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Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

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Next
issue

Socialist Organiser will be back after Christmas on January 6.

Inside this issue, two pages of views and reviews (p.10-11), features on the world debt crisis (p.8-9) and on racism (p.6-7), the conclusion of our series on Lenin and the Russian revolution (p.12-13), and new revelations about the secret factionalising of Labour's right wing (page 2).

Women shut Greenham Common: Labour must SHUT DOWN THE WAR MACHINE!

ANDREW WIARD
(REPORT)



COLLEEN MOLLOY REPORTS FROM GREENHAM COMMON:

MORE than 35,000 women surrounded the USAF base at Greenham Common last Sunday.

The day, just one year before the date in 1983 when 96 Cruise missiles are to be sited at the base, was more a joyous festivity than a siege.

Women linked hands to form a human chain 9 miles around the perimeter of the fence, decorated with symbols of life.

The whole event was organised by women for

women to celebrate their strength as women opposed to the nuclear threat. It was no more than that — it was not meant to be.

Some Labour Party and trade union banners were there, but very few; most of the banners were from CND and women's groups.

People left, high on the festivities, but frustrated at the sense of achieving nothing, apart from the media putting Greenham on the map. Frustrated, but optimistic, for now is the time to turn to trade

unionists and build on their struggles.

On the Monday some 2000 women stayed on to block-work on the base — and they certainly caused the loss of hundreds of worker-hours.

Three women were arrested and two injured as police moved in to clear a way for construction workers and USAF personnel, but — aware of the wide support for the peace women — the police felt obliged to proceed more cautiously than otherwise they would have done with such a demonstration.

IF THE labour movement mobilises its forces on the scale that the women's movement mobilised for Greenham Common, then the nuclear war machine can be shut down.

Greenham Common was probably the biggest women's demonstration for decades. Thousands of women turned out who previously had never been on demonstrations — and it will encourage thousands more people to become active.

At Upper Heyford, near Banbury, another 'peace chain' is planned for December 31, from 6.30am to 6.30pm. This will be a mixed event, though there is to be a women-only gate as well as trade union, youth CND, etc. gates. (Contact: Steeple Aston [0869]40461).

And at High Wycombe local campaigners are running a vigil over Christmas outside the Daws Hill USAF base, recently named as a probable site for the US's planned alternative European command centre. Increasing numbers of people no longer see the

war drive — such moves as Reagan's plan for MX missiles, or the Tories' scheme for £1 billion more military equipment — as inevitable and unstoppable.

Sit-downs and chains of people holding hands will not stop the giant war machine, the armoured backbone of the world power of the big capitalist states. But the organised working class can stop it.

Nothing can be manufactured, transported, or installed without the working class. The Labour Party is committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament, and must be held to that commitment by the Labour and trade union rank and file.

Industrial action to stop the Bomb, or a Labour government decision to scrap it, would only be the first step in a fierce battle with the vested interests of the military/industrial machine. The ruling class will not be disarmed peacefully. But the labour movement also has the strength to win that battle — given a leadership with the necessary political will.

IN THE immortal words of Oliver Hardy, "That's another fine mess you've got me into".

Delegates at the CoHSE special conference on the NHS pay dispute put it rather more regrettably. Many recalled that, "If



Fowler: well may he smirk

only we'd done the right thing in June, the whole situation might be different now".

Indeed, most of the 520 delegates were the same people who had in June been bludgeoned and intimidated by general secretary Albert Spanswick into rejecting a resolution calling for an all-out strike with emergency cover.

In Bridlington on Tuesday they were ironically offered a resolution apparently urging them to undertake even more drastic action, a stoppage with no emergency cover. But Spanswick — still adamantly opposed to any serious strike action — and most of the NEC knew in advance that there was no prospect of such a resolution being carried.

Many delegates pointed out that despite their own wish to strike, they were

mandated by their branches to oppose it and accept the Tory offer — though only for a one-year settlement.

In this they echoed similar views in the other health unions. NUPE branches have reportedly voted by four to one in favour of accepting the offer for this year, though against a two-year deal. A NALGO conference voted to accept the deal as it stands.

But the CoHSE bureaucrats could not resist a final twist of the knife. In drawing up standing orders for the special conference they placed first on the agenda a motion for acceptance of the offer. If carried, that would have meant all other motions, including opposition to two year deals and opposition to any differential between nurses and ancillaries, would have

fallen.

The conference rejected this manoeuvre by a large majority, and carried these two stipulations before voting down proposals for all-out strike action with emergency cover.

CoHSE is now nominally still committed to continue the level of action it has maintained since the summer: but it is plain that after eight weary and frustrating months the combined forces of the Tory government and the TUC leadership have finally ground down the militancy of the NHS workers.

The scope and strength of that militancy took Thatcher and the union bureaucracy by surprise. During the summer and autumn their pay battle rallied unprecedented solidarity action from miners and other sections of the trade union movement

— action which could have been still further extended had NUPE acted upon its conference policy for an all-out strike, and other health unions not obstructed every move in that direction.

Precisely what detailed arrangements will now be made by the union leaders to conclude this marathon dispute are not clear as we go to press.

But, while the bureaucrats heave a sigh of relief and seek to blame their betrayal on the membership, the lesson of the vast reserve of militant struggle among the rank and file of the working class — and particularly the working women who comprise 70% of the NHS labour force — must not be forgotten.

It is that strength which offers the only hope for defence of NHS jobs and services in the struggles to come.

Call for united fight against witch-hunt

John Bloxam reports on the first national meeting of Labour Against the Witch-hunt



Ford Dagenham TGWU has urged unity of the campaigns against the witch-hunt

LAST Sunday, delegates from 20 Constituency Labour Parties and ten other organisations attended the first Labour Against the Witch-hunt National Council meeting. There were also 13 observers at the meeting, including from CLPs that may soon affiliate.

The announcement that the Bermondsey selection has now been fixed for January 9 was seen as a defeat for the right-wing attempt to knife Peter Tatchell in the back by going for a hurried by-election before Christmas.

Hornsey CLP delegate Steve King reported that Hornsey's feeling to maintain their stand on Tariq Ali had probably strengthened because of the support they had been getting. Although the GC this coming Wednesday will have a resolution that proposes giving in if the NEC make no concessions, there are a number of other resolutions that the CLP should stand firm.

Hornsey

The meeting with the National Executive Committee that Hornsey demanded and won has now been fixed for December 21.

The morning session of the National Council was dominated by discussion on two issues - relations with the Militant-dominated Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-hunt, and registration.

Ford's Dagenham TGWU branch 1/1107 had written a letter to both LAW and LSCAW urging

"your national steering committees to put aside secondary differences and call a joint conference which can elect a common leadership in preparation for the 1983 trade union and Labour Party conferences."

A report was given to the meeting of the LSCAW's rejection of the proposal to exchange three delegates between the two campaigns. LAW's stance on unity was reaffirmed, with particular emphasis placed on the need to work together in specific campaigns and actions.

We also agreed that LAW should respond positively to the Ford's Dagenham TGWU branch, with the proviso that any joint Conference and campaign would have to be delegate-based, and representative of and directly accountable to labour movement organisations - particularly CLPs, but also trade union organisations, etc.

Registration was an issue because Mortimer had sent a letter to LAW asking it to apply. In a straw poll two voted to apply,

and 26 against, with one abstention.

It was a straw poll because the meeting also agreed that the issue should be taken back to affiliated organisations, and also to those who are not yet affiliated. A final decision will be made at the next Council meeting in February.

The National Council also heard NEC and Parliamentary Labour Party reports but the afternoon session focused on a series of practical campaigning points proposed by the Secretariat:

- establishing close links with the new Campaign Group of MPs, and asking them to speak at local meetings;

- affiliated organisations to take the initiative in organising regionally and locally, with particular emphasis on the forthcoming Labour Party regional conferences;

- organising in the trade unions;

- an advert in Tribune signed by CLPs that will not expel socialists, and organisations and individuals

that support them in this; meeting comrades from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy to discuss the possibility of joint activity;

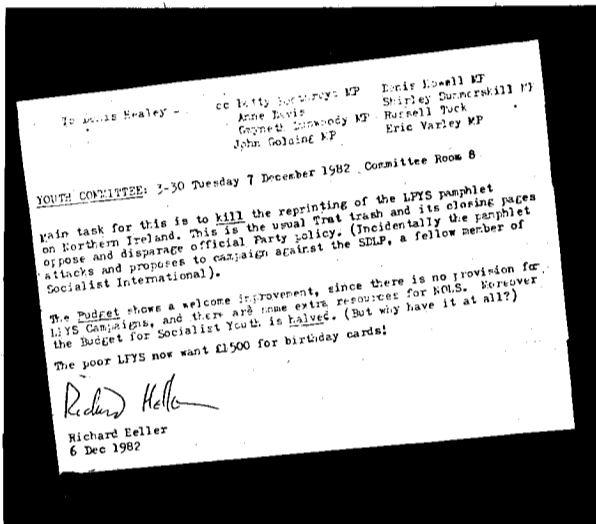
- organising a delegation to the NEC meeting on Wednesday 15 December.

Wednesday's NEC meeting is the scheduled kangaroo court for the Militant Editorial Board members. NEC members have already received a letter from Tony Benn listing ten reasons why they should drop all action against Militant, together with a notice of motion that this should happen and the NEC should instead unite around the policies and programme of the Party.

We agreed that the LAW delegation on Wednesday would hand in a letter supporting this motion.

When Russell Tuck was recently interviewed about Hornsey he made it quite clear that he expected resistance from only a few CLPs, and they could be easily picked off. All the indications so far suggest that this will prove a

RIGHT WING SCHEME REVEALED



Richard Heller is Dennis Healey's personal assistant; and the note above, which has recently come into the hands of the left press, shows how the Right is organising. Heller also sent round notes for the Labour NEC Women's and Press and Publicity Committees the same day. His select circulation list of the Right includes the chairs of all three committees.

bureaucrat's wishful thinking. But that feeling will still need to be organised when the crunch comes.

LAW will have the major role to play in that and, on the suggestion of Pete Radcliff (Nottingham East), proposals on how solidarity action will be organised and preventing the isolation of individual CLPs will be the

major discussion at the next National Council Meeting.

Membership of Labour Against the Witch-hunt is open to CLPs, trade unions, Labour Party affiliates and individuals. (CLPs and unions £10; wards £5; individuals and other organisations £3). Write to the Secretary, 11 Wilderton Road, London N16. (Tel: 01-802 1709.

Unions slam Silkin's Tribune 'coup'

THE SOGAT 82 and NUJ chapels at Tribune, and the NUJ nationally, have condemned the attempted shareholders' coup on the paper organised by John Silkin. And it looks like Silkin may be forced to back down.

At the shareholders' meeting on December 9, Silkin, a former 'compromise' candidate for Labour deputy leader, and his allies, kicked editor Chris Mullin and advertising manager George Hopkins off the Board, thus breaking a trade union agreement.

But former TGWU general secretary Jack Jones opposed Silkin, and the Board of eight still has at least four members firm in support of the staff.

Since Chris Mullin took over as editor in May, Tribune's previously disastrous financial position has been stabilised. Circulation, which had been declining by 12% per year, has been kept at 14,000 (not 7000 as rumoured from the Silkin camp).

Two unions, ASTMS and IRSF, have applied pressure by withdrawing advertising (and the Silkin faction is trying to use this as evidence of decline), but overall advertising has held up well.

The paper's columns have become livelier and more radical. This week, for example, it will carry on its front page the speech that Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein would have made if he had not been stopped from coming to London by the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

But that's just what bothers Silkin!

Tribune had been taking moves to transfer the paper from the shareholders - who had previously not met for at least ten years, and many of whom are dead or elderly - to a friendly society with shares held by readers and by labour movement organisations.

The journalists' union statement said:

The NUJ is disturbed at the moves to deprive Tribune staff of representation on the board of management of the company, and to arrogate control of the paper's editorial policy to a board minus staff representatives. The present democratic staff participation has been in force since 1969 and reflects NUJ policy on industrial democracy and workers' participation...

Messages of support for the Tribune staff from Labour Party and trade union (especially TGWU) branches should be sent to them at 308 Grays Inn Road, London WC1, with copies to John Silkin MP, House of Commons, London SW1.



New Leyland Action Committee pamphlet, 10p plus postage from LAC, 194 Dawlish Road, Birmingham 29

The real campaign is in the working class

Left Labour MPs have now finally established a new caucus to the left of the Tribune group. Ron Brown MP (Leith) told Socialist Organiser about the plans and perspectives of the 'Campaign Group'

SO: Why did you come to the conclusion that the Tribune group was no longer sufficient?

RB: The Tribune group hasn't really fought for a principled position against the Tories, it hasn't stood up for socialist policies. It's even made excuses for Michael Foot and the others who have let us down quite badly.

SO: Does the group have any plans for linking up the left in the Constituency Labour Parties and in the Unions?

RB: Yes. As left MPs we have to link up with the left outside, in the movement, in the trade unions.

When we talk about building up leadership, we're talking about building up a political understanding, so that the working class can fight back.

SO: Do you think the MPs

have a role to play on industrial issues, like the fight against the Tebbit Law now?

RB: Certainly, the new group has a role to play. It's vitally important that they are seen to be street corner and factory gate agitators - in the best sense of the word. In periods of struggle, left-wing MPs can encourage workers to fight back.

In these difficult times MPs are missing at the sharp end, where it actually matters. I hope that this new group will actively campaign in the working class, urging them to fight back, to get organised, to link up with the employed and the unemployed - all sections of the working class - to provide a united front against the Tories.

Right

And against the right wing in the Labour Party. That's most important, because the right wing are

virtually acting as a fifth column for the capitalist system. We've got to muster a challenge, through the working class, and fight back.

SO: It's taken quite a long time, since the first announcement at Conference, for the group to get itself finally established. What was the problem?

RB: The new group didn't want to seem to be splitting the movement, or the left. But the so-called traditional elements within the Tribune Group have in effect split from us by their actions.

If they want to honour Conference decisions, if they want to fight for socialist policies and challenge the right wing, then fine - we'll welcome them. But the fact is that they have covered up for the right wing in the Party.

Also they don't believe in challenging the authorities through extra-parliamentary activity. That is anathema

to them. We've got to face up to this fact in our new group, small though we are.

We appreciate that there will be many problems, but we know the potential support is there. The working class are looking for a lead.

SO: Do you think that the group can play any role in the coming General Election?

RB: Without extra-parliamentary activity, without a movement that's mobilised, Labour is unlikely to win the next General Election. It's only when you have a fighting campaigning party that you get the working class coming out to vote for you.

Feet

If you look at recent by-elections you see that many workers voted with their feet - they didn't vote at all. That proves we have a crisis of leadership.

It's all very well for the

International News International News International News

TOWARDS THE SECOND MEXICAN REVOLUTION

Bas Hardy concludes his articles on Mexico by looking at the contradictions of the development of capitalism in Mexico since the 1930s.

IN every Latin American country the working class and peasantry faces the bullet more often than the ballot.

Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia all have military dictatorships. Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have civil wars.

The few democracies would be regarded as caricatures by the British working class.

Yet it would be a mistake to conclude from all this that Latin American societies are all 'the same'. Some countries have conditions of feudalism and semi-colonialism. Others are quite highly industrialised, with economies in advance of the Balkan and Iberian nations.

States like Brazil embrace vast regional differences in terms of economic development — 'countries within a country' almost.

In Mexico, as we have seen, a relatively stable state bureaucracy has ruled continuously since 1914. That bureaucracy smashed the political and economic power of the landowners and the church, returned land to the mainly Indian peasantry and nationalised the oil industry.

Since the 1930s industry has developed in Mexico perhaps more rapidly and



67 per cent of Mexico's population now lives in cities

consistently than in any other major capitalist country but Japan. Overall industrial production increased 1,150% between 1939 and 1976 (6.8% per year, on average), transformation industries by 1,470% (7.5% per year). Producer goods industries

grew at an average 9.6% per year between 1950 and 1976. By industrial production Mexico ranks 10th among the world's capitalist powers.

Machinery and other equipment had become 19% of Mexico's exports by 1979, other manufactur-

ed goods 20%. 64% of the labour force was in industry and services by 1980 (as against 45% in 1960). So far as a comparison can be made, Mexico's level of industrial development is roughly on a par with France, for example, around 1900.

So, a capitalist success story? There is another side: the continual dependence of Mexico on US capital, its indebtedness to the western banks, and the fact that half the population has an average monthly wage of \$30. Inequality is acute and increasing, and about 40% of the workforce is unemployed or only casually employed.

Imperialist

Some Mexicans, even on the left, look down on the backwardness of their southern neighbours. Clearly, however, they are in a relationship of inequality with and imperialist domination by the US.

The exodus of 3 million or more Mexicans into the United States over the last decade is but one proof of this. The South Western US States and California have employed illegal wetback labour for 50 years or more.

The Mexican export of cheap labour is matched by its import of foreign capital, particularly from the USA. Over 80% of total foreign investment comes from the States, as do over 70% of all goods imported into Mexico.

Investment

The role of foreign capital is qualitatively smaller than it was in the early years of the century under Diaz, when American capitalists are said to have owned more of Mexican industry than Mexicans did, and also owned a lot of the land.

Foreign capital now accounts for about 5% of all investment and re-investment, and Mexican

state capital for about one third. But in strategic sectors, the foreign, especially US, capital retains dominance. According to 1972 figures, 36% of the capital in the 300 biggest manufacturing companies was US-owned.

The Mexican oil boom has further increased US business penetration. Pemex — the state oil corporation — has been farming out contracts to US companies to exploit certain oil concessions. In return, these officials have received millions of dollars in the form of bribes.

This corruption is being investigated, but by the US government, not the Mexican!

Corruption is built into the system. Through their offices in the state, the Mexican middle class have set themselves up in business. The upper ranks of government have spread out to become owners of private companies.

A new Latifundio system has been established through agricultural corporations formed by former agricultural ministry employees. The rural population once again faces dispossession.

Corruption extends through all levels of the state. Mexico City's police chief, General Durazo, lives in a replica of the Parthenon. How he could afford a £14 million home on an annual salary of £6,000 doesn't tax the minds of most Mexicans.

Mansion

The Mayor of Mexico City has a modest mansion in New England worth \$2 million.

They owe their posts and opportunities for enrichment to the 'institutionalised' President. Loyalty to the state and its system of institutionalised corruption is the main criteria

for lucrative employment from Mayor to traffic cop. This is important in the stability and survival of the system.

