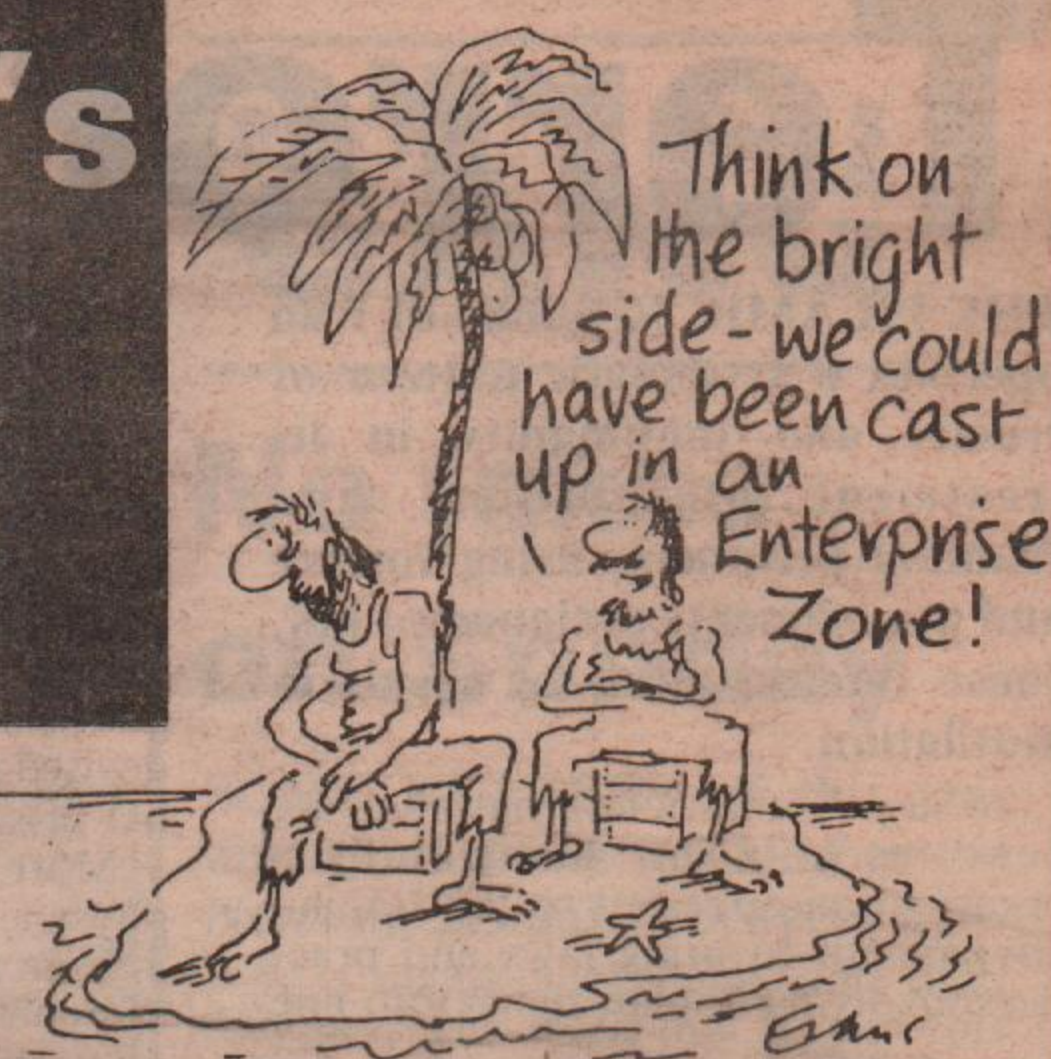


SOCIALIST ORGANISER

For Workers' Liberty East and West

Thatcher's casino economy

Labour Research



see page 5

TURN HER

OUT!



Photomontage: Peter Kennard

NHS: Safe in her hands?

IN 1970 Harold Wilson went into the June election with Labour 8% ahead in the opinion polls and after Labour had done well in the May local government elections.

Just like the Tories now.

Tory leader Edward Heath consistently scored badly in opinion polls. Wilson had been prime minister for six years. Very like Kinnock and Thatcher now.

But the Tories won the election of June 1970.

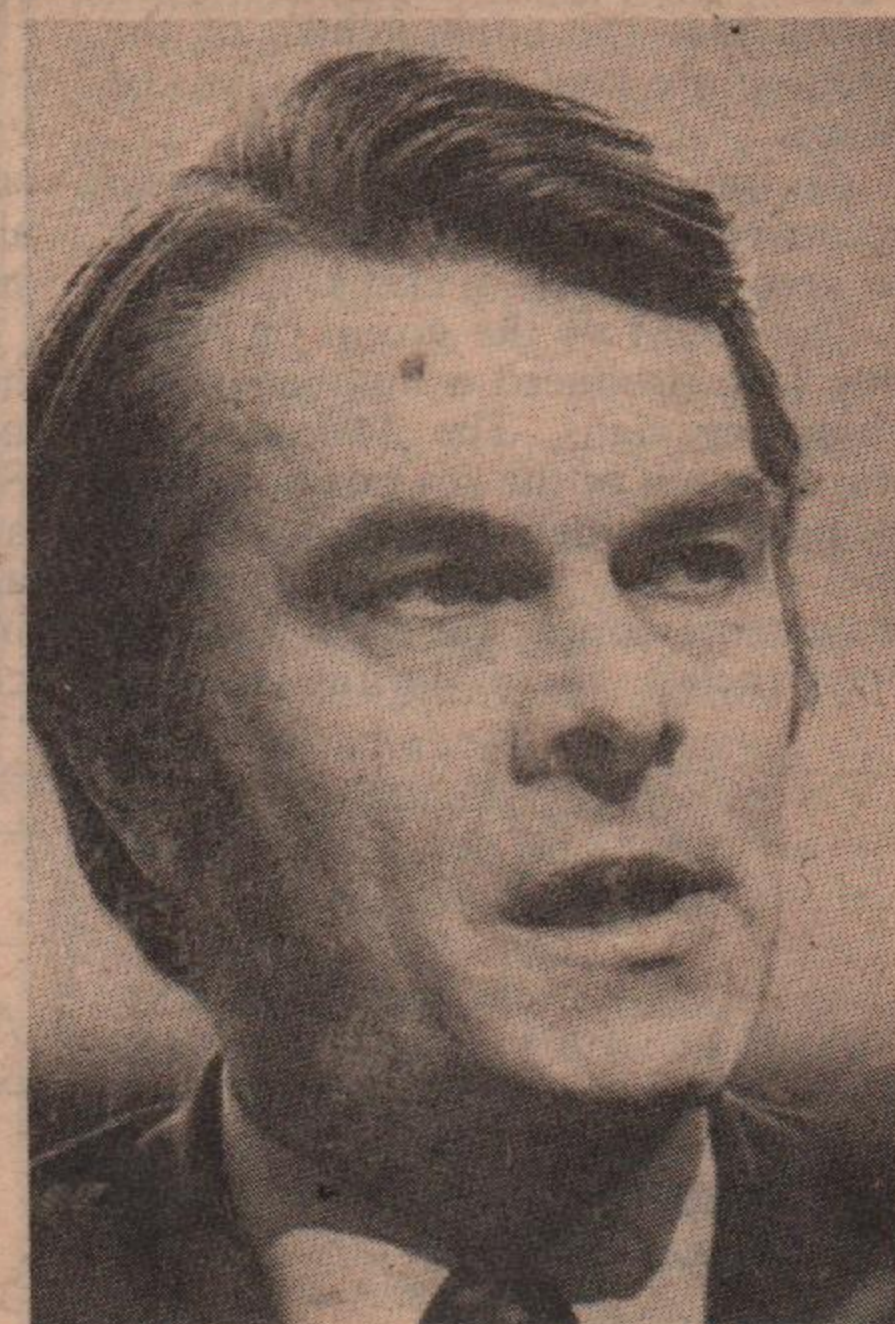
Those facts are enough to dispel the whimperings of faint hearts and defeatists in and around the Labour Party. *We can win this election.*

Many of the disabilities with which Labour enters the election have been self-inflicted, like the recent fiasco with Sharon Atkin or the monumental series of blunders and right-wing sabotage that lost us the Greenwich by-election.

We can win if the labour movement rouses itself out of despair, dismisses the defeatists and the advocates of tactical voting for the fools and traitors they are, and spends the next four weeks in a crusade against Thatcherism.

Not against Thatcher. Thatcher is

Turn to page 3



Owen: Outrider for the Tories

Work for a Labour victory

Terror and torture in Iran

THE ISLAMIC Republic of Iran operates a systematic pattern of cruelty and inhumanity in its treatment of political and criminal prisoners, using torture and punishments designed to kill, cause intense pain, or result in mutilation.

So says Amnesty International in a new report. The human rights organisation appealed to the Iranian government to bring laws and practices involving human rights into line

with international standards to which Iran is committed by treaty.

Amnesty wants provisions for stoning to death, crucifixion, amputations and floggings to be replaced with more humane punishments. At least six men and two women were stoned to death in 1986, and the authorities were using a specially devised electric guillotine for cutting off prisoners' fingers.

More than 6,400 sentences of physical punishment were passed in Tehran alone in the 12 months up to March 1987, according to figures

released by the authorities — nearly 1,100 were floggings imposed for sexual and alcohol-related offences.

Amnesty International says that arbitrary arrest and unfair trials of political prisoners are "making a mockery of justice in Iran".

Trials

Most such trials are secret and last only a few minutes, even though they may result in sentences of death or long terms of imprisonment. Often

the accused do not know the charges against them until they appear in court and Amnesty International knows of no political case before a Revolutionary Court in which the accused has been allowed to have a lawyer. In some cases the verdicts are kept secret — and there is no right of appeal.

Many thousands of political prisoners are being held in jails throughout Iran. People arrested include alleged members and supporters of opposition movements, members of ethnic minorities deman-

ding greater freedom (like the Kurds), and members of the Baha'i faith. Some are being held as hostages for relatives still at large.

Many are teenagers who were at school when arrested but some are elderly, like the 74-year-old writer held almost continuously since 1981 and reported to have been tortured — both his legs are paralysed and he is nearly blind.

Political prisoners jailed during the time of the late Shah are among those seized after the 1979 revolution and again imprisoned for long periods. Iran's jails contain a host of prisoners of conscience held solely because of their beliefs.

The detail and consistency of the hundreds of reports of torture and ill-treatment Amnesty has received makes it clear that such treatment has been routine in a number of prisons and detention centres.

Beatings on the feet, lashings with leather whips, steel rope and electric cable, and being hung by the arms or wrists, are the most common methods reported.

A recurring image in the many testimonies gathered, says Amnesty International, is of rows of Evin prison detainees sitting on the floor blindfolded, with swollen and bleeding feet.

Others have suffered sexual abuse or been put through mock executions — like the former prisoner who describes what happened after he and three others (a youngster of 14 or 15, a man of about 23 and an army officer) were tied to four execution posts in a prison yard.

"I saw the bullet hit the boy, and the officer was hit in the stomach... the [other man] may already have been dead, his body didn't react to the bullet... The young boy was shaking violently... trying to free himself... He was bleeding profusely... I shouted 'What are you waiting for? Why don't you shoot me?'"

They laughed... The young boy died, then the officer... I just stood there watching them... I try very hard not to remember".

Amnesty International has recorded the cases of thousands of people executed since 1979, many simply because the authorities believed they belonged to opposition organisations.

Executions

Over 200 people have been executed because of their religion, most of them Baha'is. Youngsters under 18 have been executed in defiance of international law — Amnesty International says it received reports that children as young as 11 were executed in 1981 and 1982.

Executions have been carried out in secret and not officially acknowledged, so the true number of victims is not known.

Most executions are by hanging or firing-squad. Stoning to death is prescribed for various sexual offences and is deliberately designed to cause pain to the victim before death — by law the stones used must not be "too large, in case the person dies after being hit by one or two of them".

Amputation may be imposed for repeated theft — in May 1986 an electric guillotine was used to cut four fingers off a convicted thief's right hand in Qasr prison; the official press later claimed the instrument could sever a hand in less than a tenth of a second.

Floggings may be imposed for more than 50 offences, including forgery (up to 74 lashes), drinking alcohol (80 lashes), and kissing by an unmarried couple (up to 99 lashes).

A convicted "enemy of God" or one found "corrupt on earth" risks four penalties: exile, cross-amputation (the cutting off of a hand and the opposing foot); a kind of crucifixion intended to cause severe pain and possibly resulting in death; and death. Amnesty International has no record of crucifixions being inflicted.

Local Election results

Liverpool show Labour the way

THE LOCAL election results in Liverpool proved again that the Labour Party still has broad support across the city.

The expulsion from office of the 47 councillors meant that Labour was forced to defend a lot more of their own seats than usual. Nevertheless, Labour emerged with 51 of the 99 seats.

