

Workers power

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The Socialist Conference

LABOUR LEFT IN CRISIS

See pages 6-7



Stop Tory Slave Labour Plans

NEXT SEPTEMBER Employment Secretary Norman Fowler plans to force another 600,000 claimants onto his new slave labour scheme.

For working in a full time job 'trainees' will get their benefit plus about £5 extra. This is all that will be left of their 'allowance' after work expenses have been paid.

The Tories claim that this Employment Training (ET) Scheme is to solve the crisis in the labour market. They say the jobs are there (700,000 vacancies), but no one has the skills to do them.

This fake concern for re-training should fool no one. For years the Tories have been conscripting claimants into low wage, no-rights training schemes in the name of job creation. Yet of all those who finished on the Job Training Scheme (JTS) last January only 7% found work.

Qualification

Only 7.2% gained any recognised qualification from their 'training'. For most it was straight back onto the unemployment register after 6 months of being 'disappeared' from the official statistics. So much for Thatcher's claim to be creating 'real jobs'. For trainees these jobs are about as real as Father Christmas!

What of the Tories repeated claims that unemployment is falling? In official terms it is. But these characters—the ones who told us the NHS was safe in their hands, remember—are past masters in the art of official deceit. Through fake schemes, harassment of the long term unemployed, through tricking people into failing the 'work availability' test and through doctoring statistics the Tories have removed thousands from the register. These people are still unem-

ployed. They are just not counted.

The ET scheme is yet another Tory employment conjuring trick. Yet the TUC have decided to collaborate with it. Norman Fowler assured Willis and his cronies that the new scheme is not going to be compulsory. But like all previous schemes refusals to enlist will be used to question people's claims to be available for work.

Cut off

Benefit payments will be cut off for those who do not go voluntarily. And, like JTS, if anyone leaves the scheme part way through income support can be reduced by 40% for 6 months.

Fowler's assurances doubtless salved the conscience of the TUC leaders, who have endorsed the scheme. But the cherry on the cake for them was the extra money he coughed up (£45 million) in response to 'TUC pressure'.

In fact all Fowler has promised for ET conscripts is marginally better discretionary allowances, plus a possible bonus from employers for people completing 6 or 12 months on the scheme. It still amounts to benefits plus £5 per week. This paltry amount would not cover Willis' daily expenses, so how are people supposed to live on it?

Collaboration

In reality the TUC were persuaded less by Fowler's 'concession' and more by the threat from the government to go ahead without them, using private training schemes.

The TUC collaboration with the government on this project is disgraceful. But it is no surprise, they have been doing exactly the same since the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) was set up in 1973. It was established as a tripart-

ite body—the bosses, the unions and local government—to monitor and plan for employment and training. With the massive growth of unemployment since then it has become the creator of wave after wave of fake-job and fake-training programmes whose sole purpose is to massage the unemployment figures.

The TUC are desperately clinging to the MSC. It is one of the few remaining 'official' forums where the government talks directly to them. And in return for this Tory generosity Willis and co are prepared to offer 600,000 workers, to be used by the bosses and Tories as cheap labour, given no serious training and then pushed back onto the dole.

Not all sections of the trade union movement support ET. Some leaders, like Todd of the T&G, feel that the latest scheme—which won't only apply to youth and may be compulsory in reality—goes too far.

Fightback

Some unions, like NUPE at its last conference, have voted to oppose YTS trainees being introduced into the hospitals. And, of vital importance, workers in the various schemes have begun to organise into unions and mount a fight back against the terrible conditions they work under. This month workers on the Community Programme (CP) scheme are planning a national one day strike.

If Fowler's plan—his work for dole, workfare scheme—is to be stopped, these forces must be organised. They must spearhead a campaign throughout the entire trade union movement, around every unemployed centre, job centre and benefit office, to mobilise the labour movement against the Tory slave labour plans.

In particular, links between trainees/CP workers and work-



Norman Fowler (right)—architect of the latest slave labour training scheme swindle

Brenda Prince (Format)

ers in local government and education services need to be made, so that a total boycott of the new scheme can be organised. The unions opposed to the TUC's collaboration should organise together to defy the TUC policy and try to overturn it. In unions which support the scheme rank and file members should organise their own boycott.

The labour movement must not stand by and allow the Tories, or the TUC, to force the unemployed to work for benefit. It is an issue for the whole class. Wages will fall as more and more permanent jobs where union rates of pay existed are transformed into training places. Flexibility, compulsory

overtime and terrible pay and conditions will be imposed under the threat of 'trainees' being available in their thousands to replace unionised workers.

The new realists must be stopped from allowing such a solution to become a reality.

- Organise the unemployed—build an unemployed workers' union
- Down with workfare, up with benefits, oppose the Employment Training Scheme
- Demand the TUC opposes the scheme and end its collusion with the bosses on the MSC
- Support the strike on 15 June

15 June ONE DAY STRIKE

For all Community Programme workers

Called by T&G Community Programme National Shop Stewards Combine

Sheffield demonstration Assemble:
1.30pm Caborn Corner
March to MSC headquarters

Rally: 3pm
Outside MSC headquarters
Speakers:
Tony Benn Clare Short
Ron Todd John Edmonds

END TUC SUPPORT FOR WORKFARE!

Afghanistan

WITH A mighty fanfare in the Soviet press and claims to have fulfilled their 'internationalist duty' the Soviet Army is leaving Afghanistan. And at the same time the Kremlin receives the prize it's been after for so long, the embrace of Ronald Reagan in Moscow itself.

