans.

Deputy Chief Constable John Stalker's report on the RUC assassination squad is still being suppressed and until it is released

we won't know the full extent of the lawlessness of the "forces of law and order" in Northern Ireland.

The Labour Councils which invited Sinn Fein were right to stand out against the hysteria. And they will be right to invite the Sinn Fein councillors back for a return visit. Even for those who disagree strongly with Sinn Fein and the IRA, dialogue makes sense and should be encouraged.

Free speech and the fight against racism

Has the left lost its basic commitment to free speech? Simon Pottinger, a member of NUS Executive, writing in a personal capacity, looks at the issues.

Over the past couple of years, banning those you don't agree with has become a display of left credibility in the student movement. Not only have fascists (quite correctly) been banned, but this tactic of 'no platform' has been used to ban Jewish Societies. When Tory MPs have visited colleges, there have been discussions, at least, about whether to ban them.

The Tories, inevitably, have picked up on this. Shortly a Bill will go before Parliament, attempting to make 'no platform' illegal.

Autonomy

While the Bill is a gross infringement on student union autonomy, it has forced the left seriously to examine its gut responses to those with whom it disagrees, and to discuss the best way to fight racists and other reactionaries.

Last week Enoch Powell spoke at Bristol University. In previous years and at other colleges, it is likely that Powell would have been banned. This year he was picketed, involving more people in political activity than a ban ever could. Choosing a picket rather than a ban meant that Powell was denied the opportunity to whip up support by demanding free speech.

This tactical consideration needs to be married to a discussion on the principles involved in denying and defending free speech.

Three things need to be distinguished and separated out.

a) Our basic principles — liberty; individual and group freedoms; free speech; the rights of minorities — especially of hated minorities.

b) The question of the best way to fight against racism and fascism.

c) Factional considerations of how best to defend ourselves against Tory attacks in which they are using the 'no platform' issue and waving the purloined flag of free speech.

Freedom from tyranny and arbitrary rules; freedom of speech and of publication; the right of minorities

to exist and organise even though they be hateful to the majority; the right of minorities not to be subject to majority tyranny — which implies the voluntary acceptance by the majority of limitations to their power — these ideas are central to a democratic society, whether it be society at large or in a students union. They would be central even in a stable democratic socialism.

The alternative to these principles is various forms of tyranny, including the democratic tyranny exemplified, for example, in recent referendums in Ireland on the question of divorce and abortion — where the Catholic majority vote to impose its morality on dissenting minorities.

For socialists too, these concerns — which we take over from the bourgeois democrats of the past — are central. We recognise that society is riven down the middle with class conflict, and it is not possible to set up Queensbury rules to be applicable at all times and in all circumstances.

The working class should not be bound by formal democracy, treating it as a fetish. Under capitalism even the best liberal laws are intertwined inextricably with laws protecting the exploitation system as a whole.

Freedom and democracy remain centrally important to socialists and the working class.

The working class can only rule, as a class, democratically. We are therefore concerned at all times that the democratic functioning of our own labour movement and the bodies of which we have leadership. We have to guard against any 'majority tyranny', and guarantee the rights of minorities — especially where we don't like them. As Rosa Luxemburg said:

Rights

"Democracy is not democracy in protecting the rights of those you approve of, democracy is always for the person who disagrees." These are matters of principle, not tactics.

It is a measure of the state of the Left that the Tories have lyingly but with some plausibility mobilised support for their policies under the



Nort London Polytechnic students protest against fascist National Front organiser Patrick Harrington. Photo: Report.

notorious banner of defending freedom against the Left.

It is against this background that the principle consideration of the question of how we fight racism and fascism arises. There can be no recognition of any individual's or group's freedom to organise violence or intimidation against ethnic groups. We should not defend the 'freedom' of fascists. But the question arises — how do we fight them? By bureaucratic bans? Or by mobilisations?

'No platform' can play a central part in the fight against racism and fascism. But it is not sufficient; and its precise meaning and limits have become blurred. Often it is reduced to meaningless jargon, used vaguely to express the idea that you have the right to suppress those you don't like.

Rule

The non-negotiable rule as far as we are concerned is this: fascists and racists should not be allowed to inflict their violence — verbal, physical, or intimidatory on any of their target groups.

'No platform' is too frequently understood merely to mean a ban imposed by the central authority in a student union. In reality, an effective fight against racism and fascism has to fall to large-scale mobilisations.

A student union is a body made up of the entire complement of students and therefore reflects most of the levels and currents of opinion and interest in broader society. Therefore the use of any bans inevitably gives those banned the chance to raise the cry of free speech and against tyranny, etc., etc., and rally the support of those who do not agree with them in defence of their claim to democratic rights.

For this reason alone we should

avoid as much as possible going into battle against racists and fascists under the banner of denying them free speech. The banner of defence of free speech is a powerful weapon.

A demonstration of this from British experience should suffice. In 1968 the Asians of Kenya were expelled. They had been given British passports when Kenya achieved independence four years earlier, but when they needed to use them the Home Secretary, James Callaghan, committed one of the most repulsive acts in the history of the British labour movement and of the British Labour Party. He slammed Britain's door in their faces. Their British passports were made useless to them, they couldn't enter.

Enoch Powell, a member of the Tory Shadow Cabinet, made a speech that unless Britain immediately stopped immigration he 'like the Ancient Romans' foresaw 'the Tiber foaming with blood'.

Powell had immediately become the rallying point for all the racists in Britain. Heath sacked him from the Shadow Cabinet because of the speech. Dockers and Meat Porters struck and marched in support of Powell through the streets of London.

There is little reason to doubt that they marched because they agreed with Powell's racism. But they marched not in support of Powell's racism but under the slogan 'free speech for Powell'.

In contrast, by far the greatest anti-fascist demonstration in history took place in New York in 1939 not under the banner of 'no free speech for fascists' but under the banner of protesting against the fascists and defending their targeted victims, the Jews, the labour movement, etc.

These lessons need to be taken on board.

The overuse of bannings can play into the hands of our enemies.

Mass mobilisations and pickets of obnoxious speakers in all the so-called 'grey areas', including those involving members of the Tory Party, are far better to prevent the organisation of racism.

In fact a powerful picket opens up the option of actually stopping the meeting without taking responsibility for denying them free speech.

Another consideration.

A bureaucratic ban, handed down from on high in a student union and not backed by mass mobilisation will almost always give those banned the chance to appeal to the middle ground on the grounds of defending free speech. A mass picket can prevent racists entering the building; and so the question of the ban — giving them the initiative on free speech — is irrelevant.

Reality

The reality is that the Tories have gained hegemony over the last seven years. The left has been largely on the retreat. In these conditions we have to take account of the balance of forces and avoid playing into the Tories' hands.

What is required is that the democratic socialist left and all those we influence should do the following things:

a. Make a bold and sincere declaration of where we stand on freedom and democracy and use that to educate ourselves against the stupidities of South Bank, Sunderland, etc.

b. Conduct a vigorous policy of reliance on mobilisation and demonstration rather than bureaucratic bans — the exceptions being Nazis and foaming at the mouth, organising racists.

30 years after Suez

By Gerry Bates

As Russian tanks were pounding away in Budapest thirty years ago, the British government was also doing its bit to defend world civilisation and put small jumped-up nations in their place. In alliance with France and Israel, British troops were invading Egypt, provoking what came to be known as the 'Suez Crisis'.

The villain of the piece was Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser, who had come to power in a military coup in July 1952. Before then, Egypt had been ruled by a corrupt monarchy closely allied with Britain.

Indeed, British troops continued to occupy Egypt until 1954, and the British government imposed all sorts of limitations on Egypt's political independence.

Egypt was colonised by Britain in the 1880s, and its semi-independent status was only the result of a long, bitter struggle. The pro-British monarchy was widely detested.

The Nasserist coup, which came to be known misleadingly as the 'July Revolution', was made possible by the massive crisis that beset Egypt, like the rest of the Arab world, after the Second World War. Anti-colonial feeling was fueled by severe economic deprivation, and the frustrations of middle class recruits to the army.

The humiliation of the Arab armies in the war that led to the formation of Israel led to sharp criticism of old, inept and corrupt rulers and military chiefs.

Strikes, land revolts and student demonstrations rocked the British-backed regime. Largely to head off this movement, a group of nationalist officers overthrew the monarchy.

The new regime, whose initial titular head was not Nasser but his military superior Neguib, banned political parties — most of which were associated in one way or another with the old regime — suppressed strikes, executed two

workers' leaders in a textile factory occupation, and almost immediately implemented a radical land reform.

To begin with the regime was pro-Western, peacefully negotiating British withdrawal, and looking for financial support from the West. It was indeed Western failure to deliver funding for the High Dam at Aswan — a project intended to irrigate huge areas of desert, provide electrical power and prove the regime's modern image — that caused Nasser to nationalise the Suez Canal in 1956.

The Canal, owned by the Anglo-French Suez Canal Company, was important both economically and strategically. Tory Prime Minister Anthony Eden, who apparently had a pathological and presumably racist hatred of Nasser, did a deal with France and Israel to invade Egypt with the intention of overthrowing the regime and returning the canal to its rightful owners.

Egyptian military resistance was not very effective. But unfortunately for the blundering imperialists, their heavy-handed tactics found disfavour in the US. Seizing the opportunity to increase its influence in the Middle East, the US put a stop to the fighting and got the invading forces to withdraw.

Nasser's original declaration of na-

tionalisation had promoted him to the status of a major Third World nationalist leader. His apparent victory made him a popular hero; and for a while his regime went from strength to strength.

It also became more radically nationalist, nationalising first all British, French and Jewish capital, and subsequently virtually all industry in the country. This it coupled with an aggressive international stand, adopting a posture of 'positive neutrality' (i.e. close alignment with the USSR), and 'anti-imperialism'. Its commitment to Arab unity led to the brief union with Syria from 1958 to 1961 which failed largely due to Syrian resentment at Egyptian domination.

Forceful opposition to Israel led Egypt into a cold war that in 1967 grew too hot: Israel launched a surprise attack that had vanquished the Arab armies in six days. Nasser resigned in disgrace, but enormous mass demonstrations demanded that he 'not desert the nation in its hour of need'.

After that, the regime's radicalism cooled off, until by the time he died in 1970, Nasser was involved in peace negotiations with the US. His successor, Anwar Sadat, steadily took Egypt back into the Western orbit.



GRAFFITI

No offence

Did you think Labour's leaders weren't making much of the Stalker affair — in which, according to evidence collected mostly by the Observer newspaper, Manchester's deputy chief constable was framed up to stop him exposing police death squads in Northern Ireland?

You were right. Peter Archer, Labour's Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, told Parliament last week that he had been "at pains throughout the Stalker episode not to over-dramatise it". He has not called for a labour movement inquiry into the activity of the police and the army in Northern Ireland, or even



for an investigation by the Tory government. Conservative back-benchers have been bolder on the issue. Why? Because

Labour's leaders want to present themselves as a respectable alternative government, which can work cosily with the police hierarchy.

Profits aren't invested

Net fixed investment in British manufacturing industry has been below zero continuously since 1980. In

other words, companies are not even investing enough to keep their stock of equipment and

buildings static by replacing obsolete plant.

A report from the official National Economic Development Office, chronicling this fact, has been banned from publication by the government.

According to a summary of the report published in 'The Independent', manufacturing profits have almost doubled in real terms since 1981, but only a tiny part of those profits have been invested in manufacturing.

YTS jobless

OVER 40% of the people on the government's Youth Training Scheme are jobless after finishing their year of cheap labour, according to a new report from Youthaid.

bad as they were three years ago when the scheme started.