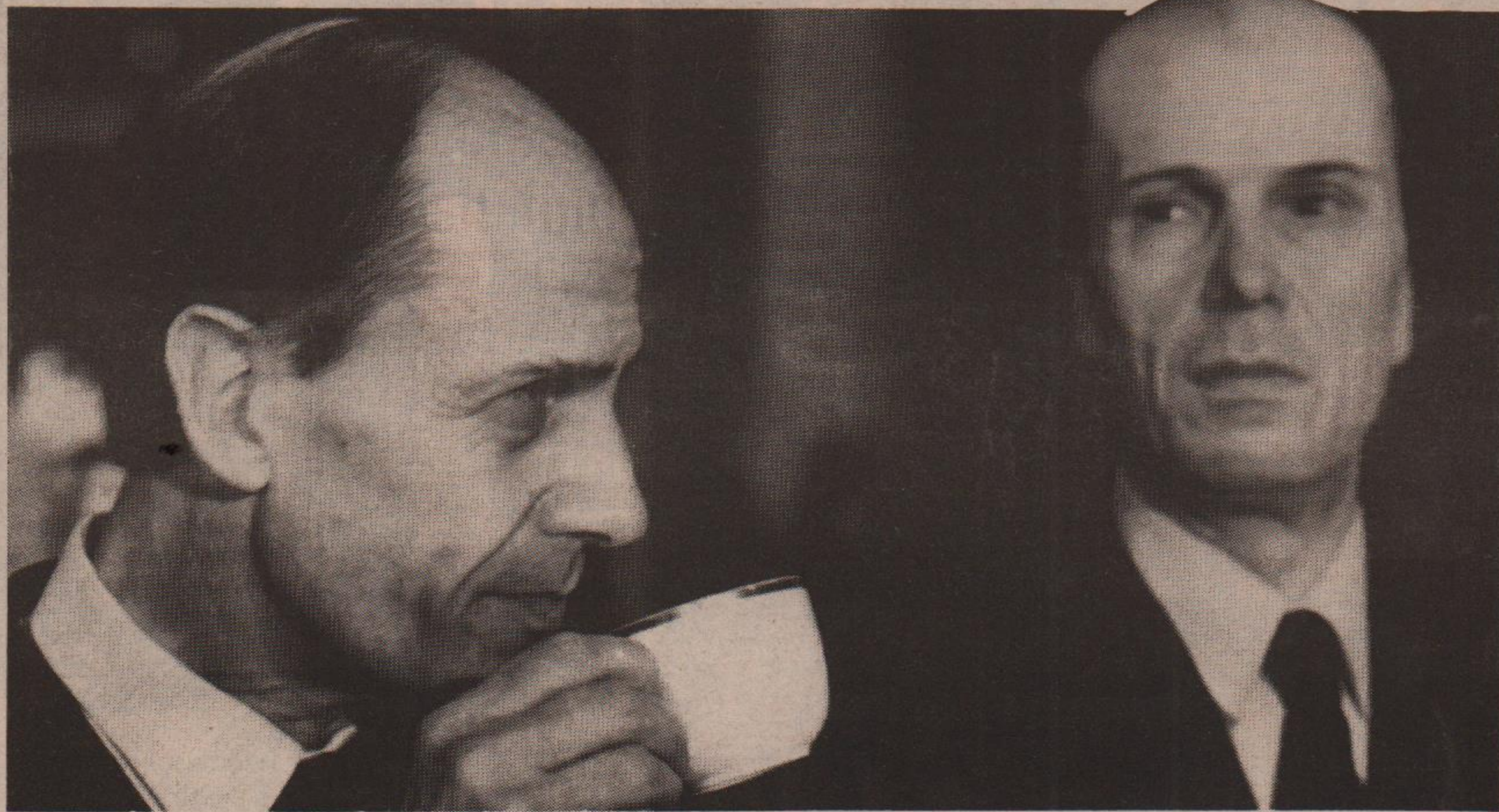
All but three of the 33 wards showed a swing to Labour from the opposition. The Tories lost all three seats that they were defending, confirming the Alliance's role as the local representative of the wealthy and privileged.

The overall picture of a 51-48 Labour majority conceals several problems. Firstly, the presence of three out of the six councillors who voted against Labour's budget in 1984 points to similar dangers in future crucial votes.

Second, the genuine left in the Labour group will have the difficult task of avoiding concessions to the right wing while simultaneously ensuring that the apparatchiks of the *Militant* are kept out of positions of power.

An immediate priority must be to reconvene the District Labour Party to keep the group in check.

The AGM of the group on Monday 11th produced a number of encouraging signs. The *Militant* slate was kept out of the key positions by a strange assortment including some of the soft left whose initial policy statements appear far from healthy. Nevertheless, the majorities in these



His only friend. Photo: Carlos Guarita (Reflex)

votes were narrow enough to give the right wing warning that they will alienate the 'independent' left at their peril.

The meeting agreed to the immediate unfreezing of the projects under the Urban Regeneration Strategy which the imposed Liberal administration had blocked. It also agreed to block Liberal plans for selling key sites in inner-city working-class areas for private development.

Attacking jobs and services loses votes

By Tony Dale

IN THE MANCHESTER local elections, Labour lost 9 seats — six to the Tories and three to the SDP/Liberal Alliance. The anti-Labour vote grew throughout the city.

In part this reflects a bad day for Labour nationally, but the main factor in the decline was the record of the City Council.

Manchester has in recent years been one of the leading 'left-wing' authorities. Faced with the threat of financial crisis from Tory cuts, the policy of the City Labour Party was to campaign against the Tory government. This supposed extreme 'loony left' strategy brought a growth in the Labour vote in the city.

But with creative accounting schemes, the financial crunch was avoided each year until spring 1987. Then, faced with a gap in its finances, the council ripped up its commitments to fighting the Tories and went for high rent and rate rises.

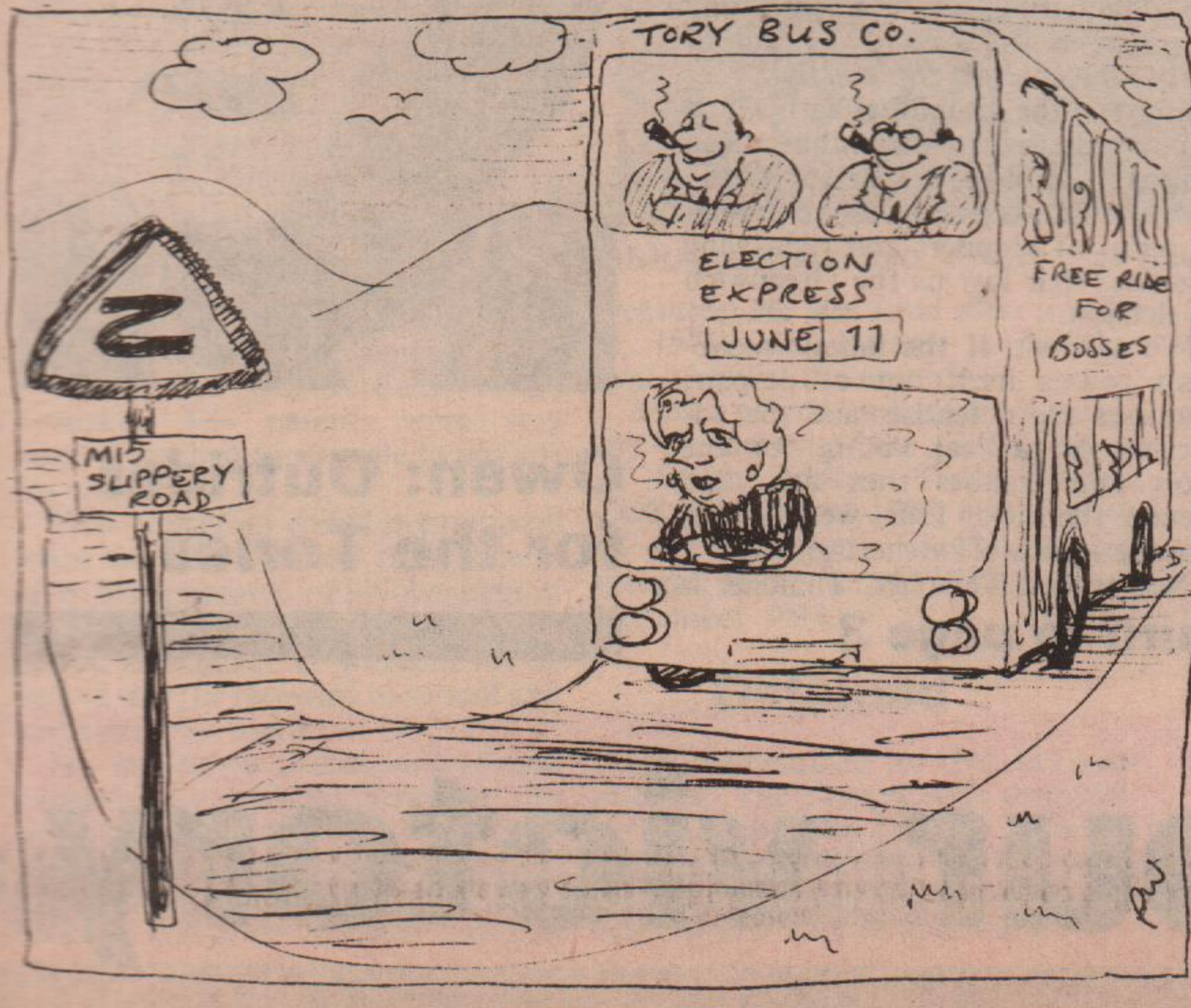
The election result shows that this policy of making the tenants and ratepayers pay for the crisis has brought a revolt against Labour.

Claims may be made that Labour's support fell because of issues such as lesbian and gay rights and the council's support for Viraj Mendis (a Sri Lankan socialist whom the Home Office want to deport). The facts say otherwise.

Manchester City Council has been supporting causes like these for years. Some people in Manchester are hostile to these policies, or to the way they have been implemented. But despite this, while the council was defending jobs and improving services, and not making the Manchester working class pay for it, Labour's support was solid.

The reason why Labour's support fell was that the council put up rents by £1.50 a week and rates by 20%.

The fight for jobs and services is still on. They cannot effectively be protected by high rent and rate rises. The Labour Party in Manchester needs to examine the results and discuss the direction the council is going.



We can win!

From front page

a deservedly hated and reviled figure to a large part of the electorate. But there is more to Thatcherism than Margaret Thatcher.

Not all those who will be trying to fill the sails of their electoral craft with the winds of hostility to Margaret Thatcher are against Thatcherism. The Alliance is not against Thatcherism, though it is competing with Labour for the anti-Thatcher vote.

The way to defeat Thatcherism and at the same time to expose and discredit the sham and con-game of the Alliance's 'anti-Thatcherism' is for Labour to launch a vigorous crusade against everything the Tories — and the Alliance — stand for.

If Labour mumbles and temporises and appears before the electorate with an apology in its mouth and the stance of a party that is unsure of itself, then it will fail to present itself as any sort of alternative to Thatcherism — and it will probably fail to win the election.

EDITORIAL

Of course the Labour Party is limited in the degree to which its leadership does in fact represent a real alternative to the Tories. What the labour movement *needs* to fight for is a *workers' government* — a government based firmly on the working class movement and determined right from the beginning, in the interest of the working class, to cut a swathe through all the vested class interests represented by the Tories and the Alliance. Such a workers' government would rely on the strength of the labour movement to protect it against the Army and the sort of anti-Labour conspirators whose dirty tricks are now coming to light in the MI5 scandal.

That's what we need. That's what Labour should have been fighting for over the last period.

If Labour had been running a serious socialist campaign against the Tories, then its electoral prospects would be better today than they are. But socialists have to live in the labour movement as it is, even while we strive to change it.

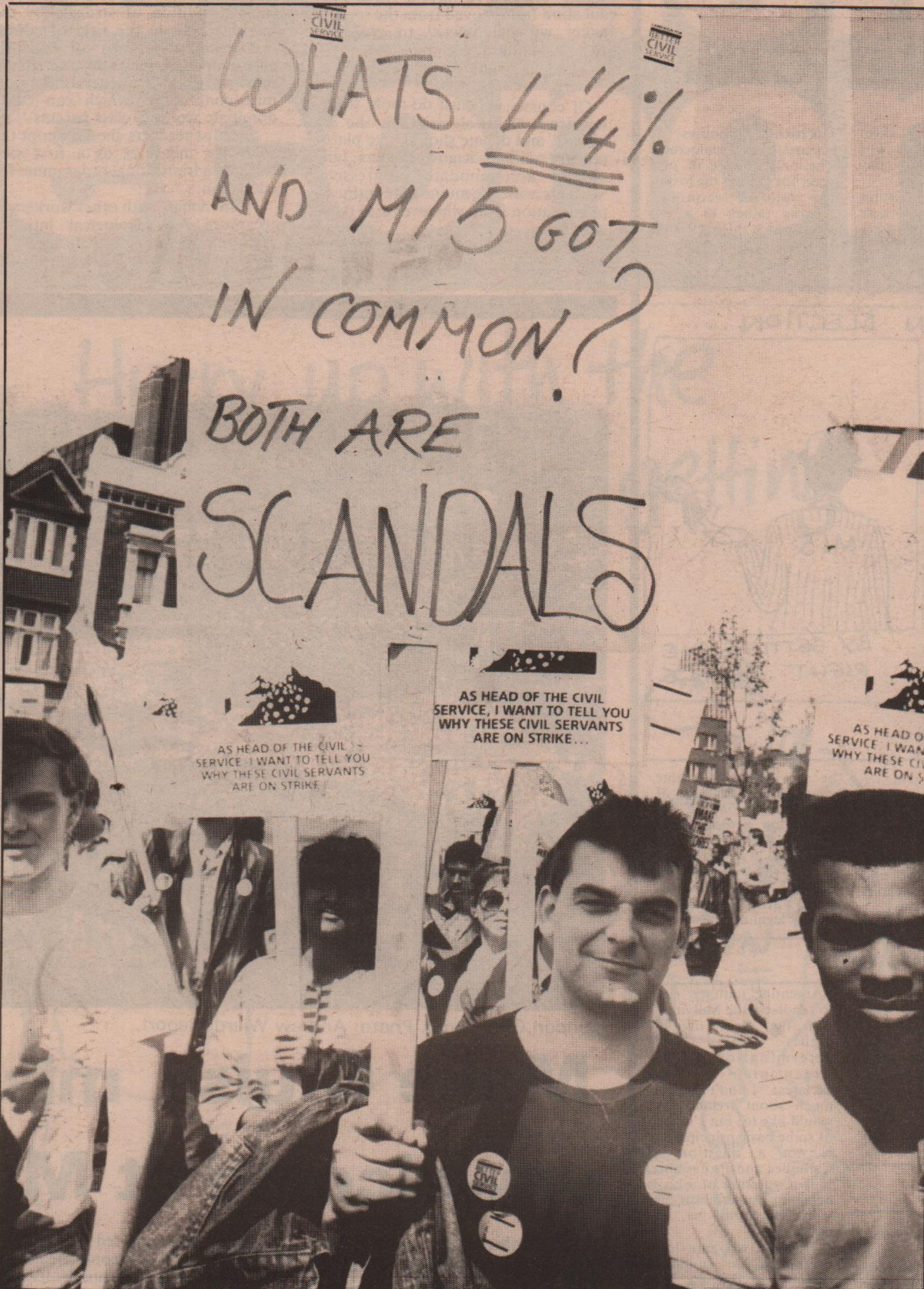
Right now the Kinnock-led Labour Party, with all its political limitations, is the only working-class-based alternative to the Tories or to a coalition of the Tories and the Alliance.

