

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

For Workers' Liberty East and West

A labour movement conference

SOLIDARITY

with workers in
the Eastern Bloc

Saturday 7 November 11 am to 5 pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1

Tickets on the door
£8 waged; £4 students; £2 unwaged

Gorbachev's

phoney

revolution

"Mr Gorbachev is the most determined Russian revolutionary since Lenin", said the Sunday Times recently. And most of the British press has the same message.

But in fact Gorbachev is the opposite of a revolutionary. He is an intelligent conservative trying to save the bureaucratic system in the USSR by modernising and reinvigorating it. He does not want to overthrow that system and replace it with something else, but to preserve and secure it.

Gorbachev is the leader of the ruling elite which has kept the Russian workers down for 60 years. He is the direct successor of bureaucratic Tsars like Stalin and Brezhnev. Only Gorbachev is a reforming Tsar.

Today, the USSR needs not tinkering from above, but a new workers' revolution. The bitter truth is that today the USSR bears no resemblance to the sort of society which the Russian workers were determined to build when they made the great October Revolution in 1917.

70 years ago, the workers of Russia took the country out of the hands of the capitalists and landlords and set out to build socialism. Led by the Bolshevik party, they took state power in the vast former empire of the Tsars, believing themselves to be performing the first act of the international socialist revolution.

Where the Russian workers led, there, so they believed, the Germans, the French, the Italians, the British and other workers would soon follow. First Europe, ravaged by war since 1914, and eventually the whole world would be taken over by the workers and reconstructed on a free socialist basis.

In the new socialist world wage slavery would be abolished. Workers would no longer be exploited by the owners of the factories and mines in which they had to work. The means of production would become social property.

Under the rule of the workers there would be no more tyrannical, bureaucratic states raised threateningly above the people. The old bureaucratic and militarist state machines would be shattered. The workers would rule themselves directly, under a democracy much fuller than any of the old parliamentary systems. Political liberty and social ownership of the means of production would be the two pillars on which a new socialist society would emerge and flourish.

The Russian workers were not mistaken that they were the vanguard of the international workers' revolution. In the three years after October 1917, the German workers rose, overthrew the Kaiser, and established the German Republic. The working class in Hungary seized power briefly. The Italian workers seized the factories. A wave of working-class militancy swept Europe.

Turn to page 3



Vladimir Klebanov: jailed for trade union activity



Gorbachev: dictator

WOMAN'S EYE



Porn: don't rely on the state

By Jean Lane

Following MP Clare Short's unsuccessful attempts to introduce a Bill against Page 3 pin-ups in the tabloid newspapers, a working group has been set up with the specific aim of proving the link between porn and violence against women.

The working group consists of author Michael Moorcroft, Jo Richardson MP and the editorial team of Everywoman magazine.

Presumably the results of their work will be used to strengthen future attempts to get a Bill against porn passed in Parliament.

Seeing the vicious way women are depicted in many forms of pornography, and with it being almost undoubtedly true that there is a definite link between porn and violence against women it is very tempting to be uncritical of attempts to get porn banned by law, even to actively support them.

But I think that to do so would be wrong.

This is for two main reasons. Firstly, while it might be true to say that there is a link between porn and violence against women, porn is an extreme version — a logical extension — of capitalist society's attitudes towards women as sexual objects and being around solely for the pleasure of men. So banning porn will not stop violence against women.

Secondly, when a Bill is passed in Parliament, even for good reasons, it can and will be used against the working class. It will be enforced by a police force we cannot trust; that we know has accepted pay offs from porn themselves, and implemented by a legal system of courts that we cannot trust, that we know will interpret it against gay people, women and left wing publications, and of judges, many of whom have no better attitude towards women themselves.

So passing such a law would not achieve its aim of stopping porn or violence against women, but would give the capitalist system an added lever against women, gays and the left.

Rather than relying on the state to ban porn, we should be organising against it ourselves. And while mobilising women against porn, drawing the lesson that while the capitalist system exists, violence against women will continue, because that is one logic of the system itself.

Woman in a "man's job"

EXPERIENCES OF A WOMAN BUILDING WORKER

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

The closure of Labour Weekly

By Eric Heffer MP

The closure of Labour Weekly is very serious for the future of the Labour Party. If various small groups can have weekly journals it is ridiculous that the Labour Party should not have one.

In fact, the Labour Weekly jour-

nalists had worked out a programme of money raising which would have meant very little subsidy from the Party in future. But even if there had to be a subsidy, it is absolutely essential to have a Party newspaper that can carry comment, argument and discussion.

It is quite clear why it is being closed. The other paper, the Labour Party News, will be the direct voice of

the leadership in Party members' homes, with no real discussion. It is a very serious blow to free discussion of socialist ideas in the movement.

The overwhelming majority of Constituency Labour Parties wanted to keep the paper going. They voted that way at Party Conference, along with a majority of other delegates. They were only defeated by the block vote.

I do not doubt the point made in

the last issue of the paper, that it was their attitude to the miners' strike — full, unequivocal support — that triggered the campaign to close Labour Weekly down. Before then it had only been the right wing who had wanted it closed.

Labour Weekly reflected the alternative views within the Party, and there are some people who do not want alternative views expressed.

"Reformers" win out in China

By Clive Bradley



Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign protests as Contra leader Adolfo Calero arrives in London to address the

Royal Institute of International Affairs. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, Report.

The 'reform' faction in the Chinese Communist Party firmly defeated the old 'traditionalists' at the party's 13th Congress this week. 90 old Central Committee members were removed, and the 17-member Politburo — the most powerful party-state organ — is now completely dominated by 'reformist' supporters of Deng Xiaoping.

The average age of the Politburo is now a sprightly 63. Most of the traditionalists are 90-year old veterans of the Chinese revolution of 1949.

The conflict between the two factions has dominated Chinese politics for many years. Gradually, the modernisers have been growing in power. For a brief period after the death of Mao Tse Tung, who led the revolution that brought the Communist Party to power, the country was run by the ultra-radical 'Gang of Four', including Mao's widow, who aimed to continue the spurious anti-bureaucratic traditions of the 1960 Cultural Revolution, in which thousands of people were 'purged'.

The Gang of Four were soon swept aside, and since then the now extremely aged Deng Xiaoping (who himself had been purged in earlier faction fights) has been the major representative of the 'reformist' wing. Post-Maoist China has long since abandoned much of its old ideological dogma — including 'Mao Tse Tung thought' itself.

Economic development in China, often widely praised on the left in the past as an alternative model to the Russian, has long since run into the same kind of bottlenecks as the Russian system.

China is extremely bureaucratic. To break out of bureaucratic inertia and gradual decay, the state has been forced to open up to the world market and in particular to foreign investment. The party has officially said that by 1990 only 30% of the economy will be under central control. At the moment it is 50%.

This open door policy has caused problems, such as inflation. Politically, too, difficulties have arisen for the ruling elite. As with Gorbachev's glasnost, political 'openness' can give the masses ideas: last New Year there was a powerful student movement demanding democratic rights involving thousands of demonstrators. In the event it was safely contained, but it shows some of the risks for the regime.

The modernisers seem now to have defeated the traditionalists definitively — a success that was probably inevitable, but no less significant for that. A free hand for the reformists will mean a more radical opening of China to Western capital.

The bureaucracy remains firmly in control, of course. This is a victory for a particular faction, not for fundamentally different social class.

It may not be good news for China workers and peasants as 'openness' means, among other things, 'attractive' low wages.

But it remains to be seen if the Dengite modernisers can keep the lid on the most populous nation on earth. Social explosions may be on the way.

Sinn Fein Ard Fheis

By Gerry Bates

The Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis (conference) made an ominous change in policy on Eastern Europe. Reversing previous policy, the Irish Republican movement withdrew support for the independent Polish workers' movement, Solidarnosc.

They passed a resolution calling vaguely for support for the "struggle of the Polish people to defend their national independence and socialism".

If Poland had national independence Solidarnosc would have taken over in 1980! It was the certainty of a Russian invasion if they did which stopped them.

But this important political shift was overshadowed by Sinn Fein's continuing rethink about political strategy. Taking stock of the low vote for Sinn Fein in southern Irish elections — 1.7% of the total — president Gerry Adams described it as "a clear indictment of the failure in the past to utilise the many opportunities for immersion in the affairs of ordinary people."

The decision to participate in the elections with the intention of taking up seats in the Dail (Parliament) last year split Sinn Fein, as hard-line opponents of the new turn walked out.

Middle East

Israeli secret police lies exposed

Shin Bet, the Israeli internal secret service, have been systematically lying to courts for 16 years during trials of Palestinians. So a government commission found last week.

The commission was appointed in May after an army officer had a conviction for treason overturned because Shin Bet interrogators had falsified information that was used

against him in court.

It was found that the majority of the 4,000 Palestinian 'security prisoners' in Israeli jails are there as a result of 'confessions' extracted under interrogation by Shin Bet.

Allegations of torture against Shin Bet have been made by Palestinian organisations and by Amnesty International.

Whether or not these prisoners will be retried is open to question — probably not.

nounce political violence, Danny Morrison argued that this would cause them no problem. The wording of Tom King's oath was acceptable. It reads: "I declare...I will neither support nor assist the activities of any organisation proscribed by law in Northern Ireland."

Said Morrison: "It would cause me no problem to condemn violence or any illegal organisation. The only law I recognise in the North is the Republican law."

The rich

Let Piggot eat hay!

So poor old Lester Piggot, the 'housewives' choice', has been sent down for three years for tax-dodging.

Piggot, a man of "limited intellectual capacity" according to his defence lawyer, managed to hide away over £3 million in no less than 17 different bank accounts, under different names.

The Jockey Club, the body which 'regulates' racing, has taken decisive action — it has removed Piggot's license to train and...transferred it to his wife. So when Lester gets out of jail he'll still have his lucrative train-

ing business to go to. After all, Lester's too much of a gent to have to go and sign on, isn't he?

Much has been made by Piggot's racing cronies of the damage done to his career by the conviction. Who are they kidding?

In Piggot's circles, employing accountants to look for 'loopholes' to avoid paying tax is par for the course. Piggot's problem was he was too blatant and was caught out. When he gets out it'll be business as usual — though of course Lester will have to be a bit more careful in future.

And the Lester Piggots and Jeffrey Archers of this world always have friends in high places to help them out. Not so the woman done for 'fiddling' the DHSS because her boyfriend stays over some nights. And not so the disabled woman, jailed this week for thirty days for not paying her TV licence.

The people for whom day-to-day existence on social security is virtually impossible aren't going to be paid fat fees to be interviewed on Wogan if they get caught out.

Piggot, according to his defence counsel, was a 'hoarder, not a spender'. For most people this isn't an option — "fiddling" is about getting enough to eat. As for Piggot and his cronies — let them eat hay!

From page 1

But the workers gained power nowhere except in Russia. The socialist parties to which the workers looked for a lead either betrayed them outright, going over to the capitalists, as in Germany, or else proved indecisive and weak, as in Italy. The Russian workers were isolated. More than that. Civil war wracked Russia.

No less than 14 states sent armies to crush the Russian workers' republic. In the civil war and the wars against the intervening armies, Russian society was wrecked. It had already been devastated by the World War. The working class itself was uprooted and decimated.

At the end of the wars of the counterrevolution, isolated Russia was a long way from socialism. The workers held power in society through the Bolshevik party. But it was a society far too backward for socialism.