Over 50% of YTSers in the North get no job at the end of the scheme, and two-thirds of black YTSers.

The figures are just as



Not impartial

ACAS is the official conciliation and arbitration service for industrial disputes. It is, of course, supposed to be completely impartial — an umpire standing above the class struggle.

plans of the Labour Party leadership to restore unions' legal rights.

"The prospect of the 're-legitimation' of industrial action of all kinds fills me with grave concern", he said. He went on to propose that prior ballots be made compulsory for all industrial action, not only strikes.

Lowry is, after all, a former car industry boss. Last week, also, another

top ACAS official came out with enthusiastic support for no-strike deals.

Unionising IBM

Trade unions from across the world will be meeting in London on 12-13 January to plan a campaign for unionisation in IBM.

The giant computer firm has always been firmly non-union. Its rapid growth and huge profits have enabled it to offer workers job security and relatively good pay, and on that basis to beat off previous unionisation drives.

IBM in the US, however, is now talking about severe job cuts, and a determined international campaign could have success.

Price

The price of defeat: according to figures given in Parliament last week, 49,000 mineworkers have been made redundant since the end of the 1984-5 strike.

Strikes

The Financial Times headlined its report of TUC secretary Norman Willis's speech to personnel managers last week: "Union members no longer want strikes".

According to Willis, "increasingly, members will be looking to their unions to provide progress without strikes and without pickets — quite simply, with the minimum of hassle".

As if up to now strikes have been a matter of workers preferring a punch-up to boring negotiations! In fact unions' ability to win advances without strikes has always depended on the credibility of the threat to strike.

Tell the boss that you want a quiet life at all costs, and he will think he can ride rough-shod.

Why we are not Zionist

I disagree with some of what Mick Ackersley had to say in his review of Pillar of Fire. I didn't see the programme so I can't comment on it; but the review raises broader issues.

It is true that Zionism in its original sense has been 'confined to history' — the movement for a separate Jewish state. But I cannot agree that Zionism as a term now means no more than the belief that the Israeli Jews have the right to a state. If this is so, the majority certainly of Israeli anti-Zionists and non-Zionists are 'Zionists'. I do not agree that SO's position is, or should be in any sense 'Zionist'.

Much of what is reactionary and oppressive in the Israeli state flows from its specifically Zionist character. That it is defined as a state for all Jews rather than its citizens is not incidental; that Jews are free to immigrate to Israel but displaced Arabs are not, is not incidental either. These features, among others, define Israel as a Zionist state, and to understate this aspect of the issue is liable to lead to an underestimation of the problems posed by the Middle East conflict.

Similarly, it is right to condemn the anti-semitism of the 'democratic' Allies prior to 1948 in refusing to open their borders to Jews fleeing Hitler; but it seems to me to undermine that condemnation to add "maybe if a Jewish state had been created, the Jews of Europe would have had a refuge, and millions might have survived." Maybe. But far better, surely, if they had been able to

escape to America, or Britain, where most of them would have preferred to go. And where were the communists, homosexuals, gypsies, trade unionists supposed to seek refuge? A 'refuge' was not the answer — as post-1948 history has tragically shown.

In any case, the fate of the 'refuge' would have depended on Allied military success in north Africa.

SO is right to bend the stick against the 'idiot anti-imperialists' on the question of the Middle East; but I think maybe there's a danger of bending it too far.

CLIVE BRADLEY, London.

denied democratic, civil rights, expelled from their homelands and concentration camp-like ghettos in South Lebanon.

To say that in a "sense", then, Socialist Organiser is "Zionist" is thus akin to saying that we support and condone all of this — and the manifestation of the Israeli government's foreign and domestic policy in the region, namely the continued and systematic terrorisation of the Palestinian and Arab peoples.

I understand the motivation behind the sentiments expressed in the article — there is no easy solution to this situation: and that most solutions put forward by the Left in essence reduce to an external and forceful destruction of not only the Israeli state but Jewish society (and people)!

But in trying to differentiate from this position Mick Ackersley has gone too far the other way!

Zionism is a thoroughly racist and reactionary ideology — one today based upon the maintenance of power of one people, the Jews, organised in their own militarised state, over that of a dispossessed and dispersed people, the Palestinian Arabs.

The terrible tragedy of the Jewish people is that in fleeing the Holocaust they built a homeland by the systematic brutalising and oppression of another people — a people who to this day continue a hard, bitter, misrepresented and all too often forgotten struggle against this reality.

BRYAN EDMANDS London.

A shared desire for peace

WOMAN'S
EYE

Dear Mr Gorbachev,

This letter is about the forthcoming visit of the British Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, to Moscow and its possible impact upon the development of British politics in the context of the General Election which will be taking place in this country within the next 18 months.

Everyone in Britain who is anxious to see a reduction of the burden of nuclear weapons will naturally be glad that the Prime Minister will be visiting you in Moscow and will be hoping that some agreement may emerge out of those talks which would contribute to that end.

Opinion

Opinion in Britain has changed quite substantially over the last few years in favour of an end to the Cold War, a substantial reduction in the arms' burden, and the opening up of a new era of international co-operation, in which the money now wasted on weapons can be diverted to development in our own countries and in other countries throughout the world.

Your own initiatives in this direction have been taken very seriously in this country and what you have been saying has been believed by a growing number of people to be wholly

A letter from Chesterfield Labour Party to Mikhail Gorbachev.

sincere, even if only because it is so obvious that the Soviet people, like our own, must want to see the burden of arms' expenditure reduced, and this impression has been greatly reinforced by the Soviet proposals made recently at Reykjavik.

However, you will also know that the British government have been consistently hostile to the Soviet Union and its peace proposals; and also to the peace movement in Britain and in Western Europe, which has been urging a reduction of weapons by various programmes of denuclearisation.

The British Prime Minister, in particular, has prided herself on her hostility to the Peace Movement here and has made the installation of Cruise missiles by the United States a test of her own leadership, in addition to her determination to acquire a new generation of American designed nuclear weapons in the Trident.

She has also supported the Star Wars Project which wrecked the prospects of a settlement that might otherwise have been reached at the Summit in Iceland.

At the same time the yearning for

peace is so strong that it may well be that the British Prime Minister would like to make her visit to Moscow into an opportunity for implying that, if returned to power, she will be seeking to work constructively for peace.

In view of her widely publicised criticisms of the Soviet Union in the past, her visit to Moscow will inevitably attract world-wide press interest, and one can visualise photographs of "The Iron Lady in the Red Square" and others showing yourself and herself shaking hands outside the Kremlin.

However, on her return to Britain, it is more than likely that she will claim that the only reason that you wished to see her in Moscow was because Britain had Cruise missiles installed, and had ordered the Trident, and that, without that degree of nuclear armament and close relationship with the United States, the Soviet Union would simply disregard the interests of the British people and might indeed launch some military attack into Western Europe.

You will be well aware of the impact that such statements might make upon British opinion and I hope you will bear them in mind when the

Prime Minister visits the Soviet Union.

Everybody understands that any Government has to maintain correct and formal State-to-State relations, and the Soviet government has got to work with any British government and cannot intervene in any way in the British political debate.

However, you should be aware of the possibility that the Prime Minister might use her visit to Moscow to secure her re-election in Britain, which many believe would have very adverse effects on the prospects of a reduction in international tension and an agreement on disarmament mutually acceptable to all sides.

Millions of people in Britain, who remember the wartime alliance linking our two countries, and who share with men and women in the Soviet Union a deep desire for peace, hope that you will continue to put forward the kind of constructive disarmament proposals which have been coming from Moscow under your leadership.

Yours sincerely,
TONY BENN,
IAN RUTLEDGE,
CAROLE WILLIAMS,
JOHN BURROWS,
TOM VALLINS.



'It always was a glamour job'

By Jean Lane

Dan-Air, the small airline with the small mind, has been told by the Equal Opportunities Commission that it can no longer employ only women as its cabin crew.

I wonder what the terms of employment will be for the men. Will they have to plaster their faces in make-up, wear high-heeled shoes and tight fitting clothes that show off their gorgeous figures?

Will they have to wriggle their bums as they glide seductively down the aisles and smile glamorously at the besuited businessman who insists on demanding yet another brandy, or the child who has just been sick over its neighbour's lap?

The spokesperson for Dan-Air told the press that for 33 years they have employed "girls". "It always was a glamour job", he said. It's strange, isn't it, that grown women in a job where the obvious physical attributes that go with being a woman are a definite prerequisite for getting the job and that are displayed to the fullest, should be called "girls". I wonder if the "boys" will have to display their bulging, bronzed pecs to their interviewers and have their willies measured. Instead of the qualifications being 38-24-36, we will now have 40-1/2(5 extended).

But of course not. Let's be serious. You don't treat grown men in this fashion. It's belittling. Whereas the job was always a "glamour job" which employed only "girls", the spokesperson says, "I suppose we live in an enlightened age and we are discontinuing the practice".

Perhaps then this "glamour job" will be seen for what it is now that real grown up people are doing it — airborne waiters, cooks, cleaners and child minders. Just as in the home, the glamour goes out of housework when the men have to do it.

The left and Russia

An open letter to Tony Benn and Chesterfield Labour Party from Socialist Organiser.

Dear Comrades,

Your letter to Gorbachev is motivated by a sincere desire to influence the international peace process. You are right to be concerned that Mrs Thatcher will simply use her visit to the Soviet Union as a public relations exercise, and a propaganda ploy.

But are you right to believe that Gorbachev is an ally in the fight for peace? We think not. The underlying assumption of your letter is that where Thatcher is a hypocrite, Gorbachev is sincere; where Thatcher is a war-monger, Gorbachev is genuinely working for peace. From this you appear to conclude that Gorbachev is a friend of the British labour movement, who may need some advice and warning on the intentions of the British Prime Minister. You appear to believe that a friendly voice from Britain will encourage Gorbachev further down the road of "constructive disarmament proposals".

If Gorbachev, or the Soviet people, can see that not everyone in the West is a hostile cold-warrior, constructive peace proposals will be forthcoming, you suppose.

It is a widespread view on the Left that the USSR is essentially concerned to bring about disarmament, or at least that it is more genuinely concerned to do so than the USA is. The Cold War is put down to US aggressiveness alone, with the USSR portrayed as a passive victim. This image is popular on the left far outside of pro-Moscow circles.

It is essentially false, though there is a germ of truth to it.

The USA and its allies have a lead in nuclear weapons, and much of the initiative in the nuclear arms

race has come from the West — from the use of the first A-bomb through to the development of a first-strike strategy.

But the view of the USSR as being essentially non-warlike is drawn from psychological, emotional and political needs, too. When Reagan and Thatcher base their case for nuclear weapons on the 'Soviet threat', the Left wants to undermine their argument simply by denying that the Soviet Union is expansionist or aggressive at all.

But it is a naive view. Gorbachev is not the same as Reagan — he rules over a very different social and political system. But Gorbachev is not a friend of the peace movement in Britain; and he is not a friend of anyone fighting against US or British imperialism.

Gorbachev is the opposite of a friend to the labour movement. He presides over a system in which the working class is held in an iron totalitarian grip in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

Bureaucracy

The Soviet bureaucracy which Gorbachev leads is opposed to progress towards freedom and socialism. Thirty years ago, the Hungarian people discovered to what extent Gorbachev's predecessors would go to crush progress towards freedom and socialism.

And let us not forget that the man responsible for crushing the Hungarian revolution was Krushchev — Krushchev, the great 'destaliniser', the liberaliser of the Russian system; Krushchev who showed his commitment to world peace by backing down over the 'Cuban missile crisis' in 1962. The most liberal of Gorbachev's



Workers face Russian tanks, East Berlin, 1953.

forerunners was also the butcher of Budapest.