Even *this* Labour Party can beat the Tories and the Alliance — if the labour movement mobilises itself.

In this situation the worst enemies of the working class are those who advise Labour voters in certain con-

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A message from Civil Service strikers

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

situencies to give their votes instead to the Alliance candidate, on the grounds that this might keep out the Tory candidate and deprive Thatcher of a parliamentary majority.

On one level it is simply stupid — with super-scab David Owen talking openly about a Tory/Alliance coalition, any 'anti-Tory' Alliance candidate elected with Labour votes may very well wind up as voting fodder for a new Tory-dominated government. But it is worse than stupid. It is traitorous.

For what is the Labour Party in the perspective of history? It is a working-class-based reform party that has yet to break properly with capitalism. It is dominated by the ideas of the existing system, yet it is a big step along the road to working-class political independence.

The Labour Party stands for the *organisational* independence of the working class in politics. Those who advocate tactical voting (and who will advocate a Labour/Alliance coalition if the post-election

parliamentary arithmetic makes it seem feasible) are advocating that the working class retreat from even the limited class independence in politics which is embodied in the Labour Party, and sink back politically 80 years to a variant of the situation before the Labour Party had clearly separated itself from the Liberals!

Give up

Those 'Marxists' who advocate this are outright traitors, and they should be branded as such. *Against this* Neil Kinnock, and even those right-wingers in the Labour Party who support Kinnock in rejecting tactical voting, are loyal and honest working-class politicians!

Just like Clement Attlee and the old right wing of the Labour Party were honest working-class politicians compared with the Stalinists in the '30s and '40s who advocated a Lab-

Lib-Tory coalition instead of fighting for a Labour government.

It should cause no surprise that the main advocates within the labour movement of such treachery are people who have evolved from Stalinism, like 'Eurocommunists', or John Lloyd, the editor of the *New Statesman*, a recent supporter of the strange ex-Maoist, Stalinist but ultra-right-wing sect known as the British and Irish Communist Organisation. These people long ago gave up on working-class politics and on socialism.

But the four and a half million unemployed, the youth, the people in the inner-city slums and all the other victims of Thatcher's hard-faced capitalist system cannot afford to give up on working-class politics — which right now has to start with fighting for a Labour government.

We can get a Labour government. From now to 11 June, every resource we can muster should be thrown into the Labour campaign.

PRESS GANG

No jokes on Sunday

SOME READERS of this column think I was too kind to the *News on Sunday* two weeks ago.

It is bland, superficial, and dull, they say. The NoS, that is, not this column... I hope.

Presumably such people were not terribly upset to hear that the paper found itself in serious difficulties within a couple of weeks of its launch.

It seems now that the NoS is to be saved by a millionaire socialist estate agent, Owen Oyston, who will probably sack editor Keith Sutton and replace him with Barry Askew (who wrote the Poulson/T Dan Smith scandal in the *Lancashire Evening Post* in the early '70s).

Meanwhile, one Mike Molloy has written a most peculiar attack (well, I think it's an attack) on the NoS in the current *New Statesman*. Much of Mr Molloy's rambling polemic is devoted to a tirade against 'chat-show intellectuals who know they can get an easy round of applause every time they attack Samantha Fox', and 'the invincibly ignorant who have invested the Labour Party in the last 15 years and are only now being doused with pesticide by Neil Kinnock'.

By Jim Denham

I must confess that I simply do not follow most of Mr Molloy's argument, or grasp exactly what it has to do with the NoS. But it turns out that this fellow does have one coherent point to make regarding the journalistic (as opposed to financial) problems of the NoS, and it has the merit of coming from first-hand experience.

'For the past year I have been editing the *Sunday Mirror*. In that time there has not been one major news story break on a Saturday. So if you wait for news on Saturday you will end up with painfully boring speculation or mindless trivia. Not a good mixture for any paper, regardless of its search for identity'.

Perhaps, then, we should turn to Mr Molloy's publication for a lesson in how to produce a popular radical Sunday paper without depending too much upon news. This week's *Sunday Mirror* front page is divided exactly in two.

The top half is a plug for their exciting new series 'King of Fools' (about Edward VIII's flirtation with the Nazis). The bottom half is the headline 'Tortured in the name of science', which turns out to be about experiments on baby monkeys.

Royalty and animals: both traditional tabloid favourites, and neither, it must be admitted, amounting to 'news' in the usually accepted sense. The NoS led on the MI5 story that it could, and should, have used for its launch three weeks ago.

Other than that, the two papers are remarkably similar. I'd be hard put to tell them apart, except for the *Mirror's* one page of scantly clad young women (a tabloid tradition which the NoS thankfully rejects).

But the *Sunday Mirror* does have one ingredient which the NoS so far lacks: humour.

There is Alexei Sayle's very funny page, and a clever spoof Conservative Party political from Julia Langdon. The NoS has only Sue Townsend's 'Secret Diary of Margaret Hilda, aged 14 1/4', which I don't find very amusing, I'm afraid.

They haven't even got a political cartoonist.

Strangely, Mr Molloy makes no reference to humour in his *New Statesman* tirade. Perhaps he hasn't realised that Alexei Sayle's page is meant to be funny. I would, however, urge the NoS to lighten its po-faced earnestness with a few jokes.

And I don't mean more articles by the Labour leader, billed as 'The Kinnock Road to Victory'.

GRAFFITI

An unpopular Czar

An opinion survey published in the official USSR press shows that Soviet workers are not keen on Gorbachev's reforms.

More than 6,000 workers polled in Moscow factories thought that the

reforms had brought them little but harder work. For a number of workers, pay has fallen too.

Three-quarters of senior managers, however, were relatively enthusiastic about the new policies.

For ordinary workers,

Gorbachev promises no 'openness' or democracy. The only change in prospect for them is the loss of the relative economic security (albeit at a low level) which the old system of rigid central planning gave them.

HOW THE TORIES WIN AN ELECTION...



Racist justice in the US

IN the US state of Georgia, the convicted murder of a white person is 11 times more likely to get the death penalty than someone who has killed a black person.

Over the whole US, 50% of the prisoners on death row are from ethnic minorities. Although blacks are murder victims just as often as whites, 75% of the death-row prisoners are there for murdering whites.

Four of the nine Justices of the US Supreme Court agreed recently that these figures show an unmistakable pattern of racism in the administration of the death sentence, and upheld an appeal

against the death sentence by Warren McCleskey, a black man from Georgia convicted for killing a white policeman.

Unfortunately, the other five Justices disagreed, and the death sentence against McCleskey still stands.

Reporting this decision,

the *Economist* magazine points to another sort of discrimination in the administration of the death sentence: "no rich person is executed in America". If you are rich, you can afford to pay lawyers for round after round of lengthy legal appeals.

Imperialists out!

The latest issue of the *Clydeside Troops Out* Movement bulletin, produced by local members of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), carries a fascinating statement by the "Argentinian Trotskyist" Leon Perez.

After glibly equating the

"Argentine nation's right to repossess the Malvinas" with the "Irish nation's right to self-determination", our Argentinian friend declares: "I don't know as much about Ireland as I would like to, but I'm sure of some basic principles. It is not a question of Catholics and Protestants. It is a question of who is defeating imperialism and who is loyal to imperialism."

"People who are loyal to imperialism should be driven into the sea. And the biggest loyalists are the capitalist government in Dublin."

"People who are loyal to imperialism" is the left's standard name for the Protestant community in Northern Ireland. It is hardly surprising that they oppose a united Ireland if it means that they will be despatched into the Irish Sea.

Perez is a leading member of the 'Morenist' international group, the 'International Workers' League'. He first moved from Argentina to become the leader of the Morenist group in the US, and now he is riding shotgun on the shattered ex-Healyites as they make their way to joining the Morenist ranks.

What, one wonders, will the Perez/WRP 'Fourth International' have in store for the British working class, whose accommodation to British imperialism is only too well-known?

the Tories want even more prison sentences.

Their prison-building programme cannot keep up, so now they are discussing privatised prisons — already pioneered in the US.

Not only can riches save you from the death sentence in the US. In California, at least, they can save you from the worst miseries of prison life. You can pay to serve your sentence in a more comfortable private prison rather than the public jail.

Discrimination

A new survey has confirmed the extent of racial discrimination in jobs. Identically-qualified black people have more trouble getting jobs than whites.

The Commission for Racial Equality studied 2,640 polytechnic graduates. A year after graduation, 8% of the whites were still jobless, but 12% of the Afro-Caribbeans and 16% of the Asians.

Prison life

The US also has three times as many people in prison, in proportion to population, as Britain — which in turn keeps more people in jail than the major countries of continental Europe.

Yet the US's rate for crimes other than murder is also higher, and rising as fast, as Europe's. US figures show 35.7 rapes per 100,000 inhabitants per year, while the rates for England, France, and West Germany vary between 5.2 and 9.7. The robbery rate is four times England's and West Germany's.

In one category of crime — larceny and theft — England comes out worst, with a slightly higher rate even than the US. But it is British courts' greater willingness to hand down jail sentences for precisely these crimes that makes Britain's prisons fuller than the continent's. So much for imprisonment as a deterrent to crime!

Three-quarters of prisoners in Britain's jails at any time are there for non-violent offences. But

Fight for education

At a time when the left in teaching is preoccupied with fighting hard to hang on to basic trade union rights and resist cruelly worsened working conditions, Liam Conway (SO 311) is to be congratulated on reminding us that as socialists we have a vision of education far removed from the sorry system we are obliged to plough through day by day.

Of course, we must do more than construct an ideal vision in the abstract, and debate should take place not just among socialist teachers, but should accommodate progressive workers with a genuine commitment to education from whatever area they work in.

This is an indispensable part of the bridge building process that Liam

refers to: for, as the Workers' Action "Manifesto for Socialist Teachers" states:

"While we must fight for the education system to be accountable to, and under control of, the working class, we must realise that the lack of a continued tradition of struggle by the working class in the field of education concretely means for socialists an uphill struggle against the stream of right wing demagoguery and reformist conceptions which can easily dominate working class parents."

Socialist teachers should adopt the following measures as a first step towards a transitional programme for education:

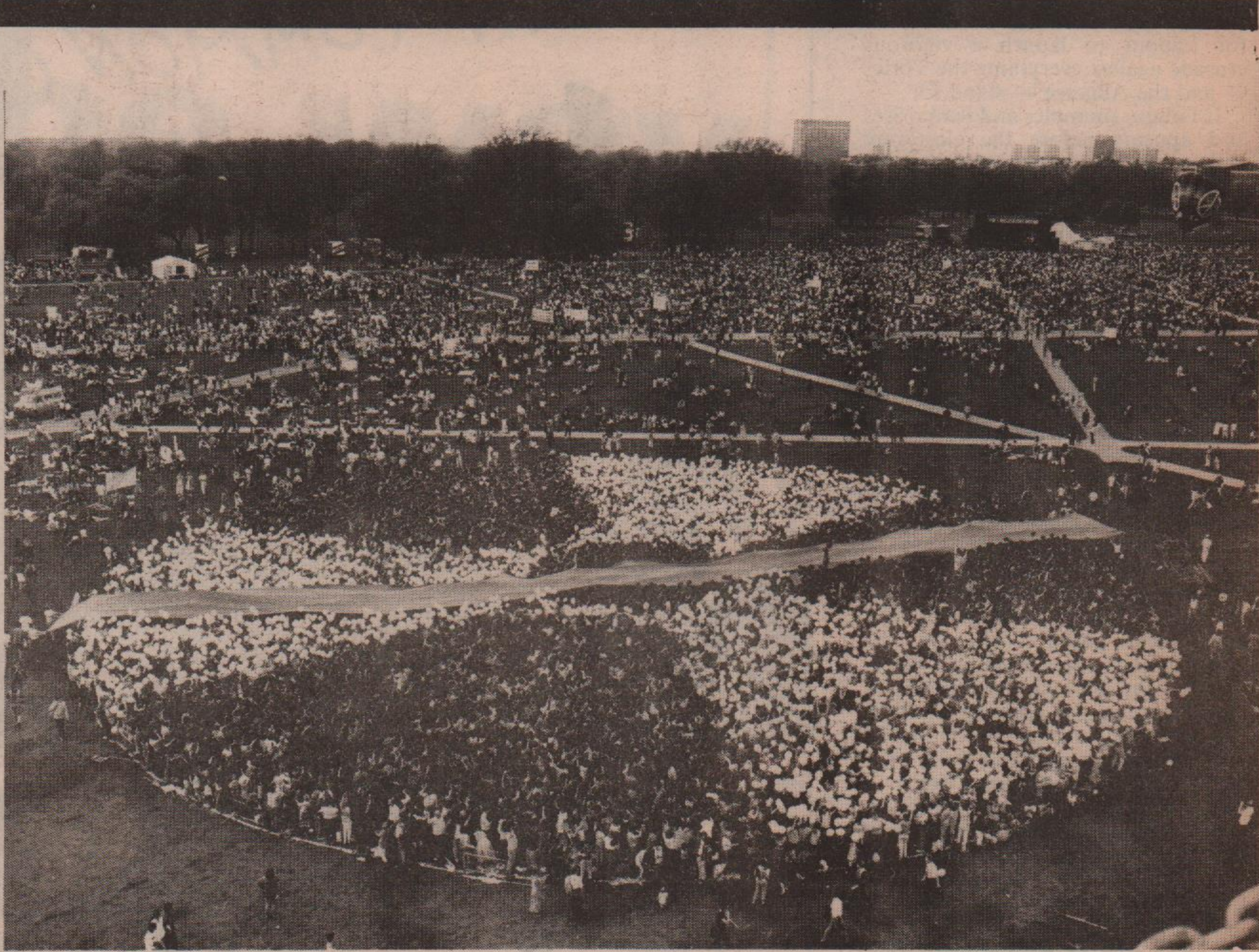
*joint debate with other workers to recapture the ideological initiative from the right wing in education

*pressure on the leadership of the

teaching unions to turn out to fellow workers, our allies, through the TUC and independently. Teachers are workers, and the myth of professionalism ("teacher knows best") only serves to isolate. Other workers don't crow about being "professional", they'd settle for "conscientious" — why can't teachers?

