

Socialist Organiser

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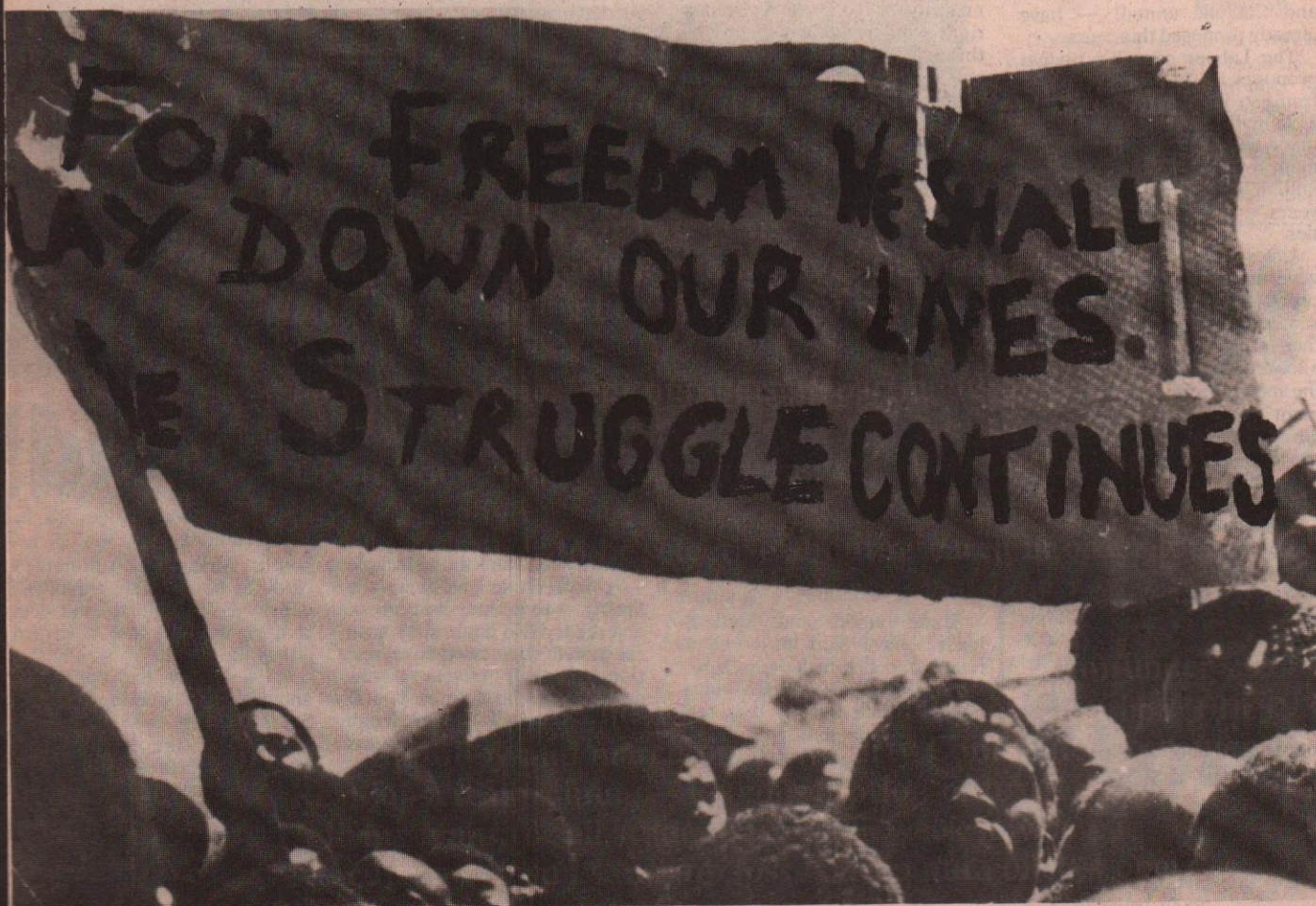
Keep our
unions

LABOUR
PARTY

LABOUR

Unions must boycott South African trade

STRIKE AT APARTHEID!



By Clive Bradley

Hundreds of arrests have followed the declaration of a 'state of emergency' in South Africa on Saturday July 20. The state of emergency, which gives enormously increased powers of repression to the brutal police thugs of the apartheid state applies in the whole of Johannesburg — which includes the black township of Soweto — in the mining towns of the East Rand, in Port Elizabeth and in other towns in the eastern Cape. This is the first state of emergency of 25 years. It was agreed at the insistence of the police and military authorities despite the opposition of politicians like PM Botha because the "security forces" feared they wouldn't be able to keep the people down without it.

The state can now ban gatherings, close buildings, control traffic, and arrest anyone without warrant for up to 14 days.

Magistrates and the police can use or authorise force — "including force resulting in death" — against anyone not heeding instructions "given in a loud voice".

Victims of the security forces have no legal rights of recourse to the courts.

Black South Africans have responded with widespread rioting. Police have shot and killed rioters, and raids under the new emergency provisions have taken place in all the districts affected.

Among those arrested are leading church figures, and prominent members of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the movement that has united much of the anti-apartheid movement.

The new emergency laws given further legal sanctions to the continuing repression of opposition to the racist state. The South African government is terrified of the rising tide of rebellion in black townships and amongst black workers.

Quite extensive 'liberalisation', and widening of formal democratic rights for blacks, Asians and Coloureds — the setting up of a tripartite parliament, the repeal of the Mixed Marriages and Immorality Acts, for example — have gone hand in hand with brutal state repression.

The worst example, on the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, was at Langa in March. Police opened fire on a peaceful funeral procession, killing about 40 people.

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Fit for heroes?

A seaman's comment on the Falklands war

Britain — a country fit for conquering heroes? Not according to many of the combatants who survived Thatcher's deadly little war in the Falklands three years ago. Alec Jewison was a civilian merchantman on board RFA "Olmeda" when his ship was ordered into the South Atlantic. He spoke about his recollections to Socialist Organiser.

Alec recalls: "At the time we were preparing for a NATO refuelling exercise off the west coast of Ireland. Though we'd heard rumours of a possible alert we ignored them anyway because the "Olmeda" was scheduled for refit in Scotland before returning to Plymouth.

Forty-eight hours later the captain informed us that we were 'acting under Navy discipline' and heading for the Falklands instead. That's it, just like being shanghied.

Naval commanders were flown in by helicopter to give us an intelligence briefing. They expected Argentina to withdraw before we reached the Ascensions. They based this optimism on the fact that they had a poorly equipped conscript army in the field, only a few obsolete aircraft and just one capital ship, and anyway, if diplomacy failed the professionalism of British combined operations was capable of meeting any contingency...so we were told.

Well, I'd served on convoys during World War 2 and to be honest thought they were dangerously underestimating the situation. The strategy was to cruise down to Ascension and allow time for the expected Argentine pullout. We then cruised in a circle around the islands for another four days.

Personnel were getting paranoid. A radar fix set off an anti-submarine buzz and we were put on red alert, frigates dashing everywhere...finally things quietened down when the contact turned out to be negative.

We saw direct action because we operated inside the war zone. In fact we were five miles south of the Sheffield when she was set ablaze by the Exocet and 12 miles off the Atlantic Conveyor when she was hit. Usually, though, we lay about 20 miles offshore while the frigates carried out night attacks on shore positions.

After the first troops landed, some 80 marines were airlifted aboard and we were sent with the frigate Yarmouth south to Thule Island to arrest ten

scientists with the Argentine Antarctic survey. Luckily for us the Argentine commandos failed to materialise so there was no shooting.

The weather down there was fine though very cold but in the end we were more exhausted because the marines continued to drill on deck during our rest periods. We didn't complain about conditions, nobody would have listened.

Like everyone else in the task-force we were given a service medal by the Admiral. We also set a record for continuous fleet replenishment...exactly 101 days at sea by the time we got back to Southampton. Ironically, enough that's when my problems started.

That was my last trip and I was paid off. But they paid me £1000 short on bonuses because the Admiralty said we'd operated outside the exclusion zone. I didn't work for the rest of the year due to illness. None of those bonuses or danger money has been paid out by the government. But the worse problem has been finding somewhere to live. I've been scraping around for accommodation because Southampton city council don't even provide short-term housing let alone secure housing for seamen as does Liverpool.

They told me that as a seaman I was not resident in the city and so ineligible for a place on the council list. We've had one bloody row after another but I stuck to my guns and got 23 out of 24 points after the Labour council took office. I suppose I'm fortunate compared with some but I've still got another year to do on the housing list. And to think that I, my wife, my son and his wife have lived most of our lives in this city.

I view the Falklands episode differently today, that's for sure. In one sense I believe the Tories never tried for a peaceful settlement. Anyway, the Falklands are neither British nor Argentine territory. The government should have either given UK citizenship to the islanders or allowed UN forces to go there. Certainly the cost isn't a problem. How could it be? It's costing us £1 billion a year just to defend! Spending £250 million on that huge airfield will be seen as a provocation by Argentina too. But then the Tories squandered billions on breaking the miners' strike...to them, territory is the measure of all things whether in the coal-mines or the Falklands.



John Hamilton speaking at the Local Government Information Unit conference in Manchester. Photo: John Smith, IFL.

Support Liverpool

By Martin Thomas

"This authority will not issue redundancy notices to any member of staff. We will not reduce employment by one single job", declared Liverpool City Council finance chair Tony Byrne this week.

The district auditor has sent a report to the council saying that it should make cuts. Otherwise the city will be broke within 12 weeks and its 30,000 workers will have to be sacked.

Alternatively, the auditor said, a ratepayer could take the council to court and get its rate declared illegal, so that a huge rate rise could then be imposed. The city's bishops — Anglican and Catholic united! — have already proposed this course.

The Labour council's budget proposes to spend £242 million from rate income but collect only £125 million. The gap can be made up only by central government returning to Liverpool £29 million of the grant cut in recent years, and £88 million in penalties.

Unless the courts or the government intervene first, the council will run out of credit sometime this autumn, and will then effectively be launched into a local general strike to demand the money from central government to maintain services and jobs. Council shop stewards are pledged to strike, and support from workers in private industry is also likely.

The councillors are also being threatened by the district auditor with surcharge because they did not set a rate until June 14. Certificates of surcharge could be issued in August, and council workers will probably respond by a protest strike. The legal proceedings for this surcharge, however, will be much more drawn out than the immediate financial crisis.

Isolated

Labour's national leadership and other Labour councils have left Liverpool isolated. At the conference on July 19-20 called by the Local Government Information Unit (a consortium of Labour councils), Liverpool was scarcely mentioned. Instead the talk was about delivering services efficiently and winning votes in 1986.

Edinburgh council collapsed last weekend. Under Scottish law which gives central govern-

ment great control over council budgets, it had been ordered to cut its rates. Council leader Alex Wood had promised defiance and said he was willing to go to prison. When it came to it he explained. "The choice we were offered was harsh. It breaks my political heart to make it but it was either this or chaos".

Lambeth

Lambeth council is still campaigning, although on July 3 a majority of Tories and Labour right wingers combined to put through a legal rate and a freeze on recruitment. The Labour group says that it will obstruct the recruitment freeze, and that after its majority is restored by a by-election on August 1 it will set an unbalanced 'no cuts' budget.

Like Liverpool, Lambeth councillors are being threatened with surcharge for their delay in setting a rate.

Despite the isolation, Liver-

pool can win. Its defiant stand provides a basis to rebuild the fighting spirit among council workers nationwide which has been dampened by the fiasco of the 'set-no-rate' policy.

The Tories are visibly nervous. If the Liverpool Labour councillors stand firm, then the Tories can win only by directly taking over the city and trying to impose their will (and big cuts and/or rate rises) on rebellious council workers and tenants.

How long we have until the decisive confrontation depends on the tactical choices of the government and the banks.

But every minute must be used to build up a campaign.

Unfortunately the Liverpool City Council leadership, dominated by Militant, has campaigned less energetically this year — so far — than they did in 1984, when the pressure of the miners' strike pushed the government into making a compromise with the council. It seems that the council leadership did not fully expect this confrontation, and indeed initially it proposed a 20% rate which might just have allowed

the council to fudge through. Also, the heavy-handed machine-politics methods by which Militant runs the council have fostered divisions, especially with the non-Militant left-wing leadership of the council NALGO branch.

There is an urgent need for a campaign organisation in Liverpool which draws different sections of the labour movement into the battle and allows policy to be discussed democratically rather than just handed down from on high.

Solidarity

Outside Liverpool a drive is needed to publicise the facts and prepare for solidarity action — both industrial action by council workers (and others), and, to follow that up, a block on debt payments by Labour councils.

The media have reported Liverpool in very low-key terms. But the fact is that we are nearer a decisive battle against the Tories' assault on local services, jobs and democracy there than we have been anywhere in the last six years.

Strike at apartheid!

Continued from page 1

Trade union and student leaders have died in, or as a result of, police custody.

Increasingly, it is black independent trade unions that are coming to the forefront of the liberation struggle. Many of the major unions have refused to join the UDF in order not to sacrifice their hard-won independence. Big strikes have been met with fierce repression.

The clampdown now has been aimed primarily at the UDF, which the government accuses of instigating the 'unrest' on behalf of the banned African National Congress.

But the government itself is split. President Botha has against declaring a state of emergency, for fear of endangering foreign investment in South Africa.

In fact they have chosen a

relative lull in the struggle — compared to earlier in the Spring — to declare the state of emergency. No doubt they have calculated that savage repression now will prevent a new upsurge in the future. It will almost certainly fail, although reports suggest that no mass uprising against the new regulations are likely in the short-term future.

Efforts

The government's efforts to accommodate the black revolt and simultaneously repress it are showing signs of growing desperation.