In Hungary still, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, as in Afghanistan, as in the USSR itself, national freedom is denied. Everywhere that the Moscow bureaucrats' long arm reaches, the working class is repressed, suffocated, atomised, oppressed. They have done to the Polish labour movement, Solidarnosc, what Pinochet did to the Chilean labour movement — and worse: some trade union activity is possible even now in Chile, while nothing but police state unions are allowed in Poland.

Even the vile apartheid state is forced to tolerate the kind of militant independent workers' movement that Gorbachev hates, fears and crushes.

Unofficial peace movements, too — like all movements outside the bureaucrats' vice-like grip — are repressed.

World peace depends upon the destruction of this bureaucratic obstacle on the road to socialism as

much as on the destruction of Western capitalism and imperialism. It depends upon future Hungarian revolutions — and Polish, and Czech, Rumanian, Ukrainian...and Russian revolutions, as well as on the overthrow of Reagan, Thatcher and co.

Our allies are those people, and in particular the working class, who are oppressed by Gorbachev. To believe that Gorbachev is our ally, or to behave as if he is, is to militate against building links with his 'internal enemies', the working class of 'the East'.

In opposing Reagan and Thatcher, we don't have to take their word for who their fundamental enemy is. Our enemies' enemy is not necessarily our friend. Stalin's heir, the dictator Gorbachev is the enemy of socialism and independent labour movements everywhere and in the first place in the USSR and East Europe. The British labour movement should treat him accordingly.



Hungary '56: Workers against Stalinism.

The lessons

Often mass movements of revolutionary scale put forward demands that in themselves are 'reformist', ideas that are incoherent, confused and underdeveloped.

The Hungarian revolution did not come up with a complete, finished programme for a new form of government; but it did demand the wholesale destruction of the form of government that existed.

And in the workers' councils that were created all across the country, the Hungarian workers built the institutions necessary to replace the old state. This was a real workers' revolution which its participants understood as such.

Its lessons are therefore important not only for Eastern Europe: all workers' movements, all over the world, can learn from the experience of Hungary.

Councils

Events in Hungary shocked those who had looked to the USSR and its satellites as models of socialism. They vindicated what the genuine Communists, the movement that had been led by Leon Trotsky, had been saying for two decades.

The Trotskyists were not the only socialists who had been critical of what happened in the USSR under Stalin in the 1930s. But most others had hoped for nothing more radical than bureaucratic self-reform. It was the Trotskyists who argued that the bureaucrats who ruled in the USSR were a counter-revolutionary, anti-working class force who would have to be overthrown in a new working

Clive Bradley draws out some of the lessons for socialists today of the great workers' rising against Stalinism in Hungary 30 years ago.

class revolution.

After the Second World War, when the Red Army occupied much of Eastern Europe, and systems were set up there modelled on the USSR itself, the Trotskyists extended the argument to include these states.

Despite its defeat, the Hungarian revolution proved them right. It proved that working class revolution was possible, and not some dreamy utopia; and it proved that the programme of such a workers' revolution would go far beyond the timid proposals of the reformers.

Also, if further proof were needed, it showed the world the vicious, repressive, anti-working class character of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Hungary was not the first site of revolt against the latter-day imperialists of Russia; there had been an uprising in East Germany in 1953 that had also been crushed. But events in Hungary were of an altogether different scale.

Hungary in 1956, like Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in 1980, was especially explosive

because of the severe *national* oppression that it suffered at the hands of the USSR. Independence for Hungary was the dominant slogan of the movement from the outset.

This was not a narrow nationalism, but a genuine, progressive aspiration for national emancipation. That is clear from the stand made by the Hungarian revolution in solidarity with the contemporary movement for national independence in Poland, a movement whose example did much to encourage and spark the uprising in Hungary itself.

Class

The Hungarian workers identified with the Polish people: they were all the victims of savage denial of their rights to self government; all the institutions of bureaucratic repression, which clogged up all the pores of national political life, depended for their power on the ultimate sanction of Soviet troops. Take the power of Moscow from behind the Party chiefs in Eastern Europe, and they would be much less intimidating.

This perception was right, of course. In Hungary and in Czechoslovakia, the home-grown bureaucrats were not up to the task of keeping the workers in their place, and it did take Russian intervention to crush the revolutionary movement. In Poland in 1980, it was fear of Russian invasion that caused Solidarnosc to hold back. Jaruzelski too would have been far less formidable but for Breshnev watching his back.

National independence and democracy — the Hungarian workers were calling for free elections and a multi-party system — are the sort of demands that historically have been associated with anti-colonial revolutionary movements or with the European revolutions generated by the rise of capitalism as a new and (in its time) progressive form of society.

But like many great revolutionary democratic movements this century, the Hungarian revolution was powered and led by the working class. It was a movement for national democracy that from the outset had a distinct working class character.

Thus far it was quite similar to other revolutionary movements, including the Russian revolution of 1917 itself. Hungary is peculiar because it was a revolution against a regime in which capitalism had been overthrown, albeit bureaucratically and without opening the road to a socialist reconstruction of society.

It is a damning comment in itself on the so-called socialist system in Hungary that the central demands of

the people against it were those characteristic of the rise of the bourgeoisie.

The existence of widespread workers' councils raised the real possibility of a working class regime based on them. The Hungarian revolution — if it had been allowed to develop and not been drowned in blood — need not have finished with a Westminster-style Parliament. It could have gone beyond that to install a regime of real, grass roots democratic working class power. A Parliament could not have replaced the existing bureaucratic state apparatus; workers' councils could.

Such a regime would be vastly more democratic than Westminster-style democracy, where, once someone is elected, the electors have virtually no control over what he or she does for another four or five years. And Parliaments keep well clear of the economic fortresses of power; in fact, though not in theory, they are subordinate to the permanent unelected power of the bankers, the bosses, the top bureaucrats and the military chiefs.

Delegates to the workers' councils, however, were subject to permanent checks and control from below. And the councils were concerned with the actual running of the factories.

During the revolution the councils established an uncontested position of power in the factories; and the idea that the factories belonged to the workers — rather than to the state bureaucrats, and still less to the deposed capitalists — was reluctantly accepted even by the workers' opponents.

The councils did not take *state* power: they did not declare themselves a new governmental authority on a national scale (although some local councils did make such declarations). But they could well have done so.

And for the period of 100 hours that the USSR abdicated its power in Hungary real power was, in fact, held by the councils and the armed workers.

In this respect, too, the situation in Hungary in 1956 was similar to that in Russia in 1917. There too workers' councils were formed. There too the councils in fact controlled what went on in the cities, and later more generally.

Power

But there too, until the councils — which were called 'soviets' — actually established themselves as the real government, they shared power with a 'Provisional Government', the representative of the old ruling class hanging on for dear life.

Until the soviets acted upon the power that they had, there existed 'dual power' — the capitalist class in Russia held on to political power by default, because of the political immaturity of the workers.

There are of course important differences between Russia in 1917 and Hungary in 1956. The Hungarian working class were a much bigger proportion of the population; and the Hungarian workers were struggling against an allegedly socialist regime — one that in any case had disposed of the old Hungarian bourgeoisie. But the parallels are



Workers demolish Stalin's statue striking.

What were the workers demanding? The demands of the original student demonstration on October 22 were already very wide-ranging and expressed deep-rooted popular concerns. They included: The withdrawal of Soviet troops; a new central committee cleansed of the corrupt Stalinists, and a new government under Imre Nagy; new elections; a new economic policy; workers' 'autonomy' in the factories; an amnesty for political prisoners; freedom of the press; and solidarity with the Polish independence movement.

This general programme of largely democratic demands quickly galvanised a mass movement, and within that the workers' councils were formed. On 31 October a Parliament of Workers' Councils in Budapest met, drawing up a statement on the role of the councils.

These laid out in very clear terms the extent to which the workers were to take control over their day-to-day lives. According to the 31 October Parliament:

1. The factory belongs to the workers...
2. The supreme controlling body in the factory is the Workers' Council democratically elected by the workers.
3. The Workers' Council elects its own executive committee...
4. ...The directors (of the factory) and the highest employees are to be elected by the Workers' Council...after a public general meeting...
5. The director is responsible to the



Socialism must start from the self-activity of the working class: workers' defence squad in Poland, 1980.

Hungary '56: Workers against Stalinism.



of Hungary



as a newly victorious workers' revolution fighting for its life, there might be other considerations). Their right to self-determination, in other words, does not depend upon their first agreeing to be socialist — still less on them agreeing to adopt the Russian Stalinist system.

98 Trotsky

Trotsky indeed argued that the revolution in countries oppressed by the USSR would necessarily begin as a national revolution. As we have seen, he was right about that; and it would make no sense to recognise the importance of the demand for national independence only to contradict it by equivocating on the issue of Russian occupation.

The second issue in a way is more profound. Many socialists who condemn Stalinism, or who even agree with Trotsky's call for a new workers' revolution, believe that because capitalism has been abolished in Hungary and similar countries, these systems are of a vastly more progressive nature than Western Europe. The restoration of capitalism would therefore be a step backwards of historic proportions.

Events in Hungary and Poland show that the workers do not want 'capitalism back'. The Hungarian workers repeated over and over again that they were opposed to the capitalists and landlords and in favour of socialism.

But in any case, even if the workers were demanding that capitalists be given back their factories, it would not justify the crushing of the workers. *Socialism* depends upon precisely the sort of working class self-activity that reached such dramatic levels in the Hungarian revolution. Thousands and millions of workers can be wrong — have confused and reactionary ideas. But if they are wrong they must be given the chance to *learn* and to change.

A working class with reactionary ideas that is free to struggle, to fight, can change, and develop socialist ideas instead. A working class crushed under the jackboot is not able to develop at all. Socialism is not possible if the workers are smashed — even in the name of 'defending socialism'.

Defend

As the Hungarian revolution demonstrated, the people who can defend socialism are the workers — the only force, indeed, which can create it. There is no socialism set apart from the real lives of the working class. Bureaucrats, still less tanks, cannot create socialism — although in exceptional circumstances they have proved themselves capable of deposing the old capitalist class. But as Marx said, the liberation of the workers is the task of the workers themselves.

Turn to page 9 for a review of Peter Fryer's book "The Hungarian Tragedy". Next week Socialist Organiser will include a profile of the Hungarian opposition today.

Workers' Council...

6. The Workers' Council itself reserves all rights to: a) approve and ratify all projects concerning the enterprise; b) decide basic wage levels and the methods by which these are to be assessed; c) decide on...foreign contracts...

7. ...the Workers' Council resolves all conflicts concerning hiring and firing...

8. ...has the right to examine the balance sheets and to decide on the use to which the profits are to be put.

9. The Workers' Council handles all social questions in the enterprise." (cited in Lomax, 'Hungary 1956', pp.140-1).

This is a far-reaching programme for workers' control. Moreover, for a short period, the workers enforced it: they did take control.

Ban

An undemocratic feature of the councils was a total ban on the operation of political parties within them, although at the same time the workers were advocating a multi-party system and free elections. This of course was the result of the workers' experience with the Communist Party, which had acted as a spying adjunct of management.

It was also a reaction to the distorted 'Leninism' of official ideology which proclaimed the right of 'the Party' — i.e. the state — to *command* the workers.

It points to a further, and more complex, issue, however. Whilst both the general demands of the revolu-

tion and the specific demands of the councils were wide-ranging and radical, the councils on the whole do not seem to have envisaged a *political* role for themselves. They saw their role as limited to the workplace. Political questions would be dealt with somewhere else.