*transitional demands based on parity with the private sector (eg. class size) and the best aspects of education in other countries. This demands serious research but the publication of the results would have immense propaganda value. While we're at it, we should include a detailed list of who among our politicians send their children where to school.

Yours fraternally,
Ian Hollingworth



London CND demo. Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report.

Make Cruise missiles unwelcome at Molesworth

RAF Molesworth, near Huntingdon, in Cambridgeshire, is designated as Britain's second cruise missile base. It is due, officially, to be fully operational by July 1988.

The past two years has seen an enormous increase of activity in and around the base. Back in 1980, when Molesworth was announced as the site of the second cruise deployment, the place was all but derelict and abandoned. This changed dramatically in 1985, with a massive security cordon thrown around the base and the hasty erection of steel fencing all along its perimeter.

Encirclement

This process also involved the encirclement of the original Molesworth Peace Camp and the eviction of protestors. The huge security operation, carried out in broad daylight, was presided over by Michael Heseltine, surrounded by soldiers and wearing a flak jacket for the benefit of the cameras.

Since that time construction workers have laboured day and night to refurbish the base and build the silos that will eventually house the

missiles. It is reported that work on these will be finally completed as early as the end of next month. It seems, however, that they won't be standing empty until next year. They will start being used from the moment they are finished.

Launcher

On 24 March at 4 a.m. a launch control vehicle was photographed entering Molesworth under heavy police escort. It had been driven several miles across country from the USAF base at nearby Alconbury. Huge Galaxy C-5 cargo planes have been sighted recently landing at Alconbury and unloading cruise-related cargoes.

A recent shipment included an actual cruise missile launcher. The usual procedure is for these vehicles, in a heavily guarded convoy, to be taken into Molesworth, usually in the early hours of the morning.

It is, however, unlikely as yet that any missiles or their warheads have been installed at the base. This will probably not happen until the completion of the silos, in approximately six weeks time.

Molesworth, it is believed, will not have its full complement of 92 missiles until 1988, but a smaller

number could be deployed there in under two months.

All this is happening without any official announcement or vote in Parliament. It has, however, stirred the East Anglian peace movement into action. Different groups in the region now organise volunteers to watch for activity around both bases every night. Fund raising appeals have started to finance a Molesworth Cruisewatch organisation.

The aim is to build it up to be as effective as the Cruisewatch organisation around Greenham Common.

Once the first missiles are deployed, the authorities may wish to commence regular dispersal exercises. If this happens, the convoys coming out of the base will be followed and possibly disrupted.

The peace movement in East Anglia is determined to make cruise missiles as unwelcome at Molesworth as they are already at Greenham Common.

ALEX SIMPSON,
Cambridge CND.

Send letters to PO Box 823,
London SE15 4NA. No more
than 300 words, please, or we
may have to make cuts.

Vote Labour, kick out the Tories!

The Casino economy

By Martin Thomas

EACH DAY £60 BILLION of currencies is traded in the City of London: that is, a value equal to all the new and replacement capital investment (machines, factories, roads, houses, etc.) in Britain in a whole year.

Maybe 10 to 15% of this dizzying whirl of money is to do with real trade of goods and services. The rest is speculation. Millions are gained and lost as the pound goes up 0.01 against the dollar or down 0.01 against the yen. Bigger falls and rises, and the international capitalist system goes into a crisis: jobs and livelihoods are destroyed.

Just a few yards away, a similar business goes on at the Stock Exchange. In the 52 months to December 1986, shareholders — a small minority of the population — made some £80 billion profit on a rising stock market, with dividends on top of that. That's five times the annual National Health Service budget.

Other years, share prices fall. The shareholders' fortunes take a knock — and companies go bust, factories close, working-class families have their lives devastated by unemployment.

London is a big centre of international finance, doing about one-third of all the foreign exchange trading in the world. Britain now rakes in more, net, in interest, profit, dividends and other 'invisible' income from abroad than any other country.

Decay

But while Britain's casino economy flourishes, and £100,000 a year, £2000 a week, becomes a standard salary for a City whizzkid, misery and decay spreads over the rest of the country. Only a couple of hundred yards east of the City is Brick Lane, where Bengali families live in rotten housing, harassed by racists and dependent for jobs on low-wage sweat-shops. That's Thatcher's Britain.

Since 1979 30 out of every 100 manufacturing jobs have disappeared. Factories have been replaced by dole queues. Since 1983 — for the first time ever — Britain has had to import more manufactured goods than it can export. Many goods, particularly high-technology ones, just aren't produced in Britain any longer.

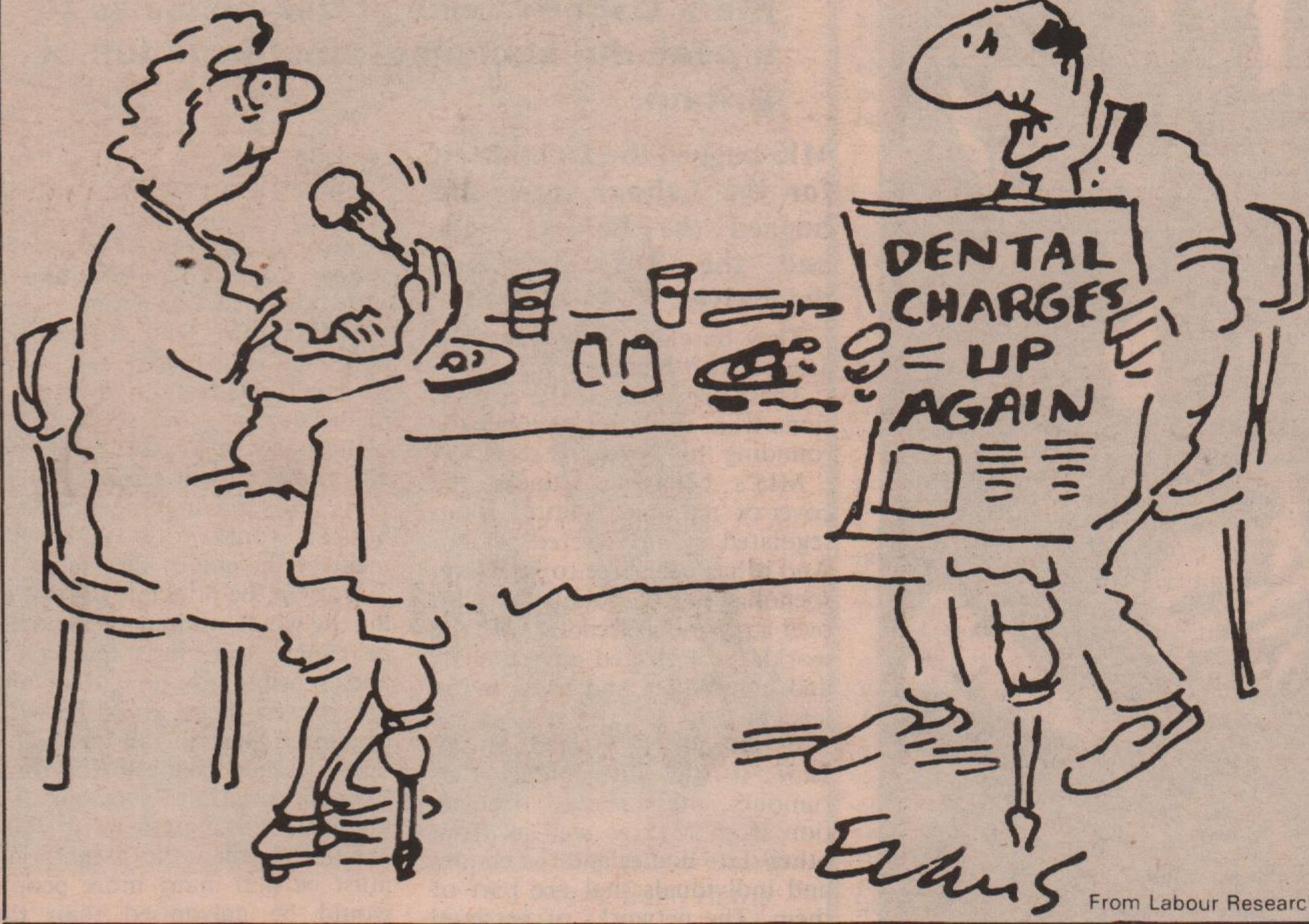
Britain's share of world manufactured exports has dropped dramatically. Between 1965 and 1983 Britain's manufactured exports grew slower than those of any other country in the entire world, excepting only India (whose exports grew at about the same rate as Britain's) and a few countries like Tanzania which export hardly any manufactured goods anyway. In 1955 Britain's manufactured exports were 133% of West Germany's, and in 1983, 44%.

Despite all the Tory government's babble about high technology, Britain has done worse there than in other sectors: the British share of world exports in information technology dropped from 9% in 1970 to 4% in 1984.

Many of Britain's industrial areas have become pauper wastelands. In a place like Handsworth, Birmingham, only 5% of school-leavers get jobs.

But this has been a boom-time for Britain's capitalists. Britain's oil boom started seriously in 1981. Between 1981 and 1985 North Sea Oil

Hurry up with the teeth dear - I'm getting hungry!



From Labour Research

brought Britain a trade surplus of £30 billion. The government drew £12 billion from oil in taxes in 1985-6. But now oil income is declining, slowly but steadily.

Even the feudal princes of Saudi Arabia and the corrupt generals of Nigeria have seen to it that their oil booms bring their countries new factories, roads and public buildings. Not Britain's Tories. While the oil money pours in, the basic hardware of British society has been decaying.

Government capital spending has slumped. The central government controls loans to councils for house-building: it cut the money available by 65% between 1978-9 and 1985-6.

According to civil servants, £19 billion is needed to put local authorities' housing stock into good repair. Civil engineering experts report that Britain suffers "decaying water and sewage services... derelict land... damaged sea defences... gaps in the road network..." The official

National Economic Development Office estimates that £2 billion is needed for hospital maintenance, and that maintenance work on school buildings is running 40% short of what's needed.

Yet the Tory government still holds the purse-strings tight. Thousands of building workers are jobless, masses of work needs to be done, and the Tories say "we can't afford it!"

Profits are booming: even excluding North Sea Oil, the net rate of return on capital in 1985 was the

'While Britain's casino economy flourishes... misery and decay spreads over the rest of the country'.

highest since 1973. Yet private capital investment is low, too. There's masses of money around, but the inner cities rot.

Since the Tories took office in 1979, the high-paid have had much bigger pay rises than the low-paid. To make it worse, the high-paid have had big tax cuts, while the low-paid pay if anything more taxes. Between 1979 and 1985 the poorer half of Britain's households suffered a real cut in living standards, while the top 6% of households became 20% better off.

Perks

Inequality of wealth has also increased. Perks have increased. Between 1980 and 1985 the percentage of managers getting share option schemes increased from 15% to 48%; those getting a company car, from 72% to 80%; those getting free



private health insurance, from 58% to 71%.

Inland Revenue workers complain that they have not enough staff to chase up an estimated £4.5 billion of tax evasion. Customs and Excise, similarly short-handed, make it a rule of never pursuing possible VAT fiddles if the amount involved is less than £100,000.

Meanwhile masses of special investigators are sent to chase maybe £4.7 to £135 million social security fraud. £886 million of social security entitlements (as of 1983) go unclaimed because people don't know their rights or are put off by bureaucracy. But between 1979 and 1986 the government cut £9 billion from social security and gave out £13 billion in tax cuts.

So the rich are richer than ever. Where has the money gone? Where have the oil profits disappeared to?

Abroad, mainly. Between 1976 and the end of 1986, the net stock of British capitalists' overseas assets soared from £3 billion to £80 billion. British capital has operated internationally for centuries. But under Thatcher it has spread itself faster and more vigorously than ever before.

There is method in this madness. British capitalists invest abroad because it is profitable. And in Britain the Tories' demolition-squad economics make capitalist sense. Mass unemployment — so the capitalists hope — will break Britain's traditionally strong labour movement, and allow industry to revive on the backs on cowed, broken-spirited workers.

But so far the Tories' success is limited. Manufacturing profits are still low by world standards. The unions still have great reserves of strength. There is a long class war ahead — and it will get more and more bitter as the oil runs out.

Vote Labour, kick out the Tories!

Why Labour must tackle the secret state



Racist and brutal: cops apply a hold that can kill to defend the South African embassy from a sit-down protest. Photo: Andrew Moore.

Mark Osborn looks at the obstacles to a peaceful socialist transformation of Britain.

MI5 bugged the Labour left for the Labour right and bugged the Labour right and the Tory left for themselves.

They burgled. They wandered around with spanners.

These are some of the conclusions from the latest scandal surrounding this 'security' service.