These were the conditions that bred the bureaucratic counter-revolution led by Stalin. A bureaucracy grew up and solidified, centred on the state machine. It took on the privileges of traditional ruling classes. In a long and bloody

Gorbachev's phoney revolution

'Whatever a party could offer of courage, revolutionary far-sightedness and consistency in a historic hour, Lenin, Trotsky and the other comrades have given in good measure. All the revolutionary honour and capacity which western social democracy lacked were represented by the Bolsheviks. Their October uprising was not only the actual salvation of the Russian revolution, it was also the salvation of the honour of international socialism.'

Rosa Luxemburg

EDITORIAL

struggle, it crushed the old Bolshevik party, beat down the working class, and established a totalitarian dictatorship.

For 60 years that bureaucracy has ruled with an iron hand. The workers in the USSR are denied both civil rights as citizens, and the right even to defend themselves by organising trade unions.

Today, 70 years after the great

October Revolution, the USSR needs a new workers' revolution — a revolution that will make the present state industry truly socialist industry by smashing the bureaucracy and the all-powerful state machine through which the bureaucrats keep down the workers and exercise control over what is nominally social property.

For all the hype about him in the West, Gorbachev will not make that revolution. The Queen and Mrs Thatcher are as likely to lead a socialist revolution in Britain as Gorbachev is to make an anti-

bureaucratic revolution in the USSR. The Russian workers will have to make their own revolution.

If Gorbachev's talk of 'reconstruction' and 'openness' helps generate a new workers' revolution, it will be because he helps stir the Russian working class into action against his projected economic shake-up, which is expected to destroy 15 million jobs in the next ten years.

On the British left today, one of the saddest symptoms of decline is to be found in the popularity of Gorbachev and the widespread belief that he represents a force for socialist change and renewal in the USSR. No, he doesn't! No, he couldn't. He is the leader of the bureaucratic elite which lives off the back of the workers and uses a totalitarian state to keep the people down.

It is as if the British left in its disappointments and setbacks feels a semi-religious need to believe in some wonderful 'socialist fatherland' far away. But no such place exists. And in the USSR it will only come into existence when the workers overthrow

Gorbachev and all the little Gorbachevs.

The British left must look to the working class in the USSR, not to Gorbachev. The 7 November conference on **Solidarity with the Workers in the Eastern Bloc** must lay the basis for a continuing campaign to convince the British labour movement to side with and help the workers who are likely to come into conflict with Gorbachev and his counterparts in the East European states dominated by the USSR.

It is the working-class opposition in the Stalinist states — the women and men in the underground, in the jails and labour camps or imprisoned and poisoned with drugs in mental hospitals — who today embody the politics and the aspirations of those Bolshevik workers who stormed the Winter Palace 70 years ago.

They are entitled to our support. They are as entitled to that support as striking workers in Britain would be entitled to demand of us that we do not cross their picket line.

And if we don't give our support to the working-class militants fighting in the Stalinist states for basic rights — like the right to organise free trade unions — then they will have a right to call us what we would call someone who crossed our picket lines.

A real revolution needed for women's liberation

For over 50 years the ruling bureaucracy in the USSR has kept women down, reversing the improvements won after 1917.

The Russian revolution of 1917 brought enormous changes in the position of women in Russian society. On taking power the Bolsheviks abolished all reactionary laws relating to women — full legal and political equality for women was established, women gained the right to abortion and to divorce.

There were even special trains which took birth control facilities into remote rural areas.

A great beginning was made towards freeing women from domestic toil. Communal kitchens, laundries and creches were set up.

But these facilities were always far from adequate. Russia was a backward country, devastated by world war, revolution and civil war. Creches were often no more than cavernous barns, used to house the growing numbers of abandoned or orphaned children. Laundries more often lost or tore clothing than returned it intact.

The more clear-sighted revolutionaries understood that in the circumstances of severe shortages of basic necessities, some of the attempts to ensure the full liberation of women were bound to be utopian. Trotsky himself warned that "our children and grandchildren will realise this aim".

Lenin and Trotsky also acknowledged an urgent need to fight against backward attitudes towards women amongst the men of the

By Lynn Ferguson

working class and peasantry, but also amongst many male Party members. Lenin, in conversation with the German revolutionary Clara Zetkin said, "They regard agitation and propaganda among women and the task of revolutionising them as the task of just the women communists... Unfortunately we may still say of many of our comrades, "Scratch the Communist and a philistine appears".

With the defeat of the Soviet working class at the hands of the Stalinists, the philistines triumphed. The leading article in Pravda of 28 May 1936 said:

"A woman without children merits our pity for she does not know the full joy of life. Our Soviet women, full-blooded citizens of the freest country in the world, have been given the bliss of motherhood. We must safeguard the family and raise and rear healthy Soviet heroes." That very year abortion was outlawed.

Khrushchev

In 1955, during Khrushchev's "thaw" abortion was again legalised. But the conditions are very far from adequate. Women in Russia have, on average, three abortions each, owing to the inadequacy of contraceptive advice and provision.

Abortions take place in dirty, overcrowded conditions, often with 15 women to a ward, with no screens, so women not only have to suffer the physical pain and emotional trauma of their own abortion, but have to witness the abortions of other women.

State childcare facilities are of extremely poor quality — the average ratio of nursery nurses to children is two to thirty. A complaint of many women is that their children return from nursery tired and ill due to poor quality food. It is commonplace for nursery workers to supplement their own poor diets by stealing from kindergarten stores.

Ninety per cent of Russian women work outside the home, and they make up 51% of the workforce. They also have to shoulder the bulk of the household chores.

In Russia this is considerably more tiring and time consuming than in Britain. After work women have to



Gorbachev is reinforcing women's burden of housework

queue for hours for the most basic foodstuffs, then go home and cook in extremely cramped conditions. The average kitchen measures 3.5 square metres.

At work, women are again confined to the lowest paid jobs. It is interesting to note that professions such as medicine, which are prestigious and highly paid in the West are low paid and undervalued in the Soviet Union — and, yes, most doctors are women. Despite formal equal pay, women's earnings are roughly 70% of men's.

Women have been expected by the Russian authorities to shoulder these burdens uncomplainingly. Soviet sociologists in the 1960s produced studies claiming that for a woman to be a 'fully rounded personality' both work and childcare should be part of

a woman's life.

However, a recent 'debate' in the Soviet women's paper Rabotsina points to a new direction. Elena, a woman who combines a family with work as an engineer, wrote a letter despairing of the problems of combining the roles, and raising demands for better state childcare provision. Her letter provoked a flood of replies from women, acknowledging the problems, but arguing if women were unable to cope they should devote themselves to their children. One woman wrote:

"What has happened to us Soviet women? Why have we changed, forgotten to rejoice in our main predestination — that of motherhood?"

The state has recently introduced some payment to women who stay at

home with children for their first 18 months, and the state has proposed that women with young children work at home.

Glasnost for Russian women means, if anything, change for the worse, a reinforcing of the ideal of motherhood. However, there are hints that a space has opened up where women and workers may begin to organise.

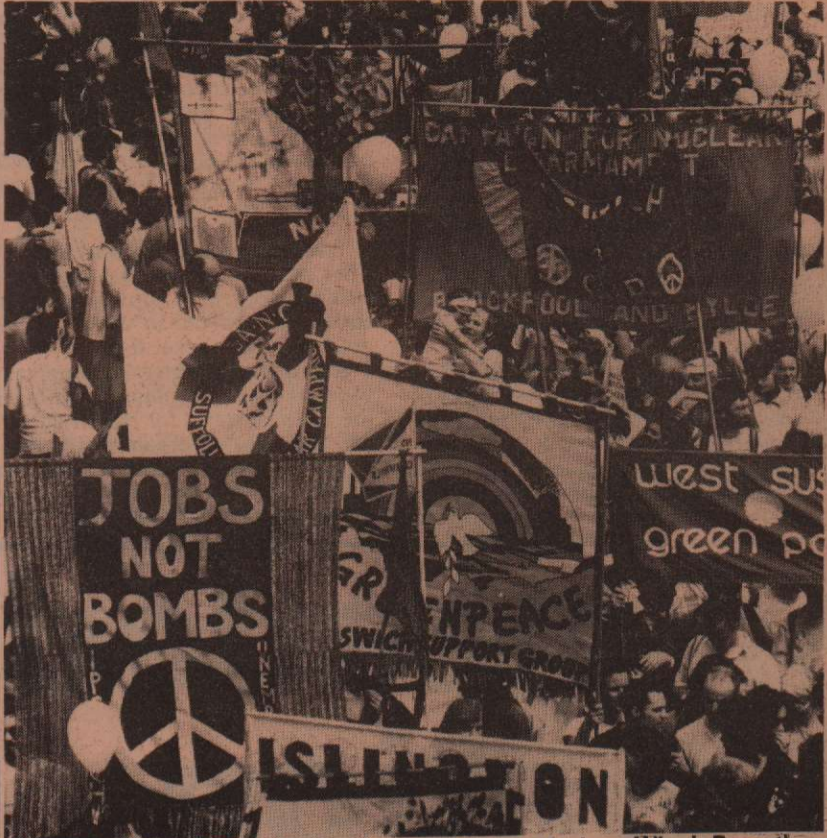
The way forward for Soviet women lies not in Gorbachev's meagre 'liberalisation' but in class action to overthrow the whole bureaucratic machine.

Joy Hurcombe's article in last week's SO was, of course, written in a personal capacity.

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GRAFFITI



We march, we vote, the Tories decide... (Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report)

CND MPs not allowed

You elect who you like to Parliament. And then Parliament controls the Government, for example through committees which study the government's activities in detail. That's how democracy works, isn't it?

Not quite. When the Labour Party proposed to nominate Joan Ruddock and Harry Cohen to the parliamentary Defence Select Committee, the Tory government said no. Why? Because Joan Ruddock and Harry Cohen are strong supporters of CND and of Labour's policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The Tories' move gives us a fair idea of how the Establishment would have reacted if Labour had won the

General Election with a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament. Every sort of sabotage and threat would have been used to stop Labour carrying out its policy.

The most scandalous thing about the Select Committee is that Labour's leaders have just backed down. They dropped Ruddock's and

Cohen's nominations, and said they would propose more 'moderate' MPs instead.

And that gives us some idea of how determined Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley would be about carrying out Labour's disarmament policy if elected, in face of Establishment resistance.

The Tories' growth industry: jails

Several English prisons now hold twice as many prisoners as they were built for.

Leeds jail is

supposed to hold 642 prisoners, but it has 1306. Birmingham has a capacity of 592, but there are 1190 in the jail. Bedford, Cardiff, Hull, Leicester, Lewes, Lincoln, Oxford and Reading are also twice as full as they should be.

Famine

Last year African countries got \$18 billion in aid and investment. But they paid out more to rich countries. They lost \$19 billion through the fall in the prices of the raw materials they export, and they paid \$15 billion in debt service.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, a lot more food aid is still needed for 1988. In 1984-5, about a million Ethiopians died as a result of famine, and many more could die next year in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda.

Justice fascist-style

A young man was convicted at Leeds Crown Court last week of raping a girl of 14.

That was the jury's

Cuts

West Berkshire Health Authority is cancelling 3,000 operations because of government cuts. Doncaster Health Authority is cancelling 1,000 hospital admissions.