This has been a common feature of bodies like the Councils; the Italian factory councils — which took over the factories in 1919-20 — defined themselves in the same limited, mainly 'economic' way.

And this points to a 'missing ingredient' in the Hungarian revolution: there was no organised, political force within the workers' movement attempting to *make conscious* the potential for taking *state* power.

The soviets in 1917 didn't come on to the political stage fully aware of their own capacity to take over the reins of government. In fact, the survival of pro-capitalist governments from February to October depended, to a large extent, on the lack of such awareness among the soviets' members.

What changed that, so that in October the soviets did seize state power — replace all the old government institutions with their own — was an active, political party — the Bolsheviks, later renamed the Communist Party.

A similar party in Hungary might have made all the difference. A political party that had studied history, digested the lessons of history — particularly the very relevant lessons of 1917 — and developed an overall strategy, could

have transformed the councils, and won their majority to the idea of gathering all power into their own hands. That would not, of course, have guaranteed the defeat of the Soviet troops; but it would have strengthened, politically, the movement against them.

Develop

Politically, the Hungarian revolution never had the chance to develop beyond the call for a government under Imre Nagy. That does not detract from the revolutionary working class character of the movement, but it does show the limits to the political consciousness of the majority of workers.

Nagy was a member of the ruling Party, a former Prime Minister who had been victimised by the Stalinists as a 'right-wing deviationist'. In other words, he advocated democratic reform.

His own ideas were not very clear or developed. He favoured Hungarian independence, neutrality — his government in 1956 did negotiate Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact — individual freedom. In general, therefore, he was essentially closer to Western Liberalism than Marxism — his ideas did not go *beyond* these liberal democratic concerns.

His appeal, nevertheless, lay precisely in his advocacy even of liberalisation, and in that he was seen as distinct from the corrupt party chiefs who had expelled him.

It is often alleged by Stalinists that

Nagy's programme was for the restoration of capitalism in Hungary.

And it is arguable that if the working class dynamic to the revolution had somehow been exhausted rather than extinguished; and a stable government under Nagy or someone like him consolidated, Hungary could have evolved in a West European 'social democratic' direction.

Certainly in Hungary, as more recently in Poland, many opponents of the regime explicitly looked to Western Europe as a model.

From this many supposed socialists conclude that the workers' movement in Hungary, or Poland, is reactionary, anti-socialist and so on — and is better crushed than allowed to flourish. Others go less far, but are half-hearted in their support of the workers' movement; sentiments are widespread to the effect that Solidarnosc in Poland must have something wrong with it if it is so loved by Reagan, Thatcher and the Pope.

In two important respects, the programme of 'classical' Marxism — of the early Communist movement before the rise of Stalin — contradicts both these attitudes. First, it has been a principle of socialists that "the nation that oppresses another nation can never itself be free". Countries like Hungary and Poland, as we have seen are *nationally* oppressed by Russia — as indeed are nations inside the USSR like the Ukraine, Latvia, Armenia and so on.

These nations have a right to self-determination — independence, if they want it — unconditionally. (In very exceptional circumstances, such

The Irish question

John Bloxam reviews the new issue of **Workers' Liberty**.

Ireland, and the British hard left's attitude to Ireland, are the subjects of a new pamphlet edition of **Workers' Liberty**, the magazine published by **Socialist Organiser**.

The conventional wisdom on the hard left today is that Northern Ireland is no more than the latest revolt against British colonialism and imperialism. The majority of the population of Northern Ireland, who passionately identify themselves as British and are determined to remain in the UK, are dismissed as just 'pro-imperialist', and thereby classified as people whose interests, desires and concerns need not be taken into account.

This conception of the conflict in Northern Ireland has spread from sections of the 'revolutionary' left until today it permeates the attitude

of much of Labour's left wing. The search for Irish votes by candidates such as Ken Livingstone in Brent East gives some on the left a direct motive of self-interest for presenting the Northern Ireland conflict in these simplistic terms.

At the same time the Labour front bench has used the Anglo-Irish Agreement as the occasion to resume Labour-Tory bipartisanship on Northern Ireland. Labour retains a notional commitment to a united Ireland, but in practice a new Labour government will do in Northern Ireland what the last one did.

Against this background **Workers' Liberty** challenges the conventional wisdom of the far left on Ireland. It poses the following probing questions.

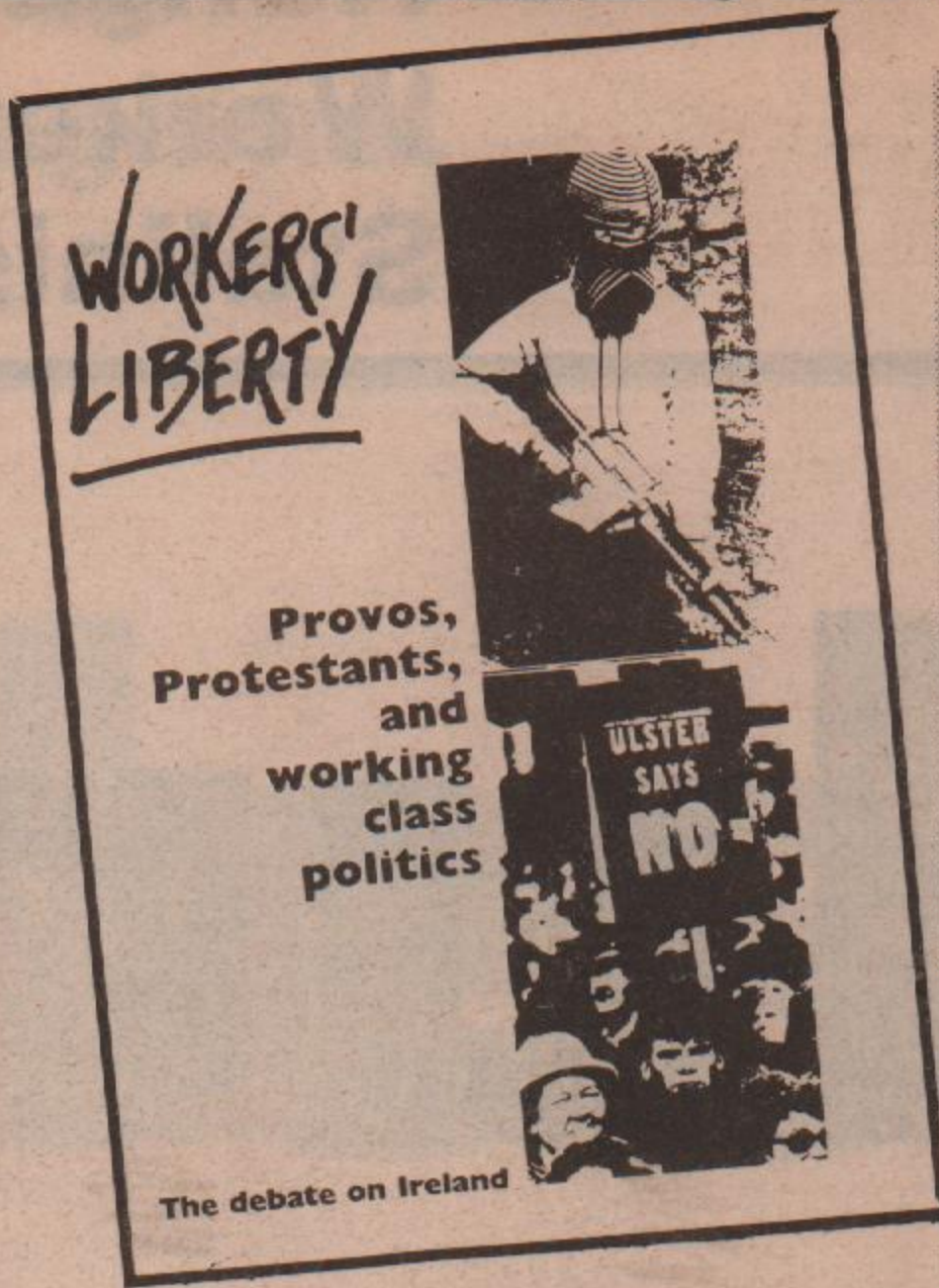
How can working class unity be achieved? Are the Protestants a distinct community with collective rights, or just a privileged group? What sort of united Ireland could conceivably win the support of Protestant workers? What strategy can secure a united Ireland and the withdrawal of British troops?

Workers' Liberty reprints a wide-ranging debate on Ireland which originally ap-

Available for £1 plus 18p postage from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

peared in **Socialist Organiser**. The debate includes all the points of view which exist today on the hard left.

Workers' Liberty continues the debate in an imaginary dialogue written by **Socialist Organiser** editor John O'Mahony, 'Provos, Protestants and working class politics'. This debate centres on **Socialist Organiser's** commitment to the idea that the intra-Irish conflict can best be solved by some form of federal Ireland, giving autonomy to the mainly-Protestant areas in the North, perhaps together with closer connections between Britain and Ireland.



Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

Lies about Chernobyl

In the days after the explosion at Chernobyl, a radioactive cloud was blown across Europe, reaching Britain a week later. Four days after, Environment Secretary Kenneth Baker told Parliament, "The effects of the cloud have already been assessed and none presents a risk to health in the UK."

That this was a *deliberate lie* is beyond doubt. Worse, it was merely the first in a long series. The evidence was given in a recent 'New Scientist' article, written by David Webster, a former adviser to the House of Commons Environment Committee. So what is the truth? Seven weeks before Chernobyl, the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) recommended a new limit for exposure of the public to artificial radiation (apart from medical x-rays). The limit was to be 1 millisievert (mSv) per year: down from 5 mSv but still 3-4 times higher than America or West Germany.

This limit would still carry a small risk: a 1-in-80000 chance of a fatal cancer and higher risks of on-fatal cancer or of serious hereditary damage to descendants. The risk to young children of cancers (mainly leukaemia) is about twice as high.

Now, nine days after Baker's statement, the NRPB's first estimates of radiation doses were published. The average was a modest 0.07 mSv — not too worrying. But *any* excess radiation would have proved Baker wrong. And, since this was an *average*, some would have received more. The NRPB found that adults in "the North" averaged 0.3 while one-year-olds averaged 0.9 mSv, close to the limit. A sizeable proportion would have received *more* than the limit. Glasgow was one area of particularly high fallout, with Govan registering the highest Iodine-131 reading anywhere. Some 25,000, mainly Scottish, under-fives will have received more than 1 mSv in the year after Chernobyl *unless their parents took precautions* such as not giving them fresh milk for a fortnight. Many will not have, following the false reassurances of the government.

Exposure

In particular, exposure to Iodine-131 (in milk) will have given Glasgow children a 1-in-33,000 risk of thyroid cancer, usually not fatal but still unpleasant. In Dumfries, the risk is 1-in-8000.

Government statements about the future were unjustifiably optimistic, talking of problems disappearing over the "next few days" or "by the end of the week". Six weeks later, movement of lambs in North Wales, Cumbria and Scotland was restricted. It was admitted that officials had known that lambs were over the radioactivity limit since 21 May. In Cumbria, over 46,000 lambs were sold for slaughter

before the ban in June.

It stretches the bounds of belief to snapping point to say, as the Welsh Secretary did, that "there is no evidence" that lambs with high radiation levels had been eaten. That this statement is technically correct is in fact an indictment of the government's failure to monitor radiation levels in fresh meat and vegetables. In badly affected Strathclyde, only three sprigs of parsley and leek were tested — the leek was over EEC limits!

After Chernobyl, the government claimed to accept the 1 mSv limit but really used the old limit (five times higher!) to decide whether lamb was fit to eat.