MI5's behaviour, under the cover of 'national security', is not regulated by any elected person. And it has been free to interfere, spending vast amounts of cash over a period of decades, with the workings of elected governments and of political and trade union leaders.

If Labour is elected on 11 June, it will undoubtedly face rumours, pressure and obstruction from MI5 as well as from other state bodies and the cliques and individuals that are part of them. The networks of personal and political ties that link the leaders of industry to the top of the state apparatus will work against Labour.

For Kinnock, let alone for left-wingers, this will be a problem. It is quite clear that the anti-red paranoia pumped out by the media about even moderate Labour people is part-believed by sections of the ruling class. If a Kinnock government were pushed even slightly to the left by working-class struggle, then maybe it would face the threat of a coup, in the same way as Harold Wilson's government did in the mid-'70s despite its efforts to subdue the working class.

Here lies the democratic case for the opening-up of state institutions to public scrutiny and control: the election of senior officials, a Freedom of Information

Act, etc.

But the question for socialists remains — could a more democratic parliamentary system, even with the abolition of such obviously dangerous bodies as MI5, MI6, and the special police units, be used to change society fundamentally and bring in socialism?

Suppose a future Labour government had serious intentions of moving against the bosses: would votes in Parliament be the end of the matter?

No. On the principle of assuming the worst, and then you won't be caught out, it is reasonable and sensible to guess that the bosses' resistance would be well-organised and intransigent. Indeed, if catastrophe in the form of expropriation were an immediate prospect for the capitalists, then the assumption must be that many more people would be galvanised than the mavericks who built private armies against Wilson.

Middle class

They would have some base among the middle class; they would control a proportion of the police and army; and they would get political, and if necessary military, assistance from abroad.

This was the situation which faced the Allende government of 1970-3 in Chile when it attempted a parliamentary road to socialism. It was eventually chewed to pieces by a military coup which murdered 50,000 of the best of the Chilean working class and smashed the labour movement.

Although the idea of peaceful

Riot cop attacks unarmed miner, socialist transformation is a nice one, I personally prefer living to dying because of wishful thinking. Historical experience, like Chile, suggests that ruling classes do not just lie down and die according to timesheets constructed from the point of view of logic. They fight tooth and nail.

The crime of the political leaders of the Chilean left was not building an alternative working-class force capable of defending the factory occupations and land seizures that had been made.

Logically, I suppose, socialist transformation is possible while avoiding civil war. It is possible to imagine a situation where the state in Britain disintegrated, the workers were massively behind a socialist political party and had won over or neutralised a large proportion of the armed forces



Orgreave June '84.

Photo: John Harris.

and the police, and the international ruling class was in such a state of disarray that it was unable to invade or interfere.

That is all possible if you want to stretch your imagination a million miles from today's Britain — or if you want to conveniently avoid the problems that workers face right now. For it is a fact that in current conditions workers face violence, or the threat of it, on picket lines, in the black communities, and on the streets. Our job is to develop working-class organisation to the level at which workers will be prepared to defend themselves from attack.

This principle, extended to the whole of society, must be built on the defence of the economic gains of a revolution — workers' control and sensible economic planning. The principle of workers' self-

defence links the class struggle of today with the socialist future, rather than imposing the schema of a parliamentary road onto the battles of today.

Possibility

The point is made clear if you look at the way the left-reformists in the *Militant* operated during the miners' strike of 1984-5. During the strike the *Militant* called for a 24 hour general strike, the aim of which was to force the Tories into a general election. What this would have meant was derailing a strike movement which would have offered the possibility of changing society for ever — by imposing their blueprint of socialist transformation.

For the capitalist class, parlia-

ment is only one means of ruling. It is not their main means even now: most real decisions are taken by permanent, unelected state officials in the Bank of England, Whitehall, and the police and army top ranks, while parliament acts as a facade. If the capitalists reckon that their wealth and power is seriously threatened, they will ruthlessly ignore the formalities of that parliamentary facade, and use all the resources of the bureaucracy and the armed forces to try to defeat the working class.

If the labour movement is mesmerised and bewitched by the parliamentary facade, and does not face up to the task of tackling the behind-the-scenes unelected power of the millionaire class, then we are fighting the class war with one hand tied behind our backs.

1924: the red scare election

By Tim Anderson

THE ELECTION of 1923 had given Labour 191 seats in Parliament, as against 159 for the Liberals and 259 for the Tories. So Labour had no absolute majority and indeed only half the seats of the Liberals and Tories combined. But they didn't combine. The ruling class was divided and this division was reflected in the unwillingness of the Liberals and Tories to form a coalition.

It was into this gap that Labour stepped and Ramsey MacDonald formed the first Labour government in the following month. The fact that the two capitalist parties acquiesced to a Labour government was not a sign of Labour's strength, but rather of the confidence of the bourgeois politicians that Labour would provide a safe stopgap. As Asquith put it, "if a Labour government is ever to be tried in this country, as it will be sooner or later, it could hardly be tried under safer conditions."

Labour's electoral programme was one of nationalisations and of dealing with unemployment; it laid particular stress on nationalising the mines.

If anything worthwhile was to come out of the Labour government, then the strategy would be to press ahead with party policy and force an election on these issues as soon as the Liberals and Tories combined to vote against them. With such a strategy Labour would certainly have increased the number of its MPs, and could possibly have been returned as the largest single party.

Election

But MacDonald did not fall short of Asquith's estimation. Rather than forcing an election on its own terms and around its own policies, the Labour government was concerned to use its few months of power to demonstrate that it was "fit to govern" — or in other words, that it was entirely subservient to the whims of capitalism.

Unemployment increased and prices went up; the mines weren't nationalised; and so eager were the Labour leaders to prove their respectability that they even evoked the Emergency Powers Act against a transport workers' strike.

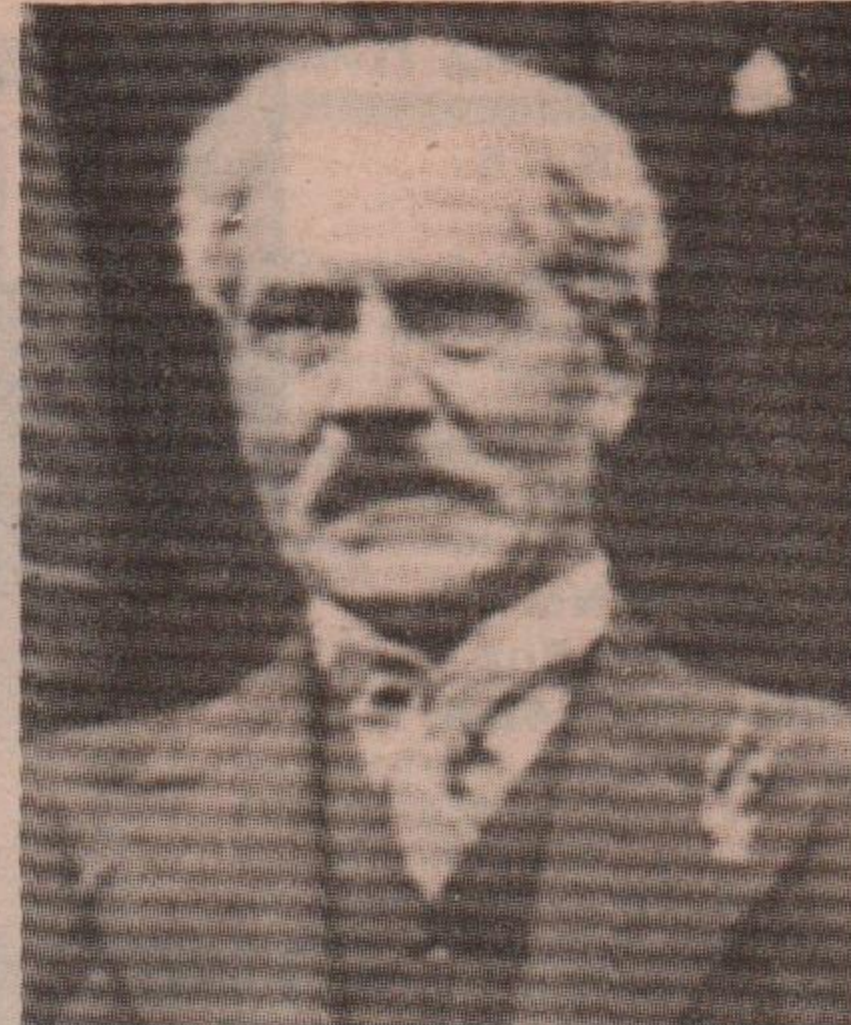
The excuse given for every betrayal was, of course, that Labour had to depend on Liberal support in order to survive as a government.

But in fact they were forced to fight an election — by a Tory 'Red Scare' campaign. This was sparked off by the infamous 'Zinoviev Letter', the existence of which was announced to the world by the Daily Mail, just 5 days before polling was to take place.

The letter was supposedly sent to the British Communist Party by Zinoviev, 'President of the Presidium of the IKKI', and Arthur McManus, who was a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Headed 'very secret' the letter called for a campaign to put pressure on Labour to ratify the Anglo-Soviet Treaty which the Government had negotiated; for the building of communist cells within the Army and Navy and the munitions factories, and for the formation of a group of military experts with the CPGB.

It was a fake. But this clumsy forgery was quite sufficient to dictate the terms of the election. Exactly how the letter came into the hands of the Foreign Office was never revealed. The truth of the matter was probably as stated by the Communist Party at the time, that the forgery was perpetrated by White Russian emigres intent on wrecking the Anglo-Soviet Treaty.

In any event, the Foreign Office sent it to MacDonald, who returned



MacDonald

it with instructions that they should find out whether or not it was genuine and publish it if it wasn't a forgery. MacDonald also approved a draft protest note to the Russian Charge d'Affairs, Rakovsky, and left the matter with the Foreign Office, who were to consult him before making any move.

Someone at the Foreign Office, however, decided to force MacDonald's hand and the letter was leaked to the Daily Mail. The same day the Foreign Office published it too, and also sent off the protest note, without MacDonald knowing a thing of what was happening.

The next day the storm broke. The press started a rabid anti-communist witch hunt, with the government supposedly in the hands of communists. 'Union Jack or Red Flag' screamed the Daily Mail, 'Vote Conservative and rid the country of the government that is controlled by the Communists who take their orders from Moscow, the home of wholesale murder and starvation.'

At first the Government Ministers claimed that the letter was a forgery, as it was. But that line fell through when it became apparent that MacDonald had approved the protest note.

The Labour Ministers protested that they were the most vehement anti-communists, as indeed they were, and they produced an impressive list to prove their claim. Had they not at the Labour Party Conference which had just ended excluded Communists from standing as Labour Party candidates and declared Labour Party and Communist Party membership to be incompatible? Hadn't they jailed JR Campbell, the editor of the CP's weekly paper, for inciting mutiny amongst the armed forces?

But it was no use. Grovel as they may, the reactionaries would not let them off the hook. Labour was branded as the 'tool of foreign agents', a danger to 'national security'. The election became a one issue affair, and Labour's one independent piece of policy, the recognition of the Soviet Union and the Anglo-Soviet agreement, now hung round their necks like a dead weight.

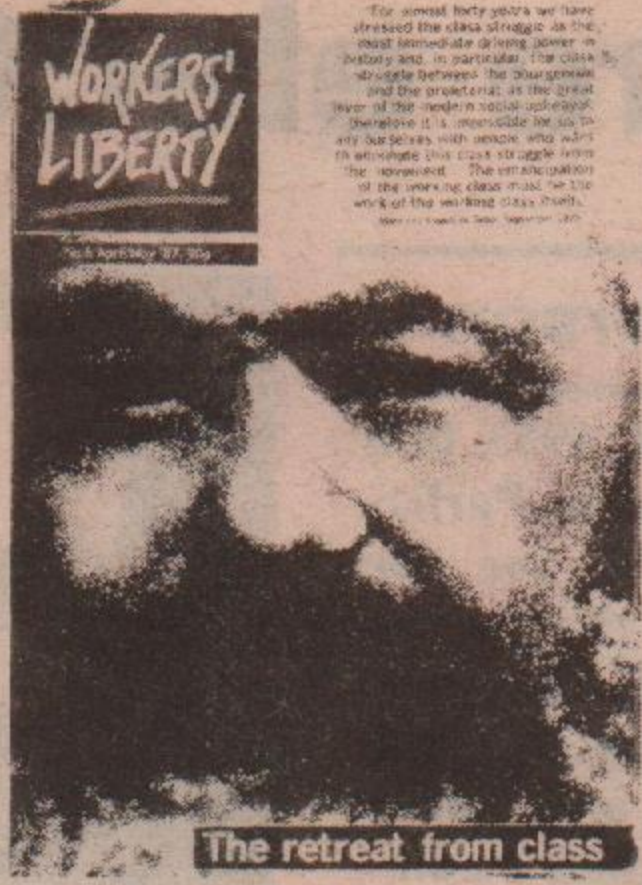
For their betrayal of party policy and for their anti-communism, Labour leaders reaped a bitter harvest. In the election Labour lost 40 seats and the Tories were returned with 415 MPs, their biggest majority since 1832.

But the "Red Letter" scare did not in fact shake the hard core of working class Labour support. Labour's vote increased from 4,348,379 in 1923 to 5,482,629 and in North Battersea, Saklatvala regained his seat on a Communist ticket (in 1922 he had stood as a Labour candidate) defeating a 'constitutionalist' who had Liberal and Tory support.

What had happened was that the "Red Scare" had shaken the middle class voter away from the Liberals and towards the Tories — exactly the same vote which MacDonald had hoped to attract towards Labour by his weak-kneed policies.

Why is the working class going out of fashion on the left?