What is most urgently needed now is international working class solidarity with the black people of South Africa. The labour movement must act to sap the strength of the savage regime that goes on treating the vast majority of the people of

South Africa as sub-human cattle to be savagely exploited, deprived of basic human and civil rights and shot down on if they fight back.

It is mainly the oppressed and exploited working class of South Africa who are now challenging the government. They are entitled to working class solidarity. In Ireland a small group of Dublin shop workers at Dunns stores have been on strike for over a year rather than handle apartheid goods. This is the sort of action that can tip the balance against apartheid.

South Africa is a modern industrial country and therefore it is highly vulnerable to the sort of action trade unionists can take to disrupt trade. Dockers, railworkers, and other workers should do what the Dublin workers are doing and refuse to handle goods to or from the South African slave state.

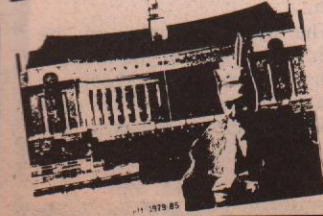
OUT NOW!

Socialist Organiser

SPECIAL ISSUE
40 PAGES 60p

Illusions of POWER

Did the local government left 'seize the power', or did 'the power' seize them? New SO special, 70p including postage from 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.



'Tribune' joins the witchhunters

TRIBUNE has joined the witch-hunters! Last week's issue of 'Labour's Independent [sic] Weekly' carried a witch-hunting statement from the Isle of Wight Constituency Labour Party which announced that they had banned the sale of Militant at their party meetings and will now expel supporters of Militant if they think it necessary. Tribune also carried an editorial which endorsed what the Isle of Wight CLP had done and held it up as a model for other CLPs to follow!

First read what the Isle of Wight statement says. Explaining that the Party had "stopped" the sale of Militant at its meetings, it went on "If

tendency members are expelled here, it will be because they courted it and ignored the feelings of ordinary Party members who have nothing in common with them. We say to Party members elsewhere, do not judge our actions as 'witch-hunting' until you have had to live with a party totally dominated and controlled by a narrow, rigid faction...

"The Isle of Wight Labour Party is determined to improve its electoral standing, whatever the cost may be. We have come to the conclusion here that we cannot even begin to make a start on that while we are saddled by the encumbrance of

the Militant tendency, its pathetic 'newspaper', and its self-serving, self-pitying disciples".

It's all there, isn't it? Embittered and repressive factionalism dressed up as opposition to 'destructive factionalism'. Bigotry against Militant licensed and made respectable and tolerable by reference to the need to win or do better in the next election. Hysteria and scapegoating too, for of course the Militant candidates in Coventry and Liverpool did quite well in the 1983 election, better than the national average in fact.

The Isle of Wight CLP is driven by an urge to comply with the demands of the witch-hunting press for the Labour Party to purge and purify itself. They do not say it in so many words, but their underlying idea is that "Labour can hope to win office only if it campaigns on SDP policies" (as former Tribune editor Chris Mullin put it recently, in a bitter comment on the logic of the current rightward drift in the party).

Lessons

Now read what the Tribune editorial says about the Isle of Wight.

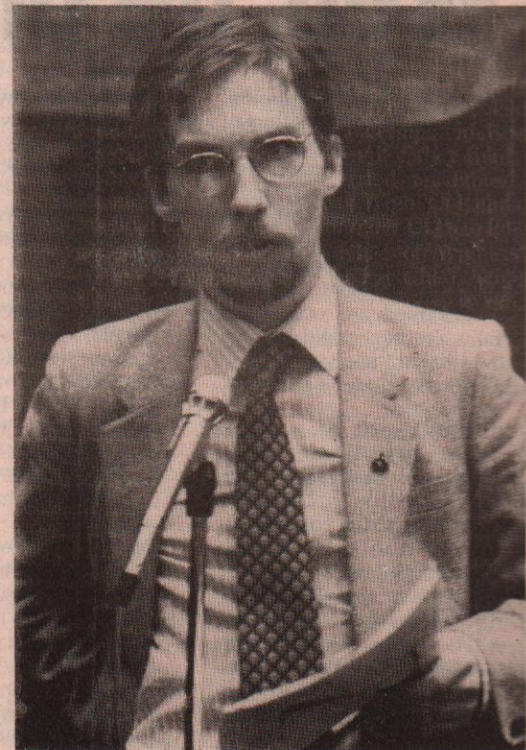
The editorial, entitled 'A Lesson for Witch-hunters', begins "The statement from the Isle of Wight Constituency Labour Party printed on this page contains a powerful message for the party's Right wing: that Militant is a parasite which, if left alone, will wither, but if it is attacked, it will thrive and prosper..."

"While it was under attack, the democratic Left was forced into the position of having to defend Militant... In recent months, Neil Kinnock has persuaded the Right to leave Militant alone. As a result, the real political differences which exist between the tendency and the rest of the Left have been allowed to emerge..."

Endorse

The best way to deal with Militant, according to Tribune, is for the 'left' to do the job of the right! That's the 'lesson' Tribune wants right-wing 'witch-hunters' to mark and learn.

By thus endorsing the political witch-hunt and the preparations for expulsions in the Isle of Wight CLP Tribune gives the green light to other witch-hunters all over the country — to LCC



Since Nigel Williamson (above) took over from Chris Mullin as editor of Tribune, the paper has moved sharply towards Neil Kinnock. (Photo: John Harris).

careerists and backwoods bigots alike.

Already there is a spate of local witch-hunts against Militant sellers (or in Trant, East Lothian, against ex-Militant sellers). What is at issue here is nothing less than the entire future of the Labour Party, and of its left wing. Should the left fight for a broad tolerant living party of the whole working-class movement in Britain — ultimately a party that will again accept the affiliation of the various Marxist groups as it did in its early years? Or should the left take Tribune's advice and collaborate with the right to trim the party down to the dimensions of a narrow, intolerant, cauterised, reformist electoral machine?

Stop witch-hunting, Tribune!



Don't laugh so loud, Neil — maybe it's not a joke after all. (Photo Stefano Cagnoni, Report).

Loyalists threaten civil war

Official Unionist leader James Molyneux has threatened 'civil war' in Northern Ireland in the event of an Anglo-Irish deal giving a role for Dublin in northern Irish affairs.

Protestants will feel sold out by the British government, he says, and as a result Unionists would turn to "gunmen" rather than politicians to look after their interests. "Gunmen can always promise to deliver the goods".

Molyneux, and Paisley, are anxious to stress the likelihood of a violent backlash in order to sink the prospects for the current talks between London and Dublin.

The British government has responded by downplaying any possibility of a formula being found for closer cooperation between the two governments.

The official Irish opinion on the talks is that they have only a 50-50 chance of success. But the talks have been going on for many months now in deepest secrecy and something is certainly brewing. It is 11 years since the Orange general strike of 1974 wrecked Dublin's last

By Gerry Bates

serious attempt to reconstruct some sort of political system in Northern Ireland. Discussions are reported to have focused on the possibility of an Anglo-Irish parliamentary tier drawn from Westminster and the Dublin Dail, and ministerial committees to oversee security, agriculture and tourism. Central to the concerns of both London and Dublin is agreement on police and army cooperation to destroy the IRA and on some form of integrated judicial system for north and south.

The Loyalists' threats of violence are not just rhetoric. The Protestant paramilitaries might well fight to prevent even limited steps towards cooperation between the two parts of Ireland.

Now as in the mid-'70s any Loyalist politicians who tried to work a system based on cooperation between the two parts of Ireland would come under fierce challenge and would risk the political destruction leading Unionist politicians like former six counties Prime Minister Brian

Faulkner suffered in the '70s.

Likely Orange animosity and opposition must be the major consideration for the British government. But they desperately need some way of resolving or at least easing the interminable Northern Ireland crisis which is very costly in financial terms and in bad international publicity.

Other problems as well as the six county Protestant hostility will beset the new initiatives London and Dublin will probably unveil in the next two months. The IRA remains strong in the Catholic communities and will oppose and thwart anything short of a United Ireland. Worse even than that from the British government point of view is the sorry state of the Dublin coalition government. The signs are that it will lose the next election, due quite soon, and it could simply break up.

Britain's problem is that the Irish Republic's opposition, the constitutional nationalist Fianna Fail, which looks like becoming the next 26 county government within a year may repudiate whatever deal Prime Minister Fitzgerald is now putting to-

gether with Margaret Thatcher.

The Irish working class needs its own answer to the Northern Ireland problem. Ultimately the answer must be a socialist Ireland. But only the working class north and south can make a socialist Ireland. Socialists need an immediate democratic programme which combines the legitimate demand

of the majority of the Irish people for a united Ireland with guarantees to the Protestant-Irish minority community that their rights and their traditions will be respected in a united Ireland and that they will not be subjected to a social legislation — like that now dominant in the 26 counties — based on the teachings of the

Catholic church they abhor. The core of such a democratic programme must be the proposal for a united Ireland with a high degree of autonomy for the Protestant population — some form of Federal Ireland.

This democratic demand forms a key in the transitional programme for Ireland. It is an irreplaceable demand for use by socialists to persuade Catholic and Protestant workers to unite and fight for a socialist solution to Ireland's chronic problems

Fund

Thanks for contributions to our premises fund to: Alan Simpson (PPC, Nottingham South), £10; Nottingham SO, £48; Nigel Bodman, £5; Tom Rigby, £15; Trudi Saunders, £20; Chris Bright, £10; Will Adams, £10; Keyvan Lajevardi-Khosh, £8; Terry Connolly, £10.95.

There's still a long way to go, because the move into the new premises is likely to cost several thousands. But reports are coming in from local groups about their plans for fund-raising: a circular letter to regular readers; socials; book sales; jumble sales; a sporting contest in Nottingham and a no-smoking endurance contest in Birmingham.

In London, Jean Lane is asking for pledges for a sponsored swim: £1, 50p or 10p for every length she completes of a 25-metre pool. Send in your pledges, and other contributions for the fund, to SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

SO

This week's SO has more long articles than usual because next week most of our staff will be at LPYS summer camp and so we'll have to miss an issue.

SO 239 will be out on August 7.

JACK CADE'S



Well, he died

The following is a translation of an actual survey conducted in Budapest by two reporters of radio Budapest as part of its May 6 comedy show, "May Cabaret". While the other segments of the show were prepared satirical pieces, this taped segment was spontaneous and unrehearsed; and as such it provides a rather candid picture of the state of "ideological preparedness" among average Hungarians: Radio Budapest sent two of its reporters first to Marx Square to ask passers-by who Karl Marx was.

Answer: Oh, don't ask me such things.

RB: Not even a few words?

A: I'd rather not, all right?

RB: Why not?

A: The truth is, I have not time to study such things.

RB: But surely you must have heard something about him in school?

A: I was absent a lot.

Another voice: He was a Soviet philosopher; Engels was his friend. Well, what else can I say? He died at an old age.

A female voice: Of course, a politician. And he was, you know, he translated Lenin's works into Hungarian.

An older female voice: It was mandatory to study him, so that we would know.

RB: Then how about a few words?

The same woman: Come on now, don't make me take an exam of my eighth grade studies. That's where we had to know it. He was German, he was a politician, and I believe he was executed.

RB: Whom was Marx Square named after?

A very old female voice: Well, wasn't he that great German philosopher? No? Marx, Engels, Lenin? No?

(The radio reporters then went to Engels Square):

RB: Do you know whom Engels Square was named after?

Passer-by: After Engels.

RB: And who was Engels?

A: He was an Englishman and he screwed around with communism.

RB: Do you know whom Engels Square was named after?

An older female voice: I don't know, I'm not from Budapest. I don't know.

A male voice: Well, let's see, Engels, a revolutionary?

RB: And do you remember his other (first) name?

A: Engels, Engels... Marx

Engels. Marx, wasn't it?

Another voice: One of his names was Marx, the other Engels?

Another voice: That's it.

RB: Where did Engels live?

A female voice: Well, where did he live, you ask. Well, he lived in Leningrad, that's to say, Moscow.

RB: Could you tell me whom Marx Square was named after?

The same voice: Karl Marx.

RB: Where did he live?

The same voice: Well, he died.

RB: But where did he live?

The same voice: Well, partly, so far as I know, in the Soviet Union. That's where he studied for a while, and then I think he also spent some time in Hungary. I wouldn't know exactly.

RB: Do you know whom Marx Square was named after?

Several voices: No, we come from Szeged. We are from Szeged, so we don't know.

RB: Do you know whom Engels Square was named after?

Male voice: No.

RB: And Marx Square?

The same voice: I don't know that either.

From "Voice of Solidarnosc", No. 6, June 1985.

On the Index

In the most spectacular incident so far of the current rash of witch-hunting against Militant, the Labour Party's Wales Executive Committee has excluded an elected member from its first meeting.

Chris Peace, a Militant supporter who topped the poll in the election for the South Wales

constituency section of the EC, was evicted from the meeting on the proposal of Ray Powell, MP for Ogmore, and TGWU official George Wright.

Miners' representative Terry Thomas protested, and even the full-time party regional organiser objected.

Powell and Wright demanded that Peace not only stop selling or contributing to Militant, but also stop reading it!

If Wright and Powell get away with this monstrous exclusion, it will make the Labour Party about as democratic as the Catholic Church. Few other organisations in the modern world ban their members from even reading 'dangerous' material.

The Catholic Church has a pope and cardinals to read dubious literature and judge whether their flock can safely be allowed to read it. Who do Wright and Powell propose as the censor to identify what might corrupt the minds of the innocent Labour faithful?

Send letters of protest to Anita Gale, Wales Labour Party regional organiser, Transport House, 1 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, with copies to Chris Peace, 21 Manor St, Heath, Cardiff.

Four times

Ronald Reagan may go down in history as the worst actor and most pig-ignorant President that America has ever had. Richard Nixon — President from 1968 until he was tried and sacked in 1974 — has a good chance of going down in history as the biggest down-right crook ever to have tenancy of the White House.