Corruption

Organised corruption has never of course been popular with the Mexican people as a whole, since it is they who pay for it in labour and blood. Deaths in police custody of Mexicans unwilling or unable to pay 'fines' into the pockets of the police have prompted popular protests.

The growing Indian struggle against the state bourgeoisie's land grabs have also witnessed repression and massacre in the recent past.

The student rebellion of 1968 disturbed the stable facade of the 'institutional revolution'. It was a sign of things to come.

Today the state cannot buy off sections of the population outside of its own ranks. It borrowed to pay for its own security in the past but now Faust must give his body to the devil. The future is 'austerity' and repression for the Mexican masses.

Factories

That is the major condition of the renegotiated international loans. For all the attempts to hail the recent bank nationalisation as a new nationalist gain, it is more likely to be with moves to bring Mexico into closer dependence, and increase the exploitation of workers in the factories and on the land.

The struggle of the Mexican masses is a struggle against the capitalist class and its state. It will be a struggle led by the working class — a second revolution to complete the first.

The Villas and Zapatas of tomorrow will come from the factories.

New shots in S. African war

IN A renewed escalation of the undeclared war raging in Southern Africa, South African commandos last week raided a UN refugee camp in Lesotho, slaughtering men, women, children, and a handful of militants of the African National Congress.

The raid took place only a mile from the Lesotho capital, Maseru. But the piles of corpses left by the apartheid butchers are not the only recent victims of South African aggression.

In Mozambique, border raids and harassment of the Frelimo regime by South African troops has been coupled with the activity of Pretoria-backed right wing guerrillas of the so-called 'Mozambique National Resistance', which last week

blew up a fuel depot in the port of Beira.

In Namibia, too, a huge South African occupying army of 100,000 troops maintains a continuing war against the SWAPO liberation forces, and has established permanent camps across the border with Angola.

The apartheid rulers have for years been supplying arms, cash and military support to Jonas Savimbi's reactionary UNITA guerrillas in their struggle to overthrow Angola's petty bourgeois nationalist MPLA government.

The outcome has been growing economic disruption and military struggle as Angolan troops, supported by an augmented Cuban

soldiers, fight to repel the invaders.

Picked off

But both President Reagan and the British government have predictably sided with the South African state in its vicious attempts to reverse the gains made by the black masses of Southern Africa since the mid 1970s and install pliable stooge governments in the neighbouring states.

In the aftermath of the Lesotho raid, Britain voted last Friday at the UN against a series of resolutions condemning the South African aggression, while Reagan has tacitly welcomed Pretoria's obstinate demands for the removal of Cuban troops from Angola.

1000 march on Poland

ABOUT 1000 marchers turned out in pouring rain last Sunday, 12th, to show solidarity with Solidarnosc on the anniversary of martial law.

The TUC had officially supported the demonstration, which was called by the Polish Solidarity Campaign. But this 'official support' amounted to little more than a press statement.

The biggest part of the demonstration was from the Polish community, and the only left groups visibly present were Socialist Organiser and the 'Lambertist' group 'Unite and Fight'.

PSC had insisted on having a Tory MP, Bernard Braine, as a speaker, despite opposition within PSC from Socialist Organiser supporters. But there was a separate labour movement contingent, and chants on the march included: 'Stalinism out, socialism in', and others on the same theme.

Perhaps Jaruzelski's

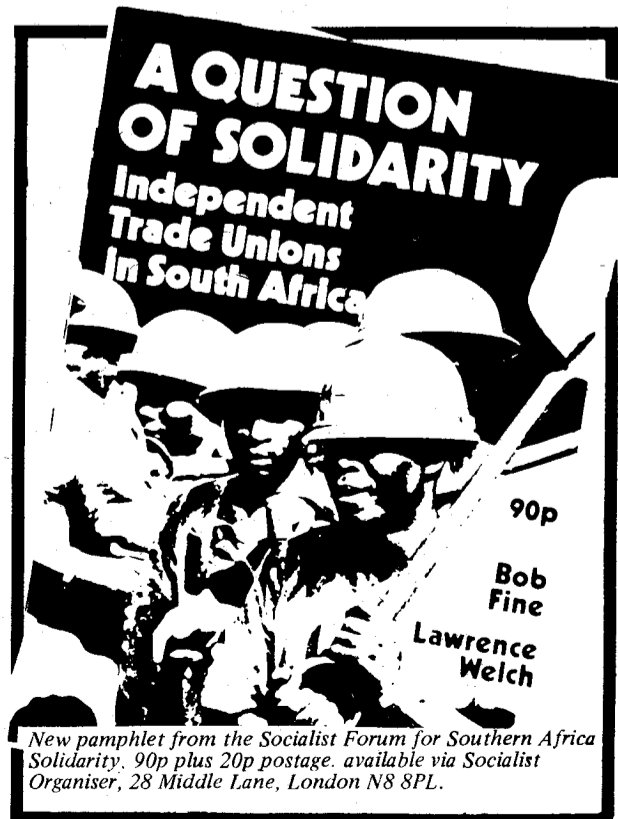
moves to suspend martial law and release some internees reduced the turnout. But the repressive hand of the bureaucracy remains heavy against any independent working class activity.

Fraser's freeze

THE conservative Australian government of Malcolm Fraser is planning a 12-month pay freeze.

Labour prime ministers in the states of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia have agreed to a freeze for six months, but it appears that Fraser will proceed not by state legislation but via the federal Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

The ACTU (Australian TUC) has come out against the pay freeze.



New pamphlet from the Socialist Forum for Southern Africa Solidarity, 90p plus 20p postage, available via Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

Ireland: A WAY TO WORKERS' UNITY?

In Socialist Organiser no.109 we carried an interview with a Belfast NHS shop steward, Micky Duffy. Duffy, a 'Militant' supporter, argued that the workers' unity in the NHS pay struggle opened the way to political class unity in Northern Ireland, which could be achieved by setting up a Northern Ireland Labour Party. Last week on our letters page, the Nottingham SO group argued that this interview was an unacceptable 'propaganda piece for the national chauvinist politics of the Militant'. This week John O'Mahony looks at Militant's politics and how they should be answered.

FROM A working class point of view, the basic problem about the Six County state is that in that state framework working class unity developed on a trade union level has always shattered at any political test. So long as the 'constitutional question' remains at the heart of political life there, it always will shatter on the rooted communal antagonism between Catholics and Protestants, Nationalists and Unionists.

There was no chance that the NHS dispute could open the way to unity in the sectarian Six County entity. Even spectacular examples of Protestant/Catholic working class unity have proved to be mere episodes.

Outdoor relief

For example, in the well-known 'outdoor relief' fight in 1932, unity in working-class resistance to cuts in social security payments was possible because both Catholics and Protestants were hit impartially. Barricades went up in the Protestant Shankill Road and in the Catholic Falls Road. Activists went from the Falls to man Shankill barricades, and from the Shankill to defend the Falls against the police. (Some on both sides were influenced by the Irish Stalinists).

Within weeks of this spectacular unity, no less spectacular sectarian rioting had been fomented. There are other examples, both before and after Partition.

The experience of the various incarnations of the Northern Ireland Labour Party runs in parallel to this. Today a very tiny Unionist rump, the NILP has at various times grown to a significant size.

It attempted to confine itself to bread and butter working class issues, that is, to generalised trade unionism, bargaining in the working class interest on the level of provincial and 'United Kingdom' society. It evaded, hedged and compromised on the issues that divide Northern Ireland's workers.

John De Courcy Ireland, an unsuccessful candidate in the last 26 County elections, talked recently about his experience in the NILP in the '40s.

Their speakers on the Falls Road, he recalled, campaigned under the nationalist tricolour. In the 'mixed' centre of Belfast they campaigned under the Red Flag; and party leader Harry Midgley campaigned on the Shankill under the Union Jack.

Such a balancing act could not get far. Sectarian suspicions soon disrupted the party and scattered its forces.

To reject Militant's view of a Labour Party as the cure-all is not to say that socialists should not work in a Labour Party if it existed. Serious work was done, for example, in the late '60s in the Derry Labour Party, which became central to the civil rights struggle.

Even after it split,

Eamonn McCann could get 9000 votes on a revolutionary socialist platform as the Derry Young Socialists candidate in the mid-1970 election.

Yet McCann's experience, too, underlines the basic point that simply trying to generalise from trade unionism within the Six County framework is no solution. The Derry Labour Party left wing tended to ignore the national question, and was bypassed by the eruption of the Republican movement. Their forces scattered, too: some went to the Officials and then to the IRSP, one or two to Militant.

Tricks

Many well-intentioned tricks have been tried to unite Northern Ireland workers. In 1907 Jim Larkin had united Protestant and Catholic workers on a trade union level. When it came to the marching and rioting season on July 12, he tried to preserve the unity by organising his own united Orange/Catholic working class parade around the walls of Derry.

The Protestant workers, said Larkin, would march in honour of King William, who secured their liberty in the 'Glorious Revolution'. The Catholics would march to honour the Pope, who at that time had taken the Papal State into the international alliance against France of which William was part!

They had a successful, and unique, parade round Derry. Within weeks sectarian rioting had shattered the working class unity.

In 1969, again, Cyril Toman, a member of the socialist People's Democracy (different then from the present PD) tried preaching socialism to Protestant workers by erecting the Union Jack above his platform. In the years since Protestant sectarianism has hardened, and Toman has moved to become one of Sinn Fein's 12 candidates in the recent Six Counties election.

The inescapable conclusion is that general political unity cannot be developed



Bobby Sands' funeral: the Border issue will not melt away in the heat of trade union struggle

on the basis of the trade union ('economic') unity; and that unity in trade union action is not the harbinger of a stable class unity.

Dismissal

But many on the left, it seems to me, go on from this basic fact to a general dismissal of any concern for working class unity. The national question, they seem to say, supersedes everything else in Northern Ireland.

The trade-union class struggle is of little importance. The Protestant working class — that is, the big majority of the working class — is no concern of ours. The struggle for socialism will develop out of the revolt of the oppressed Catholics, even though that revolt fails to mobilise, and indeed antagonises, the Protestant workers.

We concern ourselves only with the 'anti-imperialist' military campaign of organisations representing perhaps half the Catholic third of the Six County population. Only when that campaign is victorious will questions like working class unity be important.

This, I believe, is the mirror image of the Militant caricature of socialist and Marxist politics.

Arbitrarily

What in fact is wrong with Militant's approach to Ireland?

It relates only selectively and arbitrarily to the issues, processes, and struggles in Ireland. It pretends that struggles like the NHS pay battle, involving workers from both communities, already amount to, or by way of being generalised into a new Northern Ireland Labour Party, can be made into, working class political unity.

It goes from this to general socialist propaganda about nationalising the entire economy (which is essentially what they understand the socialist revolution to be: there is no

own cure-alls and nostrums, the famous 'trade union defence force', for example.

A good idea — for a different society. The workforce is heavily stratified as a result of sectarian job preference. This affects the unions, where unity has been possible only on minimal trade union questions and by avoiding politics. The unions reflect the society they exist in. The Protestant UDA is the nearest thing to a trade union militia that Northern Ireland will see this side of a revolutionary change of working class consciousness.

Democratic

Essentially Militant lacks the democratic programme which has to be part of filling the void between trade union minimalism and the socialist revolution. It relates to the political world around it by pretending that the communal divide can be ignored, and that the national question can be pushed aside.

This is a recipe for building a sect in Northern Ireland: it has as little chance of uniting the Six County working class as the previous Labour Party minimalists had.

No political formation that does not have in its programme a democratic solution to the Irish national question and to the communal antagonisms in Northern Ireland will even begin to play a positive role in Irish politics.

The best democratic programme, I believe, is that of a federal united Ireland with as much autonomy for the Protestant community as is compatible with the democratic rights of the majority of the Irish people. An all-Ireland revolutionary movement must be built which integrates this with the direct work of educating and organising the labour movement to fight for workers' power, and which links up with the workers' movement internationally, especially in Britain and in Europe, on the programme of the United Socialist Stat-

es of Europe.

From this viewpoint the polar opposite to Militant is the IRSP. Instead of pretending that the national question will fade away if socialists concentrate on working class unity, they pretend that the problem of working class unity will fade away if socialists concentrate on the national question. In effect, they pretend that the Protestant working class does not exist — and talk and act accordingly. We get the obscenity of radical — if somewhat eclectic — socialists who function as Catholic sectarians.

It is very easy for British Marxists who reject Militant's approach with contempt to lapse into an attitude not too different from the IRSP's. We sympathise with the Catholic revolt. We recognise, like the Republicans that Partition helped intensify and now perpetuates the communal divide.

We know that the overall responsibility is Britain's. We defend the right of the Republican movement to opt for armed struggle. We find ourselves, living in Britain, obliged to combat the pressures around us and to champion and defend the Republicans.

Nationalist

That explains, but does not justify, the fact that in the last decade a simple-minded petty bourgeois nationalist version of Irish history has become dominant on the left — some of it ideas that James Connolly himself was polemicising against three quarters of a century ago.

We have a duty to support the Republican movement against the British state. That does not mean a duty to side ideologically with the Republicans against Irish anti-Republican or sectarian socialists, or to consider the latter as beyond legitimate discussion. Such a conclusion would amount to denying to British, and even Irish, socialists, the right to any independent judgment on the issues.

Socialist Organiser Alliance

Get Organised!

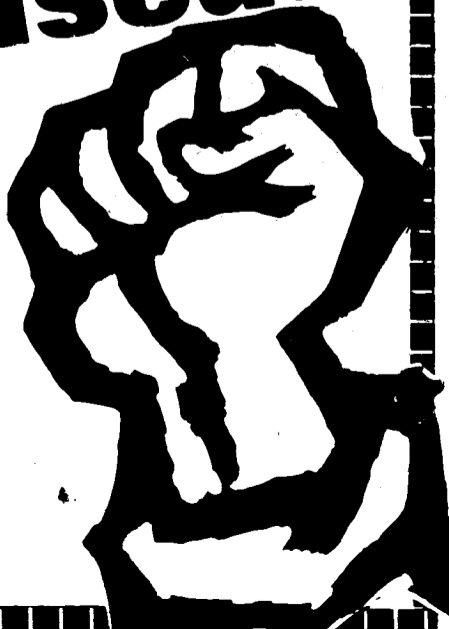
Socialist Organiser is not just a paper. We fight to organise workers in the struggle for a new leadership in the labour movement.

If you agree with what we have to say, you can help. Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns.

To 'Get Organised' in the fight, or for more information, write at once to us at 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Name

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Advertisement

NEW!

The Socialist Workers' Party of the USA, an old-established Trotskyist group, has recently and suddenly announced that Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution' was wrong after all. This new pamphlet — 40p plus postage from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD — looks at the arguments

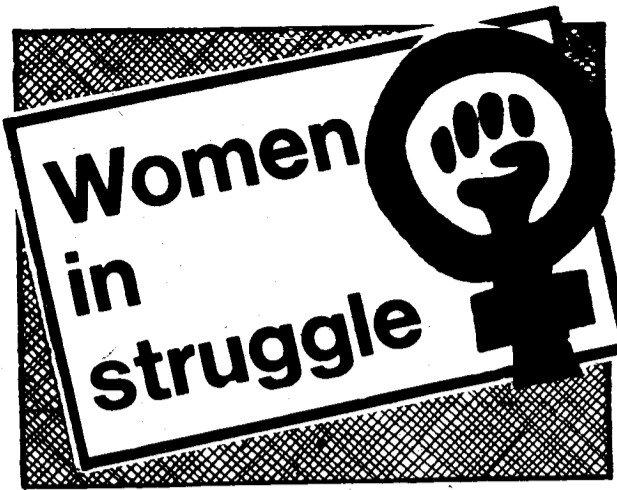


Trotskyism or Castroism?

An analysis of the political evolution of the American SWP

Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

A woman's right to choose?



The latest attempt to change abortion law — the Robertson bill — has failed in the House of Lords. But serious backdoor attacks continue. Mary Wilkins reports.



The fight for abortion rights is far from won yet

MANY people think that abortion is fairly freely available in Britain today. The attempts by White, Benyon, Braine and Corrie to restrict the '67 Abortion Act all failed. But the situation isn't that rosy.

The '67 Act does not guarantee 'a woman's right to choose' an abortion. But even the '67 Act is not safe.

The 'backdoor' attack of the 'social clause' by the DHSS's amending the buff abortion notification form to make provision only for medical grounds, has had an effect. The National Abortion Campaign argued that the change would encourage anti-abortion doctors to refuse women abortions. There is now proof that this is happening.

Evidence is coming in that some hospitals are turning women away on the grounds that the buff form only accepts medical reasons for referral.

Abortion availability in general is being restricted by NHS cuts. But possibly less well known is the fact that in much of the country, and in Scotland and Wales, the '67 Act has never been fully implemented.

In Glasgow, for example,

it is almost impossible to get a National Health Service abortion. General Practitioners use the 'conscience clause' to refuse to refer women, and the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child is active, with public meetings and demos against abortion and the '67 Act. Their campaign has received added impetus from the visits of the Pope and Mother Theresa.

Labour

The Labour Party often goes along with them. Newly elected Ms Helen McElhone, Labour MP for Glasgow Queen's Park, made abortion a main

plank of her election campaign, guaranteeing to oppose abortion, and work for the repeal of the '67 Act.

In Bradford the situation is not much better. It illustrates the problem of the huge regional disparity in abortion availability on the National Health Service. Very few abortions are performed in the Bradford area on the NHS, due to lack of facilities and the anti-abortion stance of GPs and gynaecologists.

Attempts by pro-choice campaigners to win a day care abortion clinic in Bradford have failed, due to the lack of anyone within the medical profession being prepared to fight

for it.

In addition to the problems of lack of facilities and anti-abortionists, a woman's right to choose an abortion and fertility control is being denied through abuse of abortion and contraception. Not only in under-developed countries, but in Britain too, some women are being denied the right to be pregnant and bear children by enforced fertility control. Cases of sterilisation or the insertion of an Intra-Uterine Device without the woman's consent, after an abortion, are not rare, especially among working-class black women. Injections of Depo Provera, the 3-month contraceptive

drug, also poses a threat to women, by its wide-ranging potential side effects, including sterility.

Disabled women are denied their 'right to choose' by frequently being discouraged from bearing children, and feeling pressurised into undergoing abortion against their wishes.

These abuses of abortion and contraception and their use as a means of population control among non-white, non-middle class women are an important denial of women's control over their bodies and their lives, and must be fought in Britain and internationally.

So there is a huge amount of work for pro-

choice campaigners, and the National Abortion Campaign in particular, to carry out.