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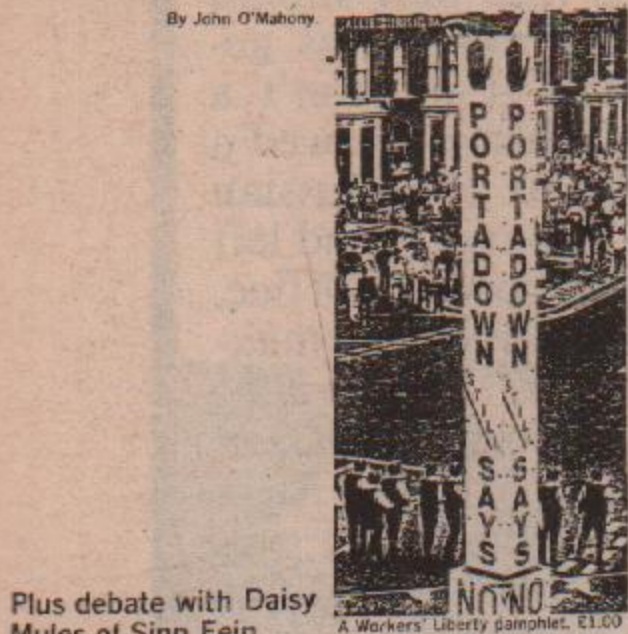
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ACTIVISTS' DIARY

Socialist Organiser Thursday Forum. How to achieve workers' unity and socialism in the Middle East. Speaker John O'Mahony, editor of Socialist Organiser. Thursday 21 May at 7.30 p.m. Plough pub, Museum Street, London WC1.

Wallasey SO public forums. Wednesday June 17. Can Kinnock Deliver Socialism? Meetings at Wallasey Unemployed Centre, Seaview Road, 7.45 p.m.

Lewisham Anti-Apartheid Group. Picket of Tesco's superstore, off Lewisham Road, SE13. Every Saturday, 11.00 am to 2.00 pm.

Stalinism against the revolution in Spain. Meeting to

commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the May Days in Barcelona. Duke of York, York Way, Saturday 23 May, 7.30 p.m.

Trade Unionism Under Attack: Organising the Fightback. Dayschool for trades unionists and friends, organised by Salisbury Labour Party. Saturday 27 June, 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. Grosvenor House, 26 Churchfields Road, Salisbury. For more information contact

Salisbury Labour Party, 148 Fisherton Street, Salisbury.

Legislation for Lesbian and Gay Rights Campaign. Legislation Conference, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London WC1. May 23&24. For more information contact the campaign at Room 221, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP.

Printed T-shirts designed to order, or from a wide range of popular prints. Contact ABS, 0782 84170.

WHERE WE STAND

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

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under workers' control. We want democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges. Socialism can never be built

in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles world-wide, including the struggle of workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their 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 contribution to help meet the paper's deficit. Our policy is democratically controlled by our supporters through Annual General Meetings and an elected National Editorial Board.

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Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

Hangovers: a thing of the past?

I'M NOT sure I should be telling you this, but there may soon be a cure for hangovers.

It is a drug called 4-methyl pyrazole (4-MP), whose potent anti-hangover effects were discovered by Wayne Jones, a Welsh scientist working in Sweden.

To understand how 4-MP works, we need to find out a bit more about hangovers.

The intoxicating effects of wines, beers and spirits are caused by a type of alcohol called *ethanol*. It is made by yeasts fermenting sugars — digesting them in the absence of oxygen. Ethanol is in fact the yeast's waste product.

Yeasts can digest other substances, and they turn these into other alcohols — *methanol*, or wood alcohol, and *propanol*, *butanol* and *pentanol* (amyl alcohol), together known as fusel oil.

When we drink ethanol, our bodies digest it, transforming it into *acetaldehyde*, *acetic acid*, and so on, releasing energy like other foods. This is done by special proteins called *enzymes*.

Unfortunately, the enzymes do not exclusively deal with ethanol. They can also start chopping up anything similar — and methanol etc. are similar. But methanol is turned into *formaldehyde* and *formic acid*, and there the process gets stuck. Formic acid cannot be digested for energy.

Poisons

Worse, both substances are deadly poisons. They cause proteins to 'de-nature', to lose their special shapes, vital to their functions. They also stick the proteins together and this makes it difficult for other things to digest them.

In fact, a solution of formaldehyde (formalin) is used to preserve dead things by stopping bacteria etc. from digesting them. Formic acid swells like ants and is used by them as a sort of tear gas to deter predators. It is also used to descale kettles.

Fusel oil is digested in the same way, producing poisonous substances, and so is ethylene glycol ('anti-freeze'),

which was added to some Austrian wines recently because of its sweet taste.

In large amounts, methanol can cause blindness, brain damage and even death. This is what happens when people drink methylated spirits, industrial alcohol, or a bad batch of 'moonshine'.

Methanol is added to industrial alcohol so that it does not attract excise duty. Amateur distillers may end up by concentrating what was a small amount of methanol in the original liquor.

Usually concentrations of methanol are quite low, but enough to cause hangovers.

Jones wanted to investigate the process of hangover, so he administered 1½ litres of red wine (9.5% ethanol, 0.1% methanol) to volunteers and tested their breath the morning after.

He found that while ethanol was cleared from the body quite fast, methanol stayed in the blood up to 10 hours longer. It was only after all the ethanol had gone that the body started to break down the methanol. It was then that the hangover symptoms started.

Enzymes

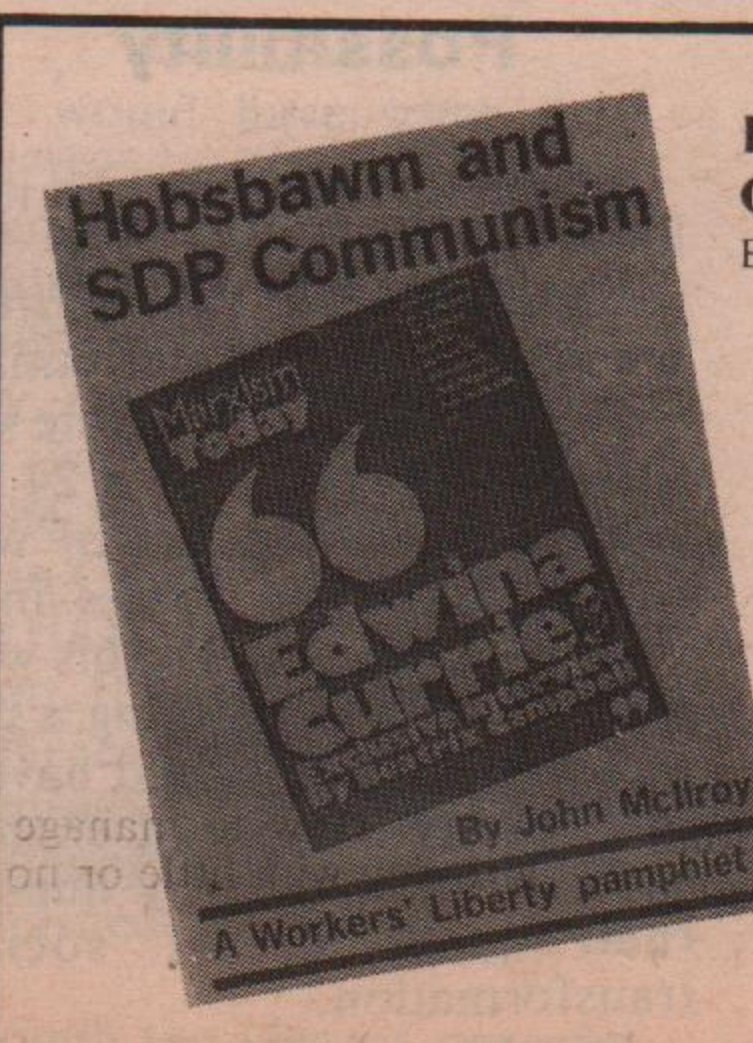
Jones surmised that interfering with the enzymes at this stage would stop the methanol being broken down and no hangover would develop. One way of interfering would be to give the victim more ethanol.

The enzymes go to work on this in preference to the methanol, postponing the hangover. This is the explanation of the 'hair of the dog' idea, and victims of methanol poisoning are actually given ethanol.

4-MP is a powerful inhibitor of these enzymes, stopping them working and preventing a hangover. It must be given at the right time, though.

Too soon and it will stop the ethanol being broken down. A 4-MP abuser could remain as drunk as a lord on a glass of sherry!

4-MP is now ready for clinical trials, and, if all goes well, may appear on the market in the not too far distant future.



Eric Hobsbawm and SDP Communism
By John McLroy. Price 50p

Not a spark, not even a spark being snuffed out

Belinda Weaver
reviews 'The Hour of the Star'

'THE HOUR of the Star' made me as uneasy as a horror film usually does.

This Brazilian feature film has won many prizes, both internationally and at home. It's not trying to be enjoyable or entertaining; it's trying to show a drab, depressed, beaten-down life as it really is. But it shows that life from a spectator's viewpoint — with pity and concern, maybe, but no sympathy or identification.

It's the story of Macabea, a young orphaned woman who comes to the big industrial city of Sao Paulo from the rural North to seek work. She gets a low-paid job in a warehouse, from which she's almost fired again and again.

World

Even at her miserable pay, Macabea is a liability. With her typing speed of about ten words an hour, and her dirty hands, she spoils each letter she types.

Her home life is also drab. She shares a room with three other women workers. They are resilient and active; they support each other, and try to give Macabea support, but Macabea never seems to make real contact with them. Invited by them to go to the zoo on Sunday, she instead prefers to ride the subway by herself.

She lives in a world of her own, and the problem is that we can never really get to understand that world. The film doesn't muster much interest in Macabea, or in the fellow she takes up with, Olimpico, except as specimens, so we feel closed off from them too. The director has tried to present them realistically and



Olimpico and Macabea: the tragedy is missing

clearly, but hasn't shown them sympathetically.

Macabea is plain, awkward, and silent. She has a fantasy life — in one scene we see her posing in front of the mirror as a happy bride, and she reveals to Olimpico that she wanted to be a film star. But her fantasy world is so far removed from reality that it seems to cut her off from reality. The world is nothing like her dreams, so why should she bother with the world?

Half alive

She seems to be only half alive.

One of her room-mates remarks that Macabea isn't stupid, but because she makes no contact with people, she seems absent to them, or half-witted.

The girls she rooms with seem to make no impression on Macabea, but she is slowly stirred into some sort of action by Gloria, a co-worker whose life revolves around men. Gloria talks about her life and men constantly, and Macabea wants to copy her. She meets Olimpico, a steelworker.

He has grandiose dreams, too — he wants to be a Senator — but his fantasies and Macabea's never coin-

cide, and can't bring them closer together. Macabea seems to doubt Olimpico, and he's offended, since he doesn't think Macabea is good enough for him anyway. He only hangs around with her because he can't get anyone better.

If anything, Olimpico is more demoralised than Macabea, and mean too.

What is missing from the film is the tragedy of these people's lives. Macabea and Olimpico yearn for better things, but without any real hope. What they want is so unattainable that there is nothing they can do, day-to-day, to work towards their fantastic goals.

Although their poverty is not the worst in Brazil's cities — they have jobs, shelter, and food — they are shown as utterly crushed by it. In some of the secondary characters, like Macabea's room-mates, you can imagine the spirit that has created militant trade unions and a sizeable Workers' Party in Sao Paulo. In Macabea and Olimpico there is not a spark of it. There is not even a portrayal of a spark being snuffed out. There is neither struggle nor tragedy, but only mute suffering and demoralisation.

Sympathy

Macabea and Olimpico are both stunted, intellectually and emotionally, so they can bring no comfort to each other.

Film-makers can show downtrodden and brutalised lives, and convey tragedy and pathos by the power of the sympathy they bring to their subject. What is lacking in 'The Hour of the Star' is precisely the kind of sympathy that could draw us into the lives of the characters.

As it is, it leaves the audience outside. It's a picture of working-class poverty which seems to be constructed entirely from a well-off middle-class viewpoint, from on high. No viewer is expected to identify with Macabea or Olimpico.

It's like those worthy documentaries where you know what you've watched is terrible, but you don't feel it's terrible — you just don't feel a thing, except relief, or guilt for not feeling anything.

Benefits and sexism

LAST week thousands of people on benefit didn't get their giros because of the strike by CPSA and SCPS members in benefit offices.

Although this is the fifth week of the strike it only appears to have hit the headline in a big way now. Is it because it is affecting London?

The usual story is that it is the north where employment is very high and lots of people there depend on benefit. One of the unifying effects of this strike is that people all over the country have been affected. The usual divide made by the government and its policies between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' has been forgotten.

Pensioners, disabled and unemployed people have all been without money. The TV interviews have focused on how much money people have to live on usually, and emergency payments. No talk now of scroungers or 'on your bike' stuff — they are all deserving and suffering. Lord Young said so — I heard him.

But some people regularly don't get their benefit and the strike would have been just another week to add to the list for them. Who are they? Women of course.

The benefit system is still very sexist. It is very difficult for women liv-

WOMAN'S EYE

By Penny Newell

ing with men to be the one to be the claimant and get the giro under DHSS rules.

Even for women who might be able to, the pressure of the male bread winner or the benefit winner is enormous. The friction and fuss caused by trying to be the female benefit winner would only add to the heavy pressure of trying to make ends meet. The women would be accused of taking away her man's dignity. So for women whose partners treat the benefit as their money and dole out small amounts for housekeeping — or worse, gamble the giro away — the day the giro is due is guaranteed to include a row followed by a week of worry. How to manage to the next giro day with little or no money?

I think we should be pushing for a different benefit system that is individually based — not family based, so that women have benefit in their own right irrespective of whether

they live with a man or not.

Of course extracting money from the man affects women whose partners are in paid work too. Then we have the problem of what they are to be entitled to claim from the state. If they don't have paid work should they get benefit in their own right — not wages for housework but unemployment benefit perhaps?