In a new interview, published in the American magazine Time, he also admits to being completely and utterly crazy.

On no less than four occasions while in office, Nixon considered using nuclear weapons.

The first was against Vietnam. It would, of course, have brought about a speedy end to a troublesome bunch of yellow people. But Nixon didn't use it because, he says: "I didn't see any targets in North Vietnam that could not have been as

well handled by conventional weapons." Enough of the gooks were being slaughtered anyway, you see.

In 1971, during the war between India and Pakistan, Nixon thought about dropping nuclear bombs on the USSR, should it intervene.

During border clashes between the Soviet Union and China, Nixon thought he might blow up the Soviet Union.

And he thought about it again during the October Middle East war in 1973. He told Time: "We did not... want to threaten the Soviet Union with nuclear weapons (but) to indicate the US would resist them, conventional and nuclear."

Not threats, the real thing.

Nixon never pressed the button. But god help us if Ronnie the White House spaceman ever gets an idea in his head.

Tankies

The myth still persists that the Morning Star/"Tankie" side of the split in the Communist Party represents the militant, working class element in the Party.

The latest crop of expellees, so the Tankies claim, exemplify the kind of working class heroes that the petty bourgeois, middle class Euros are so determined to get rid of.

Who are these proletarian colossi? They include Don Groves, a Midlands divisional officer of ASTMS and a prominent figure on the Midlands TUC Executive. Many rank and file activists were most surprised to hear of his expulsion from the CP. They weren't aware that he had ever been a member. They assumed he was just another right wing hack.

Ken Gill, general secretary of AUEW TASS, made his name back in 1977 when he broke his union's policy of opposition to the Social Contract, and abstained in the vote at the TUC Congress — in the interests of "unity", according to the

Morning Star at the time!

Last year, Gill further distinguished himself by leading the collapse of the unions involved in the Austin Rover pay dispute. The moment Austin Rover obtained a court injunction under Tebbit's laws, Gill fell over himself to comply, and declared his members' action to be "unofficial".

Cynic

Thousands of workers in the GLC and the metropolitan authorities are facing a grim future. With the Abolition Act now law, they will lose their jobs next year.

While some employees are promised a transfer to the borough or district councils, whole departments are due to vanish completely. Voluntary groups funded by the GLC and met authorities, and workers at places dependent on funding from the Greater London Enterprise Board and similar bodies elsewhere, are also up for the chop.

The choice is now stark: industrial action to thwart the Government's plans, or the dole queue.

But GLC leader Ken Livingstone isn't letting all that worry him. After all, he's got a new job fixed up, as MP for Brent East.

In a long interview in Tribune of July 19, he says that the fight against abolition is definitely over. Not a word does he say about the workers facing the sack, but he does have a lot of self-congratulation about how good the campaign was. "My personal popularity rating in London was 18 per cent after six months of a Labour GLC... Now it is up to 61".

And how was it done? Tell us, Ken, what is the secret of the new, realigned, participatory left politics?

"It is a question of imagination and style..." says Livingstone: "... the cynical soft-sell approach that we have adopted with a lot of our campaigning".

The brand-new 'participatory left' sounds rather like run-of-the-mill US showbiz politics. And in concluding perhaps Ken does have a word for those GLC workers: don't be so 'oppositional'.

"I think we have it in our hands to take power in Britain for a generation if we can grow out of the oppositional state of mind which the isolation of the British Left has inevitably created over the last 50 years".



Songs of liberty and rebellion

Union Maid

(by Woody Guthrie; new third verse by Nancy Katz)
From the Little Red Songbook of the IWW.

There once was a union maid
Who never was afraid
Of the goons and the ginks and the company finks
And the deputy sheriff who made the raid.
She'd go to the union hall
When a meeting it was called,
And when the company guards came 'round
She always stood her ground.

*Oh you can't scare me, I'm stickin' to the union,
I'm stickin' to the union, I'm stickin' to the union,
Oh you can't scare me, I'm stickin' to the union,
I'm stickin' to the union 'til the day I die.*

This union maid was wise
To the tricks of the company spies,
She'd never be fooled by the company stools,
She'd always organise the guys.
She'd always get her way
When she struck for higher pay,
She'd show her card to the National Guard,
And this is what she'd say — [Chorus]

A woman's struggle is hard
Even with a union card,
She's got to stand on her own two feet,
And not be a servant of a male elite.
It's time to take a stand,
Keep working hand in hand,
There is a job that's got to be done
And a fight that's got to be won. [Chorus]

Continued from page 7

The unilateralist victory at the 1960 conference had been something of a windfall for which the left was unprepared.

Almost by accident they had begun to pull down the structures and political prerequisites of class collaboration and thus provoked a backlash for the ruling-class agents in the labour movement that they couldn't handle. Intimidated by the right's threat of a split, the official left ran away in confusion.

The Gaitskellites had the interests of the ruling class and its state system to relate to and preserve. They knew where they stood and were in no doubt where the base line was beyond which they could not move without betraying their own cause.

By contrast the official left was utterly confused, only half-understanding the meaning and implications of the policy they had won the Labour Party to at Scarborough. When the right wing brutally spelled it out for them and told them it wasn't on, they crumbled. Against the hard bourgeois right wing — the future SDP — the left had no serious programme.

The programme of class struggle and working-class socialism was not adhered to by the mainstream unilateralists, who were at best utopians and frequently conscious left-fakers like Crossman.

Hence it was more than a question of the personal character of the lefts. Foot's record before 1960 was not contemptible. It was fundamentally a question of their left reformist politics and their characteristic failure to think things through to the end and to draw the necess-

ary conclusions in practice from political positions like unilateralism.

Before Scarborough Foot wrote in Tribune (in a front page article revealingly entitled "Don't be afraid of victory"), "Scarborough will be momentous. No one can doubt that.

"Either it will mark the rebirth of the party or the name will become the symbol for tragic and dismal confusion". In fact it became a symbol for the inconsequentiality of the Labour left and of its dismal incapacity to do other than make 'oppositionist' noises.

As early as December 1960 Tribune had tried to give Gaitskell lessons in how to fake if he wanted to lead them gently by the nose. He didn't. He wanted to smash and humiliate them. But soon enough they got Wilson as leader, and he didn't need any lessons on the arts of faking and bamboozle.

Gaitskell followed up his victory at Blackpool in October 1961 with an anti-EEC campaign that largely disarmed the left. Wilson, succeeding Gaitskell at the beginning of 1963, proceeded to disarm them completely. A former 'career leftist', he knew how to throw them inconsequential sops.

The Labour left counted for nothing throughout the 1960s, and until well into the seventies.

No defeat is so demoralising as a craven capitulation without struggle. The tendency that suffers it must inevitably have its belief in itself sapped and undermined.

The Bevanite/Tribune left never recovered. It was a new left that grew in the '70s.

Next issue: part 2 — the reactions of the Marxist left

Turkey

Torture of political detainees in Turkey remains widespread and systematic, according to a new Amnesty International report, Turkey: Testimony on Torture.

The report pointed out that detailed information on torture related mostly to political prisoners in incommunicado detention. But information received over many years strongly suggests that torture of criminal suspects is also routine in Turkish police stations.

The Amnesty Report carries accounts by seven women and six men who describe how they were tortured. The methods included: electric shocks, falaka (beating on the soles of the feet), burning with

cigarettes, hanging from the ceiling for prolonged periods, punching, kicking, beating and assaults with truncheons, sticks and iron rods on all parts of the body, including the sexual organs.

Tens of thousands of people have been detained since the military takeover of September 1980. Turkish press reports last year suggested that nearly 180,000 people had been held at some stage since then.

Amnesty International has testimony from a lawyer detained last March at Istanbul police headquarters and the Selimiye military prison who was hung up by his hands, given electric shocks and hosed with high pressure cold water.

Miners

Fighting Lynk's scab union

IT is quite clear that the breakaway by the Notts NUM is not as a result of the conference but has been planned for a long time. The changing of the area director on the Coal Board's side and the breakaway by Lynk and Penderghast represent a coming together of views and it bodes ill for Nottinghamshire.

Danger

I quite believe that in the short term the Coal Board will give them everything they ask for. That is a danger

By Paul Whetton

that we have got to be aware of.

There is no way that Lynk will win a two-thirds majority for the breakaway. He realises that, so he is likely to go for an amalgamation, either with the Durham breakaway or some other breakaway group.

I don't think the ballot will take place until after the last of the colliery holidays,

which will be the end of August.

It is difficult trying to assess which way those miners who scabbed, and who supported Lynk and the others and opposed the rule change will vote in this ballot.

From talking to the men it would seem that the main stronghold is among the pit top workers.

At the Notts NUM branch

meetings a whole range of tactics are being employed to try and prevent pro-NUM members from attending the meetings.

Many of the branches, like my own at Bevercotes, just did not meet. At others, ex-strikers were barred from entry and so on.

Panic

At some meetings they've been saying that this is the Nottinghamshire Union of Miners. They've been trying to panic the ex-strikers into

withdrawing from the union so that they can't take part in the ballot.

The other unions like NACODS and COSA seem very reluctant to get involved in the argument. They seem to be waiting to see which way it turns out.

Management haven't come out openly yet, but I think they will, nearer the ballot date. They have given the scab union recognition.

The Labour Party leaders seem to be handling this with kid gloves. You have to remember that before all this blew up in the middle of the strike, 3,000 Notts miners withdrew their political levy and they have got the option of flooding into the SDP.

Kinnock should come out with a strong statement instead of trying to see both sides of the argument.

If Kinnock tries a conciliatory line with the Notts miners, he isn't going to be able to curry their favour, no matter what he says. So he might as well throw his lot in with the strikers and declare his support for them and they will respond.

Non-recognition

Local Labour Parties should be passing resolutions and sending them to the Labour Party NEC and the TUC, demanding non-recognition of the Notts scab union.

Obviously it is particularly important that they should come from within the county of Nottinghamshire, but every labour movement organisation should be encouraged to adopt such resolutions.

There are regular meetings taking place of those in Notts who recognise the need for a

national union — I think we have to stop talking about ex-strikers in this context because many of those who did work are coming out against Lynk and in favour of remaining in the NUM.

Courts

Members from every pit in the area are attending these meetings to discuss plans for a campaign, and we've got the full cooperation of the union at national level.

Rallies and meetings are planned for the length and breadth of Nottinghamshire and over the course of the next month we will start to really put the pressure on.

We hope that local Labour Parties will invite speakers on the issue. After all, it won't just affect the NUM. If a split is allowed to develop successfully in this union, then there could be splits in other unions.

Notts Women Against Pit Closures groups are attending the meetings and getting involved, particularly the hard core of supporters who have continued to be active since the end of the strike.

We are going to be up to our necks in High Court actions over the coming weeks. We know that we will lose ten for every one we win and we don't expect justice from the British courts. We would prefer not to use them, but we have been put in a situation where we have to, though we don't regard this as the only way, or the most important way of fighting this battle.

A big problem for us is maintaining the momentum of our campaign during what is a holiday period in the pits. We've got to keep the pressure on.



Labour, TUC: isolate the scabs!

AN opinion poll published by Channel Four TV last week showed a bare 50% of Notts miners supporting the decision by their area general secretary Roy Lynk to split from the NUM.

46 per cent disapproved. When the question was put differently, only 40% said that they wished to have a separate Notts union, and 56% would prefer to be in the NUM.

A strong campaign by the NUM could possibly deny Lynk a majority in the ballot on the breakaway which he will probably call in the second week of September. Many Notts miners who scabbed in the 1984-5 strike — because of the pressures on them and the weakness or sabotage of the area leaders — still don't want a breakaway.

But the NUM has a difficult job on its hands. Lynk has powerful forces on his side which give him a good chance of success in the ballot.

As John Lloyd reported in the Financial Times, "Mr Ian MacGregor, the Coal Board's chairman, has been in constant touch with the working miners groups in Nottinghamshire and elsewhere; at the end of last month, he held talks in Doncaster with the leaders of the breakaway faction in Durham.

"He is an enthusiast for the split."

The NCB offered recognition to Lynk as soon as he said he was splitting from the NUM, and is willing to pay high bonus

By John Bloxam

money in Notts in order to consolidate a scab union.

Lynk has support from the whole ruling class, the government, and the media.

On July 15 the South Derbyshire NUM executive voted to "explore the possibility" of joining with Lynk. Jack Jones, secretary of Leicestershire — which also scabbed almost solidly during the strike — says that his area will do the same.

Federation

These moves have enabled Lynk to run his ballot on the breakaway in the form of a vote on federating with the small scab areas — which needs only a 50% majority, rather than the two-thirds required for a straight breakaway decision. Even if the NUM fails to deny Lynk his 50%, it will obviously be a blow to him if his majority is kept below two-thirds.

Notts had a breakaway bosses' union before, led by George Spencer, between 1926 and 1937. In the end Spencer failed. The breakaway was reunited with the official North Notts Miners' Association. But that was only after 11 grim years.

In those years the Spencer union was the only recognised union in Notts. Supporters of the genuine union, the Notts Miners' Association, were hounded and victimised. There was mass non-unionism.

As is likely today, the breakaway recruited only small minorities outside Notts. But it was a major struggle to contain those small minorities and stop them spreading. In South Wales, for example, the breakaway recruited no more than 5% of miners even at its strongest. But the struggle against it dominated the coalfield. Some pits staged stay-down strikes as the only way to oust scab unionism.

The Spencer union was defeated. After a big strike at Harworth, in North Notts, and a massive national vote for strike action in solidarity, the Spencer union was merged with the Notts Miners' Association. But even then only 350 of the 1000 strikers at Harworth got their jobs back after the strike, and Spencer became the president of the merged union.

How does 1984-5 compare with 1926-7? Then as now the miners had just been defeated in an epic strike. Then as now the labour movement generally was depressed, on the defensive, emphasising class collaborationism ('Mondism' then, 'new realism' now).