NAC held a national planning meeting on Sunday 5th in London, which brought together a large number of activists, representing groups as far apart as Dundee and Brighton, Norfolk and Merseyside. It became clear at the meeting that local abortion campaign groups are doing a great deal of work to fight for better facilities and access to abortion, to publicise women's abortion rights, and to take up the question of population control.

What we must not do, is to go on the offensive nationally. We must push forward on the issue of positive legislation, organising a forum to debate what legislation changes we would like to see, and the best tactical methods of gaining them. Local groups are limited in what they can do to tackle the question of lack of facilities and refusal by doctors to perform an abortion. The problem must be dealt with nationally.

We must also do all we can to publicise women's existing rights, and

the means of by-passing anti-abortion G.P.s, where possible. In addition, there are new methods of fertility control that many women don't yet know about.

Most recent is 'post-coital contraception', which is available from GPs. It involves one dose of two Eugynon 50 tablets, followed by a second dose after 12 hours, both taken within 72 hours of intercourse, and accompanied by the insertion of an IUD within 5 days. This is reported to be effective, with very minor side effects.

Clearly it cannot be used as a regular method of contraception, and is only applicable to women who can take the pill. More research is necessary. But this development opens up the possibilities for safe, self-administered abortion.

All this work of publicity and national campaigning costs money, and the National Abortion Campaign is short of funds. So encourage your trade union, women's group, Labour Party to affiliate and/or send a donation to: The National Abortion Campaign, 374, Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BB.

December
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WHAT'S ON

ISLINGTON North Young Socialists Christmas disco. Tuesday December 21, at the Boston Arms, Junction Road (opposite Tufnell Park tube). Tickets £1 (50p with UB40), on sale at door. All ages welcome. Late bar.

OXFORD Labour Party Young Socialists bumper Xmas party. 'Operator' (formerly Dub Vendor) benefit for Oxford DHSS strikers and LPYS — 8 till late, Headington Labour Club. £1.50 (£1 UB40 and strikers).

HAND-printed silk-screened T-shirts. Give them as Christmas presents for wearing next summer.

• Socialist Organiser: paper masthead, with option of local group's name added at 20p per T-shirt extra.

• Solidarnosc logo, red on white.

• Labour against the witch-hunt.

• Red star on white background.

£2.50 each except SO T-shirts, £3. Postage 50p. T-shirts come in white or yellow, please state preference. Also individual designs undertaken, cost £6, must have details of design and idea. Allow 14 days for delivery. Send orders to Kevin Glover, 19 Ranton Way, Leicester.

ARLINGTON House strike benefit. Wednesday December 22, Primrose Hill Community Association, Fitzroy Rd, London NW1. Tickets £2 in advance from Camden Labour Centre, 8 Camden Rd, NW1, or a few at the door.

STANFORDS map shop strikers' benefit. Tuesday December 21, from 7pm at

the Seven Dials Club, Shelton St, London WC2.

NOTTINGHAM Socialist Organiser meets on Fridays, 7.30pm at the International Community Centre, 61B Mansfield Road.

HULL Socialist Organiser supporters' meetings: every Wednesday. Details from SO sellers.

ISLINGTON Socialist Organiser meetings: alternate Sundays, 3pm at Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Road. Details: phone Nik, 607 5268.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland: annual general meeting 1983 will be on March 26. Resolutions to be in by February 27. There will be an extended meeting of the LCI National Council on January 22.

BAN Plastic Bullets: a labour movement delegate conference. Saturday Feb-

ruary 26, from 11am at UMIST, Barnes Wallis Building, Sackville St, Manchester 1. Sponsors include Labour Committee on Ireland. To sponsor, send delegates (fee £3), or to order leaflets (£6 per 100), contact: Plastic Bullets Conference, Box 15, 164-6 Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN.

LABOUR Against the Witch-hunt: public meeting with Reg Race MP. Sunday January 9, 11am to 1pm, WEA, Cartwright House, Broad St, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.

SPARTACIST Truth Kit — a 68-page analysis by John Lister, published by the Workers' Socialist League. £1 plus 25p postage from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

•The Campaign Against Racist Laws can be contacted c/o 56, Edithna St., London SW9.

•Anwar Mahomed, a South African political exile, is in Strangeways Prison, Manchester. If sent back to South Africa, he faces interrogation, torture, maybe death. The Home Office has refused him political asylum. Manchester Anti-Apartheid is organising regular pickets of Strangeways: contact AA, 300 Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9NS.

•Parveen and Shavkat Khan, and their children Imran and Irfan, are under threat of deportation. So are Manjit Kaur and her daughter Palbinder. Contact: Khan and Kaur Defence Campaign, 593, Stockport Road, Manchester 12. [061-225 5111]

•Afia Begum is fighting deportation in East London. Contact: c/o cllr. Susan Carlyle, 36, Bradmore House, Jamaica St., London E1.

•The Joint Campaign Against Deportations can be contacted c Bradford Law Centre, Sedgfield Terrace, Bradford 8.

NEXT Socialist Organiser delegate meeting: Saturday January 15, 11am to 5.30pm, in Coventry. Local groups should make preparations now to elect and to mandate delegates.

Join CLPD!

CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY

Membership. £4 individuals, £2 unwaged, £4.50 couples:

Write to: Victor Schonfield (Treasurer), 21 Wallingford Ave, London W10 6QA.

Stop this tide of racism!

IN the 1979 general election the National Front was trounced. In Socialist Organiser we commented, however, that: 'The demoralisation that may well follow the Tory victory, a rise in unemployment and the tide of social reaction and 'respectable' racism which the new government will invoke, all provide the best conditions for the National Front to grow in'.

And so, while anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigns have generally dwindled, both official racism and the activity of fascist groups like the NF and British Movement have increased.

After the riots in summer 1981 — in which black youth played a major but not exclusive role — the police tried to get their own back. The 'Bradford 12', black activists charged with conspiracy to manufacture explosives, were acquitted after a major campaign, but hundreds of youth faced jail or heavy fines.

The police in many areas are now armed with plastic bullets and water cannon as well as CS gas.

Under a new Tory Bill their powers to 'stop and search', and to detain without charge, will be increased. And the authorities at Hendon Police College last week settled any doubts about the bias of the force that will use those powers.

'400 years of conquest and looting, centuries of being told that you are superior to the fuzzy-wuzzies and the wogs, leave their stain on you all; such a stain seeps into every part of your culture, your language and your daily life; and nothing much has been done to wash it out...'

'British thought and British society has never been cleansed of the filth of imperialism. It is still there, breeding lice and vermin, waiting for unscrupulous people to exploit it for their own ends'.

Salman Rushdie, in a recent Channel Four broadcast

John Fernandes, a black part-time lecturer at the college, leaked 17 police cadets' essays on 'Blacks in Britain' to City Limits magazine. All but one were crudely racist, many on National Front lines. The college authorities reacted swiftly — by sacking Fernandes.

Racist violence continues on the streets.

Roused

The labour movement needs to be roused to an awareness that the racist threat is just as dangerous as it was in the mid-'70s — in fact more so.

What policies should the labour movement have?

The Labour Party is formally committed to repeal of the 1968 and 1971 immigration laws. But without a renewed cam-

paign for accountability it is unlikely to stick to this promise.

Even on the left, 'non-racist' immigration controls are proposed as an alternative. Why have immigration controls at all?

It is just not true that unemployment and other economic problems are caused by 'too many people'. Britain's population is nearly static (growing at 0.1% a year) — and, very often, rapid population growth goes together with economic booms. In the 19th century, when Europe's economy mushroomed with the rise of capitalism, its population doubled. So far as natural resources are concerned, Britain's population could very well increase rapidly again — to the same density as Belgium, say, or Holland.



The labour movement has a duty to support self-defence of black communities

It is the crazy logic of the capitalist system of production for profit which generates unemployment and housing shortages — and generated them in the 1930s, too, when there were very few black people in Britain.

Only if you see black people as 'a problem' is immigration a problem. People should be free to live and work where they choose.

Labour's Programme '82 proposes to 'prohibit searches of persons in the

street unless an arrest has been made or there is clear evidence that an offence has been committed'; to disband the Special Patrol Group; to set up a procedure 'accountable to local communities' for complaints against the police; and to 'create elected police authorities' which would take over many of the powers at present kept by Chief Constables. It hopes to eradicate racist behaviour and attitudes within the police'.

The Hendon College

case shows that a real attempt by elected authorities to combat police racism would mean a full-scale confrontation with the whole police hierarchy. Either Labour would back down and be satisfied with empty gestures — and that's what would happen if Labour's present leaders decided the matter — or Labour would have to be ready to create labour movement/community patrols in place of the police.

Black communities also need defence now against

fascist gangs and even against racist police. In some areas, black self-defence groups have been set up: they should have labour movement support, which can develop into united black/white workers' defence groups.

And as a precondition for all policies and promises, the labour movement needs to cleanse itself of racism. Fascists should be expelled from the unions, racists should be purged from all positions in the labour movement, positive discrimination should be operated to get fair representation of blacks in those positions, and trade unions and Labour Parties should launch special campaigns, with literature in appropriate languages, for recruitment in the black communities.

Only when the mostly white labour movement rids itself of racism sufficiently to allow real black/white workers' unity will a serious fight for socialism be possible; and only a fight for socialism can preserve that unity. For the squalid battle for existence in decaying capitalism generates racism as surely as sewers breed rats.

Bangladeshis fight back

THE Bangladesh Divided Families Campaign (BDFC) was founded in April 1982 by a group of Bangladeshi men settled in the Oldham area, whose wives and children have been struggling, in some cases for over ten years, to exercise their legal rights under the 1971 Immigration Act to come to Britain. Since April the group has grown rapidly and now numbers around 50 families including women whose husbands have been

prevented from entering Britain.

Most of these families have exhausted the legal appeal procedure, which is carried out in England with none of the applicants present. Some have appealed three times without success.

Overall, some 11,200 people (1981 figures) who have the right to live together in this country are being deliberately kept apart. Some have been waiting for ten years or more.

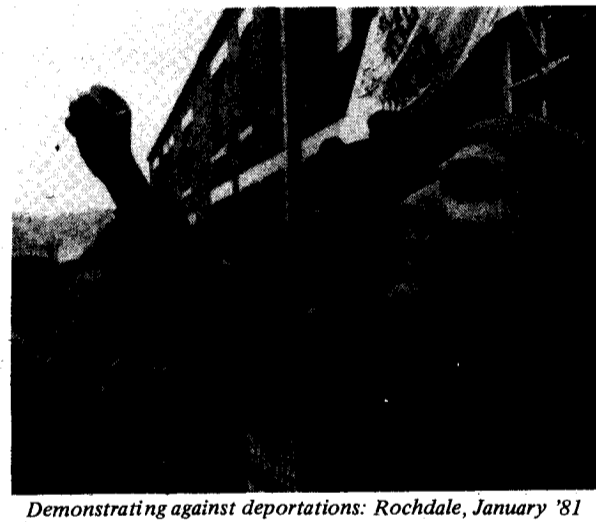
At the moment, families are considered guilty of deception until they can prove their innocence to the satisfaction of Home Office officials. The campaign is demanding that all families be assumed as genuine unless the Home Office can prove that they are not.

Finally the BDFC demands that families be allowed to be present at their own appeal proceedings, and that children who are under 18 at the time of

the first application should not be disqualified from further application as a result of Home Office delays.

The BDFC involves families from the Oldham, Rochdale, Ashton, Manchester and Leeds areas, and is calling for public support in defence of basic human rights, against the racist procedures and attitudes of the Home Office.

Contact: c/o Manchester Law Centre, 593 Stockport Road, Manchester 12.



Demonstrating against deportations: Rochdale, January '81

Deportations: the grim

Kantilal Mistry

KANTILAL Mistry is a citizen of India. He met and married his wife when visiting relatives in Britain in 1979. Sheetal, their daughter, was born in 1981.

The immigration rules state that foreign men who marry British women can only settle here if the woman or one of her parents was born in Britain. Mrs. Mistry was born in Kenya and has always held a British passport.

She came to the UK 10 years ago, but because she was not born here the family is likely to be separated.

Kantilal will be forced to return to India and leave his wife and daughter who are entitled to live

here unless he wins his appeal against the decision to deport him.

For more information contact the Tameside Immigration Campaign Support Group, 35a Manchester Rd., Denton, Manchester M34 3JU.

Everton Williams.

Defend Basil Gwatidzo!

IN July Basil Gwatidzo went to sign on at the dole. He is black, so the clerk at the DHSS office was suspicious and asked him for his passport.

This led to a Home Office check. Basil was told he could have 'no recourse to public funds' and must leave the country.

Basil came to Britain in

1975, being forced to leave Zimbabwe by the racist Smith regime. He and his family have settled here, and he was expecting to start a course this October

at Leeds University.

Now the DHSS and Home Office have ruined Basil's and his family's life.

First their electricity was

cut off, then Basil had to leave Bradford when the Government decided to cut off his money and next he was unable to take up his course. Now they will be forced to leave the country.

Ghanaians deported

THE Tory government has significantly increased its harassment of Ghanaians entering and living in Britain, particularly since the overthrow of Dr. Limmann's pro-imperialist regime last December.

Ghanaian visitors do not need an entry visa. However, the Home Office has 'discretionary powers' to deport people and to refuse entry to any commonwealth citizen.

In May several people were deported to Ghana. Eric Borley, editor of the left-wing 'Workers Bann-

er', was deported at 24 hours notice, even though on official government business. Akansa Amin was another example.

Others were simply refused entry such as Florence Duah, who was coming to visit her husband.

On September 25 over fifty Ghanaian visitors were deported within days of arriving in Britain. Thirty had been held in Harmondsworth detention centre during that period. The others were allowed to stay at private addresses on the

condition that they flew out on the 25th.

One deportee, a student in the UK for the last six years, explained how he was treated. 'I had arrived back from my father's funeral, and to be given just three days to pack up and leave the UK for good was simply incredible. At Heathrow the Immigration Officers were rude and racist.'

'People who had come to the airport to meet their relatives were prevented from making contact with us and it was quite strange that we could not even get

through to our High Commission on the phone.'

The same treatment is however not given to middle class reactionaries who oppose the present military-populist Ghanaian regime.

A Ghanaian People's Solidarity Organisation (GHAPSO) has been set up to mobilise opposition to the deportations.

Contact: Ghanaian People's Solidarity Organisation, c/o Box 20, 234, Camden High St., London N1.

The victims

SINCE the Immigration Act, 1971, came into force, 10,559 people have been subject to deportation orders under the terms of the act.

Deportation orders have increased swiftly since 1973.

Black people are disproportionately affected. In the first half of 1980, 142 Nigerians, 120 Ghanaians, 76 Indians and 63 Pakistanis were subject to deportation orders, but only eight Australians, seven Canadians and two South Africans.

Labour's shameful record

Will new promises undo it? Everton Williams reports.

THE recent Labour Party National Executive Committee proposals on nationality and immigration put forward an image of combating state racism in Britain.

But the Labour Party's record since the 1960s has been one of building up state racism. And it will take more than promises to reverse that.

The NEC statement makes twelve major promises.

1. To end the 'numbers game'.

It was the Wilson white paper in 1965 which legitimised the numbers game. Roy Hattersley, now Labour's shadow Home Secretary, coined the philosophy to justify it: 'Without integration limitation is inexcusable; without limitation integration is impossible'.

2. To repeal the 1971 Immigration Act and replace it with a non-discriminatory one.

The Labour government passed the racist white paper in 1965 and the racist Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968. It opposed the 1971 Act while in opposition. But the Labour Government went on to implement it for five years.

3. To repeal the nationality Act and replace it with a non-discriminatory one.

The Tories Nationality Act is based on the Labour

Government's green paper of April 1977.

4. To prevent the separation of families, and to ensure that anyone with a home in Britain enjoys a full family life.

It was the Labour Government's 1965 white paper which restricted the entry of dependents. For example, children aged 16 to 18 were to be admitted only in cases of 'proven hardship'. The last Labour government did not allow immigrant families awaiting arrival of their children (often kept out by immigration rules) to claim the new child benefit introduced in 1977.

The rate of deportations from Britain also rose during the last Labour government.

5. To restore the right of admission to husbands and fiancés.

Labour first took away this right in 1969. After the right was restored by Roy Jenkins in 1974, the immigration rules were changed by Labour in 1977 so that a 12 month probation was placed on marriages of immigrant husbands.

Many immigrant marriages were placed under state scrutiny as possible marriages 'of convenience'.

6. To remove the queue in

India.

It was the Labour Government's 1968 Act which started the queue via the voucher system for East African UK passport holders excluded from Britain.

In 1969 the Labour Appeals Act added to the queue because of entry certificates. These had to be obtained in the home country, but no machinery was created to process the work. This effectively denied the right to appeal on entry.

The last Labour Government refused to make full use of the quota for 'non-patrial' UK citizens to admit those from India waiting for a voucher.

7. To give priority to providing educational opportunity for people of the Third World.

The 1965 white paper restricted the entry of students. During 1977-8 the Home Office and Department of Education and Science changed the meaning of 'ordinarily resident' so as to deprive certain overseas students of grants.

The astronomical rise in fees and other costs for overseas students under the last Labour government also prevented many from taking up courses in

Britain.

8. To recognise Britain's responsibility toward refugees.

In 1974-5 the Labour government refused to give refugee status to Cypriots fleeing the civil war and its consequences. In 1976-7 Zimbabweans who skipped the draft from the racist Rhodesian state were refused refugee status.

Even Chileans escaping after September 1973 were admitted very grudgingly.

9. To remove the threat of deportation in certain areas.

Clause

It was Labour who first introduced a clause on deportation (at the Home Office's discretion) into the 1965 white paper. In 1976 270 people were deported. This trebled up to 570 in 1979 — under a Labour government.