Meanwhile a Sheffield hospital has spent £16,000 on a new carpet, just for a 45-minute visit by the Duke and Duchess of York.

verdict. But the judge thought he should add a few words.

"The girl," he said, "seems to me to be a menace to the young men in the area".

If you're a young woman or a girl, and you offend against what 75-year old Lord Justice Lawton thinks proper, sexually and socially, then you are a menace when you're a victim of violent crime!

Lawton stood as a fascist parliamentary candidate in the '30s.



Photo: Peter Walsh (Profile)

After Chesterfield

By Reg Race

The Socialist Conference in Chesterfield proved one fact to be true: that there is a substantial left in the labour movement that wishes to participate in a renewal of socialist ideas and which yearns for a clear lead as to how this might be done.

The psychological change brought about by the success of the Chesterfield conference must not be underestimated either. Since 1981, the left in the Labour Party and the trade unions has been on the defensive over policy, leadership, and expulsions; has lost its control of the NEC and substantial influence in major trade unions such as the TGWU and NUPE; and has looked increasingly out of touch as the party leadership has adopted sub-Thatcherite nostrums in order to accommodate itself to the establishment.

Thousands of people on the left have become intensely depressed at the prospects for the left in the party, especially after the Brighton conference, and at the prospects for Labour winning an election — let alone the chances of anything worthwhile being achieved by a Kinnock-led government.

Tap

What the Socialist Conference did was to tap this deep well of anxiety and concern about the future. The conference demonstrated that there is



still confidence and a clear understanding of what a socialist transformation of society would involve.

Rebuild

Our major task is to rebuild socialism as a coherent and powerful force within the labour movement. This is, in my view, essential work that must be done before any battles take place in the movement which may revolve around organisation or personalities.

There is clearly a whole layer of people *inside* the movement, and millions outside of it, who have ceased to regard socialism as relevant to their lives, and who regard socialist policies as at best irrelevant and at worst, dangerous. Our historic task is to end this spiral of decline and to in-

stil confidence and a clear understanding of what a socialist transformation of society would involve.

Programme

The second crucial task, necessary for the execution of the first, is to develop a new socialist programme. The world *has* changed since 1979, and certainly since 1976, when the alternative economic strategy was developed. This is not to say that we must accept any of the tenets of "popular capitalism", but it is essential to examine once more the powerful role of multi-national companies, the impact of monetarism, and post-monetarism on the international competitiveness of British capitalism, and the deep structural faults that still exist in the economy.

We have to demonstrate what a socialist economic policy would look like, and what socialism would mean for the enlargement of freedom and democracy.

Such a socialist programme must be coherent and clear — and it must then be taken actively into the structures of the labour movement and fought for.

Effort

This is a critical task. We will not turn the movement round, let alone influence the working class as a whole, without serious work and effort. I can assure readers of Socialist Organiser that the Socialist Conference organisers have no intention of allowing this opportunity to slip away.

Don't ignore officials

Issue 331 of Socialist Organiser contained the concluding part of John McIlroy's series on the shop stewards' movement. In this John analysed what he considered to be the key weaknesses of that movement in the sixties and seventies.

In that context he pinpointed the lack of consistent revolutionary politics, expressed in the failure to transform the Labour Party or to establish a viable rank and file organisation.

While I would not dispute these conclusions, they do leave untouched the central question of the relationship between the shop stewards' movement and the struggle to gain

mastery over the unions at regional and national level.

Faced with the cynicism of Stalinists and their allies on the left, shop floor militants have tended to shun contesting for leadership positions within unions other than on the occasional propagandist flourish.

The dangers involved in becoming elected to leading bodies of a union are incontestable. The alternative, however, is to leave the right wing or the Stalinists in control and to perpetuate their cosy relationship with the union officialdom.

That is the role performed by the SWP in the unions where they often enjoy holding positions at shop steward or works representative level, shouting the odds and passing resolu-

tions which they know will have no effect whatsoever because control of the union is left in other hands. This is a cosy *modus vivendi* and it is one which is very appealing to other groups on the left.

The much more difficult but essential job is to combine effective leadership at shop floor level with a strategy to win control of the official structures of the unions. To do that one needs in each union a campaigning body which combines these two perspectives. That is a demanding path to follow and one that is strewn with pitfalls. But it is the only way to begin to transform the unions.

Yours fraternally,
IAN McCALMAN
Glasgow

Martin Thomas continues his series

Will the crash turn to slump?

Can government policies prevent a slump?

The US government has responded to the stock market crash by pushing down interest rates and appealing to people to keep on buying stereos, videos and expensive clothes. It is trying to counteract the effects of the crash. It is especially nervous because the last few years of economic expansion in the US have been helped along by a very high level of company borrowing and a vast amount of consumer spending on credit. If credit collapses, demand could collapse very drastically indeed.

Such policies can work, up to a point, but only up to a point. Capitalist governments have only partial control over the credit system within their own countries, and very little control over the international credit system.

The extra credit which a government tries to pump into the economy can just be soaked up by inflation, or it can put the country in big difficulties internationally.

Why are all the governments worried about the "balance of payments" and "exchange rates"?

Capitalism is a world system. International trade is vital to every big capitalist economy. And the same policies which would be best to stop or limit a slump in a country's home market may be disastrous for its international position.

A cut in interest rates will encourage financiers to move their money to other countries where interest rates are higher. An attempt to keep up consumer demand may drag in imports, while exports stagnate. So — to take Britain as an example — more people want to sell pounds (to invest in other currencies instead, or to buy goods from other countries) than want to buy pounds (to invest in pounds rather than other currencies, or to import goods from Britain). Either the "price" of pounds relative to other countries' money — the exchange rate — goes down, or Britain's reserves of gold and foreign currencies go down, or both.

And if the exchange rate goes down, it means that imports cost more in terms of pounds. Britain's capitalists and workers can buy less than they could before. They are poorer.

Why is the US trade deficit such a problem?

The previous big slump, which started in 1979-80, was turned round in about 1983 by a big expansion in US demand which was enough to pick up the whole world economy.

The US government has been spending far more than it gets in, and the US as a whole has been importing far, far more than it exports. Contrary to what would usually be expected, up to February 1985 these trends went together with a very high exchange rate for the dollar relative to other currencies.

The dollar was kept high because foreign capitalists, British, Japanese, Dutch and others, were pouring money into the US. Attracted by ris-



Back to the 'thirties?

ing profits there, they were keen to take over or start up businesses in the US.

Since February 1985 the big capitalist governments have been carefully manipulating the markets to bring the dollar down slowly and thus avoid the risk of it crashing. They have been quite successful in that. Unfortunately for them, however, the reduced exchange rate of the dollar (which makes US exports cheaper in other countries, and foreign imports dearer in the US) has not had much result yet in cutting the US's trade deficit.

Now the stock market crash is likely to mean that foreign capitalists will be pulling money out of the US rather than putting it in. And unless other countries cut interest rates in line with the US, the capitalists will have an additional motive to sell their dollars and buy deutschmarks or yen instead. This could lead to a collapse of the dollar even more drastic than the collapse in share prices.

The 1980s have seen a vast expansion of world-wide money-dealing. So dizzying is the trade that the total gold and foreign currency reserves of the United States would cover maybe one day's trading in currencies (dollars against yen against deutschmarks against francs against pounds, and so on), and four or five months' trading on the capital markets (international dealing in shares, bonds, and loans). When things go wrong in such a rapid whirl of money, they can go very wrong very fast.

This threat has been there ever since the early 1970s. The relatively

stable and steady expansion of world trade up to the late '60s was based on the dollar acting as international money. The dollar was the one sort of money you could buy anything with, from any country, because anyone would accept dollars.

They would accept dollars because dollars would buy what the US produced — and the US produced more and better than any other country.

That system collapsed in 1968-71 under the pressure of a huge flow of dollars out of the US, made worse by US spending on the Vietnam war. The US stopped guaranteeing the dollar with gold and fixed exchange rates between currencies were abandoned.

The hard nuts-and-bolts economic basis of the old system had faded away. The US was still by far the world's biggest economy, but it no longer had its former absolute supremacy. By the early '70s it had been overtaken by West Germany as a manufacturing exporter; by the early '80s by Japan.

Since the early '70s the world financial system has been, as it were, suspended in mid-air. It has been a vast system of bluff.

If the dollar collapses, the consequences will be huge. Countries could be launched into beggar-my-neighbour trade wars, and world trade could be reduced to a series of one-off negotiated deals between countries.

How big will the slump be? How long will it

last?

No-one knows. No-one even knows very precisely what has been happening in the vastly-expanding but largely unregulated international financial markets over the past few years of boom, let alone how likely those markets are to make the dollar crash.

Some of the possible paths to slump contradict others. If there is a big drop in demand by investors and consumers in the US, then the US trade deficit will fall (because US imports will be falling, while US exports will remain relatively strong unless other economies slump as quickly and as deeply as the US). Then the pressure on the dollar will be reduced.

Alternatively, if the dollar collapses that would at least cut off another route to crisis — Third World countries' debts, most of which are reckoned in dollars would be wiped out.

As in 1929, there were signs of a slowdown before the stock market crash. Investment was very low in the US and Japan last year. As in 1929, the slump will take a while to work through from the stock market to the factories and offices. (There was actually a mild revival in early 1930 and the slump did not reach its worst until 1931 and 1932).

Since 1929, capitalist governments have become more skilled at managing their home markets. But they are still incapable of giving any rational order to the capitalist world system. Capitalism remains a sick and crazy system.

PRESS GANG

Sex shame of Lord Stevens

By Jim Denham

"You're out!" That was furious Lord Stevens' message to mucky Mike Gabbert when the suave Tory peer saw what was being done to his beloved *Star* newspaper.

The raunchy eight-week liaison between Gabbert, his boss Dirty Dave Sullivan, and the *Star*, ended in tears last week when Lord Stevens announced: "The bonking has to stop".

His lordship thought the paper "fitted badly with his personal image" and was reportedly "incandescent with rage" when the *Daily Mirror* published a picture of him, next to one of Sullivan, headlined 'Partners in Porn'.

An estimated 15 *Star* staff members stormed out or were fired during Mucky Mike's two months of unbridled debauchery. Award-winning consumer affairs journalist Ms Jan Walsh described it as "the Beano with boobs", and addressed her letter of resignation to "the Daily Bonk".

Moira Petty was horrified to be told by a 'leering' Gabbert that her duties would include making up 'masturbatory' letters for the agony column. Chief leader writer David Buchan said he could no longer take the paper home because he did not want his wife and children to see it.

Severed

Now Lord Stevens has withdrawn his £1.5 million stake in Sullivan's *Sunday Sport*, and severed his links with Apollo, Dirty Dave's 'publishing' company. His decision was obviously reached entirely on the grounds of taste, decency, and morality, and had nothing to do with the loss of millions of pounds of advertising from Tesco and the Co-op. Nor was it motivated by the need to scupper Sullivan's plans for a daily version of the *Sunday Sport*.

Andrew Cameron, the managing director of Express Newspapers, sadly commented that "It really is no different from the other popular tabloids such as the *Sun* and *News of the World*." A friendly deal with Sullivan was struck in September. He had said, "I'm a businessman, not a moralist".

New editor Brian Hitchin (sent in from the *Sunday Express*) has been ordered to cut back on 'bonking' and nipples and to start using proper sentences.

Meanwhile, Sullivan has ordered Gabbert to "reactivate immediately" plans for a new colour daily, and Associated Newspapers (the *Mail* group) are said to be "interested"...