The accumulated defeats then were worse than now: even before 1926 trade union membership had fallen much more drastically than it had in recent years. It was easier then for the bosses to create regional breakaways in the coal industry: instead of one national employer

and one national union, there were hundreds of private coal-owners and area miners' unions only loosely linked in the Miners' Federation of Great Britain.

Bad though the current victimisations of miners are, the purge of militants from the pits after 1926 was much more sweeping.

But Lynk has some advantages that Spencer did not have. Lynk has been organising for this breakaway since the beginning of the 1984 strike. In 1926 Notts started out 100% on strike, and Spencer himself called on waverers to strike. As a result Lynk has much more solid rank-and-file support than Spencer had. In 1928 a TUC-organised ballot in Notts showed 32,000 for the Notts Miners' Association against two and a half thousand for the Spencer union.

Merger

Lynk says that he "has not ruled out" merger with other unions outside the coal industry. The Notts area NUM is a member of Mainstream, a right-wing group also including the AUEW and the EETPU. Spencer also had support from other right wing unions — in his case, the National Union of Seamen, then virtually a junior partner of the shipowners.

But Lynk is given options that Spencer did not have by the rise of the SDP. A full political split

in the British trade union movement, and the creation of an alternative SDP-oriented TUC, is still some way off, but it is not inconceivable.

What happened after 1926 depended not only on the general social circumstances, but also, to a large extent, on what the Left and the militants did. The same principle holds today.

It is easier to be wise after the event than to see clearly in the maelstrom, but the sober fact is that the NUM leaders have so far not dealt very well with the Notts breakaway drive. A case could be made either for brisk and sharp action against the scab leaders, or for a policy of minimum action and attempted conciliation. The NUM has had the worst of both worlds.

The NUM leaders have made threatening gestures, which alarmed the Notts scabs and rallied them round Lynk, and then retreated. They could have postponed any rule changes or they could have proposed rule changes which radically extended NUM democracy and thus undercut Lynk's hypocritical propaganda. In fact they introduced rule changes, many of which could plausibly be presented as strengthening bureaucratic control.

The NUM leaders have now started to campaign. They got to a court order forcing Lynk to hold a ballot — a justifiable move, since the principle forbidding the use of the capitalist

state to settle disputes within the labour movement cannot apply to attempts to form a bosses' union outside the labour movement.

Now Arthur Scargill is meeting regularly with Notts pro-NUM miners to coordinate a campaign at rank and file level.

A lot still needs to be done. When the South Wales Miners' Federation was campaigning against Spencerism, it sent three officials to work full-time round a single pit, Bedwas. The same scale of effort is needed now. Miners' support committees should offer their assistance to the NUM.

Activists everywhere in the labour movement should also campaign for a prompt and clear declaration by the TUC and the Labour Party that they will not recognise Lynk's organisation. TUC leaders are talking about 'mediation' and Neil Kinnock, on TV on July 16, refused to commit himself.

Such weasling strengthens Lynk; and it also means that TUC and Labour Party leaders will be using the whole affair to put pressure on the NUM. After 1926 the TUC did not recognise Spencer; but 'in return' it got A.J. Cook, the left-wing leader of the Miners' Federation, not to oppose 'Mondism'.

Every trade union and Labour Party branch should send in resolutions calling for immediate and clear declarations of non-recognition.

'Left realignment':

AT ITS Scarborough conference in 1960, the Labour Party voted in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain.

This decision had tremendous implications for British politics, for it opened a fundamental breach in Labour-Tory foreign and 'defence' policy bipartisanship, one of the pillars on which class collaboration rests and on which depends the possibility of orderly changes in party government at Westminster.

British unilateral nuclear disarmament implied the disruption of NATO and probably British withdrawal from the western military alliances, all of which relied on nuclear weapons. In 1960 Britain still had an empire of sorts, claimed a 'special relationship' with the USA, and in general still had some weight in the affairs of the world.

Challenge

The Scarborough decision committed the Labour Party to challenge policies and commitments which the British ruling class considered fundamental to its interests.

The story of how the ruling class fought back, relying on its supporters in the Labour Party led by Parliamentary Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell, and how in a matter of months they whipped the Labour Party back into line with the ruling class's political needs, is a tale that sheds much light on the problem of bringing about change in the Labour Party.

The struggle around the Scarborough decision was one of the most important and decisive political experiences for the post-war Labour left, and for the revolutionary left too.

Much of the feebleness,

Six years ago the Labour left said 'never again' — never again a Labour government like Wilson's and Callaghan's, ruled by the bankers and the bosses! We set out to change the party so that future Labour governments would be held accountable to the labour movement.

Now large chunks of the left seem ready to revise their horizons — to hope for nothing better than a new Wilson-type government under the new Harold Wilson, Neil Kinnock. Left-wing Labour councillors who came to office three or four years ago promising new politics and mobilisation against the Tories are now content if they can run slick advertising campaigns, empty dustbins efficiently, and win votes. The lessons of a previous collapse by the Labour left — in 1960-1 — are important if we are to avoid or minimise the collapse now. John O'Mahony tells the story.

demoralisation and ineptness which the Tribune left displayed in the '60s and '70s can be traced to the events of 1960-61.

So can the lurch by the Marxist left away from work in the Labour Party and into 'build-an-independent-revolutionary-party' sectarianism. As a result of their bitter disappointment with the outcome of the 1960-1 struggle between left and right in the Labour Party, the major Trotskyist organisation of that time — the Socialist Labour League — turned away from the Labour Party, pioneering the sort of politics today expressed by the Socialist Workers' Party.

In the second part of this article we will examine the response of the Marxists in detail.

In the late '50s a great wave of alarm at the prospect of nuclear war ran through Britain and many other countries. People had not got used to living in a long-term nuclear stalemate, and the idea that it could continue for two or more decades would have been considered improbable.

The eruption of the cold war into nuclear holocaust seemed an imminent threat in every conflict involving the

USA and the USSR,

Of 443 resolutions at the 1957 Labour Party conference, no less than 127 were concerned with nuclear weapons or general disarmament. A resolution from Norwood Labour Party, inspired by Trotskyists, advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament, was defeated at the 1957 conference — but only after Aneurin Bevan, the personality around whom the Labour Left had crystallised since 1951, had marked his reconciliation with the right wing with a notorious speech explaining that he, as a future British Foreign Secretary, could not "go naked into the conference chamber" denuded of British nuclear weapons.

But Bevan failed to carry the Tribune left with him. Even Jennie Lee, his close political associate and wife, explained in Tribune that she had abstained on the question.

Marches

The movement against nuclear weapons continued to grow despite the opposition of the Labour Party (and of the then 35,000-strong Communist Party, which initially denounced CND for 'splitting the peace movement').

At Easter 1958, '59, and '60, there were enormous CND marches from the Nuclear Research Establishment at Aldermaston to London. Each year the march got bigger and bigger, reaching 100,000 at Easter 1960 and 150,000 in 1961.

Support for unilateralism became so powerful in the trade unions, partly through the work of TGWU general secretary Frank Cousins, that by 1960 victory at the upcoming Labour Party Scarborough conference was in sight.

Even the Communist Party felt obliged to abandon opposition to CND. That gave unilateralism a big boost in unions like the AUEW, and threw the ETU, then led by the CP, behind unilateralism.

At the Scarborough conference the National Executive Committee (NEC) resolution of support for the western military alliances and their nuclear weapons was defeated by 300,000 votes. A resolution from the TGWU committing the Labour Party to unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons was carried by a majority of 43,000.

Moving the NEC resolution, Sam Watson struck the two keynotes of the campaign the right wing was to wage.

Witch-hunting: unilateralists should not be in the Labour Party, "we have no right

to accept in our movement communists, Trotskyists, and fellow-travellers".

And the demand that unilateralists draw the logical conclusions from unilateralism: he asked them if they actually wanted to leave NATO. Did they understand the implications of what they were saying?

In fact, all the leading Labour Party proponents of unilateralism wanted to stay in NATO!

The political level of the unilateralists tended to be pacifistic and utopian. Generally they did not grasp how fundamental a challenge to the ruling class their proposal and its ramifications were. From opposite standpoints both the right and the Marxists in the Labour Party pointed out to them what those implications were. Labour's right wing understood what was at stake. They mobilised for a fight to the finish.

Under Hugh Gaitskell, the Labour Party was then led by a hard right-wing sect grouped around the magazine 'Socialist Commentary' which persecuted even the soft left. Many of them went on 20 years later to found the SDP.

They were not people to use the 'fudge and mudge' techniques of a Harold Wilson, the techniques Neil Kinnock is using now and will almost certainly use if he leads a Labour government to avoid having to carry out the Labour Party commitment to scrap nuclear weapons.

Fight

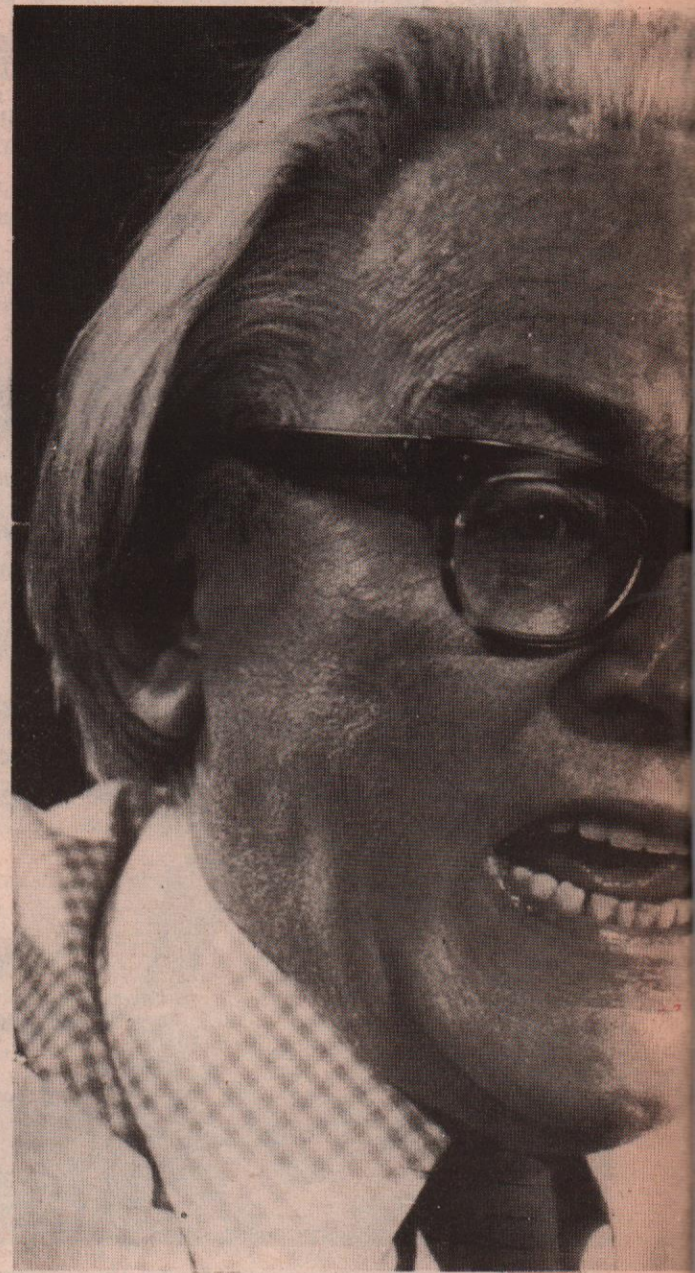
Before the vote at Scarborough, Hugh Gaitskell boldly told the delegates what the right would do if they lost. The Parliamentary Labour Party would, he said, not be bound by a decision it did not agree with.

The MPs supported the NEC policy. "So what", he asked, "do you expect them to do? Go back on the pledges they gave to the people who elected them from their constituencies? Do you think that we can become overnight the pacifists, unilateralists and fellow-travellers that other people are?"

Even if they lost the vote, they would "fight, fight and fight again to save the Party we love".

He told conference in the same speech that the leadership of the Labour Party was none of its business. "The place to decide the leadership is not here but in the Parliamentary Party".

On November 3, the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party endorsed Gaitskell's revolt against Labour Party conference when it re-elected him as Party leader by



Foot — led the Labour left in 1960-1 (photo: Chris Davies, Report).

166 votes to 81 (for Harold Wilson) and seven abstentions.

The majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party would pursue Gaitskell's policy, not that of the Party.

But what would the left MPs do? Would they too mobilise and organise and behave like people engaged in a serious political struggle? That was the key question.

Immediately the right began to organise its supporters. The Campaign for Democratic Socialism was set up as a semi-secret right-wing combat organisation which sent circulars marked 'Private and Confidential' to key activists, coordinating their fight to reverse the Scarborough decision. Its secretary was William Rodgers, later an MP and a founder of the SDP.

Gaitskell's campaign benefited from the unanimous backing of the bourgeois press. It was adequately supplied with funds whose origins were, understandably, the subject of many rumours.

The Labour Party machine swung squarely behind Gaitskell and against the party conference, organising meetings for Gaitskell and his supporters. Polite left-wing 'requests' that these meetings should also feature supporters of official Labour Party policy were turned down.

Naturally some of these meetings became rowdy and were accompanied by demonstrations against Gaitskell.

Thus unilateralism was shown to have wide and deep

implications not only for British politics but for the Labour Party too. Victory at Scarborough brought the left smack up against the unyielding Gaitskellites, fighting to 'save' the Labour Party for class collaboration, entrenched in the Parliamentary Labour Party, using the Party machine against Conference decisions, and quite prepared to split the Party in order to "save it".