10. To limit the powers under which people can be removed if deemed 'not conducive to the public good.'

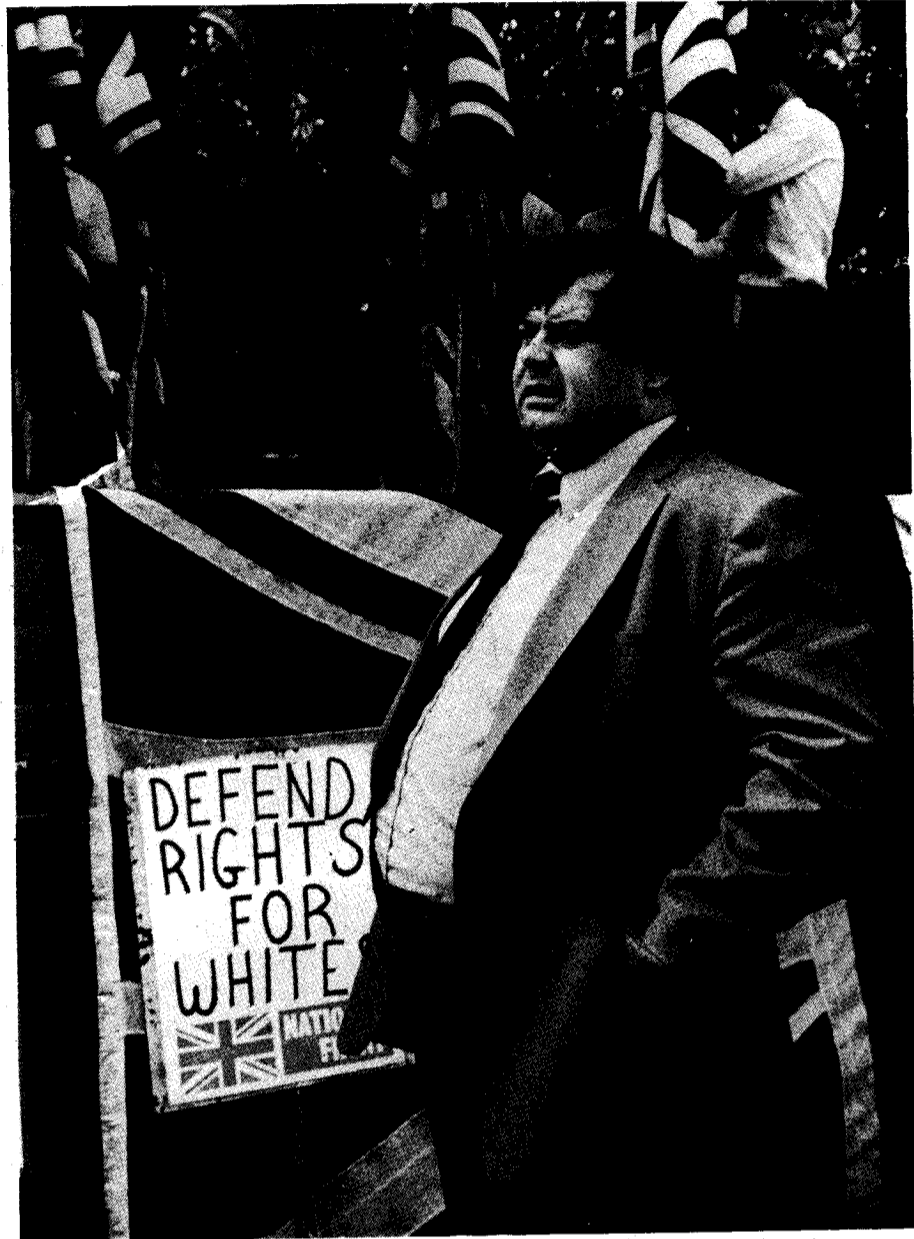
Powers

Labour first tried to use these powers in 1974 against Franco Caprino, a migrant workers and militant trade unionist. Writers Phil Agee and Mark Hosenball were deported by Labour Home Secretary Merlyn Rees on grounds of 'national security'.

11. To minimise the involvement of the police in immigration control.

Under the last Labour government police were used in blanket raids for 'illegal immigrants' on factories in London (in 1975 and 1976) and on Newcastle restaurants in 1977.

12. To control the power of detention pending deportation and limit the period of detention.



Racist measures by successive Labour governments have helped create the basis for fascists to flourish

In 1978, under the Labour government, an average of 220 people waited in prison each day under immigration Act powers, and the length of time that people were detained increased.

The promises are an improvement on Tory and previous Labour government policy. But will

they be kept? Will they even appear in the manifesto?

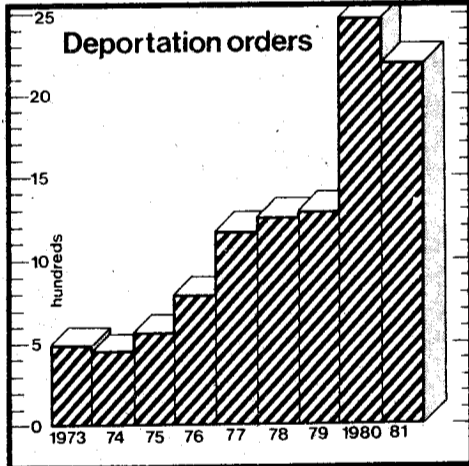
And why do they fall short of the basic democratic idea of people's right to live and to work where they want?

The working class has no interest in making national borders barriers to enable them to use mi-

grants as a cheap and disposable reserve army of labour, and to divide the working class.

The labour movement needs a leadership committed to the needs of the working class — especially the doubly oppressed — without concessions to capitalist racism.

Everton Williams



Hattersley: justified the 'numbers game'

catalogue of misery

Iranians face death Given 3 weeks to leave

MAHMOUD Sanii is one of hundreds of Iranian students facing death by deportation. Mahmoud, who is a leftist opponent of the Khomeni regime, has been refused political asylum by the Home Office.

In July 1981, Mahmoud was arrested during the uprisings in Moss side, Manchester. He was severely beaten up by the cops, placed under dusk to dawn (7pm to 7am) curfew, and forced to report to the police station each day.

The court refused to change his conditions of bail and stopped him taking up a course in London. During this period he was refused a visa extension.

The case was taken up by the Moss side Defence Campaign, aware that if found guilty he would be deported. However, the jury unanimously found

him not guilty.

On June 21 Mahmoud was told he would not be granted political asylum. The Home Office stated he was not a 'genuine student' — because the curfew imposed on him stopped him taking up his course.

Mahmoud's appeal against the refusal was heard at a Tribunal in London on December 1. The Home Office asked for an adjournment — which gives the campaign more time to build support.

The Friends of Mahmood are campaigning for a general amnesty for all Iranians in Britain, and believe this can only be done by publicity, pickets and demonstrations.

Many Iranian oppositionist students are forced by the racist system of very high fees (around £4,000) for overseas students to lose their student status.

As all money from Iran flows through the Iranian consulate, the Khomeni regime can prevent oppositionists from receiving money.

Oppositionist Iranian students also face physical attack from Khomeni agents. In India, the Philippines and France, students have been killed.

In Britain hundreds of Iranian students face these threats. For example, the Manchester Law Centre has over 40 Iranian deportation cases.

The government's attitude to Iranian students contrasts strongly with its more liberal attitude to Polish and Vietnamese students.

Friends of Mahmood Sanii, c/o Tipu Sultan Centre, 642, Stockport Rd., Manchester M13 0RZ. tel. 061-225 6886/-225 5111

WITH the battle to prevent the racist deportation of Baba Bakhtaura, a popular local Indian singer and musician, still in progress, the Home Office's crusade to prevent our being 'swamped by those of an alien culture' has produced another potential victim in the West Midlands.

His name is Muhammed Idrish and a Defence Campaign has been set up to fight the deportation. His story is as follows:

From teaching in Bangladesh, he came to Bristol to study, and during this time he met and married an English woman. This meant he had the right to stay here and so for the last two years he has been working as a social worker in West Bromwich.

After living with his wife for a number of years, their

marriage broke down and they split up. This resulted in a letter from the Home Office saying that his visa was not being extended and he had three weeks to leave the country. In their own inimitable way they gave the reason:

'We have reason to believe that you are no longer living with your wife.'

Muhammed, of course, has appealed and his hearing comes up before the Appeals Tribunal on Friday December 10.

The Home Office logic appears to be that blacks do not have the normal 'right' to end their marriage if it is breaking down.

In fact it's just one of the many rights that blacks don't have. It starts right at the top with our total lack of any secure right to live here.

Perhaps they expect blacks to stay in a marriage that is intolerable, forever in order to secure the right to stay here. However, there can be no doubt that, had Muhammed and his wife tried this, he would have been deported for 'attempting to deceive the Home Office'.

In reality, most blacks have given up a long time ago trying to unravel the government's claimed intentions in drafting the immigration laws. We recognise them for what they are: a device to keep out or throw out blacks cleanly and efficiently, and lay the ground for racism in other fields.

The Muhammed Idrish Defence Campaign is demanding that Muhammed should not be made to suffer for events beyond his

control and should be allowed to stay.

What you could do: 1. Raise the question in your organisations and get them to send a message of support to Muhammed and a letter of protest to: Timothy Raison, Minister of State (Home Office), Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT. Please quote ref. no. J137550.

2. Write to Raison yourself in protest.

3. Write to your MP asking them to take the matter up and publicly support Muhammed, eg in the press. You could write to the press yourself.

4. Donate money to the campaign. (address below) Contact the Campaign: c/o Bob Cooper, 6, Radnor Rd., Handsworth, Birmingham. Tel 021-588 7149.

Abdul Sheez

THE BANKERS' AL

The total foreign debts of Third World countries have risen from \$60 billion in 1970 to \$600 billion now — and that's an underestimate. Poland, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil — the crises multiply. Why? And could it lead to a Great Crash? Bob Sutcliffe reports.

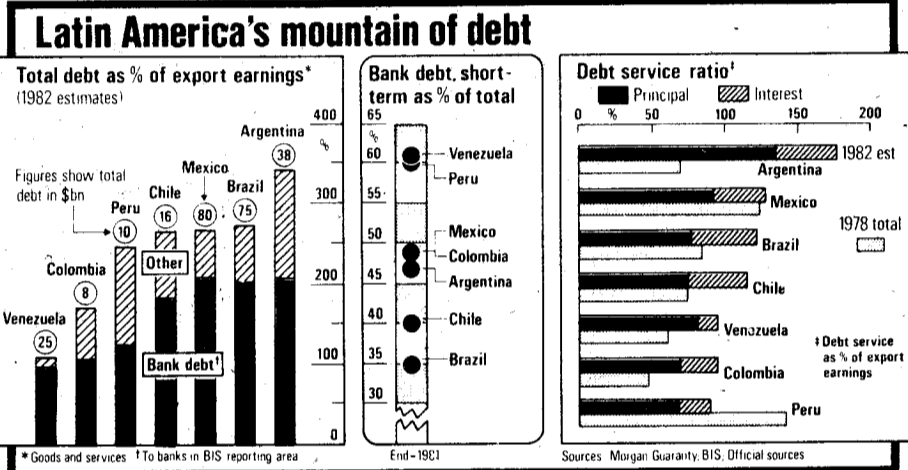


New York gold dealers Wall Street bank

YOU need a steady nerve to read the Financial Times these days. It is all shocks, horrors and sensations about dizzying currency fluctuations, rumours of bankruptcies and debt crises. And through the individual dramatic episodes a general underlying theme insistently repeats itself — the problem of rising debt.

In the first few days of December the pink pages read rather like the screenplay of a Hollywood disaster movie (to be titled 'Bankruptcy' perhaps or 'Crash'). Like all disaster movies it has hundreds of sub-plots set in far-flung exotic locations.

As the December dawn breaks over Dracula's castle in Transylvania, not far away, over the Carpathian mountains in the valley of the Danube, a group of dark-suited impassive bureaucrats board their flight to London. They are on their way to talk to a group of equally dark-suited bankers about their inability to pay the \$2 billion they owe next year to a total of 200 banks.



Meanwhile, on the same day (December 8) a group of dark-suited French bureaucrats could be found sweating in the Arabian desert where they were trying to borrow another \$2 billion from Saudi Arabia to prop up the wilting franc. Simultaneously, another group of dark-suited bureaucrats in Mexico City were preparing to send telex messages to

the headquarters of some of the 1,400 banks to which the Mexican government owes money that it cannot pay, asking for more time to pay the \$9 billion due over the next few months. And all the while, their colleagues were engaged in organising the \$35 million which Mexico has to pay as interest on its debt every day (the price of one cheap meal a day for every citizen of Mexico!).

Aficionados of disaster movies will know that such a series of cameo events are designed to arouse intimations of a massive catastrophe. But this disaster has not yet occurred. And even the pessimists cannot say exactly what form it might take.

Indeed there are experts in world banking circles who are arguing that the disaster movie is the wrong format for interpreting all these events. What is happening, they say, illustrates the extraordinary flexibility and capacity for survival of the immensely complex world financial system.

The worst that is occurring through the present undeniable debt crisis is that the financial system is being obliged to negotiate an awkward corner. But its road-holding qualities are excellent and there is no danger of the vehicle plunging over the cliff.

Evidence

Plenty of evidence could be amassed to support both sides of this argument — both the catastrophist and the sanguine perspectives. There is no simple way to decide between them since on the question of credit and debt there are no clear-cut rules.

A catastrophist would

point to the fact that at present the amount of debt in the world is vastly greater (not only in absolute size, but in relation to the value of production and income) than at any other moment in the history of capitalism. But, on the other hand, that statement has now been true for a decade or more and the great crash has not yet occurred. There is in theory no limit to the amount of credit which can be created by the banking system since the whole system of modern capitalist money is based ultimately on faith.

Billion

While no one disagrees that the level of debt is now the highest ever, equally, no one really knows how high it actually is. The structure of international credit is now so immense that it is impossible to estimate the figure exactly.

The most generally agreed figure is that for the underdeveloped countries as a whole the total debt has risen from \$60 billion in 1970 to probably over \$600 billion now. But this estimate is not satisfactory for various reasons.

First of all it is only supposed to refer to medium and long term debt and it excludes short term debt which the underdeveloped countries' agents may borrow, sometimes for a matter of hours, in order to pay for needed imports. Since the banks do not reveal it (many of them would be afraid to do so for fear of the repercussions) no one knows the size of this short term debt, but it could easily add another \$100 billion to the total.

In any case medium and



A snowballing collapse of credit... the US in the 1930s

long-term are not terms easy to define; and much of that kind of debt is not declared by the banks either. The United States Securities and Exchange Commission has just shocked some of the US commercial banks — by demanding that they reveal more information about their loans to countries which are in debt repayment difficulties. Some of them fear that to do so will lead to runs on their banks.

The net result of under-declaration of loans has been revealed during the debt crises of the last year or so. Whenever a country has been forced to reschedule all its debts and so estimates of the total have to be revealed, they have always been much higher than the total previously estimated in the available official figures. Argentina's debt was thought to be about \$12 billion until the recent crisis, when it was discovered to be well over \$20 billion. The same is true of Poland and Mexico.

The estimates also exclude privately held debt in the Third World, such as the debts of manufacturing and commercial companies, and of private Third World banks.

On many counts then the \$600 billion figure is an underestimate. The true figure could already be approaching \$1 trillion, or

about \$500 for each inhabitant of the underdeveloped capitalist countries.

The real burden of this level of debt depends on many factors. In the first place the debt is of many different kinds. Some of it is to other governments who have usually shown themselves willing to reschedule it without much problem. They do not particularly need the money since their loans were not commercially motivated; and continuous rescheduling allows them to maintain some leverage over the government of the debtor country.

Banks

Other debts are to suppliers and to banks and these are the debts which since 1970 have been rising most rapidly.

The proportion of debt to the banks rose from 20% in 1974 to 36% in 1980 (in Latin America the rise is from 21% to 56%). And the proportion owed to suppliers (trade credit) is now 7% of the total.

These kinds of debt are much more burdensome since they are made originally for commercial reasons and thus the banks and suppliers are less willing to reschedule, though they can be induced to do so if the rescheduling does not

represent a perpetual postponement.

The commercial debt is also for shorter terms than the official debt. As a result the average maturity of the underdeveloped countries' debts has been shortening fast. And the average rate of interest has, until the last few months, been rising.

For most of the 1970s this did not have the effect of increasing very fast the repayments and interest due as a share of the export earnings of the underdeveloped countries. They rose from 14% to 19% over the decade.

But there was a sudden change at the beginning of the 1980s because of a bunching of repayments due in a short period and also because the recession made a sudden dent in poor countries' export earnings.

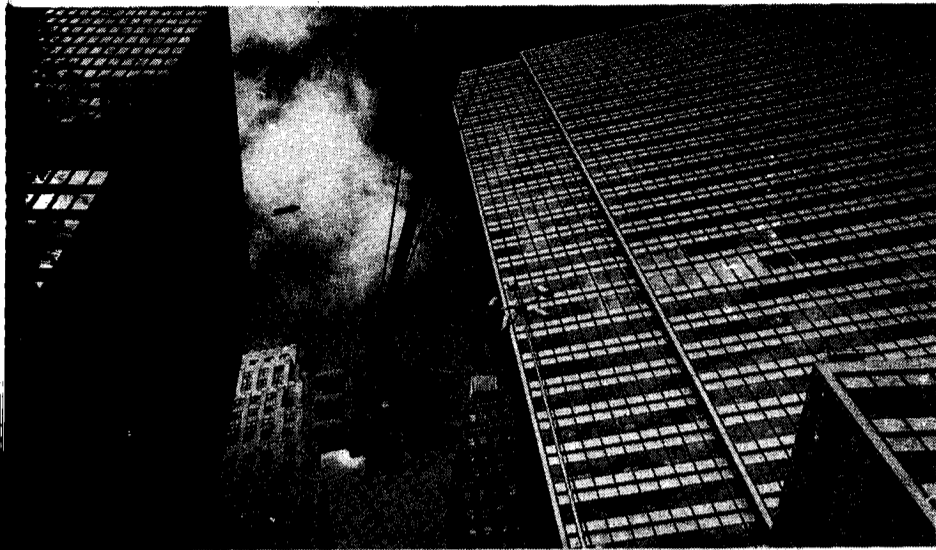
That has meant that the debt servicing obligations (repayment of principal and interest) due next year are for a few countries well over 100% of their expected export earnings. Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Ecuador are all in this category. Those countries just have no way of paying unless they borrow from new creditors in order to repay the old.

This shift in the situation has been sudden and has taken the ground from under most of the argu-



Wall Street crashed in 1929. Could the same happen to the world's banking system today?

ANGEL OF DEATH



... in millions while Third World children starve

ments that the optimists used to employ a few years ago to back up their contention that rising indebtedness was not a major problem for the world economy. They used to say, for example, that the biggest debtors tended to be those which would have the most problems in repaying (so the debt was therefore 'rational'). Two-thirds of the debt is owed by 12 countries.

Inflation

In fact, however, some of the lowest debtors have (because their economic situation has been so bad) been least able to repay. Zaire is an example of this. And at the other end the country most quoted in support of the optimists' argument was the biggest debtor of all — oil-rich Mexico — which, far from experiencing a miracle, has since last August been effectively bankrupt.

The optimists also used to say that debt was a perfectly rational thing in a period of inflation since rising prices would erode the real value of the debt. The argument is perfectly valid in theory but unfortunately misses two points.