Postscript: Since Gabbert's departure, *Star* deputy editor Ray Mills has begun using his full name on his Tuesday tirades of reaction (previously they were simply 'Mills — The Angry Voice'), and the column, for the first time ever, now carries a recognisable photo of its author. Has Mills finally come out?

SOLIDARITY

WITH WORKERS IN THE EASTERN BLOC

Why have we called this conference?

Mikhail Gorbachev is embarking on a drive to shake up the USSR's economy.

Like the ill-fated Alexander Dubcek in Czechoslovakia 20 years ago, he encounters entrenched bureaucratic opposition. Like Dubcek he turns to liberalisation, of a very limited sort, to clear the way for economic revitalisation.

Anything — however limited — which loosens the bonds of rigid state control in the USSR should be welcomed. But immediately the working class stands to suffer economically from Gorbachev's programme, as their jobs become less secure, pressure is put on them to speed up work in the factories, and pay differentials increase. As many as 15 million jobs could be shaken out within the next decade.

Gorbachev's moves to loosen the clamps on Soviet society may well set free working-class energies of the sort seen already in East Germany, Hungary and Poland. Already the *Financial Times* (16 October) reports: "A three-day strike by workers in a Soviet bus manufacturing plant in protest at a drop in wages and longer working hours has highlighted shopfloor resistance to some aspects of the economic

Mark Osborn and Tony Jain explain why they are helping to organise the 7 November conference in solidarity with workers in the Eastern bloc.

reforms..."

We do not know what other strikes have taken place in recent decades in the USSR and been suppressed. But we do know what has happened in other states of the Eastern bloc.

In East Germany in 1953 workers rioted against appalling food shortages and long hours. Their rebellion soon developed into one which demanded greater political freedom. The Russian army was called in to crush the workers' uprising by force.

Recently East German youth

have been making the same demands at the foot of the Berlin wall.

Polish

The Polish workers rose up in 1956, 1971, and 1980. On each occasion, their actions led to the removal of the ruling general secretary, and the granting of short-term reforms.

In 1980-1 the bureaucracy was forced for some time to accept the existence of Solidarnosc, the first free trade union in any

EAST GERMANY '53



Eastern bloc country since the 1940s.

In 1956 Hungary saw a massive workers' rising, first against the Stalinist rulers and then against the Kremlin tanks which had invaded the country to restore order by the barrel of a gun. The workers established workers' councils in many areas of the country, including Budapest, and these councils controlled produc-

tion and the supply of food.

In 1968 Czechoslovakian workers took advantage of the liberalisation being orchestrated by Alexander Dubcek to re-establish independent trade unions on a small scale.

In 1978-9 miners in Rumania waged one of the bitterest and most bloody industrial disputes seen anywhere in Eastern Europe, over wages, conditions, and political freedom.

The limited information available on workers' revolts in the USSR includes the fact that in Noverchensk, in 1962, workers struck against a big increase in food prices and poor conditions in the workplace. They soon began demanding other reforms. The regime suppressed the revolt by gunning down scores of workers as they held a demonstration through the town.

Survive

In recent years workers like Klebanov and Nikitin have formed trade union groups like the Free Trade Union Association (FTUA) and SMOT, which still survives today despite heavy repression. If these groups are ever to develop into a large-scale movement like Solidarnosc, they need and deserve our solidarity.

Even if Gorbachev's measures produce no explosion in the USSR, they may stir up rebellions elsewhere. We have seen before that controllable developments in one Eastern bloc state can trigger uncontrollable events in another.

Thus in 1956 a limited anti-bureaucratic upsurge in Poland was kept under control by reforming bureaucrats under Gomulka. But those events in Poland triggered the Hungarian revolution.

What will the effects of Gor-



POLAND '80



HUNGARY '56



CZECHOSLOVAKIA '68

bachev's talk of liberalisation be today in Poland? In Czechoslovakia? In East Germany? In Hungary? In China?

And where will the British labour movement stand if the workers of the Eastern bloc start moving, and begin to organise independent trade unions? Where will the left stand?

To someone who did not know how things are in the labour movement and on the left, that would seem a stupid and superfluous question. Where else can the British labour movement stand but with the working class

and those suffering state oppression? Surely nobody on the left in 1987 can believe that a statified economy under a tyrannical state is socialism? Or deny that nationalisation is only a means to an end — working-class liberation — and not something more important than the workers who can alone achieve that end?

Scargill

But in fact many otherwise good socialists and militants — Arthur Scargill, for example — consider that the bureaucrats in

the Eastern bloc represent 'socialism', and they look at movements like Solidarnosc with jaundiced and suspicious eyes.

The left has a duty to put itself straight on this issue. We have a duty, as elementary as not crossing a picket line, to side with, champion, and defend the workers in the Stalinist states.

That is why we have called the conference on 7 November. We called it on that date to mark the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, of which the worker militants whom we support in the USSR are the true heirs.

25 October/7 November 1917

The storming of the Winter Palace

Wednesday 25 October

The Petrograd Military-Revolutionary Committee sends a telegram to all major towns in Russia: "In Petrograd power is in the hands of the Military-Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. The soldiers and workers have risen up as one and secured victory without any bloodshed. The government of Kerensky has been removed." The Committee appeals to troops at the front and in the rear not to allow themselves to be provoked, and appeals for support for the Petrograd Soviet and the new revolutionary power.

In the course of the day soldiers and armed workers take over the key buildings in Petrograd: the central telephone exchange, the city's railway stations, the State Bank, the Central Post Office, the offices of the War Ministry, and, during the night of 25/26 October, the Winter Palace.

The Military Revolutionary Committee sends a telegram to all army committees and soviets of soldiers' deputies, informing them of the overthrow of Kerensky by the garrison and proletariat of Petrograd and the transfer of power to the Military-Revolutionary Committee until the formation of a government of the soviets.

By order of the Military-Revolutionary Committee the printing presses of the bourgeois newspaper "Russian Will" are taken over by armed soldiers and 100,000 copies of a special issue of "Workers' Path" printed for distribution at the front. The printing presses of the Stock Exchange Bulletin are also taken over.

Red Guards free political prisoners arrested after the demonstrations of the "July Days". An attempt by Black Hundreds to organise a counter-revolutionary demonstration in the Nevsky Prospect is defeated. A general meeting of military telegraph employees in Petrograd votes to support soviet power. The headquarters of the Petrograd military district are taken over by troops of the Military Revolutionary Committee. The Pre-Parliament is declared dissolved by a commissar of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

At 10.40 p.m. the second all-Russian congress of soviets commences; of the 649 delegates registered at the start of the congress, 390 are Bolsheviks, 160 are Social-Revolutionaries, 72 are Mensheviks and the rest members of smaller fractions. After sharp clashes about the armed uprising currently underway, Mensheviks, rightist Social Revolutionaries and their co-thinkers walk out of the congress in protest. With only two votes against, and twelve abstentions, the congress adopts Lenin's appeal "To workers, soldiers, and peasants!" which declares:

"On the basis of the will of the massive majority of workers, soldiers and peasants, on the basis of the victorious uprising of workers and the garrison which has been carried out in Petrograd, congress takes power into its hands...Congress resolves: all power in the localities is transferred to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must guarantee genuine revolutionary order."

The Yurev Military Revolutionary Committee occupies all government

1917

YEAR OF REVOLUTION

buildings, and establishes control over telegraph and telephone exchanges and railway stations; soviet power is declared. In Novgorod the Novgorod Revolutionary Committee takes over key buildings; the telegraph offices are taken over to ensure that the only telegrams despatched are those of the provincial soviet.

On hearing of the events in Petrograd, the Orekhovo-Zuevsky Soviet declares that power in the town is now in its hands; a revolutionary staff is elected and Red Guards despatched to take over stations, post offices, banks, and the telephone exchange. In Ivanovo-Voznesensk the soviet elects a Provisional Revolutionary Staff to consolidate soviet power and ensure order and calm. In Vyazma revolutionary troops take over the post office, telegraph office, station and bank.

At a joint meeting of the Moscow Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the Bolshevik fraction proposes the establishment of a Military Revolutionary Committee, in opposition to which the Mensheviks move an alternative resolution. By 394 votes to 106, with 23 abstentions, the Bolshevik resolution is adopted. The Mensheviks declare that they will enter the committee to fight in it against the Bolshevik line. The Social Revolutionaries boycott the Committee.

Soviet

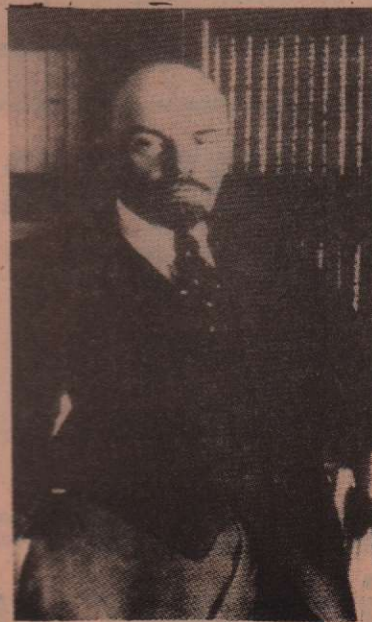
The Moscow provincial soviet urges all local district and regional soviets to take power into their hands, organise Red Guards, requisition arms for the Red Guards, and take over local stations and telegraph and telephone exchanges. The provincial soviet also declares that work in factories should not cease, and that revolutionary discipline must be maintained everywhere.

A meeting of the Penza Soviet, dominated by Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries passes a resolution opposing the events in Petrograd and committing itself to oppose instructions from Petrograd. In Kiev a joint meeting of the Executive Committees of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies breaks up without reaching a decision on events in Petrograd; a meeting of the Executive Committee of the soviet of workers' deputies votes by 17 to 13 to set up a revolutionary committee; the Kiev Duma sets up a special committee in support of the Provisional Government; the commander of the Kiev military district declares that all meetings and demonstrations are banned.

The Odessa Duma declares its opposition to the establishment of soviet power, and the commander of the Odessa military district declares a ban on meetings and demonstrations for the next ten days. A joint meeting of the Executive Committees of the Samara Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies postpones taking a decision on the establishment of soviet power after clashes between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries.

The Central Executive Committee of Siberian Soviets adopts a resolution in support of the events in Petrograd and in support of the immediate establishment of soviet power in the localities. The District Committee of East Siberian Soviets and a joint meeting of the Irkutsk Soviets of Workers' and Military Deputies vote down Bolshevik resolutions in support of Soviet power.

The Minsk Soviet takes power into its hands. 2,000 workers and soldiers imprisoned for revolutionary agitation are freed and establish the 1st revolutionary regiment of the Minsk Soviet. The Soviet Executive Committee issues a decree "To the Population of Minsk and its Environs" declaring that power is now in the hands of the soviet and appealing for support for revolutionary power, as well as establishing revolutionary censorship over all newspapers printed or distributed in the town.



Defend yourself! Fight JTS!

Mark Osborn reviews the video "Defend Yourself, Fight the Job Training Scheme!"

The video lasts for 18 minutes, alternating between trendy black and white and tasteful technicolour. This is a gigantic production, at once both Kafkaesque and dourly straight.