Deaths

It is obvious that deaths, illness and genetic damage will occur in Britain due to Chernobyl. As early as 6 May, the NRPB said "a few tens" would die. Later calculations suggested 45 deaths and 110 non-fatal cancers.

Despite this, government spokespeople described risks of cancer as "negligible", claimed that *no* congenital damage would occur, that "most probably" no Scottish children would die, etc.

The government's responsibility was not merely to keep the population's exposure to below 1 mSv. It was to keep *doses as low as reasonably achievable* (ALARA). Webster opines that a fortnight of no fresh milk and restricting time spent outdoors would have reduced doses considerably. Advice to do this was no by means unreasonable or impracticable. Nevertheless, it was not given.

Why then was every government statement inaccurate or misleading? Why were no steps taken to reduce radiation intake while still possible? How could Baker tell Parliament the day after the NRPB showed that some Scottish children would exceed recommended limits:

"I can confirm that no special precautions are needed. I repeat what I said to the House last week. It is safe to drink milk. It is safe to drink tap water. It is not necessary to take iodine tablets. In particular, I can confirm that no special precautions are necessary in giving fresh milk to infants and pregnant women"

The only conclusion is that a deliberate decision was taken to play down Chernobyl... to spare the British nuclear industry from unwelcome scrutiny? After all, the victims of this policy would never be able to prove the government's guilt.

Seminars on science and politics.

November 10. Piers Corbyn on "The Labour Party — the need for a socialist science policy".
November 24. Tony Webb on "Food irradiation".
6.30 p.m. Marquis of Granby, Chandos Place, WC2. Organised by BSSRS.

ACTIVISTS' DIARY

Why not form a Campaign Group?

A number of Labour Party members up and down the country have formed themselves into local Campaign groups.

These groups are organised on non-sectarian lines. The aim is to provide a unified left campaigning force in the constituencies.

If you have already done this and have not yet informed the Campaign Group, or if you wish to do so, please contact the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, c/o Alan Meale, secretary, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

All TGWU and ACTSS members who support SO please contact Jim Denham at 021-471 1964, home, or 021-771 0871 (daytime).

Solidarity Rally with South African Miners.

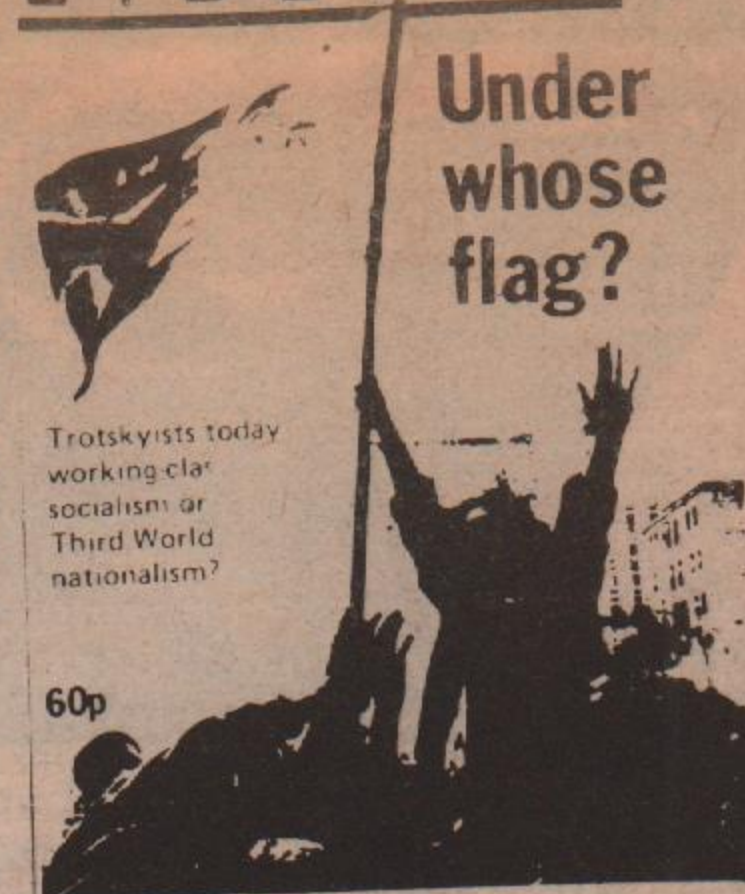
Saturday 8 November, Assemble 11.30 am at Guinness Corner, (Beside the Jolly Sailor Pub), Guinness, South Humberstone. March past coal import wharfs. Rally at 12.45 pm, opposite Flixborough Wharf. Organised by Hatfield NUM and Doncaster Anti-Apartheid Movement. Coaches leave London, Trafalgar Square, 7.00 am, return after march or social. Cost £5.

Wirral Anti-Apartheid funeral march. November 8. Assemble 12 noon at Seacombe Ferry. Details: 051-644 8699.

Slingshot North Labour Party Black Section rally. Wednesday 29 October at 7.30 pm at the Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road. Speakers: From ANC, Bernie Grant, Diane Abbott, Paul Boateng. Chair: Talal Karim.

Saturday 13 December. Conference for Trade Union Sanctions against South Africa. 11 to 6. Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham. Contact: Bronwen Handyside, 17 Porden Road, Brixton, London SW2 5SA. Tel 01-274 7722 x 2010.

WORKERS' LIBERTY



Available for 60p plus 18p postage from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

WHERE WE STAND

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

We want public ownership

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

Socialist can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers

in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles world-wide, including the struggle of workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their own anti-socialist bureaucracies.

We stand:
For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of

housework. For a mass working class based women's movement.

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

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

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

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

We want Labour Party and trade union members who support our basic ideas to become supporters of the paper — to take a bundle of papers to sell each week and pay a small 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.

SUBSCRIBE!

Get **Socialist Organiser** each week delivered to your door by post. Rates: £8.50 for six months, £16 for a year.

Name

Address

Please send me 6/12 months' sub. I enclose £.....
To: **Socialist Organiser**, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



Hungarian Tragedy

Peter Fryer was a reporter for the *Daily Worker* — predecessor of the *Morning Star* — sent out to cover the events in Hungary in 1956. What the British Communist Party had wanted was a servile description of the struggle of 'Socialist Hungary' to resist 'counter-revolution'. That's not what they got.

First the *Daily Worker's* editors had to change Fryer's dispatches; then they had to suppress them; and later they expelled him from the Party.

Peter Fryer wrote about what he actually saw in Hungary: not counter-revolutionaries, fascists and reactionaries, but millions of ordinary working class people rising up against state tyranny, poverty and national oppression.

He saw the Soviet tanks, obeying Moscow's orders, move in to mow them down.

Fryer's book, which he wrote immediately in 1956, is a masterful denunciation of Stalinist hypocrisy, deceit and moral corruption. As he puts it, the book "poured itself on the page white-hot". It is an angry,

Clive Bradley reviews Peter Fryer's book on the Hungarian revolt of 1956: "Hungarian Tragedy".

outraged, indignant defence of the Hungarian revolution against its physical and ideological assassins. And it is deeply moving.

Thirty years on Fryer's polemic has lost none of its vividness; his disgust at the whole experience has lost none of its emotional and political force.

Trotsky

Fryer was soon after won to Trotskyism. But *Hungarian Tragedy* is striking among other things for the extent to which he had already broken with the ideological worldview of the 'Communist' Parties. His conclusions point towards an attempt to reform these parties; but his politics are not those of a confused and disillusioned Stalinist.

This account is no mere emotional outburst. Fryer is extremely clear on a number of political questions that many would-be Trotskyists equivocate over thirty years on. He notes that some Hungarian workers looked to the West for help, and comments: "I for one do not regard these as counter-revolutionaries. If after eleven years the working people, goaded beyond bearing, look to the West for succour, whose fault is that? If the Americans are guilty of seeking to foster counter-revolution...surely the Rakosis and the Geros are a hundred times more guilty for providing the soil in which seeds sown by the Americans could grow". (p.23). "It did not need American-trained emigres to influence the people". (p.32).

Fryer ridicules the idea that the Hungarian people were either 'subjectively' or 'objectively' (intentionally or not) in favour of capitalism, and pours scorn on attempts to justify the second Soviet invasion as a "regrettable necessity".

Yet he is absolutely forthright: "But even if Nagy had been making



Soviet tanks

concessions all along the line to fascism, even if counter-revolution had succeeded, even if White Terror had been raging, it must be said, said openly and with emphasis, that from the standpoint of socialist principle, the Soviet Union would still not have been justified in intervening...It was a clear and flagrant breach of...(the principle) that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations." (p.68).

How many toy-town "Trotskyists" today would claim such

clarity on this issue?

Fryer's condemnation of Stalinism, of official Moscow 'communism' is extremely powerful. "Stalinism is Marxism with the heart cut out, de-humanised, dried, frozen, petrified, rigid, barren. It is concerned with 'the line', not with the tears of Hungarian children..." (p.79).

Fryer's book is a socialist classic. It cannot be recommended too strongly. Its republication is a great service to the labour movement.

ON THE BOX

Black English

BBC's 'The Story of English' in the *Black on White* series was an interesting, if rather incomplete, look at how black English has played an important part in the modern development of the English language. The incorporation into mainstream English of many black words, phrases and patterns of speech has not been accidental.

The programme located an isolated black community living on islands off mainland Carolina where black Americans still speak the 'Gullah' language. Sub-titles were used extensively throughout the programme, although most of the spoken language was fairly easily interpretable.

The point was made that the current practice of 'Gullah' is not a large departure from mainstream (black) English, not as much as previous generations at any rate. Gullah is the language from the times of slavery.

In the programme, they trace it to West African countries, like Sierra Leone, which were the starting point for the profitable slave trade.

There was no common language amongst the African people who were abducted to be slaves to white masters in America. English was first introduced to the middleman in the transactions; they in turn introduced it to the slaves.

By Payman Rezai

The most important requirement was to simplify the language and thus trade. Pidgin English was the outcome, drawing on both European and African speech patterns.

Even today the boating people of West Africa speak a heavily pidgin English. Pidgin was so widespread that it was even spoken between Robinson Crusoe and Man Friday.

Of course it was of supreme importance to the slave traders to keep their slaves isolated. The slaves' inability to communicate via a common language forced the adoption of King's English, or their adaptation of it — Gullah.