The continuation of world inflation in the 1970s did not include the prices of the raw material exports of Third World countries. Those prices have been tending to fall, and that has made the burden of debt worse in real terms and not easier. And the intense recession of the last three years has curbed world inflation quite suddenly.

Along with monetarist policies in the USA and elsewhere, that has made real interest rates on borrowing soar upwards.

Oil price

The optimists also used to say that debt should be no problem for poor countries as long as the borrowed money was used to finance real economic development. It would then create the means for its repayment in the future out of higher production and income.

Again an argument which is very sound as long as you don't place it alongside the real world. The reality is that, especially since the oil price increase in 1973, debt has been incurred by the poor countries not to finance develop-

ment plans but simply to survive at present levels without cutting back their existing very low levels of living.

And the emergency element in the borrowing has been reinforced since then because the much slower growth of the advanced countries has reduced the export earnings of most of the underdeveloped ones. Had the underdeveloped countries not borrowed to meet this problem, then, as their spokespeople often argue, the world would have been plunged into even deeper slump than it has been.

The optimists also failed to foresee (indeed, so did most other people) the only partly fortuitous coincidence of a number of political events which led three of the world's largest debtor countries to a point of virtual bankruptcy within a few months of each other. They are, of course, Poland, Argentina and Mexico.

Ingenuity

Nowadays, therefore, there is not much left of the optimists' argument except a faith that a major financial crash is impossible because of the ingenuity and flexibility of the capitalist banking system.

This highlights a difference between the rules of national financial systems and the international one. In each country there is a central bank which has some obligation to act as a 'lender of last resort' — that means flooding the system with cash if there is a panic and a run on the commercial banks. This, in principle, should stop a collapse of the banking system and the loss of peoples' deposits in the banks.

The lender of last resort system has seldom needed to be put to the test in modern times. In the 1930s in the USA it failed dismally, though it has been much strengthened since then. It might be responsible for the fact that the numerous bank failures in the USA in recent years have not resulted in a domino effect as they did in 1933.

But there is no question that, even if the domestic central banks are stronger in this respect than during the financial panics of the 1930s, there is still no international central bank to act

as lender of last resort.

Two institutions are candidates for this role. One is the Bank of International Settlements with its headquarters in Switzerland. This is often known as the Central Bankers' Central Bank. But its powers to give credit to Central Banks of countries in financial difficulties is extremely limited and so far it has played very little role in sorting out the current debt crisis.

The other potential world central bank is the International Monetary Fund, which is one of the main characters of the present drama. But it is trying to play a role for which it was not intended and is ill-designed.

The original idea of the IMF was that it should lend money to countries with balance of payments problems. A small amount was available to the subscribing nations unconditionally. But if they wanted substantial loans they were obliged to implement economic policies approved by the IMF. And these were invariably austerity policies designed to cut back the balance of payments deficits by imposing economic contraction.

The role of the IMF as a kind of conservative financial probation service in the Third World has become legendary. And a few advanced countries have also been placed in its care. The best known case



Behind the suave bankers... the armed fist of imperialism

of that is Britain during the last Labour government when James Callaghan imposed massive cuts in state spending (much more than Thatcher) at the behest of the IMF.

But the credit-creating possibilities of the IMF have proved much too small to cope with the rash of near defaults and bankruptcies of the last two years. Nonetheless the IMF has, in the absence of an alternative, played the role of World Central Banker, not so much by lending itself to the bankrupt countries but by making agreements with them and then advising the private banks that it is safe to lend enough money to stave off the crisis.

This system has for the last few weeks been threatening to break down. And that is the reason why this week the Group of Five who dominate the IMF (Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, and the USA) have been holding emergency meetings near Frankfurt to agree on an enormous expansion of the credit creating powers of the IMF.

The new system would have the effect of reducing the overwhelming power of the US government over the policies of the IMF. And for a long time that made the Reagan administration hostile to the change. The fact is that it has now changed its position is an indication of how alarmed it is at the possibility of a forced default by a major debtor leading to a domino-effect and the crash of the world financial system.

Expansion

Whether this expansion of the IMF's lending resources is enough to convert it into an effective lender of last resort remains to be seen. There is no doubt, however, that the present crisis has forced it to alter many of its former ultra-conservative policies. No doubt its officials would still like as much as they ever did to instruct borrower countries to balance their budgets and cut back their spending. But they have realised there is no hope of implementing such policies at the present time without some form of catastrophe.

So in Mexico, for example, the IMF is now appealing to the government to try to reduce its deficit in the coming year to 10% of the national income, a figure which a few years ago would have made an IMF official blanch. Yet today Mexico is getting IMF loans even without giving any convincing commitment to reduce government spending. This at least is one of the symptoms of what has been called 'debtor power'.

The debtors' power, however, would be greater if it were not for the fact that they need not only to have their present debts rolled-over (rescheduled) almost indefinitely, but also that they will need to borrow more and more simply to stay above water. The balance of payments deficits of the underdeveloped countries combined (excluding the oil producers) is projected by

the OECD to be \$100 million for each of the next few years. This implies the need to borrow that amount extra each year.

It is already clear that that is going to be extremely difficult since after the experiences of the last two years the commercial banks are already much less eager to lend to underdeveloped countries. And in any case they do not have the same excess of loanable funds which the oil price increases gave them during the seventies.

Now, after a sudden worsening in the oil market as the recession creates over supply and falling prices, many of the oil producing countries are also beginning to have trouble balancing their own payments. Some of them are coming to the financial markets as borrowers and not lenders.

Defaults

And that situation certainly means that the threat of major defaults will not lessen over the next year or two.

But if bankers fear defaults like the angel of death, shouldn't socialists welcome default as a means of ending the dependent status of poor debtor nations and in effect expropriating the property of the rich financial capitalists?

This is a legitimate question, and the answer to it is not a simple one. Certainly an essential part of any socialist programme in poor countries would be the ending of debt obligations; if necessary by default. And the counterpart of this would be that in the advanced countries the banks should be expropriated without compensation to their capitalist owners and the savings of ordinary people in them protected. If defaults on international loans were taking place in that context, then they would be very desirable.

But as long as defaults occur in the context of the unmolested rule of capitalist norms, then their effect could be disastrous for the

inhabitants of poor countries as well as working class people in the rich countries. At present defaults are such anathema to capitalist bankers that the immediate reaction to any serious default, where the country concerned was not willing to negotiate a satisfactory rescheduling agreement, would be the imposition of an array of sanctions against that country to force it to heel: the freezing of any assets it might have left, the confiscation of its property abroad, the banning of trade with that country and so on.

The measures imposed against Argentina during the war are a taste of what would be in store for a defaulter. If a default was not rectified and led to the closure of banks and the collapse of international lending — an event which could happen very suddenly — then again, in the context of capitalism, the result could be a frightening collapse of world trade and thus a gigantic international slump. This could even put the slump of the 1930s in the shade, since the capitalist economy is today much more internationally interdependent than it was in the 1930s.

Savers

And in such a slump it would be the exploited and the under-privileged who would suffer most: workers who lose their jobs, small savers who lose their money and so on. There is nothing in the present crisis of the world's financial system which would of itself benefit the dispossessed of the world or aid the struggle for socialism. But its potentially horrific consequences, which could be imminent, should focus attention on the need for socialist measures which would completely change the rules under which the economies of individual countries and the world market function, so that social need could take over from private profit as the motor of the world's economy.

Views and reviews

LAWS AGAINST

SEX

Bob Sutcliffe reviews 'Gays and the Law', by Paul Crane (Pluto Press, £4.95)

WHEN you have finished doing the Christmas competitions in the Mirror and the Financial Times then try this SO competition (for which there is no prize).

Read the following everyday scenario and be prepared to answer questions about it.

Scene: A gentlemen's public lavatory at 11.40 pm somewhere in Britain. Only two people (men) are apparently present, A and B. They evidently do not know each other. By coincidence, A's 21st birthday was yesterday; B's is tomorrow.

A looks at B in a friendly manner and says 'Hello', B ignores him. A persists: 'Would you like to have sex with me?' he asks. B declines the invitation and makes as if to leave but then appears to change his mind. A, emboldened, repeats the invitation. B says yes. They kiss. They then go into a cubicle and lock the door and enjoy sex during the course of which A fucks B.

As they are on the point of leaving the lavatory, it

becomes clear that they are not, as they thought, alone. A policeman emerges from his hiding place. He has seen everything via a system of mirrors (apparently not an uncommon use of taxpayers' money). 'Arrest you both,' he says. 'For what?' ask A and B, amazed since by coincidence both are tourists from, respectively, Portugal and Hungary, where nothing they have done would be illegal.

So here are the competition questions about this entirely private and consensual act:

1. In total under British law how many crimes might A and B have committed?
2. A has committed two more crimes than B. What are they?
3. After they first met, how could A and B still have had sex without breaking the law?

Answers:

1. Possibly, Paul Crane's book reveals, as many as eight. They include conduct liable to cause a breach of the peace, importuning, gross indecen-

cy, buggery with a minor and insulting behaviour.

2. A committed importuning by approaching B more than once. He also committed the crime of having sex with someone under 21 years of age. In the case of buggery B is equally guilty since he was an accomplice.

3. If B had said 'Yes' the first time this would have removed the crime of importuning; if they hadn't kissed then that would have saved two possible charges of conduct liable to cause a breach of the peace. If they'd gone home to A's lodgings then they would have avoided the crime of gross indecency in a public place. And it might with luck have been after midnight when they arrived, so B would no longer be a minor. But perhaps it would have been more fun to go back to Hungary or Portugal.

Paul Crane's excellent and exhaustively informative book *Gays and the Law* provides the source of all the legal conclusions in the above scenario. Not that

his book is predominantly about the problems of men cruising in public lavatories.

The story, however, does illustrate the extraordinary vulnerability of gay men to the British criminal law. It should dispel the common illusion that sex between men was legalised in 1967. In fact since that date there has been a considerable increase in the number of convictions and prosecutions of men especially for gross indecency, an event which has led to appalling repercussions for many, including loss of jobs, destruction of family and personal relations, press witch-hunts, and other forms of humiliation.

Gays and the Law also, however, describes very fully how the law discriminates against and persecutes young gay people (by denying young gay men for instance any right to have sex before the age of 21), against Lesbians (by accepting as 'fair' their sacking from a wide range of jobs and frequently by cruelly denying rights to Lesbian mothers), against transsexuals, transvestites, paedophiles, lesbian and gay immigrants and others. It details the many and surprising ways in which the law discriminates in favour of heterosexuality.

The book not only describes the details of the law as it applies against gay men and Lesbians; but it also provides plenty of useful practical advice as to what we should do when, as gay people, we have problems with the law.

Paul Crane also emphasises the way in which since 1967 the law has in some ways got worse for gay people and how none of the parliamentary political parties (with the partial exception of the Liberals) are committed to any major reforms. The Tories have just been forced to apply the British law in Northern Ireland but only after a long and bitter struggle with the European Court of Human Rights. The last Labour government made a deal with Ian Paisley not to do this.

This year the Labour party NEC has carefully decided to include discrimination against gays in the age of consent in its programme. The SDP voted against including gay rights in its programme. And recently the TUC decided against including anti-gay clauses in its proposed model anti-discrimination clause for agreements between unions and employers.

In this atmosphere there is necessarily a contradiction between what Paul Crane as a member of the gay movement advocates to change the situation — militant campaigns by gay people and their allies —

and what he as a lawyer advises anyone in trouble with the law to do to minimise punishment — make yourself out to be as 'respectable' and remorseful as possible.

It is a contradiction which highlights the immense and hypocritical anti-gay bigotry which exists in our society. And some of the most interesting parts of the book are illustrations of these attitudes as they display themselves in the police and the law courts. For instance, the Chapter on 'Police and Prisons' is headed with a quotation from a Police Federation press release in 1981 which 'deplores the way official thinking on this subject appears to be surrendering to the pressure groups who try to persuade society that homosexual conduct is perfectly normal.'

In 1977 the House of Lords ruled in a child custody case that the fact that the father was homo-

sexual 'destroys at once the main argument which is strong in normal cases that the maintenance of the tie with the possibility of parental influence is valuable to a child and should not be cut off'.

The case of the Queen's bodyguard was the occasion for a new wave of anti-gay bigotry in the press. And this was more respectably expressed in the report on the case published three weeks ago by Lord Bridges. Referring to Trestrail's taste for 'casual and promiscuous homosexual encounters which he himself recognised as sordid and degrading', Bridges comments:

'The risks he took and the indiscretions he committed, no matter how compulsive the urge that drove him to act as he did, must be seen as raising serious doubt as to the soundness of his judgement.' (And I don't think Lord Bridges is criticising Commander Trestrail's taste in men.)

He goes on to add that 'even in today's permissive society (sic), indiscriminate promiscuous behaviour, whether homosexual or heterosexual, particularly when it involves relations with prostitutes, still attracts general disapproval; to have continued to employ, in a position of close responsibility to the Queen, a man known to have indulged in such practices would clearly be unacceptable.'

Thus Lord Bridges expresses the hypocrisy of the ruling class. The last part of the Christmas competition is to estimate, if the same standards were applied to the members of the House of Lords, how many of the noble peers would be left.

Given the extent of discrimination, oppression and bigotry which such things illustrate one can only hope that Paul Crane's book will not remain the most authoritative work on its subject for long.

On the borderline

Martin Thomas reviews 'Don't Look Back', a film of Bob Dylan's 1965 British tour, and 'John Cooper Clark - Ten Years in an Open Necked Shirt', both showing at the ICA Cinema

"THUS it amounts to the same thing", wrote the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, "whether one gets drunk alone or is a leader of nations."

If one of these activities takes precedence over the other, this will not be because of its real goal but because of the degree of consciousness which it possesses of its ideal goal; and in this case it will be the quietism of the solitary drunkard which will take precedence over the vain agitation of the leader of nations."

At the same time as he wrote this, Sartre was nonetheless active in the wartime French Resistance. These films show John Cooper Clark and

Bob Dylan on the same borderline between retreat and commitment.

Much of both films is taken up with them fending off interviewers. Asked by Melody Maker whether his serious social content will become more important than the humour, John Cooper Clark replies "No, I wish I could be funny all the time". Dylan, exasperated, tells a Time magazine reporter: "I've got no reason for the things I write. I've got no message".

But there is a difference. We see John Cooper Clark fobbing off intelligent questions from Michele Roberts with flip comments; and Dylan, goaded by irritation, telling the Time reporter that his magazine distorts reality, and explaining: "It doesn't show a picture of a tramp vomiting in the gutter, and next to it a picture of Mr Rockefeller... It never does anything like that..."

In 1965 Dylan was at a turning point away from political songs. It was the year of 'Maggie's Farm' — "Well, I try my best/ To be just like I am/ But everybody want you/ To be just like them/ They say sing while you slave/ And I just get bored"; and of 'Desolation Row' — "Don't

send me no more letters, no/Not unless you mail them from Desolation Row".

Propagandism is not necessarily an advantage in art. But for Dylan the shift was, it seems to me, from propagandism to self-indulgence and obscurantism. What Pete Hamill wrote on the sleeve of "Blood on the Tracks" could serve as a motto: "In this moment of the end of wars... all of us, old, young, middle-aged, men and women, are searching for some simple things to believe in". The egotism which is pretty plain in "Don't Look Back" slowly went rancid.

If Dylan's early songs like "Masters of War", "Blowin' in the Wind", or "Hard Rain" now seem trite, it is because their vigour and sharpness helped produce a change in consciousness which made them almost clichés.

Both John Cooper Clark's deliberately awkward, mocking/self-mocking verses, and the earnest, intelligent questions he is asked by Michele Roberts, take off from that point.

"Ten Years in an Open Necked Shirt" also features Linton Kwesi Johnson, who feels no need to shield his art with throwaway comments.



'Atomic Cafe' is showing at the 'Screen on the Green' in London

Atomic Cafe

Review by Will Adams

THE Atomic Cafe, the latest film against nuclear weapons, is a film as much about propaganda as it is about nuclear war.

It is made up of extracts from US-government sponsored TV and radio broadcasts, cartoons and "educational" films from the 1940s and 1950s and from official film of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and later US atomic and hydrogen bomb tests on Pacific Islands.

The extracts are cut together in approximate chronological order. No spoken comment is made on any of the material used. Instead there is a soundtrack of songs from the period about nuclear weapons, such as "Jesus Hits Like an Atom Bomb" and Bill Haley's "Thirteen Women".

Film of the horrific effects of radiation on bomb victims contrasts sharply with the lecture by an army "expert" on the

relatively minor effects of radiation from nuclear explosions.

After the lecture the soldiers are sent out to sit in bunkers during a test explosion with instructions to keep their heads down, and to close their mouths and hold their noses (to stop radioactive particles entering their bodies!).

There is some hilarious film of the suggested protection against nuclear explosions. One kid is dressed up in a lead-lined anti-radiation suit, only to experience great difficulty climbing on his bike to cycle off. To the jingle "Duck and cover", classrooms of school pupils dive under their desks and cover their heads.

The development and testing by the United States of nuclear weapons is shown as a central part of the fight against expansionist Soviet Communism.

Nuclear weapons protect the "American way of life"

epitomised, it seems, by the nuclear family and Coca Cola.

The film also reveals a cynical racism shown towards the unfortunate inhabitants of Pacific Islands chosen by the US as sites for their test explosions.

I found the film in parts very funny and in parts sickening. But the laughter is tempered by the realisation that most of the people at whom the material was aimed did not have the overview we are given by the film makers. Instead they had to accept what they heard and saw at face value, and probably believed most of it.

Most readers of Socialist Organiser don't need convincing about the need to get rid of nuclear weapons nor about the nature of propaganda. But The Atomic Cafe is worth going to see for the range of its material and for the songs on the soundtrack.



Bob Dylan: "With no attempt to... the glimpse/into the... what each one means"

Views and reviews

E.T.: don't be put off!

Tony Richardson reviews 'E.T. — the Extra-Terrestrial'



Lovable space creatures, lovable children...

DON'T let the fact that Nancy Reagan cried and Ronald Reagan praised its optimism put you off, nor the fact that the centre of the film is a comfortable, 'middle American' family.

ET — the Extra-Terrestrial — is Hollywood escapism — but escapism which for once shows us an 'alien' as a friend who is not out to destroy the world as we know it.

small children of a "broken" family, whose father has gone off to Mexico with another woman, leaving the mother in charge.

This is why the children can relate so readily to ET, who is separated from his "home".