Consequently, there are lots of highs as the video whizzes along: Adam the 'Schoolie'; the women from Wallasey YS; Lynn's acting; some oik called Dion, giving the line on what a load of crap JTS is; Tracy from South London giving a mouthful to the parasite General Manager of a rip-off 'training agency'.

But, unfortunately, all were eclipsed by the erudite, suave, tastefully dressed young chap who interviewed Dennis Skinner. This bloke is great — not least for bearing a striking resemblance to me.

The video was made over August as Youth Fightback supporters launched a kickback at



the new cheap labour scheme — JTS. Youth in twenty YS branches up and down the country took themselves off to the shopping precinct, doles and youth clubs to

protest. We collected 15,000 names opposed to JTS in a few weeks, then organised a protest at the central London office of Sight and Sound, where we waved them at

the manager.

We held socials and stunts, pickets and lobbies. It was all recorded and added to by the filmmakers from Stoke. They should pat themselves on the back!

When we stand back and look at Youth Fightback — we're really talented! It's a good job, too. With the right wing moving in for the YS kill (with postal ballots to elect our national committee in the offing) we'll need to be pretty slick to fend them off.

Comrades should take this video round local labour movement meetings, youth clubs and colleges — building support for the labour movement boycott of JTS.

Make the boycott bite, and build a big, young YS at the same time.

Finally, if you want to find out how to make a video for your campaign, come to Youth Fightback conference where the Stoke comrades will tell you how!

The video was made by Jill, Lynn, Deb and Paul, all Youth Fightback supporters from Stoke Central LPYS. The video costs £7 to buy, from Youth Fightback, 33 Hackworth Point, Rainhill Way, London E3.



Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

Czech choke

Britain is a notorious air polluter, releasing over 80 kg of sulphur dioxide (SO₂, the gas that causes most acid rain) per head of population each year. But other European countries are worse.

One releases some 200 kg of SO₂ per head, poisoning its people as well as its trees.

What would you think if you were told that this was a socialist country? "Impossible!", you say. Quite right! The Soviet Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia is socialist in name only. A report by Misha Glenny in a recent *New Scientist* shows just how little the Czechoslovakian bureaucrats care for the working people and their environment.

Czechoslovakia has several highly polluted zones. Its capital, Prague, is designated a "disaster zone", with winter-time SO₂ emissions up to 20 times the "permitted" level. In the West, Plzen, home of Pils and Skoda is called "Black Plzen". But northern Bohemia, in north-west Czechoslovakia is the worst affected area. It is here that 60% of the country's electricity is produced in 6 huge power stations.

The problem is that they burn brown coal (lignite). This is low in energy, so vast quantities must be burnt, but it is high in sulphur content. The resulting SO₂ is allowed to escape into the atmosphere without hindrance. Pollution also pours out of the heavy industry hurriedly set up in the early 1950s under Stalin's plan to make Czechoslovakia "the smithy of Europe".

The brown coal is ripped out of 6000 hectares (15,000 acres) of open cast mines which give northern Bohemia its nickname "the lunar country". Its industry lies in the valley of the Ore mountains. The acid gases are washed onto the mountain forests, acidifying the soil and coating the tree leaves. The forests are replanted at six times the average rate for the whole country. About half of Czechoslovakia's trees are damaged by acid rain.

Government environmentalists blame much tree damage on exceptionally cold weather. Environmentalists in northern Bohemia counter with the observation that SO₂ damage makes trees less resistant to frost.

The climate and the pollution combine in another dangerous way. Situated on the floor of a valley, the towns of northern Bohemia are prone to suffer from temperature inversions. Normally, the sun's heat passes straight through the air and warms the ground. The air next to the ground gets warm also and becomes less dense. It rises, causing convection currents, mixing the polluted air near the ground with cleaner air up above.

In a temperature inversion, the ground remains cold so that the convection currents do not start. This happens when there is a lot of pollution

(smoke and gases) in the air. The sun's heat is absorbed by the top layers of polluted air, warming it. Below the ground and air remain cold and the polluted air clings to the bottom and sides of the valley.

Glenny quotes several northern Bohemians on their smogs. One describes how the gases from the power stations and steel factories rise until they meet the hill fog and then return to the ground, turning northern Bohemia into a "sick, black prison". Another talks of a "dark blanket suspended over the town for a week... What a stench!... They're waging chemical war against their own people!"

At weekends, the people drive up into the mountains. There they find it sunny and well above freezing while below, the towns are blacked out at minus 10°C.

The government is committed to reducing pollution but so far have only established the "smog drill". This is implemented 24 hours after the level of SO₂ exceeds the permitted limit at 13 stations along the Ore valley. The purpose of the smog drill is to reduce SO₂ emissions. Industry is ordered to lower output. Special high quality, low sulphur coal is used. Children are kept indoors, outdoor sports are banned and extra vitamins are given out in hospitals.

The effect of the pollution on people's health is quite alarming. One nurse said she knew when there was a smog alert because her clinic quickly filled up with sick people unable to breathe.

Recently, 300 citizens of one town signed a petition complaining at the absence of information about smog drills — an action not lightly undertaken in a police state. A Politburo member said he was studying the problem.

The government refuses to publish detailed figures on life expectancy in northern Bohemia but a leaked Communist Party document suggests a life expectancy of 3-4 years less than average. Infant mortality was said to be 12% higher with one-third more infants suffering serious illnesses in their first year.

One environmental activist claims that the government cannot afford to publish such figures lest an exodus occur from the region. Medical staff are already leaving despite incentives in pay and accommodation. Workers who stay for ten years receive an extra 4% salary — ordinary Czechs refer to this as "burial money".

Officials in Prague are not overly concerned with northern Bohemia. The top government environmentalists said "It is a pretty unappealing region. The people are a lot more wild there. There are a lot of gypsies and they do not mind about these problems so much".

However, they are committed to spending £100 million on pollution control equipment at long last. The coal-fired power stations are due to be phased out by 2020 — to be replaced by nuclear ones!

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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-

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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.

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SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Britain's death squad exposed!



The Last of England

Edward Ellis reviews "The Last of England".

When Derek Jarman's 'Sebastiane' was shown on Channel 4, its depiction of life among ancient Roman soldiers leading up to the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian led to such outrage from the Mary Whitehouse Brigade that Channel 4 introduced the red triangle in the corner of our screens to warn us of rude goings on. And other of Jarman's films have attracted the ire of the puritanical.

'The Last of England' will not disappoint them. It continues Jarman's previous taste for depressing visions of the future — a sort of 'Jubilee' ten years on. Where 'Jubilee' was the product of the punk era, 'The Last of England' bares the mark of nearly a decade of Thatcherism. 'Jubilee' was anarchic. 'The Last of England' is suicidal.

Experimental

Jarman is one of Britain's most experimental film-makers, and this one is not for those who expect only light entertainment. There is no plot; rather there is a series of chaotic but powerful visual images, more symbolic than realistic, skillfully mixed with changing musical backgrounds. A teenager tramples on an oil painting in a derelict building site. A young man sits in a wasteland crying, another eats raw cauliflower until he pukes. Sombre clouds pass over empty buildings. Soldiers with guns round people up on rooftops. A woman dances by a fire at the riverside.

It is put together with technical brilliance. Jarman really knows what he's doing. There is an evocative use of smoke, light, fire, bits of the Jarman's family's old home movies are



A series of visual images

cut in, their vibrant colours and scenes of domestic trivia touchingly contrasted to the post-nuclear darkness of the main body of the film.

Film

Much of the film is speeded up, slowed down, or 'treated' in some other way — techniques Jarman has used before, for example in 'The Angelic Conversation'. But where

that film was immensely boring, 'The Last of England' works very effectively.

Like practically all Jarman's films, there is a strong homoerotic element, which is what will guarantee an outcry when Channel 4 eventually shows it. Once scene in particular, in which a naked vodka-swilling youth and a fully-clothed and indeed balaclava-hidden soldier roll around (rather uncomfortably, I would have thought) on a bed is very rude indeed. And very symbolic, I expect, although the

idea that we get screwed by the state is not original.

Artist

Jarman is an artist. Although I must say I did look at my watch once or twice, there is no doubt that this film is visually magnificent. It would not be to everyone's taste, but if you're moderately patient and are not expecting a racy thriller, you might give it a try. Let Mary Whitehouse go blue in the face.

The best comedy on TV

By Clive Bradley

The extraordinary thing about *Blind Date* is that so many of Cilla's eager contestants are yuppies. Somehow you'd expect them to loathe such things, but apparently not. Yuppies, apparently, like humiliating themselves in front of millions of people.

Blind Date of course is the highlight of the week, not so much for the contest itself as the bit where last week's lucky pair bitch horribly about each other.

'He was really stupid', she says. 'She's not really my sort, she talks too much', he complains. 'When I saw him I thought: my god, what a dog'. 'She's quite attractive if you like that sort of thing'. And so on.

The programme is hypnotically awful. Why do people endure it? What fantastic exhibitionism is required to go through with it? How can they do it without blushing?

Despite its undoubted appeal, the whole concept of *Blind Date* is terrible. Men and women shouldn't have to compete for partners like bidders at an auction. Women shouldn't have to doll themselves up and answer some incredibly smarmy reptile of a man's loaded questions with as much innuendo as they can possibly manage.

What is even more remarkable is that they manage to dig up so many incredibly revolting blokes. I wouldn't be seen dead on a day trip to Greenwich with a single one of them. Why on earth the women so degrade themselves when they know perfectly well that all they're likely to end up with is a hog-faced narcissist who will grope them all day long and then complain that they're not his ideal woman anyway, god only knows. I suppose it's a sad comment on society.

Fortunately for our ideological purity — or almost — Spitting Image is back, better than ever before. Last Sunday saw Peter Wright go Bond, with Mrs Thatcher as the villain and Tebbit, brilliantly, as Jaws. Good stuff.

Spitting Image has a remarkable capacity to portray politicians and TV personalities as they really are. I can no longer watch Alistair Burnett without expecting his nose to glow red. And Owen and Steel are more real than they are in the flesh. This week's sketch with the two Davids as Peter Cook and Dudley Moore singing 'Goodbye' was classic.

Spitting Image is the sort of thing that has a tendency to disappoint after a bit, but hopefully this series will not.

The hideous truth of World War 1

Mick Ackersley reviews 'War Against War!' by Ernst Friedrich. Journeyman Press, £6.95.

'War against War' by Ernst Friedrich, was first published in 1924. Over a million copies of it have been circulated since.

It is a book of photographs from World War I; each photograph is captioned in four languages.

The photos show soldiers, corpses and present images of atrocities against civilians of the sort we have learned to associate more with the second than the first world war.

It is nowadays almost forgotten that the warring armies slaughtered tens of thousands of their own men for infringements of military order and discipline. But in a war in which three-quarters of a million men were sent by the generals to slaughter each other in the Battle of the Somme (1916) alone, that is really not surprising.

The book includes a collection of photos of men hideously wounded and deformed. I had to force myself to look at them.

The whole horrible imagery of war is in this book. The captions are full of irony and indignation, mocking and demolishing the conventional "heroic" claptrap of the militarists.

Friedrich was an anarchist and a pacifist who devoted much of his life to pacifist propaganda, of which this book is a most powerful expression. But pacifism is no solution to war.



From the book: a soldier is shot under martial law

The powerful wave of pacifism that swept through Europe after World War One didn't stop war.

Workers can't afford to be pacifists, in a world where our class enemies are armed to the teeth. The miners who had to either run away or fight a pitched battle with Mrs That-

cher's semi-militarised police at Orgreave weren't pacifists. They couldn't afford to be.