Before the Scarborough conference, Anthony Crossland, one of Gaitskell's lieutenants, had written in the 'New Leader' (an American publication associated with the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which was financed by the CIA) that a conference defeat for the right wing might be to their advantage. It could give the Parliamentary Labour Party the chance to dramatically assert its independence by defying Party conference, and thus the balance of power in the Party would be shifted in favour of the PLP.

Hi-jack

After Scarborough the Gaitskellites carried out this policy. They hi-jacked the machinery of the party, and their mixture of intransigence and aggressive action paralysed the Labour left.

The NEC decided to back Gaitskell and the PLP against Party conference. (Tony Benn MP, who was not then, so far as I know, a unilateral-



We want a Britain where production expands year by year and the growing wealth is fairly shared throughout the nation

Gaitskellite election poster, 1959

the last time round



appointed one Roy Shaw to review its membership book to see if any known Trotskyists had joined.

By contrast with the right, the official left dawdled and looked for a way to avoid a full-scale clash.

To consolidate its Scarborough victory the left needed to face up to the implications of unilateralism, and to organise.

Tribune, the organ of the 'official left', at that time still had some serious influence on the rank and file. The organised left was quite weak. Only 100 people attended the annual meeting of the Tribune organisation *Victory for Socialism* in 1961; 50 attended the Scarborough fringe meeting of the Trotskyist-influenced Clause Four Campaign Committee. But the many thousands of CND supporters and activists formed a reservoir from which a mass left wing could have developed, as part of a fight for the Scarborough decisions.

Unilateralism then implied a sharp break with the capitalist establishment and with its Labour supporters. Such a radical break could not be confined to one issue if it was to be sustained.

Its natural complement was a break with the root cause of war and of the threat of nuclear war — capitalism. In principle all the leaders of Labour's unilateralist left were long-time opponents of capitalism. But there was for all of them a great gap between being 'socialists' in principle and mobilising for a serious anti-capitalist struggle. From that flowed the tragedy that engulfed the Labour left.

Sustained

If Labour's left had faced up to the fact that unilateral nuclear disarmament could only be carried in society or sustained as Labour Party policy as part of a general anti-capitalist mobilisation of the working class against both Labour's right wing and the capitalists they served, then such a mobilisation could have given real life to a struggle for socialism in the Labour Party. It could have linked up the unilateralists, especially the youth, with activists in the trade unions, to transform the Labour Party.

For that to be possible the left would have had to take their own ideas seriously. But they didn't.

In fact the left responded to the Gaitskellites by an ignominious self-disavowal. The left's Scarborough victory on unilateral nuclear disarmament was soon transmuted into a unilateral political disarmament by the Tribunites.

Immediately after Scarborough Michael Foot, soon to be returned to Parliament for Nye Bevan's old seat of Ebbw Vale (Bevan had died in July 1960) declared his support for the right of MPs who disagreed with the Scarborough decisions to vote in Parliament according to their conscience. The Gaitskellites had a right to defy conference and hi-jack the Labour Party!

The necessary response to the revolt of the MPs, a fight to kick them out and replace them, was not even aired for

discussion by Tribune. The executive of *Victory for Socialism* rejected out of hand a proposal by Hugh Jenkins that they should advocate the selection of new candidates where Labour MPs refused to abide by conference decisions. (So Jenkins told a VFS meeting in 1961, as reported in *The Newsletter* on June 3 1961).

Rejecting such action, Tribune had nothing else to do but surrender to the unyielding PLP.

Tribune's leaders thought they had an alternative to both surrender and a fight. They looked for a compromise. Prominent left-winger Anthony Greenwood MP said at the end of October:

"I believe it would be a disaster for anybody to split the Labour Party on an issue which changes from day to day. Neither side can be too dogmatic or demanding". Which only meant that he wouldn't be "dogmatic or demanding".

Dampen

The Gaitskellites stood their ground. Talk like Greenwood's couldn't mollify them; it could, however, not fail to dampen down the fighting spirits of those who took Greenwood seriously, and many Labour Party activists did.

Greenwood resigned from the shadow cabinet and told Gaitskell publicly that his behaviour was "quite incompatible with the democratic constitution and spirit of the labour movement". Just so — but what to do about it if you rejected the only serious course, a fight to deprive the PLP oligarchs of their position?

Certainly Tribune didn't know. "No doubt also there must be consequential changes in the Labour Party itself. It is too early to discern their exact nature", wrote Tribune after Gaitskell announced that the PLP would defy conference!

Since no bilateral compromise was possible with the Gaitskellites, Tribune now opted for what might be called a 'unilateral' compromise, by way of unilateral political disarmament.

In December, a few weeks after the Scarborough victory, Tribune simply began to shift its political focus away from unilateralism. In that month Tribune carried this astonishing piece of front-page advice to Gaitskell on how to fake.

"And here was a proposition [the Tory government proposal, debated in Parliament, to set up a Polaris missile base in the west of Scotland] which could be frontally opposed: not only by those who support the Scarborough decision of the Labour Party but also by the parliamentary leaders of the Labour Party who have criticised NATO's strategy on the technical grounds that it is too reliant on nuclear weapons.

"But Gaitskell put down a motion which could not possibly be voted for by supporters of Scarborough... implicitly accepting the nuclear strategy and specifically

approving in principle the government's plan accepting Polaris..." If only Gaitskell had been Wilson!

In the following weeks Tribune and the left leaders like Foot shifted their ground decisively. While they remained nominally unilateralist, their specific focus became a criticism of NATO (within which they wished Britain to remain) for being too reliant on nuclear weapons.

Their 'proposal' changed to the demand for a British declaration never to use nuclear weapons first.

Should Prime Minister Macmillan and President J F Kennedy be "pressed" to "declare" that they would never use nuclear weapons first? That question, Michael Foot wrote in Tribune on March 3 1961, "goes to the root of the recent controversies about defence in the Labour Party".

Foot was looking for a compromise, or rather a ladder to climb down.

But the Gaitskellites gave the left MPs no points for their willingness to 'compromise' and to climb down from unilateralism. They insisted that they toe the line of the PLP or get out.

They gave them no credit, either, for their docile unwillingness to organise to deprive Gaitskell and the PLP of the right to speak for the Labour Party.

A few days after Foot's Tribune article, in March 1961, he and four other MPs were expelled from the PLP for daring to defy the PLP whip and vote against the

Tory government's air estimates.

Konni Zilliacus, a prominent left-winger, was suspended from the Labour Party for publishing an article in an international Stalinist magazine. In these ways the Gaitskellites gave notice of their willingness to split the party if they didn't get their way. They kept up the pressure on Foot and company to 'compromise' away their victory at Scarborough.

Dramatic

Now a dramatic opportunity to endorse something that could be passed off as a 'compromise' presented itself to Foot and his friends — the lyingly misnamed 'Crossman-Padley compromise'.

In February a drafting committee from the TUC and the NEC agreed by 8 votes to 4 to accept a new right-wing 'defence' statement (drafted by Dennis Healey) for the next Labour Party conference. The dissident minority — Walter Padley, Tom Driberg, Frank Cousins, and the cynical operator Dick Crossman — produced their own defence statement. Though three of them at least were prominent unilateralists, they came out with a 'compromise' based on the idea of a pledge not to strike first.

"While we recognise that the Americans will retain nuclear weapons so long as the Russians possess them, we reject absolutely a NATO strategy based on the threat to use them first and a defen-

ce policy which compels NATO forces to rely on these weapons in the field".

Tribune jumped at the chance to advocate the 'Crossman compromise'. Thus it undercut and in effect abandoned the official Labour Party unilateralist position. Foot wrote that it would be a major step forward if the Crossman document (or a less cynical variant on similar lines worked out by Frank Cousins) could "secure the general backing of the Labour Party".

In fact there was never any chance that it would get the backing of the Pentagon- and Whitehall-linked Gaitskellites. What was happening was that the left leaders were selling 'compromise' to the unilateralist rank and file.

The 'compromise' now became the left's alternative to the Healey draft of the right-wing position, and it was touted as a basis for unity.

Gaitskell referred contemptuously to the wriggling of the Tribunites and justly scorned them for their "lack of principle". The right would concede nothing.

The Crossman-Padley compromise was a transparently cynical device to get the left off the hook. Padley's union, USDAW, adopted the 'compromise' but did not even move it at the Blackpool party conference of 1961. Once it had done its work of demobilising and undercutting unilateralism, USDAW abandoned the 'compromise'.

Continued on page 4



The threat of the H-bomb produced a mass CND

ist, resigned from the NEC in protest at its attitude to party democracy).

Using its majority on the NEC, the right went on the offensive immediately after the conference. On November 23 the NEC launched a witch-hunt against the youth paper *Keep Left*.

The job was to split the left and intimidate the feebler spirits — so they picked on an easily identifiable and vulnerable target, the largest organised Marxist tendency in the Labour Party. (*Keep Left* was the youth paper of the Socialist Labour League, which eventually mutated into the WRP).

Parallel

The parallel with the way the witch-hunt against Militant has recently been used to split and intimidate the left is very striking.

So is the parallel between Tribune's attitude to the witch-hunt then and its attitude under the editorship of Nigel Williamson to the witch hunt now.

Faced with the vigorous assault of the right, the Tribunites feebly struck out at their left. Tribune took up the rallying cry that the Marxists had no place in the unilateralist movement because they were not prepared to advocate unilateral nuclear disarmament by the USSR. The AGM of the broad left organisation *Victory for Socialism* in January 1961

Debate on Palestine

GERRY BYRNE'S TV WATCH



How the lads misspend their youth

It always puzzled me why proficiency at snooker was proverbially the sign of misspent youth, since it was practised in Temperance Halls and the slate bed held infinitely greater attraction than any other. Us girls never got within ogling distance of the tables. It took them a long time to cotton on that for the majority snooker was performed a spectator sport and therefore eminently televisual.

I deplore the introduction of coke and edited highlights into the game, as wholly unethical and contrary to the spirit of snooker. Its essence is in the ennui, the slow unrolling drama — not frenetic potting by callow millionaires off their tiny boxes. It's not the Stock Exchange! And besides, one ball rolling down a hole looks much like another.

It is preeminently a game for adolescents pretending manhood and grown men clinging to their adolescence and beer guts. Which makes it the ideal vehicle for the saga of Bad Boys versus the rest of the world. The Boys face tough opposition from the Girls (who want to tie them down with rent, mortgages, babies, responsibility, i.e. make them act like grown-ups) and the Men (who are real villains and will batter them shitless given half the chance). Their only weapons in this unequal struggle are their arcane skills and lumpen audacity. The penalties for losing are harsh — marriage, broken bones and being ripped off.

But they have each other. While soppy girls slurp up slushy romance, the Boys have an altogether more sizzling relationship. Sparks fly, sex is sublimated into sparring — both verbal and physical — but at the end of the day the True Love of Pals Conquers All.

Self-parody

This motif worked very well in 'Minder' but it always teetered on the edge of self-parody, threatening to degenerate into bald comedy or mere macho Goodies versus Baddies. And the relationship was a little too unequal. I know Terry was a boxer and therefore brain-damaged, but did he have to be quite such a soft touch for exploitation? His dimness got to be so predictable that it drew the string from Arfur's witniness.

It got so you just felt sorry for the poor sod, instead of wondering at the wicked ways of the world.

"Give Us a Break", the tale of Mo the innocent snooker-whizz and Mickie his manager, has the edge because Mo isn't daft, despite the bobble hat. He's a quick learner and soon initiated into aforementioned wicked ways.

They inhabit a curious half-world with its own magic money and secret language. For the girls, money is earned by honest

back-breaking toil in demeaning jobs and spent on the dull necessities of life: for the men, it is acquired through bank jobs where real bodies get broken, and spent on flashy cars and those big signet rings that are the hallmark of the criminal classes. The boys ponce the girls' hard-earned bread. It then undergoes a miraculous inflation via various scams (quasi-criminal enterprises where no-one actually gets hurt) whence it also evaporates just as quickly. You can see why the rest of the world doesn't love them. Idle, irresponsible, amoral and charming — which we would all dearly love to be. So every Friday night we vicariously don their predicament.

"Leave it out" — they appropriate the Men's language — like dressing up in the grown-ups' clothes — and of course must be punished for their presumption. But only mildly — just a slap not a good hiding. After all, it's harmless: they're only trying to create a bit of individual space in a hard world. There's only two of them. They won't change the world.

Contrasts

Times and mores do change — even in TV-land. If you compare "Give Us a Break" with "Budgie", made in the early '70s, treating similar themes, there are some striking contrasts in the way of racism and sexism. Adam Faith as Budgie could get away with the most extraordinarily racist tirades. It's not that present-day naughty heroes aren't portrayed as racist (Mickey refers to blacks as "Lucozades" — spades, ha! ha!) but now the scriptwriters would feel compelled to distance themselves from the character and counterpoint the expressed racism of the character with something in the story which puts an opposing point of view. There's an episode of Minder where Arfur rants on about "Gypos" but is forced to concede by the logic of the story that his views are purely prejudice and not based on anything in the Gypsies' behaviour. In Budgie, the illegal immigrants conform totally to the stereotypes.

Similarly, with the treatment of women. In Budgie the prostitutes could have been taken straight off a dirty postcard and the mother of his illegitimate child is presented as naive, adoring and totally characterless. Their predicaments are merely fuel for a few cheap laughs. Now, even though women are still marginal, there is some suggestion that they have an existence and personality independent of the lads.

I suppose it's progress of a sort. Not that it's anything to crow about. Still, they'll grow up. But not too soon.

The Socialist Organiser AGM on June 22-23 decided to continue our discussion on Palestine. Until now SO has supported the mainstream Palestinian-Arab slogan of 'a democratic secular Palestine' with equality for Jews and Arabs (Muslims and Christians). Some SO supporters now argue for a separate independent Palestinian-Arab state alongside a modified Israeli-Jewish state; here Bruce Robinson argues for a unitary democratic Palestinian state.