Spielberg and his fellow director George Lucas ('Star Wars') create their "children's" films. They base themselves on the idea that children are "innocent" and "uncorrupted" by the harsh realities of life — in other

words, middle class. Such children — unlike the adults — can accept the ET without much problem. The story would be inconceivable anywhere in

the poverty and misery of the 'Third World', where reality forces itself upon children in the form of hunger and disease. It could not even happen in

the harsh surroundings of the black ghettos of the big American cities. But having made these criticisms, the film is a work of genius. Spielberg knows exactly how to hold our interest, at what moment to reveal the creature to us.

This ability has earned Spielberg a fortune on previous films like 'Jaws', 'Close Encounters' and 'Raiders of the Lost Ark'. ET is the best yet. And his fortune is increased not only by the films themselves but also by shrewd marketing.

The fact is that the film lives up to all this build-up. The relationship between ET and the children tugs on the emotions of the audience. The \$1.5 million creature appeals to real children, not just the Hollywood variety.

Indeed the fact that such an ugly creature — which the film hints is related to a frog — appeal to children itself shows that conceptions of beauty are very much created by society.

Spielberg plays on all the emotions, in particular the love of children. The excitement comes from the fact that the authorities are trying to catch ET — possibly (it is hinted) because the adults want to cut it up for research. While the adults have their reasons for chasing the creature, the children just want to help it go home.

Interestingly Spielberg changes the book in order to increase the mystery and open up a religious interpretation. The book depicts the Extra-Terrestrials as 10 million year old botanists, trying to save the earth's plant life, with which they communicate.

Spielberg explains none of this in the film. So when ET's finger heals the boy's cut, or when at the end of the film he touches the boy's head and says he will always be there, the viewer is left free to interpret this in a religious sense.

Don't be put off by the vast profits (takings are fast approaching Star Wars' \$244 million, and Spielberg has a personal stake in all the toys and spin-offs).

ET is a really good movie. Take the children — family or no family.

Goffman: sociology at its most critical

by Bob Fine

I have just heard of the death of Erving Goffman.

He was one of the few sociologists read by those who participated in anti-Vietnam war, anti-racist, student and counter-culture movements. He himself seemed to take little interest directly in politics. But his writings hit a note that was readily embraced by many radicals.

The image that remains for me is of a figure alone in a corner of a room, observing, critical, looking for his own way to drop out of society. The story goes that when his wife died, he wrote an article on condolence-offering behaviour based on his friends' superficial responses to the death. This jaundiced view of society was what appealed.

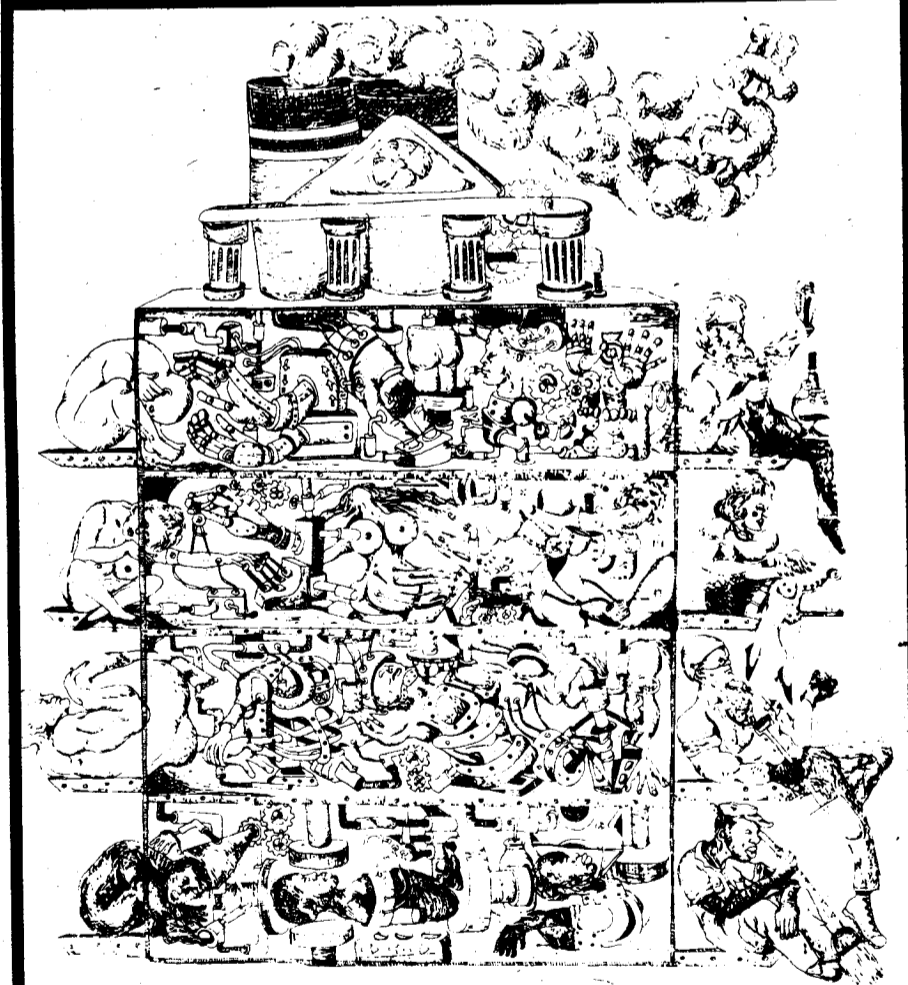
Stigma

The works I remember best are 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', 'Stigma' and 'Asylums'.

In the first of these, he takes to its limit the sociological idea that human beings are actors playing roles for one another. The 'self', he says, is a performance: it requires backstage work to keep up the illusory appearances; teamwork to insure that those closest to you don't reveal your dirty secrets; stage management to maintain the ideal front offered to others; and a certain trust on the part of your audience lest they expose what lies behind the mask.

All this is hard and precarious work; the charade might fall to pieces at any moment. And when it does,

*The three books mentioned by Erving Goffman are available in Penguin: 'Asylums' at £1.95, 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' at £1.75, and 'Stigma' at £1.95.



The American way of life... seen by a cartoonist

society is pitiless. If your front collapses, if your dirty backstage secrets come to the fore, society will turn you into an outcast, a bearer of stigma, an alien.

Scratch beneath the surface of good and proper folk and you will find enough to portray literally anyone as deviant. It is almost a matter of chance who gets picked out.

'Asylums' examines what happens to those who are stigmatised and confined in total institutions. Goffman presents mental hospitals as machines for the production of outcasts. Mental patients suffer

from "contingency" rather than mental illness: they are there because a member of their family happens to have complained to some medical authority; the future patient happens to have said the wrong thing which is interpreted as a sign of madness.

Once confined, the patient is watched in his or her every movement, gesture, word; nothing escapes the eye of authority; a psychiatric discourse is able to translate anger at being confined into a symptom of disease: the medical record preserves every case of "abnormal" behaviour

and systematically excludes the possibility of situational cause. The patient has no private space, no possibility of constructing a normal self. Each attempt at building an identity can be undercut by the doctors on the basis of their all-pervasive record.

A biography is built up of the patient, detailing every act he or she has committed which can possibly fit the category of developing madness. Normal conduct is selected out and only the faults retained, even if they constitute a minute fraction of the patient's actual life.

Anyone, says Goffman, can slip into this nightmare. And anyone can then be portrayed as a proper and right object of psychiatric attention.

There are enough skeletons in each of our cupboards to enable society — if it puts its mind to it, if it watches us sufficiently, if it translates our reactions into maladies of the psyche, if it builds up a record of each act of madness — to convince itself that we are mad and need to be locked up.

Drugged

If this is not enough, the patient is stripped of his or her clothes, personal possessions, freedom of movement, even of the right to use a knife and fork. In some cases the patient is drugged until he or she trembles and froths and loses coherence. Under such circumstances anyone will look mad.

The asylum is for Goffman the other side of the coin of normal society: the dark side of civilised manners. Goffman's weakness was that he could see no escape from this situation: it was for him the meaning of social life.

All that he could offer in the end was a plea that our presentations of self not be undermined, that our idealised fronts be accepted at face value, that we suspend our distrust on the ground that he who throws the first stone...

Wary

He became as wary of the mugger who violates the trust required between strangers on a street as he did of the state which violates this trust in another way. I am not sure what politics he ended up with but I should not be surprised if he went the way of that other famous anti-psychiatrist of the time, Thomas Szasz, and joined forces with the Republicans, Nixon and

Reagan.

After all, they promised to cut down on the state's enormous expenditure on mental health as part of its general attack on federal spending, at the same time as they waged war on muggers.

Rousseau

Goffman could see no material base to the ills of society. Two hundred years before him Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the great apostle of Enlightenment, declared that with the rise of private property, people began to hide their real feelings and put on a mask, the better to pursue their own private interests at the expense of others. After a while, they forgot what their real feelings were and were left with nothing but their masks.

Inauthenticity was the product of bourgeois society. The solution for Rousseau was the abolition of private property.

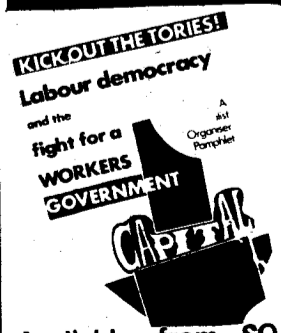
For Goffman these alienated relations had become so entrenched that he was no longer able to see them as anything but natural and eternal. They seemed to have no historical foundation and accordingly to have no solution. People are by nature role players.

Negative

Goffman's virtue was to see the negative, critical side of this existence, while orthodox sociology treated role playing as the bland, neutral essence of social life.

Like many who cannot understand the ills of society, Goffman, I believe, moved to the right and sought imaginary safeguards. But I am not sure because at this point I lost touch with him.

Goffman's best works represent sociology at its most critical and for many students have offered a way into radical thinking. Marxists can learn from him.



Available from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 for 60p incl. postage.

■ Lenin and the Russian workers' Revolution

Stalin's political counter-revolution

Andrew Hornung and John O'Mahony conclude their series on Lenin by looking at Lenin's last struggle.

IN 1922 Lenin suffered a stroke which paralysed him almost totally for a period. After a brief recovery, he suffered another stroke on March 7 1923. He never recovered, though there were periods in which he was able to dictate notes.

In this period he fought his last battle, against growing bureaucratism and in defence of working class democracy.

On his deathbed he became increasingly aware that things were not going well, and alarmed by the growing power of the bureaucracy. He had, he said, the uncanny sensation of turning a steering wheel which no longer had any control over the vehicle.

Initiative from below was being stifled. The Workers' Inspectorate, far from being a genuine organ of working class supervision, had become merely one more source of bureaucratic power for Stalin.

On the national question, too, 'great Russian chauvinism' was restoring itself to power within the new social structures. Stalin and Dzherzhinsky had conducted a savage campaign against the Georgian Bolsheviks, accusing them of

nationalism. Lenin knew where the malignant nationalism lay — in the Great Russian chauvinism of the central state apparatus.

He resolved to conduct a struggle against the bureaucracy, in favour of the maligned Georgian Bolsheviks and the rights of the Georgian people within the Soviet system. But Lenin the activist was reduced to Lenin the dictator of notes, unable even to write them himself. These notes became his Testament.

Rude

On January 4 1923 he wrote: "Stalin is too rude and this defect... becomes intolerable in a general secretary. That is why I suggest that the comrades think over a way of removing Stalin from that post and appointing somebody else differing in all respects from Comrade Stalin by one single advantage — that of being more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and considerate to the comrades, less officious, etc..."

I think that from the point of view of assuring against a split and from the point of view of what I wrote above of the mutual

relations between Stalin and Trotsky, it is not a detail, or it is a detail which can acquire decisive importance".

Stalin was not removed, and in any case he was not himself the new bureaucracy, merely its personification.

No political issue so clearly epitomises the profoundly revolutionary and democratic spirit of Lenin and the Bolsheviks as their policy on the national question. True, they had (rightly) not hesitated to subordinate the national rights of the Poles in 1920 and of the Georgians in 1921 to the needs, as they saw them, of the workers' revolution.

But for most of the long-oppressed nationalities and peoples of the Tsarist empire, the workers' revolution meant liberation, a tearing-down of that Bastille of the nations. The revolutionary effects of Bolshevik policy on oppressed nationalities and peoples was felt as far away as among the Blacks in the USA.

The fate of the national minorities under the Stalinist bureaucratic counter-revolution graphically summed up what that counter-



Many of the Left Opposition's supporters were from the ranks of the youth like these Red Army cadets

revolution meant, and will do to illustrate what happened in every area of society.

It was one of the most savage ironies of history. While the Austrian prison house of nations had been shattered into fragments, the Bolshevik policy of self-determination had preserved the unity of most of the former Tsarist empire — unity on the basis of freedom on the part of nations and peoples.

Prison

Now the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration began systematically to convert the free association of Soviet peoples created in the fires of revolution and civil war back into a prison house for the non Great Russians. Stalin rebuilt the walls and the institutions of national oppression. The systematic bureaucratisation of the party and the state apparatus, bureaucratically centralised and unified throughout the 'Soviet Union', inevitably meant that the constitutional rights of the nations and peoples became a fiction.

The political and ideological degeneration of the bureaucracy injected the poison of Russian chauvinism into the state structure. By the mid-'20s, the Stalinist faction was already using 'anti-semitism — within the party! — against the Trotskyist opposition which continued the anti-bureaucratic offensive of Lenin.

The progressive impulse of the revolutionaries' policy on the national question could still be felt throughout the 1920s, especially in the least developed eastern regions. But by the early '30s the Stalinists were able to turn on its head the central teaching on the national question of the revolution and of Lenin

— they now proclaimed that the national problem in the USSR was no longer the poison of Great Russian chauvinism, but 'nationalist deviations' among the peoples long oppressed by that chauvinism.

For over 50 years now a majority of the people of the USSR have had national oppression superimposed on the social oppression experienced by all the population.

Whole nations have been deported. The Ukraine, a nation of 50 million, the biggest oppressed nation in the world, has been subject to systematic national and cultural oppression, sometimes more savage, sometimes less. The last large-scale purge there began in the 1970s.

There are few states on earth more alien to Lenin's programme on the national question than the one where the production of pictures and statues of Lenin — stylised to fit a vulgar Stalinist caricature — is a major industry.

On January 21 1924 Lenin died. Within a short time all that he stood for had become a dead letter on the Communist movement.

Stalin and his friends used the occasion of Lenin's death to organise the so-called 'Lenin levy', a swamping of the revolutionary core of the party by a mass of raw, often careerist, recruits.

Opposition

At the end of 1923 the Left Opposition, led by Trotsky, had taken up the same struggle as Lenin. Within less than a year after Lenin's death the bureaucracy had differentiated itself from his programme by proclaiming a programme that he would have mocked, that there could be socialism in one country.

Thus they started on the road to abandoning the struggle for international proletarian revolution.

Over years and decades they were to redefine the very basis of socialism, the self-liberation of the working class, to comply with their own authoritarian police-state rule. The notions of liberty and democracy, and much else that the socialist working class takes over from the great liberation movements of the past, were excised from their state socialism, and an authoritarianism previously associated with the Right inserted in their place. Lenin's properly bitter denunciations of the reformists' parliamentary fetishism were construed as absolute renunciation of democracy and endorsement of bureaucratic tyranny.

Transformed

Trotsky and the Left Opposition were very soon the only forces still standing on Lenin's programme. The bureaucracy gained control of the young parties of the Comintern, many of them still in the process of formation. In time they were transformed into parties like the British Communist Party of today.

Within little more than ten years of Lenin's death, almost the entire generation of Bolshevik revolutionaries were murdered by the totalitarian state with Stalin at its head.

Lenin, safely dead, was mummified and made into an icon by the Stalinist state. As if foreseeing it, Lenin had written, with Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in mind:

"During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice,

the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonise them, so to say, and to hallow their names to a certain extent for the 'consolation' of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its substance, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarising it".

The impossibility even for Stalin of destroying Lenin's published works — which for us remain the real Lenin — now led to endless scholastic reinterpretations of them, quite alien to the spirit of Lenin and the spirit of Marxism.

The Russian Revolution led by way of the Stalinist political counter-revolution to the savagely tyrannical rule of a vast bureaucratic caste which subjects the working class of the USSR and Eastern Europe to unparalleled social and political oppression. In conditions of Russian backwardness and the isolation of the revolution, many of the worst features of class society were grafted onto the collectivised property initially established by the workers' revolution. These mutant remnants of the 1917 workers' revolution will have their progressive potential realised only when the working class makes a new, anti-bureaucratic revolution.

Does the historical fate of the Russian workers' revolution endorse in retrospect the verdict of those scholastic Marxists like Karl Kautsky who condemned Lenin and the Bolsheviks as adventurists — people who took a leap in the dark?

It is best to let the splendid revolutionary Marxist



By November 1928, practically all the militants of the Left Opposition had been sent into internal exile. But they still organised demonstrations on the 11th anniversary of the revolution. The banners read: 'Turn the fire against the Right, the kulak, the Nepman, and the bureaucracy', and 'Long live the dictatorship of the proletariat'.



The Stalinists could consolidate their power only by physically exterminating most of the activists of Lenin's party

Rosa Luxemburg answer that question. Luxemburg was an ardent supporter of the Russian Revolution, but also a sharp critic of the policy of the Bolsheviks. She differed with them on their land policy and on their national policy. She criticised the Red Terror and argued that the Bolshevik Revolution could and should have been won with less repression and more democracy than the Bolsheviks felt they could foster after the outbreak of civil war in mid 1918.

She wrote against the Kautskys:

"That the Bolsheviks have based their policy entirely upon the world proletarian revolution is the clearest proof of their political farsightedness and firmness of principle and of the bold scope of their policies".

"Surely nothing can be further from [Lenin's and Trotsky's] thoughts than to believe that all the things they have done or left undone under the conditions of bitter compulsion and necessity in the midst of the roaring whirlpool of events, should be regarded by the International as a shining example of socialist policy toward which only uncritical admiration and zealous imitation are in order". But:

"Whatever a party could offer of courage, revolutionary farsightedness 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".

The Bolsheviks — socialists, proletarian revolutionaries, and consistent Marxists — were absolutely right to seize power, to base themselves on the

perspective of the international socialist revolution. It was not their fault that the working class was everywhere defeated in the advanced countries of Europe and that the Russian Revolution was isolated and subsequently degenerated.

If a group of old Bolsheviks, led by Stalin, finally betrayed the revolution, they could only feel secure in that work when they had slaughtered almost the entire membership of the revolutionary party that Lenin had built.