The CPSA and SCPS should be used to widen the discussion on the benefit system. The new Act coming in next April is awful. Benefits never come high on the list of issues when general elections are in the air. We could use the effects of the strike positively to start changing that.

We also need to think about co-ordinating action better between Civil Service unions and local government ones like Nalگو. There is a new emergency payment rule that can now allow local councils to pay out benefit and claim it back from the DHSS.

The total confusion in London worried me. Different Nalگو branches were agreeing to different emergency arrangements. We must have better rank and file links so that we know where we're going.

I can see a time when local DHSS offices could be closed by their management and councils will be told to use the emergency procedures. We need to be ready for that too.

1917

YEAR OF REVOLUTION

Monday 8 May

Workers at Kiev workshops producing military uniforms pass a resolution declaring the coalition government "hostile to the interests of democracy, counter-revolutionary in its domestic policies, and annexationist in foreign policies." A meeting of the Dolzhan Regional Soviet calls on local soviets to establish armed militias to combat counter-revolutionary activities. The Kazan Soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies declares its support for the coalition government. The local commissioner in Merv appeals to the commander of the garrison for reinforcements in view of increasing anti-government demonstrations.

Tuesday 9 May

A series of factory mass meetings in Petrograd opposes the formation of a coalition government. A meeting of the Krasnoyarsk Soviet describes the entry of socialists into the coalition government as a "tactical mistake".

The Poltava Soviet approves the formation of a coalition government. The Executive Committee of the Odessa Soviet of soldiers' and officers' deputies appeals to all members of the garrison to support the coalition Provisional Government. The Novocherkassk Soviet declares its support for the coalition government and advocates war until victory. A regional congress of local soviets held in Simferopol supports the government and calls for immediate introduction of social control over production.

A meeting in Moscow of the 11th company of the 185th reserve infantry regiment calls for an end to the war. The Tambov Soviet calls for peace without annexations and confiscations. Soldiers on the Rumanian front send a letter to the Petrograd Soviet appealing for better provisions for the army, and for the despatch of police and gendarmes to the front.

Wednesday 10 May

Minister of Foreign Affairs Tereshchenko declares his opposition to the publication of secret treaties concluded under the Tsar.

In Odessa 1,000 delegates attend a congress of Soviets of the Southern region; it declares its support for the coalition government, continuation of the war, the 8-hour working day, and better working conditions. The Elisavetgrad Soviet of officers' and soldiers' deputies calls for deserters to return to the trenches. A meeting of the military section of the Ekaterinodar Soviet of workers' and military deputies calls for the shutting-down of the local Bolshevik paper and for the arrest of Lenin; a mass meeting of 3,000 workers, soldiers and peasants demands that the Soviet military section drop these proposals. The Saratov Soviet adopts a resolution in support of the coalition Provisional Government.

Thursday 11 May

A meeting of 20,000 sailors, soldiers and workers in Kronstadt calls for the immediate publication of Tsarist secret treaties, an end to agitation by the government for a new offensive in the war, and for the conclusion of peace. The Riga Soviet refuses support for the Provisional Government and for the war, and calls for transference of all power to the Soviets. On the Southern front a congress of delegates of the 2nd Army resolves to organise distribution of socialist papers in the army, to set up political clubs and libraries, and to produce agitational leaflets in German.

Saturday 13 May.

The Petrograd Soviet reaffirms its support for the coalition Provisional Government. A joint meeting of the Executive Committees of the Moscow Soviets of workers' deputies and of soldiers' deputies supports the Provisional Government. A number of soviets in the Minsk region declare support or reaffirm support for the coalition government.

The Executive Committee of the Kronstadt Soviet declares that the sole power in Kronstadt is the Soviet; the crew of the "Dawn of Freedom" calls for immediate transference of all power into the hands of the soviets. The Aleksandrov Soviet adopts a resolution to organise Red Guards. A mass meeting of railway workers in Sizran calls for transference of power into the hands of the soviets. In Gus-Hrustalny the Bolsheviks decide to recall their representatives from the local soviet, which is dominated by Social-Revolutionaries.

WHETTON'S
WEEK



Don't forget the sacked miners

THERE HAVE been no further developments on my tribunal case. We are in communication with the Coal Board's solicitors, and we are still standing by the position that we are not prepared to accept any deportation out of the area.

The argument about the sacked and victimised miners has got to be raised in Labour's election campaign, but it's got to go a bit further than that. We've got to talk about sacked and victimised workers generally — at Silentnight, Hangers, the print, and all the others.

In the event of another Tory government, those attacks are going to pale into insignificance. Thatcher and co. are absolutely determined to stamp out the trade union movement. The attacks upon workers, not just in the mining industry but throughout the country, are going to get much worse.

The trade unions are the first line of defence of the working class. If the Tories can get away with smashing or immobilising the trade union movement, then they will go for everybody else — the minority groups, the blacks, the gays, the lesbians, the gipsies, anyone who doesn't conform to their norm.

I think the main issue in the election is the destruction of the trade union movement. All the other issues, about the economy, about education, about housing, are vital issues — but those sectors will be wide open to attack once the trade union movement has been immobilised.

As for the local election results, it tickled me that we now have a hung council in Nottingham. The control of that is in the hands of one Communist. But the Labour Party did badly in the local elections.

It reflects the inward-lookingness of the leadership. Instead of turning inward on our own supporters and our own candidates, they would have done much better if they had projected their poison towards the Tories.

The Moderate Labour Party got one council seat, in Worksop. I think that was more luck than judgment. In the rest of the county, the Moderate Labour Party got wiped out. I don't really see them as any threat.

The UDM has now accepted the Coal Board's pay offer in a ballot. Everything has turned out fairly much as we foresaw it. The membership have been conned into accepting the original package except that instead of the 'no-strike' clause we now have the 'conciliation' clause, which is exactly the same thing but with a different title.

They really have been sold a pup, and I'm quite sure we're going to pick up some more recruits to the NUM.

The press reported clashes between McGahey and Scargill last week. The argument is about embracing the UDM, and we can only reiterate what we've said all along: there is a place for every man in the NUM as long as he comes in under the NUM rulebook. There are certain people who are not going to get back in at any price, and we all know who they are.

People ought to come and live among them before they start making comments about embracing the UDM.

The other issue, of course, is Margam, and I'm quite confident that when it is put to the membership at annual conference and possibly a ballot vote it will be firmly decided that we don't talk about any increase in the working week — we talk about shortening the working week, providing more jobs for more miners.

Paul Whetton is secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.



Under Gorbachev, the great 'reformer', conditions for political prisoners have got worse.

From Gorbachev's dungeons: a call for workers' rights

ANATOLY Marchenko, a worker, is internationally acclaimed for his expose of the post-Stalin concentration camp system in 'My Testimony'.

Marchenko was first arrested in 1959. His periods of imprisonment have been 1960-66; 1968-69; 1969-71; and 1975-79, a total of over 20 years in labour camps and exile.

His last arrest was in 1981 for circulating samizdat works and being a member of the Moscow Helsinki Group. According to the prison authorities, Marchenko died of 'combined heart and lung insufficiency' on 8 December 1986. What they did not say was that in imprisonment he was subject to beatings, mistreatment, lengthy periods in solitary confinement and punishment cells.

What is clear is that despite all the attempts to portray Gorbachev as a 'budding liberal', conditions for political prisoners have got worse, not better, in the USSR.

When a Western correspondent asked Soviet officials why, against all the provisions of the Soviet criminal code, Marchenko's wife had not been allowed to see him for 2½ years, he answered: "I have no explanation" — quickly adding that a prisoner's privileges, including family visits, might sometimes be curtailed because of "crude violations of camp discipline" (*The Observer*, 14 December).

As the *Observer* correspondent concluded, "No great State aspiring to self-renewal in the terms proclaimed by the Soviet leadership can retain credibility in its profession of concern for human values and shrug off the Marchenko case so casually".

This is the last samizdat document written by Marchenko before his death.

Gentlemen:

You represent the nations which 11 years ago signed an international document that bases international politics on respect

Anatoly Marchenko died last year after spending over 20 years in labour camps and exile. He was a committed working-class opponent of the Soviet regime, and a supporter of the struggle for human rights in the USSR. We reprint below his last samizdat (underground) document, which appeared in 'Voice of Solidarnosc', Jan/Feb 1987.

The introduction, also from 'Voice of Solidarnosc', is by Taras Kuzio.

For the rights of nations and civil rights, reaffirming the 1948 UN International Declaration of Human Rights.

With this appeal, I bring to your attention the fact that human rights in my country are under a cynical assault.

I am Anatoly Marchenko, a political prisoner serving 10 years in confinement and five years in internal exile for having disagreed with the ideology and policies of the Soviet government and for having criticised its internal and international actions. I expressed my views in articles and books published in the West.

During my five years of imprison-



Anatoly Marchenko

ment, I have been abused and tormented. Many times I have been subjected to 15-day confinement in the prison's punishment cell, where the inmates are stripped of warm clothes and fed every other day while enduring a temperature that dips to 14 degrees Celsius [58 Fahrenheit] in the winter. Every time, this torture by the cold and starvation is covered up by some 'legal' pretext.

During my punishment cell stays, I have been further penalised for having fallen asleep during the day (because of the cold, I couldn't sleep at night), and for having covered myself up with a cotton jacket.

In December 1983, I was pummelled by the guards, who handcuffed me and banged my head on the cement floor until I blacked out. I suffered a concussion and damage to the functioning of my brain. To this day I feel the effects of that beating: constant pains in the back of my head, dizziness, nausea, and ringing in my ears.

Annihilation

To keep this incident quiet, the authorities transferred me from a camp to a prison, where I am being kept in even more inhumane conditions. For two and a half years, I have been deprived of visits from my family. All this amounts to an assembly line leading to annihilation.

I also suspect that prisoners are subjected to neuroleptic drugs and other narcotics. It is possible that they are being used to break the will of prisoners who have gone on

hunger strikes.

Over the past years, I have not been aware of one case in which a camp or prison employee was punished for excessive use of power and acts of cruelty on political prisoners. Neither the prosecutor's office nor other government officials have conducted a single open comprehensive investigation of complaints from political prisoners.

Our complaints are *a priori* considered libellous. Our humiliation and our agony are part of the government's programme of elimination of those who disagree.

The Soviet government uses prisons and labour camps to crush the human dignity by applying physical and mental torture against those who oppose official ideology and policies. The Soviet government views this as its sovereign right and a purely internal affair.

They are violating the Helsinki Agreement. It may be that the Western signatories of the Helsinki Final Act saw it as the guarantee of international progress; the Soviet government saw it as a mere propaganda gesture on the international arena.

Gentlemen, you do not seem to be able to find a way to demand that the USSR live up to its obligations. Therefore it is up to me alone to demand what had been guaranteed in the agreement signed by your governments.

Today, on 4 August 1986, I have started a hunger strike, and will remain on hunger strike until the end of your conference in Vienna.

I demand:

1. The prohibition of abuse of prisoners, including the beatings, the cold punishment cells, feeding every other day, deprivation of visits etc.

2. An open legal inquiry and punishment of those who physically assaulted me in December 1983.

3. An immediate resumption of visits from my family.

Gentlemen, I ask you to back my minimal demands, as well as to demand that the Soviet government declare an amnesty for political prisoners.

**Anatoly T. Marchenko,
Institution UE-148/SP-4,
Chistopol, Tatar ASSR,
USSR.**

All out on the London buses!

NEARLY ALL London buses were off the road last Monday, 11 May.

The ballot of all London's bus

drivers had shown, as expected, a solid majority in favour of industrial action against the deregulation of the bus services, and they showed they meant it with the 24 hour strike.

About 75% of the members voted, and about 90% of these voted yes.

This is a vast improvement on what was happening before, when one garage would take action while the rest were working and didn't even know what the other garages were doing.

What upset a lot of members, though, is that the rest of London were told about Monday's strike before they were. Many drivers and conductors were informed of it by their passengers.

If the union wants to keep the

By John Payne

anger of the members and their determination to fight going, then the members must be given the opportunity to decide what and when the action will be.

At a union meeting at one garage where the tendering of bus routes was discussed, the attitude of many union committee members was "not to bring politics into it... but we must

hope for a Labour victory at the General Election, and then the transport policies will be reversed".

That seems to be a common attitude, not just on the buses or in the T&G, but in other unions as well.

But hoping for a Labour victory and praying that a Labour government will reverse the Tories' policies will not win this battle. Taking all-out strike action and forcing the Labour Party to support it is more likely to save the bus services and also to boost Labour's chances in the election.

UCW conference

By Pete Keenlyside

PAY is unlikely to figure very highly at the UCW conference. The only motion of note on the issue of pay is a composite motion calling for the 1988 Postal Pay Claim to be settled on an across the board basis for all grades and not on a percentage basis.

This motion should be fully supported, because for years those on the lower grades, the bulk of the membership, have seen their position worsen with successive percentage increase pay awards.

An issue which should figure prominently at UCW conference is the splitting up of the Post Office into separate businesses — letters, parcels, counters and Giro. This is an obvious attempt to prepare the Post Office for privatisation and it has taken place with little or no opposition from our Exec.

There are two motions on the agenda calling for the business to be reorganised as it was prior to the split-up at the earliest opportunity.

The issue of ballots for the election of

the Executive is also likely to provoke a heated debate. At the moment ballot papers are distributed in work places with members being given a list of candidates plus short biographical details. As far as the average member is concerned they might as well be trying to pick a winner for the National.

In those circumstances the branch recommendation on who to vote for is usually followed blindly. This is both undemocratic and almost guarantees that the same old gang will get re-elected year after year.

As a result seven branches have put resolutions calling for candidates to submit election addresses of no more than 500 words. This at least will give members the chance to see where the candidates stand on the crucial issues facing us.

There are a number of political and general trade union motions on the agenda. WDO calls for a campaign against the Tory Green Paper on Trade Union Laws and Blackburn for the repeal of the 1984 Trade Union Act.