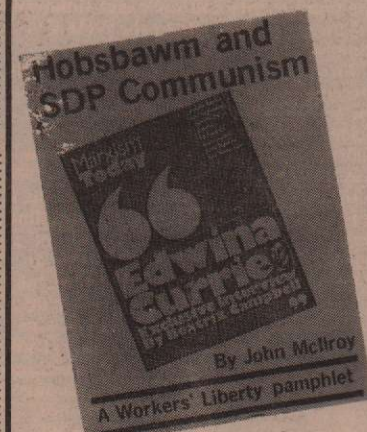
The pacifism of much of the German labour movement faced with Hitler's drive to power only helped Hitler get into a position where he could drive Europe towards a new

world war.

But while Ernst's message of pacifism-on-principle should be rejected, this book remains a grim record of the terrible things done to millions of human beings when the empires made war on each other in 1914.

Eric Hobsbawm and SDP Communism

By John McLroy. Price 50p



All pamphlets available from: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. Please include 20p p&p.

The scandal of NOLS

Excerpts from a Socialist Students in NOLS pamphlet by Jane Ashworth

In the academic year of 1987 Labour Students lost numerical control of the National Union of Students Executive. However, there is still a majority of Labour Party members on the National Executive Committee.

The leadership of the National Organisation of Labour Students has alienated many good Labour Party and student union activists who will no longer toe the Party line and vote for official NOLS candidates. The NOLS candidates are branded as supporters of the Democratic Left (DL) — a name synonymous with inactivity, and political and organisational duplicity.

The 1987 NOLS Conference was small; the membership of NOLS was down by 400 on the previous year. Part-time FE students, those on the dole, are still not allowed to join the organisation.

In NUS, NOLS are seen to have run out of ideas; they command little respect in the eyes of the membership. 1986-7 was widely regarded as the worst year for NUS campaigns since the turn of the decade. NOLS have been forced to electorally resurrect the Eurocommunists of the Communist Party to ensure a continued voting majority on NUS NEC.

NOLS appears to be heading for a semi-stable coalition with the CP. The CP has voted with the Democratic Left on every substantial issue on NUS Executive to date (November 1987).

The NOLS leadership — the DL with the Clause IV grouping at its ideological core — stands accused of destroying NOLS as a democratic, honest and political youth movement, and of stupefying the largest students' union in the non-Stalinist world — NUS — into a dead sleep.

For over a decade there have been accusations of Clause IV and then the DL rigging the annual conference of NOLS.

When SSiN was formed NOLS appeared to us to be an open organisation. Most of us had previously been YS activists and NOLS — at the time — seemed like a haven. At the annual conference of NOLS there were ge-

nuine debates; minorities were encouraged to speak; there were regional and national aggregates; everyone seemed to get the chance to participate in honest debates. It seemed to us that alignments inside NOLS were on the basis of politics. It was a far cry from the YS which we knew to be bureaucratic and stifled under the dead hand of Militant.

The proto-SSiN used to transfer votes to the Clause IV slate in NOLS elections. Not only were Clause IV at the time on the left of the Party, but their administration of NOLS appeared so much better than the Militant's administration of the YS.

Faced with a choice of voting for the Clause IV or voting Militant and letting them do to NOLS what they did to the YS — seal it up — we chose Clause IV.

By 1983 we had all changed our minds. The corruption in the NOLS office was so blatant that there was no choice.

Since then the situation has got worse. Now NOLS is declining and in all probability the DL do not have the support of most Labour Clubs. In a democratic conference they would lose control of the organisation.

While NOLS office has been spending its time carving up the opposition, Labour Clubs throughout the country have been left to go their own way. There has been little or no direction from the NC, little or no campaigning work, few forums for debate: NOLS has stagnated.

There is very little reason why anyone who is not involved in the prolonged power struggle in NOLS should want to be in the organisation. It is unattractive, it does little in its own right and even its control of NUS as been a charade, a mockery of the mass campaigning NUS they promised to create.

The record: 1983

This was the year when things changed for SSiN. Previously we had had a few delegates carved out, but the 1983 conference at Manchester Poly was the start of the war of attrition.

The opposition had more than 20 delegates ruled out — Clause IV majority was only 19. And that figure of 20 excluded those delegates who were initially ruled out but reinstated after conference heard their case. Most spectacular were the cases of Manchester University Students' Union and Birmingham University.

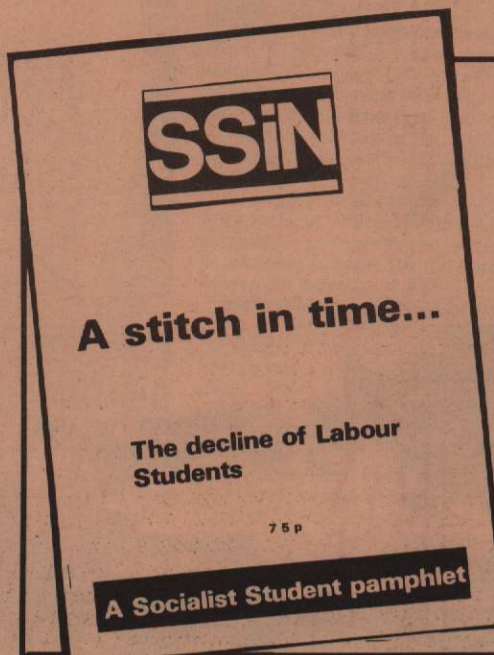
Abdul Sheir and Phil Davidson were the two SSiN delegates from Birmingham which had four

However none of these cheques has ever cleared through our account. Therefore, all in all we owe NOLS £597. Despite this and the fact that I wrote to NOLS four months ago NOLS NC has not contacted me or the club at all (although they have seen fit to talk to other individuals in the club e.g. Teresa Kelly, Gerry Devaney).

At SOLS conference this year Strathclyde University Labour Club was denied their third delegate because NOLS said that they still owed £26 for membership. This was despite the fact that SULC had actually sent 106 membership cards plus an £80 cheque plus £26 in postal orders all by registered mail.

At SOLS conference this year I stood up during questions to the Treasurer's report. I asked why SULC had been denied one of their delegates for supposedly owing £26 when GULC had been allowed its full delegate entitlement despite the fact that it had not paid any money to NOLS for two years. As you can imagine all hell broke loose and I was accused of "shitting all over the club" and so on. The committee came out with their usual "sweep it under the carpet" attitude and said that what was of most importance regarding SOLS conference was not the fact that we had no right to be there, but the fact that I had embarrassed the club in front of the whole conference. This has continued to be the prevailing attitude and so I wrote the letter to the NEC which I will show you some time...

Yours in comradeship,
LINDSAY J. MUNRO



Available from Socialist Students in NOLS 54a Peckham Rye London SE15

delegates. Dave Mason, a member of the NOLS Officers group was the 'reserve' delegate. Mason offered to send in the Club's membership cards to the Labour Party. He did so. Sheir and Davidson were subsequently ruled out because their cards were incorrectly filled in; Abdul's lacked an NUS card number — or so the NOLS office said.

In 1983 NOLS NC members were allowed to see the national files on clubs. Going through the cards revealed that Abdul's card did indeed not have an NUS card number on it; neither did it have Abdul's signature on it. The card held by the NOLS office was a forgery. Dave Mason admitted throwing away Abdul's genuine card and replacing it with an incomplete forgery. Abdul was reinstated as a delegate and Mason went home.

Over half of the Manchester University delegation were SSiN supporters. The reserve delegates were Clause IV. The SSiN delegates were ruled out; again it was said that their cards were incomplete.

When challenged, John Mann (NOLS NUS officer) and John Dennis (Labour Party Student Organiser) both said they had themselves sent the cards, they were indeed incomplete and a photocopy would be forwarded in confirmation. The photocopy never arrived. NOLS office said that they had lost all the SSiN supporters' membership cards! A hastily convened meeting of NOLS NC reinstated the delegates — an admission by Clause IV that they had cheated.

Not surprisingly the LPSO credentials report took 2.5 conference sessions to get through. Conference was also suspended for a session because John Dennis, the LPSO refused to accept a conference decision to give clubs appealing against his credentials ruling the right to reply to his defence.

1984

This was the year when Clause IV did their sums wrong and failed to carve out enough of the opposition to give themselves a comfortable majority. The conference was closed down in chaos.

The combined opposition were knocking Clause IV all over the place. Three censure motions were passed against the NC and its Report was referred back. The highest vote recorded on a show of hands was 239. The election for the first block of officers of the NC was held. SSiN won two, Militant one and Clause IV three. The odd thing was that the total number of votes cast increased by 11.

As John Dennis, the Returning Officer read out the results, there were demands for answers to the basic question, where had those eleven extra votes come from.

John Dennis refused to allow his report to be questioned. SSiN demanded a roll-call vote to allow

conference to see who was in the room. John Dennis refused to allow one. Militant declared that they knew how the ballot had been "rigged" — duplicate ballot forms had been given out to Clause IV loyalists.

John Dennis then insisted that either his report be accepted or that he would have to have the conference closed. Dennis said that Labour Party general secretary Jim Mortimer had told him to say that. Militant pushed further and the conference was closed down. Chaos followed with both the Militant and DL shoving people about — but not on anything like the scale that Clause IV later pretended.

1984 was also the conference where:

1) New clubs mysteriously appeared. By the time the list of affiliated clubs was released, eight clubs were listed which had never been accepted into membership by the NC.

2) NC members were not allowed to see central files.

3) An attempt to change the standing orders was defeated — the changes would have abolished the roll call vote and given the chairperson the right to adjourn conference.

1985

This was a quiet conference. New standing orders were in effect, having been imposed by the Labour Party NEC after the 'inquiry' into the 1984 conference. The Labour Party Student Officer's Credentials Report was no longer taken.

A Credentials Committee had been set up and so too had an Appeals Committee. Both these were Labour Party bodies that few people knew anything about — let alone who was on them.

1986

About 50 delegates were ruled out; more than enough to make the difference between the DL maintaining or losing control of the NC.

The NOLS machinery had hardened up and so too had the conference. The dispute over the accounts best illustrates this. SSiN supporter Dave Brennan was one of the NOLS Auditors — the other was a DL sup-

porter.

David had not been allowed anywhere near the books, let alone given the chance to examine them or any other files equally relevant to his job. Presented only with a table of income and expenditure, David refused to sign these "accounts" as a true and accurate record.

The DL decided that this didn't matter; one student had signed and that was enough. SSiN appealed to conference — an Auditor had a serious point to raise. He had been prevented from doing his job and wanted two minutes to explain why he had rejected the "accounts".

Disgustingly, conference voted against letting Dave speak. Conference thereby declared that they didn't care if NOLS had been robbed, or if there was a big cover-up going on. Conference was pro-DL, and by fair means or foul it was going to stay that way.

1987

The 1987 conference was again shrouded in mystery. Most of the carving was kept well away from conference floor, with many Clubs ruled out well before that.

The carving was particularly vicious and small minded. North Staffs Poly, for example, asked for thirty more membership cards at the start of the year. They were sent them, but the thirty sent previously were cancelled at the same time! Then they had delegates ruled out of order because they had to replace one as he couldn't attend through pressure of work (Nottingham University). York University had delegates ruled out because the wrong club committee member signed some of the membership cards, despite the fact that this had happened previously on many occasions. Sussex University had their delegates ruled out, reinstated on appeal, and ruled out again 24 hours before the start of the conference — obviously with no time to appeal.