Bolshevism

If the European labour movement had had more of Bolshevism in it, then the Russian Bolshevik-led revolution would not have led to Stalinism but to the inauguration of the liberation of the working class at least of Europe.

Their method, their programme, and their spirit is today still the only serious working class answer to capitalism, and now also to the Stalinist system which rules over one third of the globe.

These articles have traced the outline of Lenin's political activities. Let the writer Maxim Gorky, a friend of Lenin though not always an uncritical one — he opposed the October insurrection, and very bitterly criticised the Red Terror — have the last word on Lenin's character and motives:

"I have never met... nor do I know of, any man who hated, loathed and despised so deeply and strongly as Lenin all unhappiness, grief and suffering. Lenin was exceptionally great, in my opinion, precisely because of this feeling in him of irreconcilable, unquenchable hostility towards the sufferings of humanity, his burning faith that suffering is not an essential and unavoidable part of life, but an abomination which people ought and are able to sweep away".

Socialist Bookshelf

by Colin Foster

FOR anyone encouraged to read further by our recent series, "Lenin and the Russian workers' revolution" this book is, I think, the best place to start.

Simply written — drafts were read to workers' classes — and vivid, yet precise and illuminating on many complex political issues, the book is also a world removed from the quasi-religious cult of Lenin developed by the Stalinists.

Krupskaya's approach is sharply illustrated by one passing comment on a speech by the pre-World War 1 French Socialist leader Jean Jaures. "I did not like his speech — every word seemed to be deliberately chosen."

Krupskaya here speaks for herself: but her dislike of phrases spoken for effect is also the attitude of the Lenin described by the historian Pierre Broue,

"He always argues, sometimes submits, but never finally gives up trying to convince, for it is thus, and thus only... that he wins his victories."

The Stalinist picture of Lenin is not of a militant learning, arguing, striving to convince others, but of someone infallibly "direct-

ing" the revolution in about the same way as the bureaucrats saw themselves "directing" the society of the USSR.

There is not much inspiration or education to be gained from the activities of Lenin seen the Stalinist way — you can only await the arrival of a new infallible "director" of the revolutionary movement.

Account

But Krupskaya's account fits in more with Trotsky's summary: "Lenin ever extended his horizons, he learned from others and daily drew himself to a higher plane than was his own yesterday." From such a struggle for growth we can learn to struggle too, if not to grow so high.

Krupskaya wrote her "Memories of Lenin" between 1924 and 1926. Through most of this time she was in opposition to Stalin: she opposed the suppression of Lenin's Testament and later belonged to the Zinoviev-Kamenev wing of the Left Opposition. She broke with the Opposition in late 1926, and afterwards largely confined herself to specialist work in education.

The memoirs span the period from 1893 (when Krupskaya met Lenin) to

Memories of Lenin

'Memories of Lenin' by Nadezhda Krupskaya (Lenin's widow) is currently out of print. But US editions can sometimes be found in bookshops, and many libraries have it.



Krupskaya was Lenin's comrade-in-arms, his best biographer, and a fighter against the Stalinists' attempts after his death to make an 'icon' of Lenin

October 1917. The anecdotal detail not only makes them highly readable, but also gives a more rounded picture of the real processes of building the Bolshevik party.

Take for example the 1903 split in the Russian Marxist party, the first division between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. It was not all clear-cut from the start.

The party congress had elected an editorial board of three — Plekhanov, Martov, Lenin — excluding three old members. This exclusion, proposed by Lenin, caused great resentment. Martov refused to serve. Plekhanov wavered and eventually moved to co-opt the other three.

And Lenin? "After the Congress Vladimir Ilyich raised no objection when

Glebov proposed co-opting the old members of the editorial — even to drag along in the old way was better than a split. But the Mensheviks refused...

"Vladimir Ilyich tried to come to terms with Martov. He wrote to Potresov (a Menshevik and old Editorial Board member) to convince him that there was no real cause for a split...

"Plekhanov decided, in order, as he said, to preserve peace in the party, to co-opt the old Iskra editorial. Vladimir Ilyich resigned from the Board... Let Plekhanov make peace, he would not bar the way to peace in the Party...

"[Then] Plekhanov insisted that a second CC [Central Committee — the Party leadership inside Russia, as distinct from the

emigre Editorial Board] representative, Rou, should leave the Council [the joint committee of CC and EB] to be replaced by a Menshevik. Vladimir Ilyich for a long time hesitated at this new concession.

"I remember how the three of us... stood that evening by the edge of the turbulent Geneva Lake. [Rou] persuaded Vladimir Ilyich to agree..."

The hardening of the lines, the clarification of the differences, did not come through Lenin seeing everything in advance, but through the successive tests of political struggles. Lenin's contribution was not unique foresight, but unique courage and perseverance in plunging into, analysing and drawing all the conclusions from those struggles.

SCIENCE

FORCES' FAVOURITES

by Les Hearn

READERS may be aware of research on particle accelerators at CERN (European Centre of Nuclear Research) in Switzerland and elsewhere into the fundamental nature of the matter and energy which makes up our universe.

This is being done by giving particles of matter a lot of energy (accelerating them to high speed) and then smashing them into each other. Some of the energy is then transformed into new mass (as predicted by Einstein with his famous equation $E=MC^2$) and a

shower of new particles are made. Researchers then look for particles whose existence has been predicted by current theories.

The whole thing is called "High Energy Physics", and they must have a colossal electricity bill!

Before looking at the current theories, I shall briefly describe the history of this quest.

Over 2,000 years ago, some Greek philosophers thought that matter might be made up of particles that could not be divided up

anymore. They called these "atoms" (atomos — without cutting).

It was only about 200 years ago, however, that atoms were proved to exist and it was soon shown that they could be further divided — into a nucleus (or core), and electrons, which seemed to circle round the nucleus, like the planets round the sun.

Nucleus

But that was not the whole story. The discovery of radio-activity showed that the nucleus itself could be divided. An atom could be split into two or more bits, some of which were themselves other atoms, and others of which were particles of matter (alpha and beta-particles and neutrons) or packets of radiation, called photons (gamma-rays).

So — matter was made up of protons, neutrons and electrons while energy was carried by photons. (We know these as radio-waves, heat, light and ultra-violet rays, X-rays and gamma-rays) and that was that. Or was it?

Since the early twentieth century a vast number of so-called fundamental particles have been discovered. Unfortunately, to discuss these particles, we have to abandon many of our common sense ideas,

as most of the properties of these particles have no counterpart in our experience.

Modern theories try to explain matter and energy in terms of the four forces of nature.

1. Force of Gravitation — all particles (including the photon) are subject to this force which we are familiar with, even if we can't explain it. Now, a force has to be transmitted in some way in order for it to have an effect, and with gravity this is thought to happen by particles called Gravitons being passed back and forth (like rugby players passing a ball, except that the "ball" seems to keep them together in the case of gravity).

2. The Electro-magnetic force — this is felt by particles possessing electric charge (e.g. protons and electrons) and it is transmitted by passing photons between interacting particles. There are two types of electric charge called (for absolutely no reason) positive and negative.

Each repels its own kind, but attracts its opposite. The electro-magnetic force is 10^{33} (10 followed by 32 noughts) stronger than the G force.

3. The Strong Force — felt by neutrons and protons. About 100 times stronger than the electro-

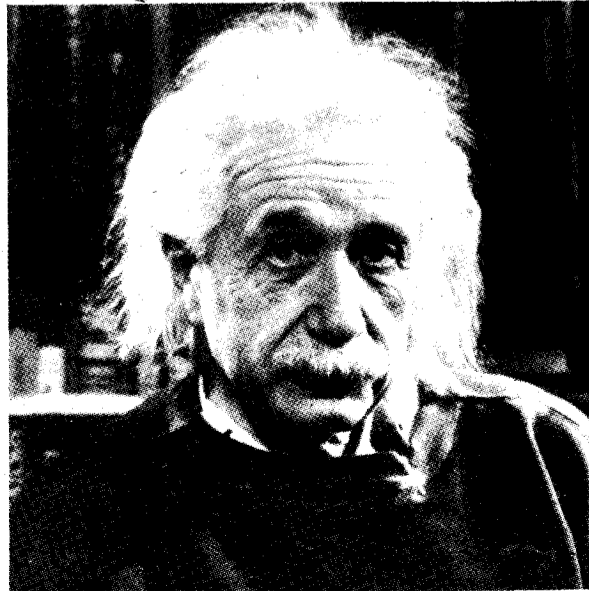
magnetic force, which explains how protons can be squeezed into a tiny nucleus even though they have the same electric charge. It is carried by particles called gluons, which are passed between particles feeling the S force.

4. The Weak Force — this is felt by protons, neutrons, electrons and neutrinos and is about a million million times weaker than the Strong Force. It is thought to be carried by the W-particle (the Intermediate Vector Boson or Centauro) which researchers are now looking for at CERN. Neutrinos are interesting particles — they have no mass or charge and pass through most objects with impunity.

By day, they shine down (and through us) from the sun. By night, they shine up on us, passing through the earth as if it were not there.

So, there are the four forces of nature, the particles that transmit them, and the particles that feel them.

In future articles I will talk about the thousand or so other particles that have been discovered or made, as well as quarks, the Big Bang and GUTs (Grand Unified Theories).



Einstein: energy into matter

'Come back into the LCP!'

A letter from Socialist Challenge

SOCIALIST Challenge makes two accusations against Andrew Hornung and Socialist Organiser. First that they irresponsibly split the Labour Committee on Palestine at its founding conference, thus creating a disastrous situation where there are now two labour movement campaigns on this question. Second that they then proceeded to engage in a muck-raking, irresponsible and scandalous campaign in the bourgeois press which in addition to making it extremely difficult now to build any labour movement campaign on Palestine, bordered on red baiting against Ted Knight and Labour Herald journalist Penny Coles.

Lousy

Andrew Hornung, who would have made a good solicitor but makes a lousy revolutionary politician, responds by logic-chopping and point scoring, but nowhere confronts the issue of the damage which has been done to the task of building labour movement support to the Palestinian cause.

At the Labour Committee on Palestine founding conference there were undoubtedly problems with

the credentials. Socialist Challenge supporters are not in possession of all the relevant documents and are not in a position to give an accurate account of all the problems.

Ted Knight alleges that on the door Andrew Hornung 'waved through' Socialist Organiser supporters. Andrew Hornung alleges that the conference was 'packed' with WRP supporters. If Hornung's allegation is true, and our considered judgement is that Knight probably did mobilise Labour Herald and WRP supporters in some strength, then this of course was incorrect and a breach of workers' democracy which we condemn.

But the essential question is this: do you fight sectarian stupidity with sectarianism, and breaches of workers' democracy by walking out? This has to be judged concretely, and not with ritualistic formulae and lawyer's arguments.

Andrew Hornung and Socialist Organiser have to answer: what would have been changed, what was at stake, by accepting the existing delegations to the conference, even under protest? As far as we could see, and Andrew Hornung does nothing to dispel our

assumptions on this, there were but two.

First, what would be the political platform of the LCP. Second, who would be the officers of the LCP. On the first, Hornung believes we exaggerate the differences between the platform proposed by him and the one adopted — in other words that the passage on the reactionary Arab states was 'just a passing reference'. Even if he is right, then in effect his argument is that there was not a substantive political difference.

Decisive

Second, and we think this is the question which Hornung, Greenstein and SO thought was decisive: should Hornung and Greenstein be the secretary and chairperson of the LCP?

In our view the question of the officers was not a crucial question for a small labour movement campaign just getting going. We in any case would have backed Ted Knight for one of the leading posts because he is the person with credibility and support in the labour movement who has done most to raise the issue of Palestine.

There was no question of preventing Hornung and Greenstein being on the steering committee. In the event, not a single member of the WRP was proposed for or accepted on to the steering committee of the LCP.

But Hornung and Greenstein were not satisfied with that; they wanted to ensure that they were the officers, and split the committee when it looked as if they would not be. They should have stayed in the campaign and accepted nomination to the steering committee, rather than splitting and throwing the campaign into disarray.

Subsequently there have been gleeful articles in the Guardian and New Statesman. The Guardian obviously got their information from Hornung and devoted their whole Diary column to it — which started 'And now an everyday story of Labour Party folk.' This gutter press campaign was at best a grave error of judgement. At worst it was a deliberate attempt to discredit the LCP, using whatever weapons came to hand. It gave the bourgeois press not only an opportunity to discredit any Labour campaign on Palestine, but an opportunity to discredit the far left in the Labour Party

Who is being sectarian?

The following letter was sent in answer to the piece above, which appeared in last week's Socialist Challenge.

AT THE end of your 'reply' to Andrew Hornung on the Labour Committee on Palestine conference you claim that "Socialist Challenge is in no way allied with the WRP". This is true only in the spirit of the well-known jibe at Fleet Street: "You really cannot bribe or twist/ The honest British journalist/ But seeing what, unbribed, he'll do/ There's really no occasion to".

In fact you perform lick-spittle service for Ted Knight while demagogically misrepresenting the issues and slandering SO.

The issue is not SO versus the WRP, but a real labour campaign on Palestine versus disruption. You lie that only SO people walked out. So did

a number of independents, including some Palestinians.

For the rest, I find your arguments impossible to follow.

You hedge and bluster, but have to admit that the account of the former chair and secretary of the LCP is essentially true and that a lot of people came to the conference on a rent-a-crowd arrangement between Ted Knight and the WRP. "Our consid-

ered judgment is that Knight probably did mobilise Labour Herald and WRP supporters in some strength".

In fact nearly 100 such people — a majority — were non-members of the LCP there as mere voting fodder; for example, at a signal from Knight they immediately and without question switched from opposition to support for a reference to Zionism in the platform.

A CHANGE OF LINE?

invited the principal leaders of the world Trotskyist movement.

Its purpose? To expose and denounce the practices of the Workers' Revolutionary Party.

I taped the proceedings, and the tapes bring devastating evidence against Socialist Challenge's current view on the Labour Committee on Palestine.

Ernest Mandel of the USFI, the IMG's parent organisation, told the rally: "The WRP is a gangster organisation led by a tinpot autocrat which has spent years slandering other revolutionaries. It is a tendency which should be treated as being extraneous to the labour movement".

Towards the end of the rally, Gerry Healy rose to speak. Tariq Ali, in the chair, refused him.

The IMG leadership endorsed Tariq's decision, and in articles by John Ross described the WRP as "a vile, loathsome, and degenerate sect".

So what has changed? Why is refusal to acquiesce in a WRP takeover of the LCP now 'sectarian'?

TONY GALENTO, Manchester.

Most of these people who, with Ted Knight's and Penny Cole's connivance, gate-crashed a controlling majority into the conference, were not members of the Labour Party. At best a handful were TU delegates. Since WRPers are now even against the return of a Labour government (for fear it will provoke a military coup, it seems) it is impossible to champion the participation of the WRPers as individual members from any position which accepts the minimal electoral raison d'être of the Labour Party.

So, what should the LCP militants there, including the SO supporters, have done? 'Talked politics with them', says Socialist Challenge, refusing to 'fight sectarianism with sectarianism' or to be 'organisational'. But the WRPers came there under discipline, in factional combat formation, and evidently under instructions to follow Knight's lead. These — the majority, remember — were people who believe, on the say-so of Mr G. Healy and his team of professional liars who produce Newsline, that the IMG's international associates — and probably SO too — are 'controlled' by secret police and run by 'agents'.

Their relationship to their 'party' and its Ayatollah Healy is one of intense and unreasoning emotional commitment. They believe what they are told. To confine it to talk is to leave them in control.

You say, nevertheless, that there were no important consequences. They elected a broad committee with SC people on it.

What would they have done if the walk-out had not made it necessary to cover their tracks? But there were important consequences. They gave effective control of the LCP to Knight and Cole as its officers — people who, by your own account, manipulated and cheated to pack the conference against the actual members of the LCP present.

Isn't there, comrades, a glaring discrepancy between your attitude to Knight and

at the height of a witch-hunt. How stupid can you get?

Socialist Challenge is in no way allied with the WRP, and does not cover up for its activities. In particular we defend Socialist Organiser unconditionally against attempts to use the courts to prevent fair political comment. But what Socialist Organiser did at the LCP conference and subsequently is inexcusable.

The way out of this mess is for Socialist Organiser and Tony Greenstein to come back into the LCP. A refusal to do this is to continue to fight sectarianism with sectarianism.



Writeback



We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words. Send to 'Writeback', Socialist Organiser, c/o 28, Middle Lane, London N8.

A forum for CLPs

FOR some time now there has been a growing opinion that Constituency Labour Parties have the need for some kind of forum in which they can exchange opinions and discuss how to tackle the different problems which they face. Other sectors of the movement benefit from such discussions between themselves, and have various means of co-ordinating their activities.

At a time of mass unemployment, a major problem for the entire Labour movement is how to improve trade union participation in Party organisation, and many Constituencies are experimenting with different ways of extending their base within the trade union move-

ment. In this connection, attempts to organise workplace branches are interesting and important, but there exists no convenient focus for discussion of the lessons of such initiatives.

Preliminary talks between representatives of a number of Sheffield and Nottingham Constituencies lead us to believe that a conference of Constituency Parties would be widely supported.

We would propose that such a conference would meet for one day, and would take the form of a number of workshops on specific problems, aimed at sharing experiences which can help us in the task of winning the next Election. The workshops would consider how to organise and campaign amongst such groups as: the unemployed, the poor and low paid, workplace, women and ethnic minorities.

Other workshops would compare experiences on the scope for action by local authorities, and discuss the improvement of trade union participation in all these activities, as well as the structures through which trade union involvement takes place.

We think a convenient date for such a conference would be Saturday March 12 1983. We suggest that Constituency Parties reserve this date for a day conference, which might be held either in Sheffield or Nottingham.

Trade union

We suggest that Constituency organisations be invited to send, say, four delegates each, at least half of whom should be drawn from their trade union affiliates.

We would be very pleased to hear from Constituencies which would wish to be associated with this kind of initiative, and would suggest that CLPs agree to sponsor such a meeting. A steering committee for the conference, made up of sponsoring Parties, could make the detailed plans for the conference itself.

If your Constituency is prepared to act as a sponsor or you would like to be kept informed of developments, please write to Roger McGarva, Secretary of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party, 5 Trentside, West Bridgford, Nottingham. This address will serve as a clearing house for the different CLPs who wish to be involved, until they are able to make some permanent arrangements.

E. BULLIMORE
Chairman
ROGER MCGARVA
Secretary
KEN COATES
TONY SIMPSON
Rushcliffe CLP

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Address.....