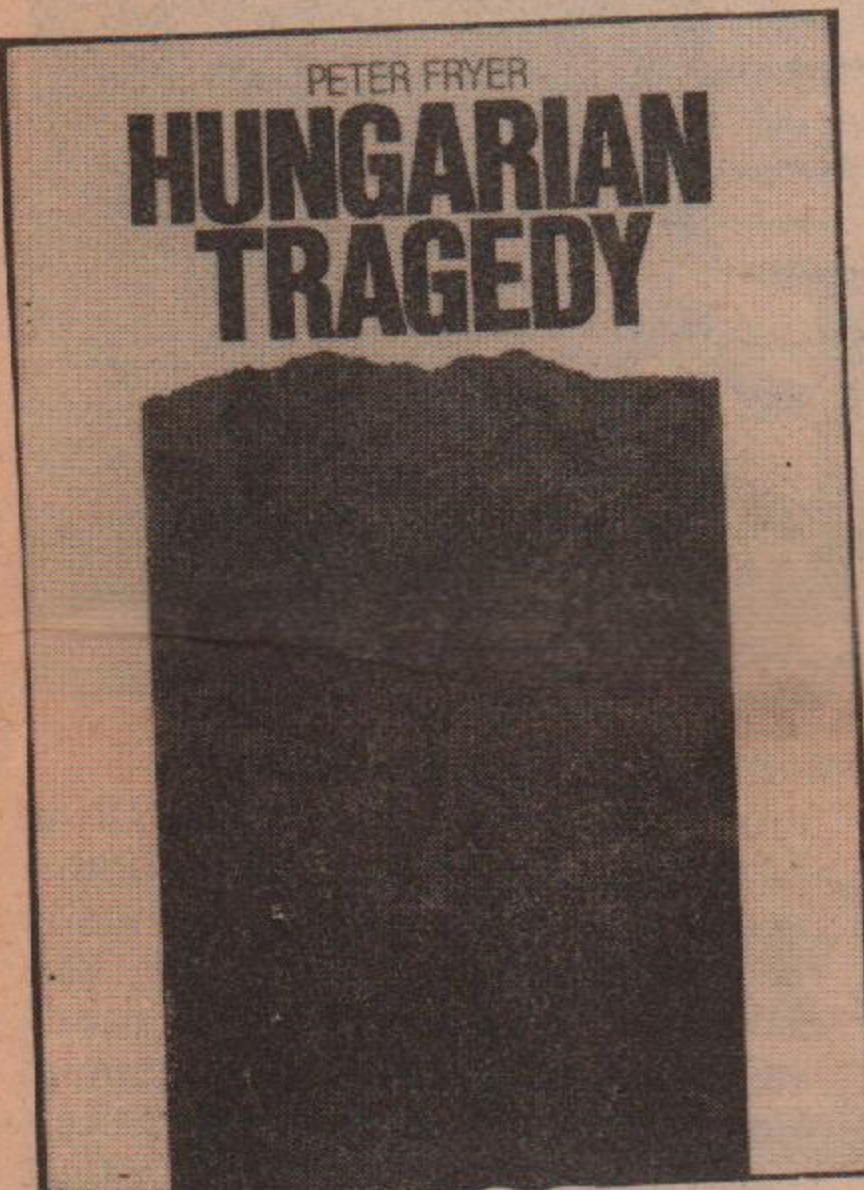
The programme traced the development of Plantation Creole. The slaves' language, paradoxically, also affected the language spoken by the masters. Especially amongst the Southern upper classes, the slave owners, is this most apparent. Charles Dickens was quoted as saying that 'Southern women talk just like the blacks'.

The next phase in the dissemination of black English to the mainstream was prompted by the immigration to the North at the beginning of this century and the transportation of black culture through black music and language. The 'Jive' talk of 1920s New York was due to migrating black musicians.

Words like 'cool', 'square', 'nitty gritty' and many others became part of everyday talk. The reality for the immigrants was much harsher than the glory stories of the best musicians and bands suggest. Blacks were segregated and forced to eek out an existence in whatever way they could — shoe-shining or playing the spoons.

After this, the programme took a giant stride to the American Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and the subsequent growth of a black middle class in the US. Many American blacks, like the Mayor of Philadelphia, take speech lessons to 'standardise' their English. Many more show no obvious signs of a different accent.

The last quarter of the programme was occupied with young black rap artists and how they display many traditional speech patterns — especially in the rhythmic style of their delivery and implying how this has its roots in the black experience of language.



Available from New Park Publications, price £2.95.

FILM

The 'green eyed god' of jealousy

Belinda Weaver goes to the cinema or is it the opera?

Franco Zeffirelli's film of Verdi's 'Otello' has had a bit of a hiding from opera purists. A key aria has supposedly been omitted by Zeffirelli.

But if you don't know the opera, you don't know what's missing, so you can enjoy it anyway. I didn't feel any lack in the film.

Filed opera has a few advantages over live opera. It's a lot cheaper, so it makes opera much more accessible. The soundtrack has each singer in peak voice, so you aren't relying on the possible vagaries of live performance.

Films can also use grandiose effects that the stage can't match. 'Otello' opens with a raging storm in which Otello's ship is feared lost. You couldn't do that on stage without drowning the audience.

Also films can deceive in a way the stage can't. The camera can conceal or soften the age lines and stout girth of many middle aged singers playing youthful roles.

Otello is a grand spectacle, from its storm-tossed opening to its tragic, bloody finale. Placido Domingo with boot polish on his face doesn't look very Moorish, but he has the majesty

and presence to convey the larger than life heroics of Otello.

The story is about the 'green-eyed god' of jealousy. Otello descends from his miraculously saved ship as a hero, the vanquisher of the Turkish fleet.

But he's risen so high only to be brought down by the insidious poison of his ensign, Iago, who feels slighted by Otello's choice of Cassio rather than him for captain.

Hero

For a respected hero, adored by his wife, Desdemona, Otello very easily falls prey to suspicion when Iago begins hinting of an affair between Cassio and Desdemona. Otello is all too ready to believe that Desdemona might prefer the blonde, handsome Cassio to him — he fears his blackness is a handicap.

Iago resents this 'thick-lipped savage' and seeks to destroy him.

The film does go over the top at times. Belief must be suspended when the mortally wounded Otello is still able to sing in full voice.

Desdemona is almost too cloyingly sweet, and she's unbelievably passive — she seems almost eager to give up



Desdemona and Otello

her life. Iago is fully convincing and I felt rather relieved when he got speared at the end.

The music is dramatic and the singers in fine voice. If you've never been to an opera, give it a try.

The ABC OF MARXISM

Explaining itself

By Martin Thomas

Last week I tried to identify some of the distinctive features of the Marxist *method* of studying issues. I concluded by saying that Marxism shares with orthodox social science a commitment to checking theories against facts, but they go about this in different ways.

Take economics for example. Orthodox economics starts from a theoretical 'model'. Society is a collection of individuals. Each possesses a certain amount of 'labour' or 'capital'. Labour and capital can be combined in certain technical proportions to produce certain goods. Each individual sells so much labour, or so much capital, buying with the proceeds various goods; his or her choice is made on the principle of maximising 'utility'.

This model can be developed further by complex mathematical calculations.

All orthodox economists will admit, however, that real life is not like that. So they supplement the basic model by countless specialised sub-theories. Keynesian economics, for example, is all about what happens to the basic model when individuals hang on to cash for a while rather than spending their income promptly.

By refining and multiplying sub-theories, orthodox economics can bring itself closer and closer to the facts.

Checked

But the basic assumptions and concepts are never checked against the facts. And the question is never asked: *why* do individuals behave economically in this dog-eat-dog way? Concepts are not clarified. What is 'capital'? Factories and machines? Money? Some muddy mixture of the two?

The basic model is 'ideological': it is a set of spectacles through which to view the world which is determined not by any critical analysis but by unreasoning acceptance of the mental framework of a particular class at a particular time.

Thus orthodox economists can use their 'model' — drawn from the assumptions of the middle class in industrial capitalist society — for studying very different societies.

They talk about 'capital' and 'returns on capital' in the Middle Ages. Of course they discover that earlier societies operated 'irrationally' and modern capitalism is, give or take a few details, 'rational'. A great scientific discovery! But it is nothing but a rehash of what they implicitly assumed in the first place.

Marxist research has to start, like any other, with the facts as structured by current 'common sense'. What distinguishes Marxism is that it then attempts a critical and historical analysis of concepts.

It digs beneath 'price' and 'profit', for example, to value and labour-time. And more than that. Marx commented on some economists who, like him, believed that value was determined by labour-time, that they had never asked the questions *why* labour was represented by value, and *what sort* of labour was so represented. Marx asked those questions.

Marxists cannot, of course, escape from their own time and circumstances. Their concepts, like anyone else's, reflect the viewpoint of a particular class at a particular time: the working class in industrial capitalism.

But Marxism has this advantage: that it undertakes to explain other viewpoints as not merely 'mistakes' but reflections of other class interests, and to argue why its viewpoint is superior.

From mass strikes to guerilla warfare

Resistance in Peru

Second part of Phil O'Brien's analysis of Peru.

Last week's article described the military coup of 1968, which was followed by a reformist-nationalist policy under General Velasco.

Much of the left rallied to Velasco. But the US was hostile, and the military elite itself became divided.

Peru became increasingly isolated in the continent. And when Velasco began to develop an authoritarian personality cult, a group of progressive army officers formed an alliance with the moderate officers to topple Velasco.

However the second period of military rule, under General Morales Bermudez, soon moved right, expelling the progressive officers and reversing many of the previous period's reforms. Bermudez also introduced a stabilisation deflationary economic programme.

Faced with a cut in their living standards and the withdrawal of many of the previous gains they had made under Velasco, the working class responded with a series of mass strikes which reached its climax in the July 1977 general strike and the 81 day national strike of the teachers' union, Sutep, in May 1978. The ferocity and extent of the struggles forced the military to announce a time-table for the return to civilian rule beginning with an election for a Constituent Assembly in 1978, to be followed by presidential and congressional elections in 1980. The elections for the Assembly took place against a background of violent strikes, massive unrest and increasing repression. In spite of the repression, the left had managed to put together two main fronts, the Focep, headed by Hugo Blanco, which was an alliance of Trotskyists, independents, and the small pro-Albanian party; and the UDP, the Democratic and Popular Unity, which consisted of many Maoist and Mariateguist groups.

Boycott

However the largest Maoist party decided to boycott the elections. The left groupings obtained 30% of the vote, the highest percentage they had ever received, with Focep obtaining 12.3% which was to represent the high-point of Trotskyist influence in Peru. But the Assembly was dominated by the centre right, and after three years of mass mobilisations and repression the left and the mass movements seemed unable to cope with the new situation. Haya in a characteristic opportunistic alliance with the right became President of the Assembly, and just before his death signed the new constitution which enfranchised illiterates.

Haya's death threw APRA into turmoil, and led to a bitter internal feud. The left too split after the failure of the Revolutionary Left Alliance to work together. The left entered the campaign with five separate groupings, and in the 1980 elections their total vote dropped considerably from their 1978 high.

APRA's internal feuding, and the strong-armed tactics of their Presidential candidate also led to a decline in the APRA vote. The clear winner of the 1980 elections was Belaunde, the victim of the 1968 coup. Almost unnoticed at the time Sendero attacked a polling booth, and called for a boycott of the elections. Significantly in the areas around Ayacucho, where Sendero



Peru: declared ineligible for borrowing by IMF

operated, blank votes were the highest in the country.

Belaunde and his party, the AP — Popular Action — had however lost any of their reforming aims which they had in the 1950s and 1960s. They now favoured the free-market approaches which were so prevalent elsewhere.

But in a country of such gross inequalities as Peru, the free market only accentuated those inequalities. Foreign firms and local banks did moderately well, but the rest of the economy suffered enormously, particularly when from 1982 onwards, Peru entered its worst economic crisis of this century. For the poor of Peru the situation bordered on the intolerable, and the country began to slide into social disintegration.

In such a desperate situation, Sendero's violent insurgency began to grow. Sendero's leadership emerged from the complicated web of Maoist politics in Peru. Following the Sino-Soviet split in 1964, a philosophy professor, Abimael Guzman, joined the Maoist Bandera Roja — the Red Flag — only to leave that shortly after over the question of armed struggle.

Guzman took with him most of the Bandera Roja's fairly substantial following in the poverty stricken Ayacucho area, and through his position in charge of teacher training he recruited many Quechua speaking teachers who went back to the rural areas to spread his politics. Sendero evolved into a frightening version of fundamentalist Maoism and a fundamentalist perversion of Mariategui. Its strategy was that of a prolonged popular war to surround the cities from the countryside to create the Republic of the New Democracy — a sort of communism with elements of back to the Incas. It is a sort of Peruvian Pol Pot, rejecting modern technology and the capitalist money economy.