John O'Mahony refers sarcastically to our old position having an "alleged ability to do justice to everyone concerned", contrasting it to his approach, which starts from the real divisions that exist. Our approach, however, should be precisely that of what Lenin described as "consistent democracy".

Our job is not that of acting as diplomatic advisors to the Palestinians or arguing about which policy is most likely to be acceptable to the Israeli working class at present given their present consciousness and attitude to the Palestinians. We are only interested in the national question from the viewpoint of finding a programme that represents a real solution to the national oppression and thus removes it as an obstacle to class unity.

Lenin poured scorn on Rosa Luxemburg (who was opposed to Polish independence from Russia because, as a Polish socialist she was frightened it would strengthen Polish nationalism) for emphasising that what was required was a 'practical' solution to the national question.

"The whole task of the proletariat in the national question is 'unpractical' from the standpoint of the nationalist bourgeoisie of every nation, because the proletarians, opposed as they are to nationalism of every kind, demand 'abstract' equality; they demand, as a matter of principle, that there should be no privileges, however slight. Failing to grasp this, Rosa Luxemburg, by her misguided eulogy of practicality, has opened the door wide for the opportunists, and especially for opportunist concessions to Great Russian nationalism".

John O'Mahony's position is similar to Rosa Luxemburg's, in that out of fears about the effects of the nationalism of the oppressed — the Palestinians — on the rights of the Israeli Jews, he looks for a 'practical' solution which avoids challenging the privileges of the oppressor nation. It is an attempt to find a short cut to a solution without any fundamental changes in the relationships between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

His position amounts to saying that a solution will be achieved on the basis of the Palestinians giving up their unrealistic demands, so as to avoid having to face the thorny problem of how it is possible to break the Israeli workers from their current attitudes towards the Palestinians.

John O'Mahony claims that any policy of a single state in Palestine must imply forcible integration of the two nationalities. Martin Thomas also seems to accept that the nations will want to hold on to their separation above all else, even if Israel was no longer a Zionist state.

The policy I am proposing is unlikely to recommend itself to the bourgeoisies of the Arab states, who either want a deal with Israel or are not in any position to impose a solution anyhow. (Even if they were, I would oppose it as there would be no way that they would impose an even remotely democratic solution). It is based on the idea that both sides would have had to move towards a recognition of the other's rights as a pre-condition of any lasting and fair

Democracy is only in a single



Palestinian youth have no choice but to fight arrangement.

John O'Mahony argues that two elements in the programme of a unitary state make its voluntary acceptance by the Israelis impossible. His first point is that a single state is in itself a denial of Jewish national rights and thus unacceptable. On this basis, however, for the reasons outlined above, no solution will ever be possible if one (or both) nationalities continue to claim an exclusive right to even a part of the territory. If the Palestinians were to give real guarantees of Jewish rights of the type I have already mentioned, such a claim would not be justified.

John O'Mahony's second objection is that the right of the Palestinians to return to any part of pre-1948 Israel means dispossession of the Jews currently living there and would be resisted. However, the right of return does not necessarily require the restoration of every square inch of land to whoever owned it in 1948. Obviously given the length of time that has passed, changes in the economic structure of the country, etc., this would be impossible.

What is at issue is a) the right of Palestinians to return to live in those areas; b) some form of compensation for land taken as part of an overall settlement; c) removal of some recent settlements. Of these, the third can be called dispossession — and it would also be required to set up a West Bank/Gaza state.

Both communities will have to

make concessions for any solution to work. The Palestinians will have to recognise that moving towards their goals requires winning over a large section of the Jewish population. This in turn requires them to recognise the permanence of the Jews in the area and the collective rights which this implies. It probably also requires a change of tactics from one which emphasises guerilla action to one which puts more emphasis on political action and has an active orientation towards winning the trust of the Jews.

Benefit

However, the main balance of concessions must come from the Israeli Jews as they are at present enjoying privileges as the oppressor nation. The national consensus across classes in Israel is not just maintained by Zionist ideology or an external threat, but also rests on the fact that all sections of society benefit from the present discriminatory and oppressive relationship to the Palestinians, e.g. access to better or more secure jobs, land, more extensive political rights. As in the case of Ireland, it is often those sections of the population for whom the relative privilege is smallest who cling to it most — in this case, the working class Oriental Jews.

What forces then will break

out of the vicious circle of mutual antagonism between the Palestinians and the Israelis? In the short term, it is difficult to be optimistic, whatever position you hold. It is possible that the national conflict would only be ended as a result of successful social revolutions elsewhere in the region, though clearly we cannot advocate that all the parties concerned wait around before trying to find a means of coming together.

More positively, a number of developments have begun which undercut the basis on which Israel has been able to maintain 'national unity' in the past. The war in Lebanon has led to some questioning of Israel's claim to act militarily only in its own defence and to a war-weariness among some sections of the population. The economy is in more or less permanent crisis. The shift in US policy in the region lessens Israel's room for manoeuvre.

None of these developments necessarily mean a progressive shift in general attitudes towards the Palestinians, but perhaps a few cracks are appearing in the general acceptance of the national interest of Israel.

In such a situation it is difficult to assess what the effect of a Palestinian declaration of recognition of Jewish rights would have. It is however a precondition of any long-term progress.

possible state

THE BASIC POSITION

1. A democratic solution to the national conflicts between the Israeli Jews and the Palestinian Arabs can only take place within the framework of a single state. The intermingling of the two national groups is such that any territorial division would be unlikely to be democratic or provide a lasting solution to the conflict.

2. Such a unitary state would recognise and guarantee the collective rights and identities of both groups, including freedom of religion, language and education. These would be implemented by devolving powers in these areas to whichever level would assure the two communities best control of their own affairs without imprisoning minorities. The Palestinians would have the right to live in any part of the state (which would cover the area of pre-1948 Palestine).

3. While defending the rights of the Israeli Jews, we recognise that at present it is the Palestinians who are the oppressed nation and give them unconditional support in their struggle against the Israeli state.

4. For a single Palestinian state to be realisable requires that at least a sizeable section of the Israeli population break from Zionism and the 'national consensus' currently existing in relation to the Palestinians. No solution is possible while the Israeli working class enjoys privileges at the expense of the Palestinians. Such a break will only come about if the Palestinians make it clear that they have no intention of suppressing the Jews and are willing to grant them the collective rights in a common Palestinian state.

WHY A UNITARY STATE IS NECESSARY

The normal approach of Marxists to the national question has been to argue for the right of self-determination — that is, for the right of an oppressed nation to secede and form its own nation state. We generally support self-determination, not because we support nationalism or think that the nation state is

the best political unit for socialism, but because it provides a democratic solution which ends national oppression and removes a divisive obstacle to developing class unity between the different national groups.

However the right to self-determination cannot be applied where the two national groups are intermingled and both claim the same territory with some degree of legitimacy.

In Palestine there are no borders suited to a democratic solution based on separate states for the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians. Even if the present population were to fall into two distinct territories, there is still the problem of the Palestinians currently living outside pre-1948 Palestine who wish to return.

Of the Palestinian refugees about 10% lived in the areas which became Israel in 1948 prior to that date. Of these about half remain refugees. Many of those born in the camps since 1948 identify themselves as coming from the areas where their families lived before fleeing in 1948.

Return

Whether all of the Palestinians would return to those areas given the choice or whether they would accept a West Bank/Gaza state is a debateable point. However, given that the process of settlement and colonisation of these areas has been the root cause of their national oppression, it seems to be that the demand for the Palestinian right to return to those areas must be granted as part of a democratic solution. (How this could be done is discussed later).

Given this population distribution and the precise form the national question takes in Palestine there are three different ways of dealing with the situation:

a) drawing boundaries which essentially maintain the existing majority-minority relationships using a recognised border, such as the pre-1967 one. This would

mean either leaving minorities within the new states or some form of population exchange;

b) drawing new boundaries by allowing pieces of territory with a majority different to that within the pre-67 borders to secede and join the other state (e.g. the areas of pre-67 Israel with Arab majorities);

c) recognising that a democratic solution cannot be based on a territorial division or redivision of pre-1948 Palestine.

The second position at least has the merit of recognising that the pre-1967 borders are undemocratic. If the national question in Palestine was merely one of national minorities wanting to form their own state or associate with another state, it would provide a feasible solution.

However, it does not take account of the odd features of the situation which come from Israel being a state based on settlement of an area, whose previous inhabitants have not disappeared, but still have legitimate claims to rights within the same area.

Status quo

It is also difficult to see how a West Bank/Gaza state would be a step towards this solution. If a West Bank/Gaza state were to succeed in the aim of reducing national tensions, it would have to become the status quo for relations between the two peoples for some considerable period of time. While the Palestinians could 'in principle force concessions', including the right for Arabs in Israel to secede to the other state, who would be able to enforce it? Presumably the Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. How would this give the breathing space for reconciliation Martin Thomas talks of?

A common state would have to be based on and guarantee the rights of both the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians to maintain their separate collective identities, unhindered by the state and with control over those aspects of political life necessary to require them to do this. This differs from the 'classic' conception of the secular democratic state as advocated by the PLO in giving collective rights to the Jews within a unitary state and offering such rights unconditionally.

Such rights would include freedom of religion and language, control of education, the rights of free political organisation etc. They could be implemented through a form of local autonomy where communities — whether Arab, Jewish or mixed — would be able to decide what provision would be made for these issues in their area.

Local autonomy is not however the cornerstone of my argu-



Israeli peaceniks offer no way forward

ment. It merely seems to be the most likely way of guaranteeing to the furthest possible extent the rights of both communities. Some rights, however, such as the right to use either language would have to be guaranteed by the central government. What is crucial is that the means exist for 'justice to be done' within the framework of a single state.

The main argument against this has been that it ignores what is fundamentally at stake — namely, the rights of two nations rather than merely democratic rights.

It is suggested that local autonomy would lead to one or other nation wishing to secede from a united state.

However there is no way that full national rights (which include the right to a territory) can be put into effect for either nation without it oppressing the other.

Exclusive

For what it's worth, I would recognise the Israeli Jews as a nation. However we should remain aware of some of the peculiarities of both national groups.

Firstly, the national consciousness of the Israeli Jews has until now been based on the Zionist ideology of the right to an exclusive Jewish state in Palestine, a state which has been based on settlement of the territory previously occupied by the Palestinians. Whether the Israelis feel themselves to be political Zionists in the full sense is irrelevant. Quite what form a Jewish national consciousness would take if the exclusivist, chauvinist and, usually, racist elements based on this ideology were to disappear (or even begin to break down) is highly problematic.

Secondly, the rights of the peoples of the area and whether they form nations or not cannot be asserted simply by reeling off a set of characteristics (language, culture, economy, territory) a la Stalin of 1912 and seeing how well they fit. On this basis, one would have to reject the Palestinians' claim to be a nation on the grounds that they do not have — and never have had — a distinct national economy or historically well-defined national territory.

It is precisely the fact that the Palestinian question is not a straightforward issue of the rights of nations or national minorities which makes it so intractable. Any programme we put forward must deal with three aspects of Palestinian oppression as well as the rights of the Jews. Firstly, they lack any territory in which to live. Secondly, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip they face a military occupation. Thirdly, within Israel the Arabs are treated as second-class citizens.

Insensitive

I am a Jewish Canadian who has previously lived in Israel. I have been active in groups supporting Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement such as the Peace Now movement both in Israel and Canada.

I recently picked up an issue of Socialist Organiser and was encouraged to discover the debate about the merits of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although I have certain disagreements with some specific points made in the draft statement, I want to add my name to those who support a two-state solution based on Israeli withdrawal to the ceasefire lines of June 4 1967 and heartily applaud Socialist Organiser for the courage and maturity that it took to present this highly emotional issue so responsibly. For too long many groups and individuals on the left remained consciously or unconsciously insensitive to Jewish concerns and collective aspirations with regards to Israel and Zionism. This is not meant to imply that a critique of Zionist ideology is necessarily anti-semitic, but the 'anti-Zionist' pronouncements of some left wing activists serve to alienate many progressive Jews who are concerned about the continued existence of Jews in Israel. These pronouncements tend to drive many Jews both in Israel and abroad towards an ultra-nationalistic 'Greater Israel' stance and away from supporting a democratic solution to the conflict.

As well, it should be understood that the vast majority of activists and supporters of the Israeli peace movement both in Israel and among Jewish communities abroad, define themselves as Zionists. Without

these people, groups like the Peace Now movement, the Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, the Citizens' Rights Party, Mapam, etc., would simply not exist. This fact was recognised by PLO officials Said Hammami and Issam Sartawi who paid with their lives, the price of daring to establish contacts with 'Zionist' Israelis.

By your advocacy of a two-state solution encompassing both a democratic Israel and a democratic Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and through your reasoned analysis of modern Jewish/Zionist sentiment in Palestine you are able to present a principled, democratic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which takes into account the legitimate national aspirations of both peoples.

Furthermore, I agree that a guarantee of the rights of the Arab minority in Israel is far preferable to allowing the Galilee and the Little Triangle areas to become part of the Palestinian state.

The majority of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship feel themselves to be 'Israeli' and there is no reason why Israel should be 100% Jewish any more than the Palestinian state to be created should be 100% Arab. Consequently, if a Jewish minority were to exist in the Palestinian state (and I see no reason why theoretically it could not), I would argue on their behalf for full minority rights but against the right to secede to Israel the areas where they, in turn, might possibly constitute a majority.

I welcome the opportunity to participate in a dialogue of this calibre and look forward to a response.

MARK KLEIN

Will 'two states' divide?

I am particularly interested in the Palestine debate which I think is fascinating and on precisely the right terrain. I have been entirely supportive of the efforts of John O'Mahony and others to break from the common left position with its blanket endorsement of third world nationalism and its hints/strains of anti-semitism. I am less enthusiastic about the proposed two-state solution, but I withhold judgement.