I enclose £.....
To: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.



In brief

80 DHSS workers in Oxford and over 500 in Birmingham are on strike to win extra staffing to deal with the extra workload caused by escalating unemployment.

There are mass pickets in Oxford every Monday and Friday morning, from 7am at Harcourt House.

Donations to M. Robertson, 24 Beechcroft Rd, Oxford; and to Richard Horton, CPSA, Room 337, Fiveways House, Islington Row, Birmingham B15.

TGWU members at Air India struck on July 2 after the sacking of a shop steward, and are fighting for management to abide by agreements signed with the union. Air India has sacked the strikers, in a clear move to break the union.

Help on the picket lines at New Bond St and Heathrow, and send donations to Air India TGWU, c/o Transport House, 7-9 South Road, Southall, Middlesex.

ASIAN workers at the Sandhar and Kang cash and carry warehouse in Coventry came out on September 22 demanding unconditional withdrawal of redundancy notices and recognition of their union, the TGWU. Their biggest handicap has been the refusal of the TGWU to make the strike official; contact strike committee, c/o 88 King George's Ave, Foleshill, Coventry.

AT P.S. Raindi in Smethwick, 200 Asian women and men have now been on strike for ten weeks.

Raindi last week called for ACAS to arrange talks with the TGWU. However, when these talks took place Raindi refused to repeat his earlier public statement that he was prepared to recognise the union though not to reinstate the sacked union organisers at the subsidiary Supreme Quilting. Instead he took a completely intransigent attitude which made negotiations impossible.

The only change has been that he has dropped his absurd claim that he was going to close the factory completely. However, all the workers are still sacked.

Raindi's latest move has been to issue a slander writ against a Labour councillor, claiming he described Raindi's as 'a sweatshop' in a council meeting. In view of recent damages awarded to Grunwicks for slander, this is a serious threat. The withdrawal of the writ must become another condition for settlement of the dispute.

Raindi's erratic behaviour of the last fortnight would seem to indicate considerable weakness. Any weakening on the part of the strike committee, or watering down of the strike demands, now, could be disastrous.

Our 'Problems and Policies' series on the trade union bureaucracy will be concluded in the next issue.

Apologies also to all the contributors whose articles and letters were squeezed out in this bursting-at-the-seams issue.

CPSA claim £12

CPSA's Special Pay Conference saw no surprises. On every major issue the Civil Service Executive Committee (CSEC) got their way.

The conference agreed to carry on talking to the Tories with 'no commitment' about pay bargaining and the Megaw report.

Cops appeal

ON December 8 at Halifax Magistrates Court two pickets arrested on August 12 at Halifax General Hospital had their trial postponed for six months.

The postponement was due to an appeal by the West Yorkshire police prosecutor against a not guilty verdict returned two weeks ago on six pickets arrested at the same hospital the day before and charged with obstructing the highway.

This sort of appeal is extremely rare. The reason given is to ensure that future trade unionists tried for similar offences (most pickets are tried under obstruction laws) cannot use the Halifax verdict in their favour.

The Magistrates accepted that obstruction was indeed done, but that the offence was so minor it was a waste of time bringing it before the courts. In fact the Official Prosecutor sees it as a threat to the new Tebbit laws now in force. Two of the six arrested were secondary pickets.

Mr Tebbit and the West Yorkshire police wouldn't like to see all of Tebbit's hard work undone on a decision made by local magistrates. If the magistrates decision is overturned, the only part of the "community" to benefit will be the police, Tories and bosses.

different angle) from Militant. But the speech for the victorious policy by senior vice-president Ray Alderson, a Morning Star supporter, showed its major weaknesses. He argued that with no emergency centres the strike action would be for a shorter period. This is untrue - and seems to imply that we would want to use the plight of claimants as a weapon.

Such a tactic would be wrong. And it would hand a major weapon to the hypocritical Tory government, and to those in the TUC who want 'peace at any price'.

Together with no co-operation with the emergency centres, socialists should propose full support for other unions such as NALGO and UCW to help in getting claimants their money while safeguarding members' conditions, and showing that unions care about claimants where the Tories do not.

We must also build towards an effective all-out strike with mass picketing of fuel depots etc., and mass disruption of the government machine, rather than of the lives of the unemployed.

That is where our strength, and our possibility of victory, lies.



Map sales hit

"TRADE in the shop should be about 50% up on normal in the days before Christmas. But it's not even at the normal level. Service is very poor. They have got staff who have been there ten weeks trying to train staff who have been there five weeks."

One of the strikers at Stanfords map shop, Covent Garden, explained to SO the effect of their picket at the shop over the past 11 weeks.

But management have yet to move from their refusal to reinstate all the strikers.

The pickets are getting support from staff at other London bookshops. They have organised a benefit social for Tuesday 21st (see 'What's On'), and ask for donations to be sent c/o ACTSS, 173 Clapham Rd, London SW9 0QF. Cheques payable to J A Cook and R P D Hobbs, Stanfords Strike Account.

COUNCIL manual workers' unions immediately rejected a pay offer of 3 per cent made at negotiations last Thursday, December 9.

The line of the local authority negotiators - controlled by a Conservative majority - was that the government's squeeze on council finance made any more impossible. New talks will be held in January.

No to 3%

Hostel demo

THE turnout for the mass picket at Arlington House hostel, Camden, on Saturday 11th, was good, though not the big mobilisation it could have been if the TGWU's official machinery put its weight into a campaign.

Workers at Arlington House, who since striking for improvements on their pay of around £30 a week have been sacked and evicted from their rooms at the hostel, have now been found proper alternative accommodation by Camden Council.

A strike benefit is being organised on Wednesday December 22 - tickets £2 from Camden Labour Centre, 8 Camden Road, London NW1, or a few at the door [Primrose Hill Community Association, Fitzroy Road, London NW1].

Donations and offers of help with picketing to the Labour Centre [485 1100].

NOLS cash in

LAST Sunday, 12th, the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) national committee voted down a joint resolution from Socialist Students in NOLS and Militant supporters against the witch-hunting decision of the Labour-NEC youth committee to cut the Labour Party Young Socialists budget.

The Youth Committee had switched some of the money from the LPYS to NOLS, and the resolution moved that the ill-gotten bounty should be given to

the LPYS's YOPs Trade Union Rights Campaign, which NOLS supports.

The right wing are only too happy to find allies to help them destroy the LPYS, and NOLS raid on the YS coffers has been seen by the YS and many Labour Clubs as complicity in the witch-hunt.

To protect themselves, the members of Clause 4 (the dominant NOLS faction) on the NOLS standing orders committee are trying to rule out of order motions to conference which link

the witch-hunt and the vote on the youth committee by NOLS chair Geoff Norris to cut the YS campaigns budget. They say these break the rule that motions must deal with only one subject!

Strange, really, when only a few weeks ago Geoff Norris said that it was clear from the mood on the NEC that if NOLS didn't try for the money it would be lost from youth expenditure altogether. If that's not cashing in on the witch-hunt, what is?

ASLEF 'no' to deal

by Steve Good (Kings Cross ASLE&F)

THE executive of the train drivers' union ASLE&F has rejected a deal of £5 per shift for One Man Operation. The deal is supported by the NUR.

The ASLE&F EC had conducted no campaign on OMO, but the rejection must reflect the pressure from the continuing fight at local level which means that British Rail have not been able to implement variable rosters in any effective way.

At London Bridge, for example, following the imposition of the new rosters, management were forced to make nine alterations to the rosters in the space of 11 weeks. When management announced a further alteration, the men threatened to walk out. Management capitulated.

On OMO, too, the possibilities of a fight were shown

by a meeting in Luton on December 6, called by Kings Cross, Bedford and Cricklewood branches of ASLE&F.

75 members attended. The discussion showed a tremendous interest and diversity of views on OMO, and a determination not to be sold short. Kings Cross proposed a policy of time-and-a-half for OMO and time off the job - 52 hours' pay for a 32 hour week - and this was only narrowly defeated.

But the ASLE&F EC has insisted on a 'free hand' to negotiate, from a position of £10 per shift payment for OMO.

The meeting also discussed the issue of the OMO units being tested on the Bedford-St Pancras-Moorgate line (where they are due to be first introduced). These units, stabilised at Cricklewood, have been blacked by members there until a satis-

factory agreement is reached on OMO; but the EC has been pressing for withdrawal of this boycott.

The question was asked what if the British Rail Board try to impose the new OMO working? EC member Lew Adams affirmed that the membership would be called out in support of the management impose OMO prior to agreement.

Even if the £5 per shift deal is signed, the right will not be over. Kings Cross branch intend to take the issue to the union's 1983 conference. We will be fighting for a reversal of the proposed agreement, and for OMO to be renegotiated on the basis of 52 hours' pay for a 32 hour week.

* Coming soon in Socialist Organiser: a feature on British Rail's 'productivity' offensive.

Save Mildmay Mission!

MILDMAY Mission is a small hospital nestled between council estates in London's East End.

It was originally set up in conjunction with the local mission, still has strong links with religion and is run on a 'Christian ethic'. Hardly any of the staff are unionised - and so it has become a logical target for closure.

Tower Hamlets District Health Authority is £2 million overspent and says it must find this amount by March 31.

The DHA has refused to put any money, resources, or staff into the hospital over the past few months and as a consequence the two remaining consultants told the Authority last week

that they could no longer accept medical patients or casualties because conditions are unsafe.

Junior doctors and most workers were immediately told that the hospital would close on December 21, leaving only one ward with ten handicapped children open.

This amounts to an attempt at back-door closure of a very popular and much needed hospital, and shows the contempt the authority has for consultation. The Community Health Council were not even told that the December 21 date had been given for closure, and only learned it from a member of the public at a CHC meeting.

The local residents,

community groups and people who work in the area are furious at these tactics.

Initial

Despite initial disagreement about tactics with some workers at the hospital, a joint campaign has now begun. Mildmay Mission Hospital Support Committee has already organised a lobby of the District Health Authority meeting, and are meeting regularly to plan future action. Tower Hamlets Labour Party has pledged its support.

Messages of support and donations to: Mildmay Mission Hospital Support Group, Mildmay Mission Hospital, Hackney Road, London E2.

PRESS GANG

Daily Mail
Daily Express
FINANCIAL TIMES
The Daily Telegraph
THE Sun

THE crucifixion of Ken Livingstone over his invitation to Sinn Fein to visit London cannot be shrugged off as just another episode in the everyday story of gutter press folk.

For the second time in nine months, the Left - whatever that portfolio word is supposed to cover - has crumbled under an onslaught from Fleet Street.

It is no accident that both these episodes go to the root of capitalist rule - to the question of imperialism.

The first was on a grand scale - the sending of an armada half way round the world to inflict the maximum of deaths and destruction considered compatible with a veneer of civilisation.

Before the blood started flowing, they were loud in their calls for peace. After the fighting started there was hardly a left figure of any prominence who did not feel the need to pay tribute to the bravery of "our" forces before calling for UN intervention.

The Sinn Fein invitation was a much lesser event but the venom was no less powerful and the test no less catastrophically failed.

The hysteria was multiplied by the Ballykelly bombing. But that is no reason to treat the press attacks as exceptional. The circumstances provided a stiff test - but exactly and precisely the test which the class war poses to the leaders

of the working class at every serious turn.

It was not as if there was not easy ammunition against Fleet Street. The Sun, for example, which screamed for vengeance against the horror of Ballykelly, was the same paper which celebrated the sinking of the Belgrano with the headline "Gotcha!".

But it was the INLA which was most vociferous in pointing that out, not prominent figures in the trade unions or Labour Party.

As the furore increased, the GLC councillors steadily retreated. Livingstone has, in the past, defended the right of oppressed people to turn to the armed struggle. Under the onslaught, he began justifying the visit solely on the grounds that he will be able to tell Sinn Fein how much he and the Labour Party were opposed to violence.

This is certainly not to jeer at Livingstone. Behind him, the sound of the rats deserting the sinking ship was deafening. Some councillors who signed the invitation fell over themselves to declare it to be a mistake.

Benn did not speak out until the war was won and lost. All over the country, Labour Party wards were passing resolutions backing Livingstone, but the big guns were silent. It scarcely needs saying that neither Scargill nor any other figure of influence in the trade unions

issued one word in Livingstone's defence.

The Sinn Fein visit was, of course, a simple, democratic right. It met every dot and comma of bourgeois democracy - elected representatives exercising their right to move freely within the borders claimed by the state.

There will be more, similar tests in the coming months and years, and the Left will continue to fail them. It will fail until it is able to confront honestly such questions as the question of violence without genuflecting to altars erected by the state, which deem some acts of human destruction to be barbaric and others to be glorious.

Divorced

The press cannot be separated or divorced from the rest of the state apparatus. This was not a witch-hunt dreamed up in an editorial office. It was based on a social class, the oppressor class.

It will not be confronted by pacifist gestures or democratic generalities. To build an opposition to press witch-hunts of this sort means building mass forces able to come onto the streets and demonstrate that they will defend Livingstone and other Lefts against it. The prerequisite for that is first of all leaders who will not bend under it.

Socialist Organiser

Islington North GLC councillor Steve Bundred this week commented on the government's exclusion of Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison under the Prevention of Terrorism Act

IT'S a denial of free speech, and it's hypocritical. The Tories want elected representatives of the people in Northern Ireland to take part in the Assembly, and at the same time say they are not fit to come to talk to people in London.

Sooner or later, Britain is going to have to withdraw, and that decision is going to be taken in London. By preventing the political debate which must precede that, Whitelaw has just ensured that the killing will go on a bit longer than it need do.

Steve Bundred, GLC councillor for Islington North

See Press Gang, page 15

Evans threat to defy Tebbit

TO JUDGE by their public statements, the leadership of Britain's largest union, the TGWU, have thrown down the gauntlet to Norman Tebbit.

Any move to jail a TGWU member under Tebbit's legislation would be answered by the convening of a special conference to call the whole of the union's 1.7 million-strong membership out on strike.

All well and good. It is high time that union leaders showed themselves willing to fight for action in defiance of the Tory anti-union laws which they have done nothing to prevent reaching the statute books.

But there is a hollow ring to Evans' threats which must temper any tendency for the Tories to fall into a panic.

For, according to the Morning Star report: "Moss Evans yesterday announced that the union's general executive council had decided to carry on as usual."

"If as a result the Tebbit laws were used against them, they would expect industrial support — including strikes — from the rest of the TUC unions".

Yet, as the strikers at Air India, S&K in Coventry and Arlington House hostel in London have bitter cause to realise, the TGWU 'carrying on as usual' is unlikely to incur Tebbit's wrath.

Instead of building the necessary support for these isolated strikers by comparatively small numbers of trade unionists through an aggressive campaign of boycott action, secondary and mass pickets, TGWU bureaucrats have abandoned them to their fate or even — in the case of S&K — withheld official support.

A real defiance of Tebbit has to start where the TGWU leaders leave off — by building active mass support for each and every section of members in struggle, to show every worker the importance of trade union organisation and the power we have as a class to confront and defeat the employers and the Tory government.

ALL OUT TO STOP



DHSS staff are planning to strike from January 17

JOBS MASSACRE!

MAYBE four million, maybe five million... the experts are still searching through the government's fog of figures to discover the real number of unemployed.

More important, major unions have made decisions to fight the jobs massacre.

CPSA civil servants' branches will be deciding between now and January 12 on a proposal for an all-out strike in the DHSS from January 17. DHSS workers in Oxford and Birmingham are already on strike, demanding increased staff to meet the increased work-

load caused by higher unemployment.

At pithead meetings last week, South Wales miners voted overwhelmingly to strike from January 17 unless the Coal Board steps up investment in the coalfield. This strike — a preemptive move against pit closures — would, said miners' union president

Arthur Scargill, "spread like wildfire" through the other coalfields.

South Wales NUM vice-president Des Dutfield said the miners would seek support from other unions in South Wales.

This week will also see the announcement of central government grants to local councils for the year

April 1983/April 1984. Here too the Tories will be pushing for cuts. Labour councils will have to make a choice between allying themselves with the fight begun by the civil servants and the miners, or being administrators for the Tories.

Tremendous pressure is sure to be put on the miners

and DHSS staff between now and mid-January. The success of the strike calls depends on labour movement activists campaigning for support, and linking them with the general demands for restoration of cuts, for a shorter working week, and for work-sharing under workers' control with no loss of pay.

Strike call

AFTER the special pay conference had finished, the DHSS delegates stayed behind to talk about escalation of the Birmingham and Oxford disputes.

Delegates had been given a motion two hours earlier, outlining the NEC's plans for escalation. It called for delegates to return to branches, hold workplace meetings, campaign and get a mandate for all-out strike action, then return to a recalled delegate meeting 8 working days in December 23. The all-out strike would begin on January 10.

To say delegates were stunned is an understatement. However, there is grass root support for staffing levels but to achieve an all-out strike mandate in 8 days is a bit too much to ask.

Apparently, the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) had decided on a course of rolling action, bringing out different areas

for a week at a time. London for the first week, Merseyside for the next, and so on.

Delegates then spoke from the floor, and most rejected the SCPS idea of rolling action, but also had reservations about the timing of the CPSA's proposals.

Then, at 6.30 pm, an amendment to the NEC's motion was brought by the Oxford strikers' branch. That was for a recalled conference on January 12, giving up till then to win mandates from branches, and the all-out strike to start on January 17.

This was carried by a massive majority and it is up to all DHSS CPSA activists now to campaign hard for this, as it will prove to be a real threat to the government and a real boost for CPSA.

Steve Battlemuch DHSS CPSA Branch Executive member, in a personal capacity.

FUND

IF YOU'VE read as far as the bottom of the back page, you have probably seen the middle pages.

There you will read the story of how capitalists are rallying round to save Mexico from going bankrupt.

Socialist Organiser hasn't quite got debts of \$80 billion, but then again we haven't got lots of bankers offering us long-term loans.

Our supporters have been rallying round, but don't forget us over Christmas. There won't be a paper to remind you, but we will be sitting here waiting for your cheques through the post.

Christmas parties, socials, sales. every group should find some way of raising money. And now's the time to think of the new year. We'll be having a monthly fund target, so groups should make plans for a monthly fund-raising event.

This week's contributions. "week's wages", Mick O'Sullivan £60, South East London supporter £15, Bob Sutcliffe £50, Bob Fine £50, Bruce Robinson £89. Other donations. Sheffield SO £8.68, Cllr Derek Sawyer £6, a London reader £5, Pete Keenlyside £25, another London reader (from a windfall) £20, Jo Thwaites £5. Total: £333.68.

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