Perhaps the most vicious case was Newcastle Poly. NOLS rang to tell them they had to change the date of their selection meeting — which eventually the Poly agreed to do, and a date was set over the phone. NOLS then ruled them out of order because the Poly had changed the date without informing them!

Although an appeal procedure was set up, several of the above were not told of it until they badgered the office, or found out from an outside source. In fact, some were informed there was no such right of appeal.

At the event, before conference had started, the Militant member of Standing Orders Committee and their NOLS NC member Julie Frost staged a sit-in protest, demanding information about Clubs registered, ruled out and so on. This lasted for hours but Militant backed down when it looked like the conference might be suspended. In any event, by this time the Democratic Left had guaranteed a smallish but sufficient majority. Their candidates beat the Militant/SSiN slate by an average of about 15-20 votes. So we still have the carving right-wing in control.

Danny Nicol was leader of the Oxford University Labour Club delegation to the 1984 Conference at Hull. He says:—

"It was a very tight situation: Militant and SSiN had about as many delegates combined as the DL, and leading figures on the National Committee were worried about losing control of NOLS.

So certain members of my delegation decided to improve the DL's chances by some ballot-rigging. The ploy was to claim votes twice, pretending the second time to be another member of the delegation who hadn't managed to turn up. Two comrades tried this.

The first succeeded. The second was at a disadvantage by being a woman of striking appearance; she changed her clothes and wore her hair up, but Militant still managed to penetrate her disguise. One of their supporters, stationed outside the room where voting

was taking place to guard against abuse, recognised her as someone who had voted before.

Of course, when this story broke in the conference hall, it caused a hullabaloo. The comrade excused herself to the Party's student organiser, saying she acted under the misapprehension that she could cast a proxy vote on behalf of her absent friend.

Incidentally, her boyfriend was NOLS Treasurer. The last I heard of the couple they had ceased being active in the Labour Party and had got well-to-do jobs in banking and computing.

There was bad behaviour from Militant at the conference, too, but two wrongs don't make a right."

Danny Nicol is now a member of the Executive Committee of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

Labour councils: fruits of defeat

The defeat of the rate capping campaign has seen the chickens come home to roost in many of the erstwhile left Labour boroughs, such as the London Borough of Haringey.

The new leadership around Councillor Harris, elected after Steve King took a principled stand and refused to carry out the cuts, hoped to get away with a smooth transition from posturing against Thatcher to doing her dirty work.

They were wrong. White collar workers from the NUT and NALGO have already taken major industrial action against the council in the form of a one-day strike which quite clearly was a 'shot across the bows'.

The scope of the cuts proposed by the council are staggering. In a full year they will exceed 26 million. For the teachers alone it will mean the loss of 340 full-time equivalents. While the service will suffer by such things as a 10% cut in books and equipment. Tony Brockman, secretary of the NUT said this was only the beginning. Next year is expected to be even worse.

Yet what was missing from the strike action and will be key to the building of a successful struggle against the council was the presence of the manual unions. At a

joint shop stewards' committee they had been asked to support the strike but declined. The immediate reason for this rests in the fact that the council are attempting to shove the whole burden onto the white collar staff, playing up the division amongst the workers and splitting the response. Of course this is what management always try and do. However, this tactic is not confined to Haringey, but has been the general line taken by councils now rushing to balance the books. There

are reports that manual trade unions at shop steward level have been lent on by their full time officers to support the council because they are defending 'front line', i.e. manual workers' jobs and because they are not attacking Labour Party affiliated unions.

While this 'no fight' line is deplorable in itself, it is also stupidly short-sighted. There is no way that the cuts can be contained to the white collar staff, let alone the problem of fighting privatisation.

For instance the NUT nationally are likely to take the council to court saying that the cuts will mean non-compliance with the 1944 Education Act. They have already done this successfully against two Tory councils. While in the DLO there is trouble brewing over the equalisation of bonus and overtime payments, which make up a major part of the pay packet and will be the first to go in any spill over

into cuts on manual staff.

It is essential that these divisions are overcome and that the militants within the unions challenge the 'no fight' policy of the manual workers. Those within the Labour Party and Haringey Fightback need to turn their attention to the manual workers and get them to realise that their interests lie in a joint fight alongside the white collar staff.

Camden library

By Nik Barstow

Librarians are not most people's idea of the average union militant. But plans by local councils to cut library services change things.

London Labour councils, which are desperately looking for 'humane' and 'rational' cuts see libraries as top of the list; a fringe service with a workforce they do not expect to fight back. They are wrong!

In Camden, where the council is 'freezing' unfilled jobs, they are pressing for flexibility to cover the unfilled gaps. Three library staff at the Music Library at Swiss Cottage refused to help out at the Lending Library and were suspended as part of this exercise. A strike by 40 NALGO members there got their pay reinstated. But four libraries are still under the threat of closure.

The library dispute in Camden is just part of the far larger clash between a council that has thrown away its com-

mitments to fight for jobs and services and a trade union that is prepared to stick up for them. On 29 October the 5500 strong Camden NALGO branch struck to protest at the Council's plans for £40 million worth of cuts that threatened 1500 jobs and most of the borough services were severely hit.

Some 20,000 leaflets from library workers, as part of the Islington Fightback campaign, were distributed to the public explaining the case against cuts in jobs and services. Added to the thousands of signatures already collected on the Islington Fightback's petitions in every library; a photo-exhibition at the North Islington library threatened with closure; and other aggressive campaigning — the Council is being shown that trade unionists will not agree with their plans to cut jobs and services.

The policy of both looking to industrial action and winning wider support in local communities through campaigns like Fightback is one the council trade unionists need to adopt through both London and the country.

Manchester council

By Tony Dale

Close to 1000 workers demonstrated on Monday 2 November, demanding that Manchester City Council ask the Director of Social Services to withdraw her resignation.

On the surface this seems strange; but beneath the surface is the issue of cuts and the Council's job freeze.

When the Council decided on cuts they adopted a blanket jobs freeze. Due to the large number of temporary posts in Social Services, the jobs freeze hit these very hard. Some sections were close to col-

lapse. Embarrassed by media coverage of this crisis, the Labour Council moved against Social Services Director Irene Walton.

Councillors told her that she had two choices — resign or be sacked.

The action on Monday saw a large number of workers from all sections of Social Services joining the lobby. But a decision to back-track from a one-day strike to a lunch-time lobby weakened the action. The NUPE and NALGO officials, despite mobilising large numbers, did not lead an occupation of the meeting.

Their appeals to the Policy and Resources Committee were rejected as the councillors approved Irene Walton's early retirement.

CPSA

CPSA Broad Left meets

This weekend (7/8 November) sees the CPSA Broad Left gathering in Liverpool for its national conference.

Its members will elect the Broad Left's slate for next year's elections — chiefly for CPSA's President and National Executive Committee, but also for the

By Mike Grayson

union's delegates to the TUC, Women's TUC, etc — as well as electing the Broad Left's own national committee.

The conference will also be debating some 90 motions covering a wide variety of topics from our next pay claim to

fighting immigration controls and the Alton Bill. Two subjects which have attracted a large number of motions are the affiliation of CPSA to the Labour Party (a ballot will be held next Spring), and support for COSATU and the Moses Mayekiso campaign.

Unfortunately, some other important issues such as support for the right of self-organisation for oppressed groups and the extension of union democracy — are still largely the preserve of the Socialist Caucus group. This organises most of the hard left who are independent of the Militant and SWP and includes supporters of Socialist Organiser.

Since the beginning of June the Broad Left has had a majority on the CPSA Executive Committee but this has led to difficulties within the Broad Left as an organisation. One motion submitted to conference records the non-appearance of the Broad Left's journal "Broadside" for almost two years.

Another motion expresses concern that "following the election of a Broad Left NEC, the Broad Left National Committee held no meetings for nearly four months."

Without denying the genuine problems that the Broad Left NEC has faced, these failings must be rectified.

It is vital that the Broad Left is not seen as something that only needs to operate democratically when its elected representatives are *not* in power: or as something that only gets active when there are elections to be won. Hopefully the close of conference will see a Broad Left better armed with policies and organisation that will enable us to both retain the leadership of CPSA and build stronger active support in the workplaces.

Education

A new attack on teachers

The government is squaring up for another fight with the teachers, this time over pay. But as with previous confrontations the teachers' leaders appear unprepared to do battle.

The NAS/UWT has presented a claim for 15% and the NUT is demanding a minimum of 7.5%. The government is offering 4% and Education Minister Kenneth Baker is ruthlessly closing down all channels of negotiation.

The teachers' leaders go on about 'government dictat' but continue to negotiate despite the fact that, legally, no body now exists in which teachers' unions can have any effective voice over pay and conditions. NAS/UWT and NUT leaders have already ruled out strike action over pay.

The union leaders are punch-drunk. They have been floored so many times now over negotiating rights, over conditions of service, over the defence of state education, that they have lost the means

and the will to fight this government.

Doug Macvoy, NUT deputy general secretary, said it all the day after the general election when he ruled out the possibility of action at school level and claimed that this government was unbeatable as it had been returned with a 100-seat majority.

In 1985 the Tories had a 147 seat majority but the union leaders still had a campaign of strike action. Indeed it was only when that campaign seemed to be having considerable success that first the NAS/UWT, and then the NUT leadership collapsed into the futility and disaster of the ACAS talks.

At present we have not got an alternative leadership in the NUT. So we must put every pressure on the current leadership into abandoning its current policy.

However, the Socialist Teachers Alliance must continue the process of patiently explaining to members that this government cannot be stopped by mere words, mobilising more rank and file teachers into union activity.

Salplas

Tribunal victory

The six workers whose victimisation sparked the strike at Salplas, Eccles, have won their tribunal for unfair dismissal. They will receive redundancy pay, although the amount is not yet clear.

The strike began in February this year. Although the strikers held 100% solid for many weeks, they were isolated. Solidarity action was unlikely, since Salplas had no sister factories, although workers at several firms refused to handle scab Salplas products.

Most of the strikers are TGWU members. The union's full time officials have shown a fairly minimal support for the strike. A lot of financial support came from the rank and file in factories locally and across the region. Despite this, finan-

cial hardship has meant strikers dropping out and/or finding work elsewhere. Not one striker has crossed the line at Salplas — except to occupy the factory!

The boss, Barry Chapman, has seen no such hardship. Chapman is now trying to sell up and make off with the loot. The factory has been smartened up. Machines have been freshly painted.

The parasite ran a stall at a plastics trade fair in Birmingham to perk up his order books and make the company appear a 'going concern'. A price list for Salplas machines is circulating round local plastics firms.

Money is still needed. Send to: Salplas Strike Fund, c/o J. Billington, Branch Secretary, 6/196 Branch TGWU, 43 Abingdon Road, Urmston, Manchester M31 1GW.

AEU/TGWU

Ford plant row

By Jim Denham

A furious row has broken out between the AEU and the TGWU over Ford's planned £40 million

Dundee plant.

The AEU has negotiated a single union agreement that amounts to a no strike deal in all but name. It also cuts across the Ford 'Blue Book' agreement with all the motor industry unions and is plainly in breach of the TUC's disputes principles and procedures.