One aspect which disturbs me is what it entails for those consigned to live within the Israeli state. I think that we should recognise that Israel is not racist in an ordinary way. The idea of a Jewish state is not an ordinary nationalism. There has never been an adequate separation of church and state, for all the secularism of the Zionist movements, and this lack of separation has become much more

pronounced. The exclusion of non-Jews from full citizenship rights is not an ordinary racism.

Obviously we oppose these things whether there is one state or two, but it seems to me that the latter option does not help. We have to consider in my opinion what a Jewish state means not in abstract but as a present reality.

It is racist in an extraordinary way and undemocratic in an extraordinary way. Surely there is a potential among Jews fed up with the influence of religious orthodoxy, with militarism, with Jewish particularism, with siege mentality, etc., to tie their dissent to the dissent of Palestinians and others who bear the brunt of state and para-state repression?

Does not advocacy of two states cut across this unifying potential? Does it not, from the Jewish point of view, assume a

static fixation with a Jewish state that for many is becoming more of a weight than a means of emancipation?

Are we not underestimating the effects of the gulf between the idea of Zionism and the reality of today's Israel on the consciousness of ordinary Israelis?

My own knowledge and experience of Israel — where most of my family lives — is well out of date now. I have not visited for many years and I have not studied developments in any detail beyond the Guardian and the Jewish Chronicle. But my strong impression — from friends, family and even the Jewish Chronicle — is that we would be foolish to underestimate the growing disillusion with the particularism represented by Israel.

BOB FINE

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IF Michael Crick's book "Militant" is meant to be a serious political analysis of the Labour Party tendency of the same name, then 'Private Eye' must be rated among the world's leading magazines of political theory — though peppered with all kinds of spicy anecdotes, the book is lacking in any substantial political content.

The reader discovers, for example, that "the eccentric Ted Grant", the leading figure in Militant, is "obsessed with keeping fit and healthy, eating health foods and doing exercises every morning", that he likes table tennis, Beethoven and Bach, that "once during a television interview, he took his handkerchief out and energetically wiped his nose", and that "his only known vices are jelly babies and gobstoppers."

Peter Taaffe, on the other hand, nominally the editor of Militant, is apparently not an eccentric. He "mixes well. He gets on with working people and understands them; he will have a drink with the lads, talk about television or football and his favourite team, Everton."

But Taaffe has his vices too. He frequently plays football with the staff at Militant's London offices. But this is a hierarchical tendency: Taaffe, says Crick, is "always allowed to pick the best side". However when Taaffe plays Grant at table tennis, Taaffe always loses, "much to his annoyance". But is it real or feigned annoyance? Does Taaffe really lose to Grant, 30 years his senior, or does he "throw" the game in deference to the same principles which secure for himself the right to pick the best football team? These and other fascinating questions are only hinted at. It is not known how — or if — Taaffe wipes his nose, on television or otherwise.

And it is not merely about current Militant supporters themselves that Crick serves up his gossiping anecdotes. Did you know that the current Labour MP for Ealing Southall, Syd Bidwell, chaired a meeting of Grant's organisation in 1941? That the present Labour Party Information Officer Frank Ward was a member of Grant's organisation in the 1940s? Or that Grant unsuccessfully attempted to recruit Frank Chapple after the latter left the Communist Party in 1956, (though Chapple did write a number of articles for Grant's publications of that time)?

A substitute for serious political analysis they certainly are not. Nor are they interspersed in an integrated analysis of Militant's politics — they are strewn across a history of Militant as an organised tendency, and strewn across what is in the final analysis an attack on Militant supporters for having organised themselves into a tendency to fight for their ideas.

The opening chapters of Crick's book are fairly accurate on the outlines of post-war Trotskyism in this country. Crick traces the origins of Militant back to the Workers International League. In the 1930s the Militant Labour League was recognised as the British section of Trotsky's Fourth International in opposition to the WIL, but the two groups fused in 1944 to form the Revolutionary Communist Party.

Grant and his followers had left the Labour Party in 1941 and remained hostile to rejoining it: "Under the given conditions, the best tactic for the party is the maintenance of the independent party. The discussion has not convinced us that in the present situation entry (into the Labour Party) would constitute a superior tactic," wrote Grant in 1949. But the RCP declined, and finally was disbanded in 1950. The Grantites followed the bulk of the RCP's ex-members into the Labour Party.

Clashes

Despite the clashes between the Left and the Party leadership in the '50s and '60s, "Grant and his colleagues survived this period virtually unscathed", writes Crick, attributing this to the fact that "for a long period they were by far the least significant of the three factions."

"By 1963, after 13 years of little success, Grant had done far worse than either of his rivals from RCP days. Gerry Healy and Tony Cliff, who both had strong groups if only within the youth section of the Labour Party (forerunners of today's WRP and SWP). The Grant group was still small. Its magazines were irregular and badly produced."

The following year the Militant newspaper was launched. Initially it was something in the nature of a broad paper, with non-Grantites both writing for it and helping produce it. But in

The politics of 'Militant'



Stan Crooke reviews Michael Crick's book "Militant".

less than a year they had lost the fight to maintain the paper's openness — the Militant had become the exclusive property of the Grantites and has remained so ever since.

In the mid and late '60s, the Grantites faction competitors in the the Labour Party and the LPYS (the present WRP and SWP) pulled out of the Labour Party or drifted out of it. Though still small, the Militant group thereby found itself the only organised force in a stagnating LPYS.

Majority

In 1963, 365 delegates attended the LPYS national conference; in 1967 216; in 1969 150; and in 1970 when Militant won a majority on the LPYS National Committee for the first time, there were just 126 delegates.

As class struggles mushroomed under the Heath government in the early '70s, "Militant's style of politics — concentrating on industrial and economic issues — began to have more appeal," writes Crick. By 1974, the size of the tendency had increased five-fold. After this initial "take-off" Militant has continued to grow in size and influence ever since.

Potted

But what Crick's potted history of the Militant in the '50s and '60s fails to do is to explain Militant's politics, explain why it failed to grow, unlike the Healyites, and explain why Militant avoided any conflict with the Labour Party bureaucracy.

Militant failed to grow because of its own political perspectives. Certainly, as Crick points out, "after the war Ted Grant faithfully carried on believing that capitalism's collapse was near, even during the post-war boom". One of Grant's fellow-members of the RCP is quoted as saying: "Ted's always been the same. Since 1945 he has been predicting a slump," and reference is made by Crick to articles written by Grant in these years in which he talks of "the upheavals and convulsions of tomorrow" (February 1952).

But the point was that the "upheavals and convulsions" in which "the British masses will find the way to a Marxist policy" were always scheduled for "tomorrow". In the meantime, there was nothing for the Grantites to do — they had arrived before their time and had to wait for the inevitable next step of the historical process.

Such a perspective ruled out any serious attempt on their part to build themselves into a combat tendency, as the Healyites, for all their political faults, were doing. And it is also this factor, not their numerical insignificance, which explains why they were "virtually unscathed" by the political conflicts of the period.

If the "British masses" were going to find their own road to "a Marxist policy" in the "upheavals and convulsions of tomorrow", then the tasks of Marxists today was reduced to being the guardians of the Marxist programme, integrating themselves into the labour movement and its routinism, and waiting for "tomorrow".

And this is what the Grantites did. Hence the decision of Grant himself to abstain in a vote in his Labour Party on the expulsion of two Healyites.

Hence the decision of Sinna Mani, the first business manager of Militant newspaper to move the expulsion of three Healyites from his LPYS branch in 1965.

But Crick fails to relate the Grantites' lack of growth in the '50s and '60s or incidents such as Grant's abstention on the expulsion of the Healyites, to their politics.

Instead, he attributes the Grantites' failure to defend the Healyites from the witch-hunters to the bitterness of the relationships between the two groups. This was, undoubtedly, a factor. The Grantites' politics led to political accommodation with the Labour bureaucracy which manifested itself in their failure to fight the witch-hunt of the Healyites.

Crick's book is not a political work but a piece of bourgeois sociology. As the Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci once wrote: "Bourgeois sociology describes: but it explains nothing." It could serve as a verdict, 60 years ahead of its time, on Crick's book — it describes the history and organisation of Militant, often in great detail, but fails to probe below the surface to offer a political explanation of Militant's existence.

Balance?

In his preface Crick declares that the book "is not intended to be a hatchet job". If the book is Crick's idea of a balanced approach, then I would not like to see him trying to ride a bike.

Just 15 out of the book's 200 pages are about Militant's politics. Crick merely picks out certain aspects of Militant's politics in order to dismiss them from a "common sense" point of view.

For example, Militant refused to call for the withdrawal of the Red Army from Afghanistan on the basis that it would mean a return to feudalism and the restoration of American influence.

Crick wrongly claims that "Militant has been fiercely criticised by other Trotskyist groups for its attitude to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan" (in fact most other would-be Trotskyist groups shared Militant's position) and, more importantly, he fails to draw out the implications of Militant's position on Afghanistan for its overall concept of socialism.

Militant's line on the Falklands war

was, as Crick says, "very unusual". It called for a general election in Britain and a socialist federation of Britain, Argentina and the Falklands. Crick does not even attempt to explain the logic which led Militant to this position.

And Militant, writes Crick, "has taken an odd position on many of the other major issues for the new left", citing its line on Ireland and the Middle East as examples. But, again, he fails to relate this back to Militant's overall view of politics — a view of History as a sort of automatic machine, producing class unity and socialism as the inevitable outcome.

Attitudes

Crick also mentions Militant's attitude to feminism, sexuality and soft drugs: the feminist movement is "petty-bourgeois dominated" and subject to "hysteria", homosexuality is a "problem" which will disappear under socialism, and smoking dope is a "petty bourgeois deviation" which "numbs the consciousness" of the working class.

Instead of reasoned discussion, Crick responds with further anecdotes: that Militant supporters "were seen eagerly quizzing" some East Europeans at a British Youth Council meeting about their country's electric shock treatment for gays, or that three Militant supporters in Edinburgh were once thrown out of the tendency for smoking cannabis.

The nearest Crick gets to any rounded analysis of Militant's politics is his treatment of Militant's basic economic demands. But here he goes seriously wrong. "Militant's programme is simply a list of modern day 'transitional demands'... Peter Taaffe's 1981 pamphlet (Militant: What We Stand For) can be seen as a new version of Trotsky's Transitional Programme," he writes, just after quoting Trotsky's own definition of transitional demands as ones "stemming from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat".

But Militant's demands are not "transitional" in any meaningful sense of the word. Usually they are abstract demands, counterposed to the logic of the class struggle, or at least irrelevant in terms of "unalterably leading to one final conclusion". In other cases, they are an accommodation to reformism.

Militant's well-known demand for the nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies is an example of the former; its demand for workers' management of nationalised industry on the basis of one-third for trade unionists, one-third for the TUC and one-third for the government, of the latter.

Crick, however, misrepresents Militant's demands by claiming that they are all part of an elaborate conspiracy: their demands are described as "a reasonable bait to make Militant attractive to workers or left-wing trade unionists" but "once the new 'con-

tact member' has been drawn into the tendency, all will be revealed to him or her."

So what does Militant really stand for? It seems that no-one knows! Little of Militant's revolutionary plan is stated explicitly by the tendency, even in its secret internal documents, but it is exactly in line with the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky," writes Crick.

But if nobody, not even Militant's own supporters, know Militant's 'real' politics, then there is no point in discussing with Militant supporters. And that is exactly the conclusion which Crick wants his readers to draw: "Militant's public programme disguises the tendency's fundamental beliefs. People on the left frequently assert that Militant should be countered by political argument, but it is not as simple as that." Any attempt to argue with Militant's "public programme" is therefore "a fairly pointless exercise."

Hence it is that Crick takes Tony Benn to task for his defence of Militant: "Tony Benn has defended Militant by arguing that Marxism has always been a 'legitimate strand of thought' within the Labour Party. He misses the point. Militant is not just Marxist, but also Leninist and Trotskyist".

Now, if those opposed to Militant's politics (whatever they are) are wasting their time when they argue, then the only other way to combat Militant is organisationally. And, as Crick must know very well, an organisational attack on Militant, or any other left wing tendency in the Labour Party means a witch-hunt.

Crick claims that Militant "has a style of secretive and disciplined politics that is wholly alien to the democratic traditions of the Labour Party" and, just to ram the point home, repeats it in the conclusion to the book: "Militant's Leninist style of organisation, with iron discipline and complete secrecy is wholly alien to the democratic and open traditions of the Labour Party."

"Those Labour Party members who defend Militant fail to recognise that few of them would last five minutes in the unlikely event of the Labour Party being taken over by Militant".

For Crick, the nature of Militant's politics is of secondary importance to the alleged nature of Militant's organisation. One could go even further and say that Crick defines Militant not as a political programme but as a form of organisation. And that would certainly explain the gross imbalance in the book's contents: only a fraction of it is given over to discussion of Militant's politics; the bulk of it probes into Militant's "inner organisation" — and looks into the various attempts by the Party bureaucracy to clamp down on Militant on organisational grounds.

Thus, the middle section of Crick's book consists of a chapter given over solely to Militant's structure: "It is the organisation of a political party — and one operating secretly within the Labour Party," he concludes, a chapter given over to an analysis of Militant's finances, a chapter on "The Militant Life" ("the similarities between Militant and a religion are obvious from the lifestyle of the members," claims Crick) and a chapter on Militant Merseyside which basically says that Militant rebuilt the Labour Party in Liverpool after it had been virtually wrecked by a Catholic mafia in the '30s and '40s and the Braddock party machine in the post-war years).

Witch-hunt

The three closing chapters of the book, nearly a quarter of its entire contents, look at the escalating witch-hunt against Militant which has taken place during the 1980s. They also make it increasingly clear where the author's sympathies lie.