Sendero is very much an indigenous movement: there is no evidence of outside support or links. Its weaponry is not sophisticated — the mainweapon is dynamite. Never-

theless it has been the most enduring guerilla movement in Peru, able to mount hundreds of dynamite attacks, frequently black out Lima, and survive savage repression. It is also incredibly secretive: no documents are issued apart from a pamphlet in 1982, no secret press conferences given (no one knows if Guzman is dead or alive — he is rumoured to have leukemia), no attempt to claim responsibility for actions, etc.

What is clear is that the attempt to suppress them has been particularly savage as the army attempted indiscriminate massacres and torture to destroy them and their bases. What is also clear is that Sendero's fanaticism and savagery also limits their appeal. But if there is a further collapse of the Peruvian economy, and a slide into social disintegration then the simple fanaticism of Sendero may seem attractive.

The 1980 election forced both APRA and the left to reconsider their positions and to reorganise. The left were the first to recover. They formed the United Left which all groups, except the Trotskyists, joined. This new grouping recovered some of its lost ground in the municipal elections whereas APRA continued to decline in those elections. In 1982 APRA chose a young Alan Garcia as its secretary general. Advised by the Socialist International he set about modernising the party and steering it into a more traditional social democratic direction. Felipe Gonzalez was clearly a model.

Collapsing

In the 1983 municipal elections, it became clear that Belaunde's AP was collapsing as APRA gained 33%, closely followed by the IU with 29%. In the 1985 Presidential elections the collapse of the AP was confirmed, receiving a mere 6% of the vote. The IU although the second party of Peru, was a good 20% behind Garcia.

So far the government, and in particular Garcia himself, has remained popular. Garcia, an immensely energetic, charismatic, but erratic leader, quickly launched a number of

unorthodox measures. Above all he initiated a programme of economic recovery in place of the orthodox recessionary policies of the IMF. This economic emergency plan raised wages including that of the minimum wage, improved agricultural prices, reduced interest rates, froze prices after increasing electricity prices, and devalued with a promise to maintain the exchange rate for a year.

Cut

In addition the military budget, especially for hardware, was severely cut (for example an order for 26 French Mirages was cut to 12); and payments on the debt restricted to 10% of exports. The latter action in particular has aroused the wrath of the international financial community, especially as Garcia has accompanied his action with ringing denunciations of imperialism and the unjust distribution of the world's wealth. As a consequence Peru has received little new foreign credit, and its failure to maintain its payments to the IMF led that institution to declare Peru ineligible for further borrowings. Although the economy has performed quite well with inflation falling and growth resuming, there are worries that the foreign exchange situation could become critical.

In many ways Garcia has stolen the left's 'clothes', leaving them trailing behind him. Garcia ordered a halt to the use of barbaric methods to counter the terrorism of Sendero, gave legal status to the Indian communities of Ayacucho, and has attempted to boost the income of the rural poor both to stem the emigration to Lima (Sendero was picking up considerable support among this group) and weaken the support for Sendero. His policy seemed to be working when, during a meeting of the Socialist International in Lima, the armed forces killed over 400 Sendero prisoners in a prison riot. Violence is never far from the surface in Peru. If Garcia fails then the alternative is not likely to be the IU or a resurgence of Trotskyism, but a military take-over and the growth of Sendero.

By Sandra Cartlidge

For years and years Labour Clubs have felt badly done to by the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) National Committee.

There has been an absence of campaigns, an almost complete lack of forums for debate, ad many complaints concerning the NOLS membership cards and delegate entitlements for NOLS conference.

As long ago as 1983 there was a spectacular and proven case of fraud in the NOLS office. A Socialist Students in NOLS delegate from Birmingham University was ruled out of conference because his membership card had not been properly filled in — his NUS number was missing.

But the delegate knew that his card had been properly completed and the SSiN supporter on the National Committee demanded access to Birmingham University's file.

Going through that file and finding the delegate's card, it became clear that his original card had been thrown away and replaced by an incomplete card.

The same year, four SSiN delegates from Manchester University were told that the National Committee had never received their cards, and NOLS NC only had the cards of the two supporters of the Democratic Left on the Manchester University delegation.

Then the story was changed: the cards weren't missing, just wrongly filled in. Finally, an emergency NC was called to allow the four back into NOLS membership.

In the years following, there have been enough "rulings out" to ensure that the Democratic Left maintain a comfortable majority at NOLS conference.

Inside NOLS almost everyone who is not a hard-line supporter of the ruling Democratic Left faction (and some who are) believe the tales from other Clubs about "missing mail", "missing cards" and bills for unsolicited publicity.

This year a Monitoring Committee has been established. Its members are Sophie Nicols, Piers Corbyn and Andy Rathbone.

Sophie is a member of CLPD, Piers a Southwark Councillor and Andy is general secretary of Wessex Area NUS. All are on the committee in a personal capacity.

The committee, says Sophie, will be asking Clubs to send her information about problems they have had with the National Committee and reports will be published. An initial mailing will go out to all Clubs this week.

SSiN hopes every Club will sponsor the committee and send it any relevant information. The NOLS Monitoring Committee can be contacted by writing to Sophie Nicol, 54 Southwood Lane, London N6 5EB, tel: 01-348 3588.

South Africa; RELEASE THE DEJAINEES!

SOCIALIST STUDENT

25p



Latest issue of Socialist Student available from 54A Peckham Rye, London SE15.

Behind the 'Big Bang'

The 'Big Bang' is the transformation of the Stock Exchange from an old-fashioned gentlemen's club into a more-or-less free market.

New firms have been allowed to deal in stocks and shares, and their commissions on dealing will be determined by competition rather than fixed rates.

In fact it only brings the equity and government bond markets into line with what has already happened in other financial markets. It is part of a well-established and world-wide process of creating a global market in big money.

Centres

The way things are heading, you can trade bonds, leading shares, and currencies across the world 24 hours a day. New York, London and Tokyo, in their different time zones, are the three centres of this market.

William Schreyer, boss of the giant US firm Merrill Lynch, told the Financial Times:

"No longer can we fool ourselves and say that we're a US firm and the US is what counts. We have all to think in terms of a one-world market...London is the third leg of a stool...London, Tokyo, New York".

New technology has played a big part in the development of this "one-

The spark for the Big Bang was a legal case against the Stock Exchange under the Restrictive Practices Act.

In 1983 the government did a deal with the Stock Exchange to exempt it retrospectively from the restrictive practices law if it would reform itself.

Retrospective undoing of the law is a lot easier if you are a City millionaire than if you are a miner.

By Martin Thomas

world market" recently. It makes instant international trading possible, and it enables firms to process information quickly enough to make money on slight fluctuations in the market.

Recent years have seen a huge growth in foreign exchange — trading currencies against each other and trying to make money by a slight variation of the dollar against the yen or the pound against the deutschmark. London now does \$90 billion of foreign exchange business each day.

But the process of speeding up international capital flows dates back to the 1970s. First there was the Eurodollar market — a vast pool of dollars being traded to and from and between European financial centres, quite outside the supervision of the US government.

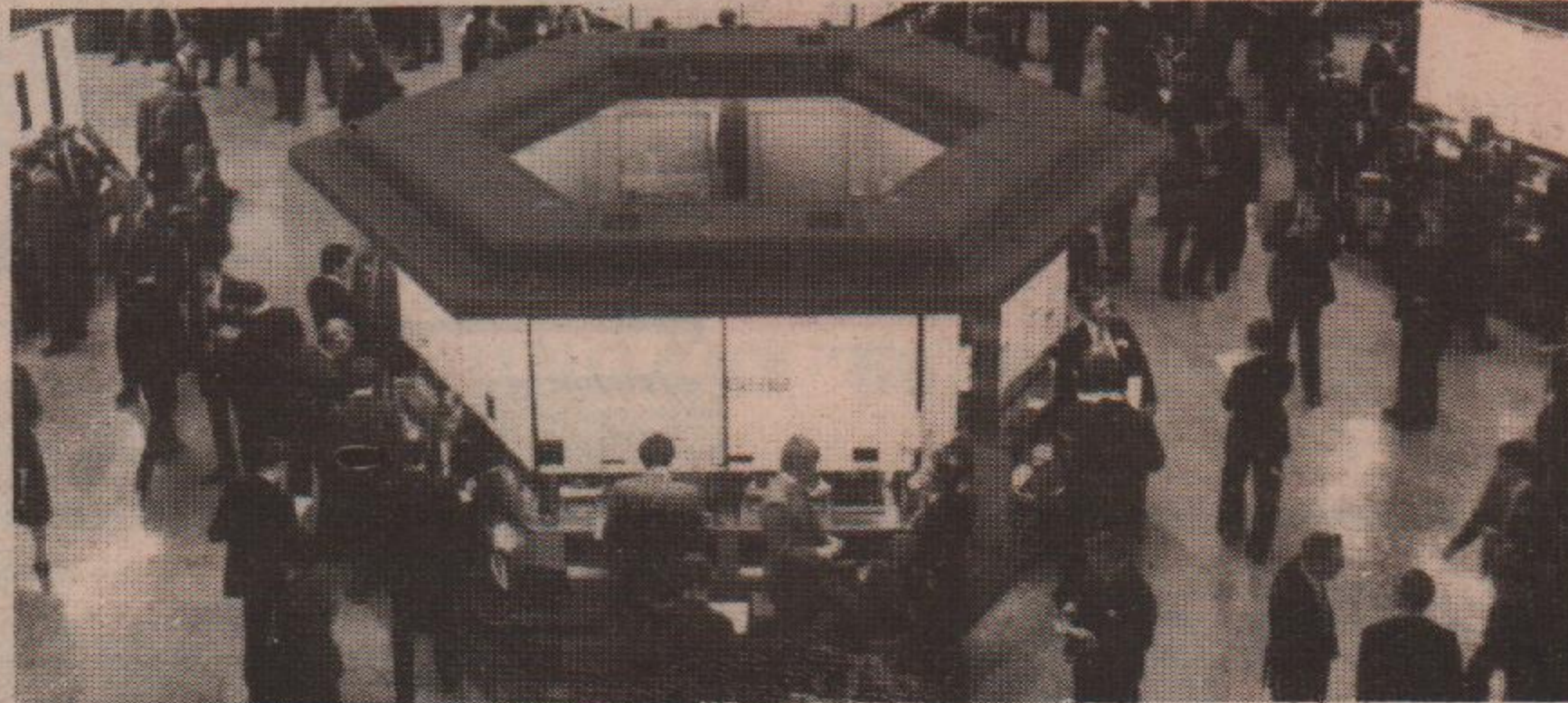
Then there was the enormous expansion of international bank lending, as the dollars which flowed to oil states after the OPEC price rises found their way to Western banks and then to borrowers.

Growth

In recent years, alongside the growth of foreign exchange dealing, ordinary loans have been increasingly replaced by various sorts of bonds — pieces of paper bearing fixed interest, but which can be bought and sold.

So, in many different ways, capitalists across the world are more and more becoming members of a single club, for whom national frontiers only have the significance of annoying minor obstacles in their hectic whirl of speculation and money-shifting.

This increasing international integration of capital since the early 1970s has, paradoxically, gone hand in hand with a sharpening of international tensions. At a slower rate than sometimes seemed likely, but nevertheless steadily, the various big capitalist countries have erected more



and more barriers to free trade. The abandonment of fixed exchange rates in 1971 has created a less stable framework for world trade.

The expansion, and the various new forms, of international money-dealing have given the system flexibility to deal with the new strains and stresses. Simultaneously, however, they have made it more uncertain and unstable.