At the Ford joint union negotiating committee on 22 October a motion of no confidence in the AEU's chief negotiating officer for Ford, Jimmy Airlie, was only averted by a last minute decision by Mick Murphy, the TGWU's automotive officer.

The row is particularly embarrassing for the Broad Left in the AEU as Airlie is a prominent Communist Party member and Broad Left 'hero'. Thus a recent letter to the Morning Star signed by a number of trade unionists associated with the CP and/or the Morning Star, including London North District secretary George Anthony, attempted to defend the deal on the dubious grounds that "This is not a no strike deal...this is a greenfield site agreement".

But the official AEU description of the deal gives the lie to this sort of hypocrisy: "It is not a no-strike agreement but makes provision for an immediate meeting between the AEU council and senior company executives in the unlikely event of unresolved local difficulties". In other words, binding arbitration.

Airlie himself justified the deal on the grounds that "Ford knew the US would have located their plant abroad unless they reached agreement on a single union bargaining agreement. As a union our main objective is to attract manufacturing industry into our country". This whole sordid business demonstrates the bankruptcy of the nationalism peddled by Airlie and the CP, and the need for stronger international links (in this case with United Auto Workers in the US) to prevent Ford playing British unions off against each other with threats to take investments overseas.

Lobby NUM national executive!

I read today that Ted Scott, the branch secretary from Stillington in North Yorkshire sacked last July for straightforward trade union activities, has started work at Kellingley pit.

His case is very similar to my own, and until very recently he was insisting on reinstatement at Stillington and rejected re-employment at Wheldale, a pit in the process of closing. From what I have read he has now accepted re-employment at Kellingley and started with a group of men from Wheldale. He has signed some form of undertaking about his activities at the pit, but he is also going to pursue his case in an industrial tribunal and argue for reinstatement.

As I have been told often enough in my own case, even if the tribunal decides for reinstatement the Coal Board do not have to comply.

Obviously, it is Ted Scott's own decision, but I would have liked to have had some joint meeting between myself, Ted Scott and other people to hammer out some common policy. In my own case I have still not firmly decided what to do, after the tribunal's decision to back up the Coal Board's offer of re-employment at the Yorkshire pits of Manton or Shireoaks.

I know, however, if I am forced to

WHETTON'S WEEK



move I'm not going to sign any documents. Instead I would be demanding from the Coal Board guarantees of no loss in service, no loss of pension rights, guarantees of transport, etc. I have made no decision yet.

Last week the Coal Board gave the UDM a 4.2% pay rise, but refused it to the NUM until the overtime ban was called off. The rise will go to all those in UDM majority pits, so all Notts miners will get it. It is yet one more blatant example of the Coal Board propping up the UDM, but rather than enticing men to that organisation I think it will have the opposite effect and just make them more angry.

I hope that anger will be channelled into a lobby of the next National Executive meeting, demanding the overtime ban be made effective. At the moment miners are losing money but having little effect on the Coal Board; in fact, the present so-called ban is a sign of weakness, not strength.

And if the Executive is not prepared to take more positive action, then at the very

least they should be prepared to have a special delegate conference to allow the lads from the pits to have a voice and decide whether we forget the whole thing or decide to implement effective action.

Last Friday Arthur Scargill delivered the S.O. Davies memorial lecture in South Wales, and rightly criticised the 'new realists' in our own union, as well as in the wider labour movement. The question those people have to answer is where does the collaboration stop, and where do you start trying to regain some of the things that have been taken away from us?

Ban

In fact the attitude can only lead to surrendering more and more of the things we have won over the years.

The divisions inside the union are having an effect for which I blame the 'new realists'. It is because of them that we have an ineffective overtime ban. And, for the first time, the UDM have got something to campaign on, appealing to NUM members to get out of the 'mess' and join them. They are also campaigning vigorously on the NUM's failure to deliver the national benevolent scheme.

Those who are boasting about knowing how to deal with the UDM, from Areas where there is not a single UDM member, should come to Notts and see exactly the short of weapons they are putting in the

hands of that organisation here to campaign against the NUM.

Last week, for the first time, NUM and UDM representatives sat down together on management committees for both the pensions scheme and the social insurance and welfare fund. Arthur Scargill refused to be one of the representatives. As a branch, Bevercotes has also decided that we will not sit on any committee with the UDM; Ollerton has decided the same.

We took that decision to the Notts Area and it has now gone back to the branches for endorsement or whatever. Hopefully, in a very short space of time, it will be Area policy not to collaborate in any way, or sit on any committee on which UDM members serve.

I know there are significant problems, especially with things like the pension scheme, but I do not think we can play the game at one end of the scale and turn our backs on the argument at the other end. It should be national NUM policy that we do not sit down with a body that is not recognised by the TUC nor the Labour Party, and is a bosses' organisation. Whatever the problems we have to make a principled stand.

With the 70th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution, I often wonder what Lenin would think if he could come back and see what has happened. He certainly would not be pleased. The revolution was brought to a full stop by Stalin.

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HARRY BENSON reporting from Manchester.



UDA plans attack on martyrs' march

The dollar starts sliding



THE PARA-MILITARY Ulster Defence Association is drumming up its supporters in Britain and telling them to stop this year's Manchester Martyrs Commemoration march.

The Manchester Martyrs were three Fenians (Irish Republicans), Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, hanged outside Belle Vue Jail, Manchester, in 1868. Their bodies lie in Moston cemetery.

They had been captured after Fenians had ambushed a police van and freed two prominent leaders of their organisation. A policeman had been killed in the raid, and Allen, Larkin and O'Brien were charged with murder.

When they were sentenced to be hanged, they shouted 'God Save Ireland', a sentiment which was immediately turned into a song still popular in Ireland — "God Save Ireland", said the heroes. God Save Ireland, say we all...

Every year in November there is a commemoration march to Moston cemetery. This year the UDA will try to stop it. Don't let them!

Contact the Manchester Martyrs Committee, c/o Grass Roots bookshop, 1 Newton St, Manchester 1.

By Martin Thomas

Fourteen days after the Great Stock Market Crash, the world's capitalists are still waiting to see what the US government will do.

Ronald Reagan has agreed to meet Congressmen to discuss tax increases and spending cuts. On normal economic wisdom, this is the opposite of what the US government should do.

A stock market crash wipes out wealth. US shareholders have lost a total of over \$1000 billion since Wall Street started sliding on 25 August. That's an amount equivalent to two-thirds of all the national wealth of the UK — houses, roads, factories, offices, equipment of all sorts, the lot.

The loss is also equivalent to about ten percent of all the machines, buildings, highways and so on in the US.

Now it's a paper loss, a destruction of credit. None of the machines and buildings and roads have been smashed up. But the capitalist system runs on bits of paper, and the paper loss is likely to lead to many of the machines and buildings becoming idle.

People and companies who have made big losses spend less. Demand dwindles. Producers find it more difficult to sell.

The standard government policy in such circumstances is to spend more and to cut taxes, so that the private sector is encouraged to spend more, or at least not spend less. Why is the US government planning to do the opposite?

Since 1983, big spending by the US government (on arms) and by US consumers (much of it on Japanese and other East Asian goods) has been pulling the world capitalist economy into a feeble expansion. A basic problem lying behind the stock market crash is that no-one thought this could last.

The US spending spree means that the US government has been spending much more than it gets in taxes, and US companies and individuals have been spending much more than they produce.

They have been able to spend because Japanese, British, Dutch and Third World capitalists have been lending the US government and US capitalists vast sums of money. The capitalists have done this because of high profit and interest rates in the US. But how long could it last? The



Panic

longer the spree went on, the more nervous capitalists became that it might end in disaster.

What they want now is a gradual, controlled cut in US spending — so that there won't be a sudden, uncontrolled cut. They want a small downturn now in the US rather than a big slump later. Whether they can manage this is an open question.

The dollar began to slide in the foreign exchange markets last week. By 2 November it was down to 1.71 deutschmarks and 137 yen. Only recently it was 1.80 deutschmarks and 150 yen. Jacques Delors, president of the EEC Commission, said on 28 October that the dollar would fall to 1.60 deutschmarks.

These shifts look small. They are more significant than they seem because of the vast sums spinning round in the world money-trading markets. Still, if the dollar does slide down quietly to 1.60 deutschmarks over the next few weeks, the capitalists will be more relieved than worried. They can cope with gradual, controlled shifts. A sudden panic in the currency markets could be much more devastating than the stock-market crash, ruining world trade and unleashing long-pent-up drives to trade war. In the same speech, Delors warned that the European

Monetary System — the arrangement which is supposed to stop EEC currencies swinging too much out of line with each other — was in trouble.

The stock markets have got past some important trouble spots without obvious disaster. 26 October was settlement day in New York, the day when cash had to change hands for the fortnight's transactions including 19 October. The Down Jones index went down 157 points as people sold to raise cash, but no big company immediately went bust. The London Stock Exchange also weathered its settlement day, on 2 November.

Sell-off

On 30 October the BP sell-off was saved by a bit of welfare-state-for-financiers — with the Bank of England guaranteeing to limit the losses of the millionaire companies which had (in return for fat fees) promised to take the shares. The price of the new shares has since dropped to within half a pence of the Bank of England guarantee price of 70p, but the Tories' success was big enough to encourage the Japanese government to press ahead with their sell-off of Nippon Telegraph and Telephone, scheduled for 10 November.

Last week the Madrid and Stockholm exchanges both had their biggest-ever one-day falls. But the US, Japanese and British stock markets between them account for over 80% of the world's share values. They veered around last week, but by 2 November they were only slightly down (or slightly up) on what they had been at the end of the first week of the crash.

Such small recoveries and levelling-outs are common in stock market crashes, and give little backing to the people who have been saying that the worst is over.

The Financial Times reported last week: "The \$100 billion-plus US market for... 'junk bonds' has suffered from a capital flight no less ghastly than that hitting equity prices". 'Bonds' are bits of paper entitling the holder to repayment at some date in the future, plus interest payments — and 'junk' bonds are bonds with very high rates of interest but very thin guarantees that your repayment is secure, sold by companies to raise money fast.

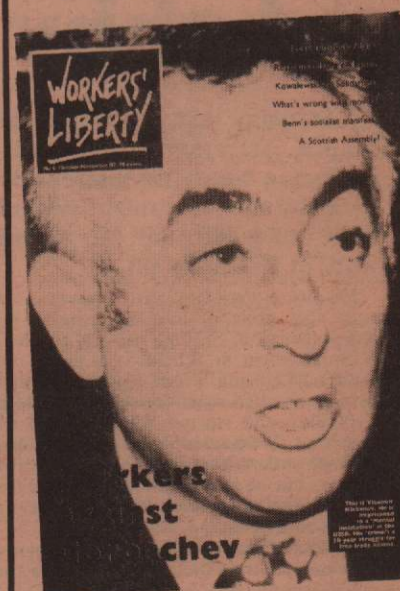
They are the equivalent, in the US business world, of the big loans raised by Third World states in the '70s. Once the credit dried up, those Third World states could not repay. But companies which can't repay go bust.

shown that English and Scottish Loyalists will resist their aims of stirring up trouble in mainland Britain.

Allen, Larkin and O'Brien were simply Irish murderers who received their just desserts at the end of a rope. How on earth they received 'martyrdom' is beyond a joke. If the IRA/INLA are anxious to add a few more 'martyrs' to their never-ending stream of dead thugs, then I am sure they should be assisted in that regard.

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