His book adds nothing to an understanding of Militant's politics, which Crick scarcely touches upon anyway.

And Crick's endless tittle-tattle about Ted Grant's taste for jelly babies and gobstoppers and so on will, given the lack of any overall political analysis, only encourage others to substitute such anecdotes for coherent political arguments against those of Militant. This in turn will only help continue to leave Militant free from any political challenge.

His book is not one for those interested in analysing Militant's politics, but one for those on the look-out for a bit of "dirt" with which to smear Militant.



After Live Aid

By Edward Ellis

In Western Sudan, nearly three million people — the entire population of the province of Darfur — are dying of starvation. About 30,000 tonnes of food are needed every month, but the people of Darfur are not getting a single ear of corn. A bridge connecting the province to Port Sudan was swept away by a flood last week: nothing can move. 300,000 tonnes of food is stockpiled and rotting.

We have all seen the results of this appalling human catastrophe — in Sudan and other parts of Africa — on our TV sets. Also on our TV sets we have seen the historic concerts in Philadelphia and London that raised about \$70 million under the aegis of 'Live Aid'.

Efforts

There can be no denying the tremendous efforts of Bob Geldof and his friends to raise this money — even less can there be sneers for the millions of people who have donated it. No doubt, as in the past, it is people who themselves are seriously out of pocket who have contributed proportionately the most.

The good will of these millions of people should be an inspiration for socialists. It shows — against all the claims of right wing "common sense" — that human nature is not inherently mean, selfish, greedy. Humanity can be moved to try to do something, however small, to help alleviate the suffering of Africa's starving.

But some stark facts remain. Live Aid's \$70 million is a drop in the ocean: it is only a gesture towards solving the crisis, not a solution. Nor would any number of Live Aids be a solution.

And the hypocrisy of Western governments — the British government in particular — is staggering. After the applause from the Tories for Geldof's heroism has died down, consider this:

Britain has given less than any other EEC country in food aid to Africa — a lot less. It has promised only 85,000 tonnes in cereal food aid. It has not even increased its aid budget. Worse than that: the government gave £100 million in aid to Africa in the financial year to April this year. But this was money deducted from the existing aid budget — that is, in plain language, taken away from other needy, cold, hungry people.

And the government has cut its aid programme. At a meeting of EEC budget

ministers in April, according to Labour MP Stuart Holland, British representatives were pushing for a cut in overall EEC food aid to Africa.

British offers of £75 million to the World Bank special Africa fund were turned down by the Bank — because the Tories insisted that the aid be tied to the purchase of British goods.

Other EEC countries and the USA are not much better. And the USSR is quite substantially worse — it has promised a miserly 7,500 tonnes of food aid.

And not all 'food aid' is what you might expect. About a third of America's aid, and two-thirds of the EEC's, is what is called 'programme aid'. Instead of giving sacks of food to the starving people, they give food to governments to sell in the market.

In other words, it will not reach the starving people at all. And western governments have taken no steps to see that it will.

And even direct food aid often doesn't reach the starving. In Ethiopia about 30,000 tonnes of food a month, it is estimated, is going not to the dying, but to soldiers and civil servants.

Big-name concerts cannot hope to change that. Because the real problem is not a lack of money: it is not that the powers-that-be don't have the resources to deal with the crisis in Africa — or elsewhere in the Third World. They do. The EEC has millions of tonnes of grain stockpiled to boost prices in Europe. Rich governments have stacks of money.

The problem is that the governments — which represent the ruling class — do not really care. Their system is based on principle: make money. All other considerations are secondary.

Help

It is good that Geldof and company want to try to help. But their idea of what 'help' is in the long run counterproductive.

Geldof's idea that it is not a political issue is idiotically wrong. It is a political issue. The capitalist system is responsible for the terrible suffering. And on that real root cause, Geldof is on the wrong side — he opposed the miners' strike.

If Bob Geldof gets the Nobel Peace Prize it will be because capitalist governments want to salve their consciences about the famine. In that sense, the Live Aid extravaganza helped let the Tories — and their ilk elsewhere — off the hook.

Racist justice

FOUR members of an Asian family died after an arson attack on their home in Ilford, East London, last week. Eight months pregnant Shamira Kassam and her three sons are the latest victims of racist attacks

A few days previously another Asian family had petrol poured through their letterbox and ignited.

Newham police say that the attacks may not have a racial motive.

These attacks occurred as the trial of the Newham 7 drew to a close. The trial, which lasted almost seven weeks ended with the jury, after 13 hours of deliberation, returning guilty verdicts on four of the seven Asians and all three whites. Sentencing of

Tom Rigby, Peckham LPYS, looks at the implications of the Newham 7 trial verdict and the racist attacks sweeping East London.

the Asians, likely to take the form of a community service order, has been deferred for social reports.

The four convicted Asians are discussing an appeal and Parvais Khan is to start proceedings against the Home Office in connection with the black eye he received while in custody at the Old Bailey.

During the course of the trial 95 people were arrested on demonstrations and pickets in support of the Newham 7, with two being arrested on the last

day. A number of these are planning to sue the City of London Police for assault as a result of being photographed against their will.

The verdict can in some ways be regarded as a victory.

Three Asians have been acquitted. The other four will probably only face sentences of community service.

Meanwhile the three racists have been found guilty and fined £100 each. Not exactly a fitting penalty for these scum.

Such a limited victory, in

terms of the sentences, is not enough. In convicting the four, the court has established the principle that self-defence is an offence. This is a step backwards from the situation that existed after the Bradford 12 trial when the courts supported the principle 'self defence is no offence'.

There can be no substitute for mobilising the black community on a permanent basis to defend itself from racist and fascist attacks. The labour movement must support such mobilisations.

Racist murders like that of Shamira Kassam and her sons must never be allowed to happen again.

Tory plans to rip-off young workers

What a glaring contrast there is between the Tory government's attitude to young and badly paid workers and its attitude to its own grossly overpaid officials and warlords! In the week when pay rises of up to 48% were announced for top civil servants and generals, the government abolished wages councils for under 21s, thus removing the limited protection wages councils have given to over half a million young workers.

The new legislation on wages councils, which will come into effect next summer, hits at one of the few safeguards against the mass exploitation of young workers. The under 21 age group which stands to suffer the most is already the most badly paid and least unionised. Youth will now face the choice between YTS schemes paying £25-£35 a week, jobs paying similar rates — or unemployment.

Minimum

For over 21s, the wages councils are to offer a 'simplified' service, which means that they can only set minimum hourly rates and a single overtime rate. They cannot set regulations for holiday pay, weekend rates, shift work rates, guarantee rates

for short-stay working, or differential rates for skilled workers.

They can also be either 'modified' or abolished entirely at the discretion of the Employment Secretary.

The government says that its reason for doing this is that it believes youth unemployment is the result of too high wages being paid to young people. This is blatant lying: since 1979 the real wages of workers aged under 18 have fallen 6% but nevertheless youth unemployment has more than quadrupled.

Teenage

Britain's 26 wages councils were set up originally back in 1909 following mass campaigning for the abolition of 'sweated labour'. Today, one in five teenage workers is protected by them — about two-thirds of whom are women and many of whom are from ethnic minorities. The main industries that will be effected by their abolition are retailing, hotel and catering, hairdressing, clothing and shop workers — traditional areas of youth employment and of the sweatshop economy. The wages set by the Councils are by no means high and many workers in those industries already

workers

By Linda Mouldsdales, Islington North LPYS

do not receive these minimum rates because the government has already cut down on wages inspectors. But, still, the Councils offered some protection.

Being an active shop steward in the hotel industry, an industry traditionally known for its non-unionisation, low pay, long hours and bad working conditions, the reality of the loss of power in the wages councils is clear to me. Hotels are in most cases open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Most staff work long shifts, encountering unsocial hours and receive very little allowance. When the new legislation comes into effect many employers will take the opportunity of not paying split shift allowance, which in the majority of cases is only paid if the shift is split over 12 to 14 hours, weekend bonus or night bonus.

We have already faced management using higher percentages of casual labour either

to break unions or to cut their labour costs. By avoiding sick pay, holiday pay, etc. Following the Trade Union Act we also have had to face the non-recognition of union agreements, the closing of hotels for short periods without pay, and increased redundancies.

Non-unionised

When the new legislation comes into effect, non-unionised hotels, followed by those with unions, will increase the number of young people they employ and massively exploit them.

Meanwhile on the other side of the court, there are great rewards for the (supposed) public service's greatest assets: 12.2% for leading civil servants; 10.3% rise for judges; 17.6% rise for generals in the armed forces; and for Sir Robert Armstrong — who recommended the increase! — a 48% rise. He takes home £75,000 a year!



Part of the crowd at Live Aid, Wembley

YOUTH AGAINST THE TORIES

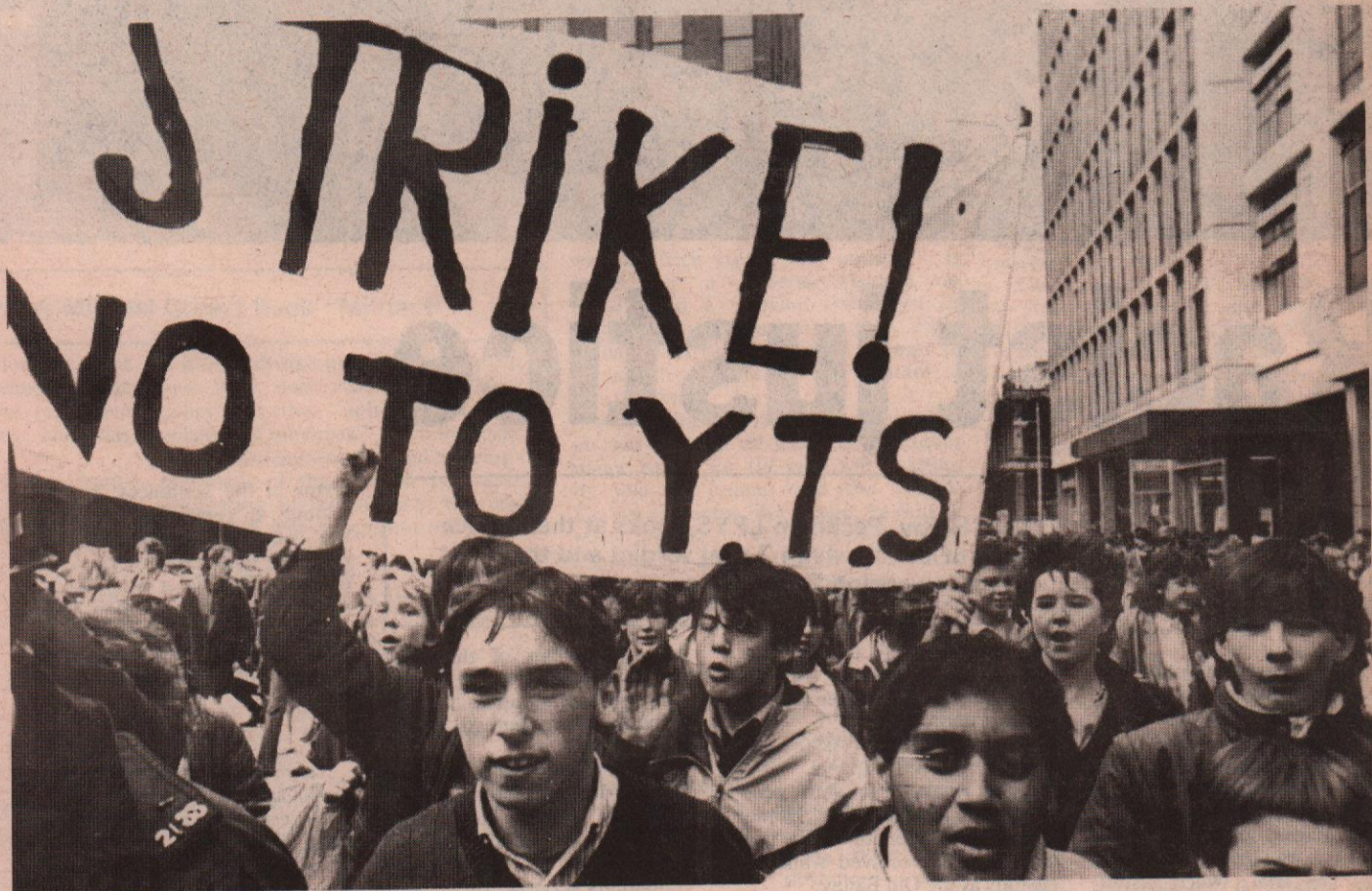
OCT 10 LOBBY
TORY CONFERENCE!

**No cuts in
colleges**

**No cuts in
benefit**

**Grants not
loans**

**No
conscription
onto YTS**



This year the Tories have opened fire on students, workers in colleges and unemployed youth.

They intend:

- *To make YTS run for two years.
- *To make YTS compulsory as soon as they can get away with it.
- *To keep on cutting benefit for youth who refuse a slave labour scheme.
- *To merge colleges, cut numbers, departments and courses and even close a whole university.
- *To introduce loans instead of grants.

They have already

- *Told universities to be selective about research in order to stop it altogether at some colleges.
- *Cut teacher education courses
- *Announced a £3-£5 cut in supplementary benefit for under 25s.

Manchester Area NUS and Tyne Tees Area NUS on October 10th 1985 are organising a lobby and march on Tory Party Conference to demand:

- *Real jobs, real training – no conscription onto YTS.
- *A living grant for all students – £30 a week now!
- *No cuts, no closures, no job loss – keep our colleges open!
- *No to cuts in supplementary benefit!

For more details, transport, etc., contact MANUS c/o Manchester University Students Union or T&TANUS, c/o DSU, Dunelm House, New Elvet, Durham or ring Simon Pottinger, 01-272 8900.

Transport

A CLASS FIGHTER/SOCIALIST ORGANISER POSTER