Increased uncertainty is, indeed, itself one of the reasons for the greater activity on the financial markets. When economic development is comparatively stable and certain, not much money can be made

Peter Cameron-Webb and Peter Dixon embezzled about £40 million from investors in the Lloyds insurance business. They are still wealthy and active businessmen — they've just had to move to the US, that's all.

Johnson Matthey Bankers went bust in September 1984. It had lent out £248 million without adequate security. The government bailed it out by effectively nationalising it. Bank of England investigators found the bank's records in chaos and many files missing. Labour MP Brian Sedgemore has made detailed allegations about crooked dealing by Ian Fraser, the man in charge of

JMB's loans, and by Abdul Shamji, one of JMB's major debtors. Fraser and Shamji are still rich businessmen. Nobody has been prosecuted.

Since 1980, the Stock Exchange has reported 80 cases of insider dealing, which is a criminal offence. Only a fraction have resulted in criminal proceedings. 'Big Bang' replaces the City of London's present maze of restrictions and antiquated customs by a freer and more computerised market. It will be regulated mostly not by law but by 'self-regulatory organisations' — except that the new system is not yet in place.

The necessary legislation has not yet gone through Parliament, and the regulation of the City is in limbo until the middle of next year.

Whether it is good for the national economy I wouldn't know, but I'm looking forward to seeing a few black eyes dished out on the floor of the Stock Exchange.

Whether it is good for the national economy I wouldn't know, but I'm looking forward to seeing a few black eyes dished out on the floor of the Stock Exchange.

Whether it is good for the national economy I wouldn't know, but I'm looking forward to seeing a few black eyes dished out on the floor of the Stock Exchange.

Whether it is good for the national economy I wouldn't know, but I'm looking forward to seeing a few black eyes dished out on the floor of the Stock Exchange.

Sacked miners must not be forgotten

At the present time, people like Mick McGinty, the two lads from Welbeck — Mark Hunter and Tony Geddes — and myself are living in some sort of a vacuum.

Although sacked in February we are still waiting for our tribunals and it is like being a condemned man waiting for the "drop". It doesn't help the situation when we see that even those people who have won tribunals have still not finished up with their jobs back.

Sickening

That may well happen to us irrespective of whether we win the arguments or not. It is sickening when people with big money can go to the law courts for immediate satisfaction while we have to wait as if we were on remand.

The one satisfying thing we are looking forward to is the chance, once in the court, to air our views.

Alan Meale, who won the Parliamentary nomination for the Mansfield constituency was not only supported by the NUM but by a whole number of unions. He is a popular candidate and I am sure he is going to put up a good fight. But then we had the ridiculous situation of Roy Lynk and the UDM Executive saying that they were going to field a rival candidate. However they have a problem. They can't field a political candidate without having a political fund which they haven't got.

I can't believe that Arthur Scargill is seriously considering seeking nomination as the Parliamentary

WHETTON'S WEEK



candidate for Barnsley Central where Roy Mason has announced that he will not stand again. But it shows just what sort of speculation gets flung around. All I can say is that Roy Mason won't be missed.

The other constituency in the news is Knowsley. I think the decision to impose on the people of Knowsley a candidate who does not enjoy popular support within the constituency is unfair to them and unfair to

the Labour Party. It is a tragedy. Regardless of what you think of Les Huckfield, it's up to the people of Knowsley to decide and no one else.

Elections

It will be interesting to see what comes out of the Shadow Cabinet elections by the Parliamentary Labour Party later this week. It's time Kinnock started to face up to reality. Of course we all need a Labour government but we need a Labour government with a correct orientation and the correct colour and grey is not our best colour.

I think the "Big Bang" may give the City a small lift but I think they are going to encounter more pro-

blems as it goes on and we will see the enjoyable sight of people in the Stock Exchange cutting one another's throat in order to compete for business.

Whether it is good for the national economy I wouldn't know, but I'm looking forward to seeing a few black eyes dished out on the floor of the Stock Exchange.

Rural

I think that the newly-introduced bus deregulation is going to hit the rural areas particularly badly, especially once the private operators realise how unprofitable they can be. The pit villages around here, for example, could be very badly affected.

Save West London Hospital!

Last Saturday over 200 people marched in Hammersmith to demonstrate against the proposed closure of the West London Hospital.

Money

Riverside Health Authority wants to close it supposedly to save money. The closure will mainly hit women, babies and the elderly.

West London's Maternity Unit with over 2000 deliveries a year, renowned for its progressive model of care for mothers and their newly

By Mark Nevill

born babies, are part of the closure. There are no plans for reprovision of the service in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Along with this the special care baby unit which has saved many babies born prematurely will be affected. This is an outrage when hospitals throughout London can phone up between 10 and 15 hospitals before finding just one care cot.

Meanwhile similar attacks like this are happening to the NHS all over the country. Edwina Currie rants on about ignorant northerners and how

well the NHS has done under the Tories.

Demands

The Campaign to Save West London Hospital (SWEL) is demanding:

- No more health cuts.
- Better provision for women in hospitals.
- More facilities throughout the Health Service.
- Care before profit!

For more details, contact SWEL, D. Shields, coordinator, c/o NUPE office, West London Hospital, Hammersmith Road, London W6.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST



Don't tolerate NEC dictatorship

The Labour Party NEC has intervened to stop Knowsley North Labour Party selecting a candidate to fight the by-election on 13 November caused by the resignation of the renegade Labour MP Robert Kilroy-Silk. The NEC has imposed its own candidate. ERIC HEFFER MP comments.

It is quite wrong for the NEC to override the Knowsley North Labour Party. I'm not arguing that Les Huckfield, or anyone else, should be the candidate. In fact the local party had not agreed any candidate. It had just got nominations in. I don't know if they would have picked Les Huckfield or anyone else.

But it is quite wrong for the NEC to do what it has done. There is no justification for the NEC to override the local party and impose their own candidate. It is absolutely wrong! I think it is 40 odd years or more since something like this happened.

I understand that some of the local people in Knowsley expected them to say: "OK, you can't consider Les Huckfield because he is a Euro MP or whatever (although I wouldn't have agreed to that). But you go ahead and select your own candidate on the basis of those who have been nominated." But the NEC didn't do that.

It's clear that the NEC accepts the concept that the leader will decide who the candidate is. That is contrary to everything we have accepted in the party for a long time.

Over the weekend the party decided they would take the matter to the courts yet again. They lost out. They are now faced with the question — should they or shouldn't they support a Labour candidate.

They will probably say, oh, well, we don't agree with what's happening but we are in the Labour Party and we will support a Labour candidate.

Our duty is to support the Labour candidate even if we don't think it's right the way he has been selected, and we don't necessarily think he is the right candidate.

Constituency Labour Party members throughout the country must let it be known quite clearly that they are against what the NEC has done.

One of the most interesting things I've found is that some people, quite right wing MPs, have said, I don't always agree with you, but it's quite wrong what the NEC are doing. There can be a big backlash. I hope every CLP in the country will pass motions protesting at this type of NEC intervention in local parties.

I would like every CLP to let the NEC know very clearly that this sort of thing is not on. This sort of thing is reminiscent of the Sarah Baker days.

People like Michael Foot should speak out — he was one of the people in the old days that taught us quite rightly that we should never tolerate this sort of NEC dictatorship in the Labour Party.

Police attack black miners

40,000 miners went on strike in South African gold and coalfields from Sunday night, October 26, after mining companies failed to agree to union wage demands.

Gold Fields Mining Company, which is controlled by the British Consolidated Gold Fields, remained in opposition to the National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) claim, even after other

mining houses have agreed to wage increases of 19.5% to 23.5%, backdated to October 1.

The agreement covers mines owned by Anglo-American, JCI and Gencor. Gencor had been declared "enemy number one" by NUM earlier this year, and until recently was one of NUM's weakest areas of organisation.

Strikes went ahead in Gold Fields' mines at Doorfontein, Deelkraal and Kloof. According



to the company itself, the strike was almost total at the three mines.

NUM spokesperson Marcel Golding said that police opened fire with rubber bullets and tear gas on workers singing union songs, causing confrontation at Doonfontein and at nearby mines where there was no strike.

Gold Fields is claiming that NUM did not have the strike ballot required of them by law. The union was originally demanding a 30% across-the-board increase, and forced the Chamber of Mines up from their original offer of 15-20%.

In addition, in negotiations before this week's Gold Fields strike, mine owners agreed to a number of welfare demands. In the event of transfer to a lower job category due to injury, a worker will be paid at the old rate for six months. Work-caused diseases are to be included in the income security proposals.

Consolidated Gold Fields employs 93,000 people in South Africa, and in addition to gold has interests in coal, lead, zinc, copper and tin.

Solidarity Rally with South African Miners.
Saturday 8 November, Assemble 11.30 am at Guinness Corner, (Beside the Jolly Sailor Pub), guinness, South Humberside. March past coal import wharfs. Rally at 12.45 pm, opposite Flixborough Wharf.

Backlash over Brent

A new threat to democracy and civilisation as we know it has been unmasked, thanks to the tireless reporters of the Mail on Sunday.

Unlike previous threats (Tatchell, Scargill, Bernie Grant) this is a faceless, collective entity. Ron Anderson and Kuba Assegai have been tipped as possible personifications of the threat, but so far the enemy is simply "The Council".

The story so far, for those of you who have spent the past month or so in a coma, is that Brent's leftish Labour council have been operating a vigorous anti-racist policy, with particular emphasis on education. As the Observer noted, "the broad lines of that policy are to be applauded... Brent is trying to remedy the lack of black teachers in an area where most pupils are Asian or black and it is determined to stamp out racism in schools. It is also right to be concerned about evidence that black children do badly at school because white teachers underestimate them."

So far, so good. The problems arose when a head teacher, Mary McGoldrick, was sacked for allegedly making a racist remark over the phone. The evidence against McGoldrick was, to say the least,

dubious. The unions and the majority of staff and parents (black and white alike) support her. And she has a record of anti-racism.

This was the signal for the hacks to descend upon Brent, intent upon uncovering more examples of "loony anti-racism".

Unfortunately, the Council promptly provided them with a gift-wrapped story, the "racist body language" row, when a school gover-

PRESS GANG

nor was denounced for looking at her watch and shuffling papers while a black teacher was being interviewed for a headship. The governor, incidentally, placed the black candidate on her short-list.

Mao-oid excesses like this, plus the Council's stubborn refusal to reinstate McGoldrick, gave the Mail on Sunday the opportunity to attack a perfectly reasonable proposal to appoint 170 race advisors for schools (using Section 11 money from the government) as a plan for "Commissars in the classroom". The story

had an immediate effect, as this week's Mail on Sunday proudly reports: "In an unprecedented move, 50 Education Department inspectors have already been sent to the left-wing London borough in the wake of our expose".

The Sunday Express came out with the predictable angle: "Is it not a chilling thought that the creatures who so cruelly mismanage the affairs of Brent may one day be able to influence the fate of the nation should Labour win another election?"

This sort of garbage is, of course, guaranteed to rally the left in defence of Brent. And rally round we should — especially as the press campaign against the borough and its anti-racist policies seems certain to escalate. But the fact remains that some of Brent's methods — especially the refusal to reinstate Mary McGoldrick — have played into the hands of the right. Brent councillors would do well to read Christopher Booker's right wing column in Sunday's Today. He can scarcely conceal his glee: "If there is one consoling feature of the McGoldrick affair it is that, at last, it seems to have set in motion a proper backlash..."

By Jim Denham

Socialist Organiser
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.
01-639 7965.

Latest date for reports: first post Monday or by phone, Monday evening.

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

Published by Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.
Printed by East End Offset [TU], London E2.
Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.
Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views of SO.