There is a resolution condemning the expulsions from the Labour Party and calling for the re-instatement of those expelled. There are also five resolutions on the issue of Apartheid.

One welcome feature of this year's conference is the re-emergence of the UCW Broad Left. The Broad Left virtually disappeared in 1982 but it has recently been revived, mainly by supporters of the Campaign Group.

At least two meetings are being planned around conference and hopefully these can be used to start building the alternative leadership the Union so badly needs.

Whether a Labour Government gets in at the election or not, UCW members face crucial issues in the coming few years. The past record of the current Executive can give us no confidence that they will be able to deal with them.

Leith Blake's

27 workers at the James Blake and Co factory in Leith (Edinburgh) have been sacked after going out on strike for a pay rise.

Management's refusal to agree to a decent pay rise comes on top of its consistent refusal to improve working conditions at the factory — ventilation is inadequate, the toilet facilities are atrocious, the roof leaks, the lighting is poor, and there are no canteen facilities.

The strikers at Blake's are appealing for industrial help and financial support for the dispute. Messages of support and donations can be taken to the picket line, or sent to: Blake's strikers, c/o Edinburgh and District Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place, Edinburgh EH1 3JT.

SSiN

CUTS AT MIDDLESEX POLY

By Neil Stonelake

MIDDLESEX Polytechnic is the latest in a long line of colleges under attack by the Tory government.

In the face of a refusal to implement a cuts budget which would involve site closures, local Tory councillors have threatened to bring in Education Secretary Kenneth Baker to run the college's finances.

On 11 March the Academic Board passed a paper on 'site rationalisation' by 30 votes to 7. The Student Union's opposition to any site closures was heavily defeated.

On 14 March the Joint Academic Committee, which comprises councillors from the boroughs of Haringey, Enfield and

Barnet, met to discuss the closure of the All Saints site. Haringey Labour councillors refused to implement a cuts budget and walked out.

The Student Union disrupted attempts by the Tories to reconvene the meeting, but on 18 March the Governing Body approved the immediate closure of the All Saints site.

In a letter to members of staff, Dr Rickett, the Director of the Polytechnic, said: "I do hope that all concerned will cooperate to effect the move as smoothly as possible".

But the Student Union acted swiftly, uniting with campus unions — NUPE, NALGO, and NATFHE — around a programme of:

- No cuts in educational provision;
- No cuts in student services;
- No loss of jobs.

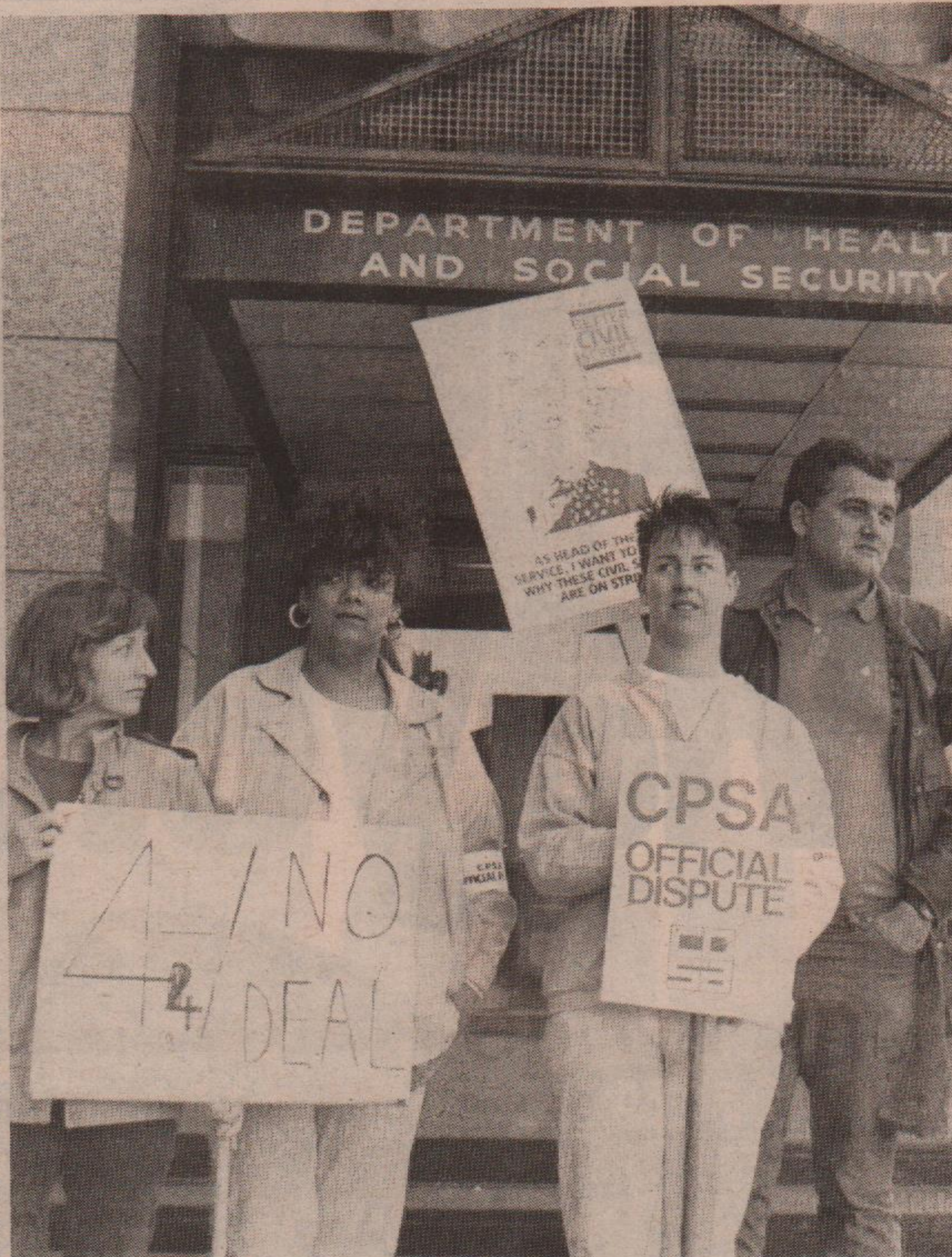


Photo: Ian Swindale

Pay campaign weakened

By Mike Grayson

AT CPSA conference on Monday 11 May, an alliance between 'Broad Left 84' and the right wing helped to defeat an emergency motion calling for early escalation to all-out action over pay.

Instead a motion coming from the soft-left 'BL84' was carried which called for a further three-week programme of selective action. This will include a national two- or three-day stoppage in the first full week of June, followed by regional strikes lasting two days throughout the remainder of June.

There will be a ballot for all-out action, but the date will be decided by the National Executive when and if they feel that it is necessary.

This strategy was proposed to maintain unity with the managerial union SCPS, which has opted for a similar strategy of selective action. In fact, it has also been inspired by the feeling that the CPSA should not

rock the boat in the run-up to the general election.

But too long a period of selective action is certain to undermine the present mood of anger and determination among CPSA members. The decision taken on Monday represents a serious weakening of what has been CPSA's most successful pay campaign for many years.

Setback in DHSS

Militant supporters on the DHSS Section Executive Committee of the CPSA recently voted to abandon conference policy for non-cooperation with the Fowler reviews.

Conference unfortunately voted to uphold this SEC decision and to take up the fight at a time when we are 'likely to win'.

Socialist Caucus, the SWP and some independents on the SEC argued to carry on fighting, but the soft-left BL'84 argued that we should never have fought in the first place!

The Fowler Reviews will mean the Government attempting to bring in Limited Period Appointments i.e. long term casuals. In Caerphilly branch a 5 month strike against casuals was recently won. Conference voted overwhelmingly to congratulate the Caerphilly strikers, to continue the ban on casuals and overtime and to ballot for industrial action if Limited Period Appointment are introduced.

The Section Executive elections were once again won overwhelmingly by the Broad Left (including some Socialist Caucus supporters).

Ancoats SIT IN, NOT GIVE IN!

By Paul Woolley

"WE'D RATHER have a sit-in than give in!"

That was one of the songs of defiance on last Monday's march (4 May) by the Ancoats Action Group and supporters. 200 people marched through the estates around Ancoats Hospital to alert local people to the Casualty Department's closure.

The march ended with a rally and pop

bands in Manchester's Albert Square. Local Labour MPs and Ancoats activists pointed to the Tories' wholesale axing in the NHS and the need to vote Labour in the elections, local and general.

The people of Ancoats sit-in are still determined to win. But the health bosses can play 'wait and see'.

The solidarity strikes by workers at other Manchester hospitals should be revived. That, for a start, would put the frighteners on the bureaucrats holding the purse-strings.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Why Thatcher backs Botha

Union leader charged with treason

MOSES Mayekiso, one of South Africa's leading black trade unionists, is on trial for treason. If he is found guilty, he could be hanged.

Moses is the general secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union, one of South Africa's most political and democratic trade unions.

The state's charges say that in helping to organise the militant black township of Alexandra into street and area committees, Moses and those on trial alongside him were guilty of attempting to overthrow the state.

In reality the state is attempting to drive a wedge into the black trade unions, saying that they must not become 'political'. South African president Botha has already warned of new labour laws in the wake of his election victory, to ban political action by the unions.

This will not work. Moses' union, MAWU, stands full-square behind him, and has been organising industrial protest action across South Africa every Monday for his release. COSATU, the giant black labour federation, has also backed Moses' stand, and urged all its members to build street committees and defence committees in the townships — in other words, to copy Moses' example.

Moses is well known in Britain. He has toured this country several times to raise solidarity with the struggle in South Africa, and is known personally by a large number of trade union and labour movement activists.

It is the job of every trade unionist and socialist to help build a gigantic campaign in this country and internationally demanding Moses' release and the release of all detainees.

Free Moses Mayekiso!

A fighting spirit

"IN SOUTH Africa the capitalist class is fighting against the working class and using apartheid as a whip to suppress people..."

You can't reform capitalism. It must be kicked out, removed, and a new social system introduced that is going to benefit the masses"

That's how Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union, summed up his view of the kind of revolution — a socialist revolution — that will be needed to defeat South Africa's white racist apartheid rulers.

It is a conclusion drawn from a life of struggle and from involvement in the black workers' movement.

Moses was born in Cala, in the Transkei. His parents were very poor. They had to struggle to pay for his education.

That education ended prematurely when he was expelled from school after being accused of involvement in a student protest. After working for a period as a miner in Welkom for 80 cents a day, he returned to school and completed his matric in 1973.

He moved to Johannesburg and worked as a building labourer. By 1976 Moses had found a job at Toyota and joined MAWU.

Moses quickly became a shop steward and then MAWU national

Release Mayekiso!



Moses Mayekiso. Photo: Ian Swindale.

treasurer. He was fired after a strike in 1979, and became a full-time organiser for the union.

Moses played an important role in the foundation of the giant Congress of South African Trade Unions, COSATU, in late 1985, and was one of the organisers of the two-day general strike in the Transvaal in November 1984.

Detained

He was detained for this, but later released. The charges were dropped.

In March 1986 MAWU members staged a national strike for his release from another spell of detention. He was released shortly afterwards.

On 28 June last year, after returning from a union solidarity tour to Scandinavia, Moses was detained and charged under the Internal Security Act. He was held in solitary confinement until January 1987, in a tiny cell with no windows, and was subject to constant beatings designed to disorient him.

Since the end of his solitary confinement, Moses is still denied books and writing material.

He has undoubtedly been tortured and beaten.

The racist regime must not be allowed to break Moses' fighting spirit. He is a symbol of the resistance of black workers — defiant, proud and unbroken.

Free Moses Mayekiso! Free all detainees! Send messages of support to MAWU, The Metal and Allied Workers Union, 4th Floor, COSATU House, 268 Jeppe Street, Johannesburg 2001, South Africa.

Send letters of protest to: The President, PW Botha, Union Buildings, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa.

Margaret Thatcher is apartheid's best friend. She has opposed the imposition of sanctions against South Africa at every turn, she denounces black freedom fighters as 'terrorists' and she is a racist who identifies with the bigoted, die-hard, ultra-racist Afrikaners like PW Botha.

It is money that ties Thatcher and the Tories to South Africa. UK big business has an £11 bn stake in apartheid.

Of the 2,000-odd multinational companies in South Africa 1,200 are British. This amounts to around 40-45% of all foreign investment in the country.

Most big British companies have interests there either directly or through associates.

British bosses draw out £1.2 bn per year in profits and dividends squeezed out of the black workers, who earn starvation wages, live in matchbox houses and enjoy no political rights.

Labour must make South Africa a big issue in the election. The scandal of Tory support for apartheid, of black blood on Thatcher's hands must be exposed.

Thatcher and British big business' argument that investment in South Africa means that pressure can be applied for change is hypocrisy and cant.

Only 20% of British companies investing in South Africa recognise genuine black trade unions. Even the most 'liberal' big business figures reject the idea of one person, one vote in an undivided South Africa.

It is also hypocrisy to say as Thatcher does that sanctions and

'UK big business has a £11 billion stake in apartheid'

disinvestment mean poverty and unemployment for blacks.

The black trade unions have made it clear that though British companies should get out that does not mean that the factories should close down. According to COSATU, the main black trade union federation, everything owned by the multinationals in South Africa — the machines, buildings and investments — belongs to the workers of South Africa. It must be taken over and run in the interests of the workers.

British workers in firms with South African subsidiaries should establish links with black unions in the same firm.

Action in support of the black workers' demands can be successful.

For instance after links were made between South African and British workers employed by the arms and electronics multi-national Plessey, management in South Africa was forced to recognise the workers' union and to start negotiations on pay.

International working class action, organised in conjunction with the black workers movement, could help paralyse the racist state.

Neil Kinnock could give a lead in this by stating clearly his commitment to impose sanctions on South Africa.