That these two events are occurring simultaneously is no coincidence. When the Soviet bureaucracy ordered the invasion of Afghanistan eight and a half years ago it did so to forestall a pro-imperialist regime being established in what it had historically regarded as its 'sphere of influence'. For that reason it was forced to prop up the PDPA government that was in danger of losing its civil war with imperialist backed reactionary rebels.

All along it sought to do a deal with imperialism that would trade off the PDPA regime in a settlement with the US. It wanted above all to prevent the creation of a directly anti-Soviet state. Its efforts have been directed at finding the means of dealing with imperialism to create a non-hostile regime in Afghanistan. It was the Soviet bureaucracy who ordered the reform programme of the PDPA to be slowed down, halted and eventually reversed. They were the first to hold an olive branch out to the Afghan King. They are behind the Afghan regime's policy of 'National Reconciliation' with reactionary tribal chiefs and landowners.

Initially imperialism was more than prepared to snub the Kremlin's every overture and increase its discomfort. It demanded no less than a global retreat by the Soviet bureaucracy as the price to be paid for partnership and co-operation with imperialism. From Indo-China to Nicaragua, from Southern Africa to Afghanistan, that is the price Gorbachev and his supporters are prepared to pay.

We cannot support the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. It leaves Afghan workers and peasants and the oppressed non-Pathan nationalities to the never tender mercies of Islamic fundamentalist reaction. In particular, it leaves those workers and students who have joined the PDPA militia in imminent mortal danger.

However the Soviet Union in Afghanistan during the last eight years has sought to stifle any independent movement of the exploited and oppressed. It has even opposed such democratic advances as land redistribution to the advantage of the poor and the landless. In return for 'reconciliation' the old landowners are now guaranteed their lands back. While the USSR's armed presence has served to physically defend many of those forces committed to democratic advance, the Kremlin bureaucracy, through the agency of the PDPA government, has politically deprived these forces of either the ability or the means to implement the most basic reforms.

'Internationalist duty'

Both within Afghanistan and globally, in its attempt to restore a stable partnership with imperialism, the Kremlin's policy has had a predominantly reactionary character. The 'internationalist duty' the Kremlin bureaucracy is performing for itself is collaboration with imperialism at the expense of the oppressed and exploited of the world.

Already eastern garrisons are falling to rebels and the bombing of Kabul has intensified. As more Soviet troops withdraw so the urban strongholds of the regime will come under increasing pressure. Our first responsibility is to fight for the independent organisation of the Afghan workers and peasants to defend themselves against reaction. That will have to be fought for against Najibullah's PDPA government and its attempts to enforce conciliation with reaction. It will also have to be fought for against the PDPA's Kremlin backers. We must demand the weapons and the political independence necessary for the exploited and oppressed to defend themselves.

Against National Reconciliation with the King, the Mosque and the chieftains we must advance a programme of independent working class organisation, for an agrarian revolution that can liquidate the power of the big landowners, for a Constituent Assembly, for women's rights and for the separation of the Mosque and the state. Only with such a programme can the small but growing Afghan working class mobilise all the oppressed behind it in the battle it must wage with Islamic reaction and with Stalinism.

The Soviet withdrawal is designed to prevent both the physical and political advance of the Afghan workers and peasants. We do not demand that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan goes on in the old way. What we say is that the Afghan workers and peasants and the non-Pathan minorities all need physical defence. This should be provided by the USSR in whatever form, including troops, that those defending themselves against reaction require. And it must be given without any strings which prevent the self-organisation of the Afghan workers and peasants for their own defence.

Alongside military aid the Afghan workers and peasants need massive material and financial backing in order to implement a programme that can rally the oppressed and exploited to their side against reaction. The USSR must provide that too with no strings attached. That aid, no less than military support, is vital for the defeat of Afghan reaction in the civil war.

It is a measure of Stalinism's treachery that it will countenance a wave of reaction in Afghanistan in return for friendly handshakes with imperialism. As the Kremlin bureaucracy preens itself for coming in from the cold, for being treated once again as a partner by the White House, our stand is with the millions of workers and peasants that it is prepared to sacrifice in the pursuit of its reactionary and utopian goal of peaceful co-existence with imperialism. ■

The Lords our saviours?

SOME TRADE unions have got a picture of the Houses of Parliament with the legend 'The hope of the workers' emblazoned on their banners. The more simple-minded amongst us had perhaps thought that referred to the House of Commons. Recent months have forced us to revise this view.

With the 'lower chamber' dominated by hard-nosed Thatcherites, the official labour movement has turned its eyes to 'their Lordships' House'. There sit mild Christian bishops, hearts overflowing with the milk of human kindness. There sit kindly old dukes and earls obliged by the principle of noblesse. Here sit forcibly retired one-nation conservatives yearning to heal the divisions wrought by Thatcher. Here sit the ranks of yesterday's union barons and Labour prime ministers. Surely these venerable senators can moderate the Thatcher Revolution?

The strange spectacle of Labour leaders urging the House of Lords to throw out the Poll Tax proposals, and of Thatcher warning of a constitutional crisis if it does should give us pause for thought. *Tribune* pleads for the peers to save ILEA whilst the *Sunday Times* demands the abolition of the House of Lords. Campaigns of the oppressed lobby the Lords in the hope that they will amend or moderate reactionary legislation like the Alton Bill and Section 28.

Why this outbreak of humble petitioning? One reason is spinelessness. Thatcher's apparent omnipotence is largely due to the fact that the entire Labour Party and union leadership have worked overtime to prevent any serious resistance to her. First they stabbed the miners and the printers in the back by preaching obedience to the law at all costs and keeping other battalions of the labour movement out of the fight. Seafarers are the latest

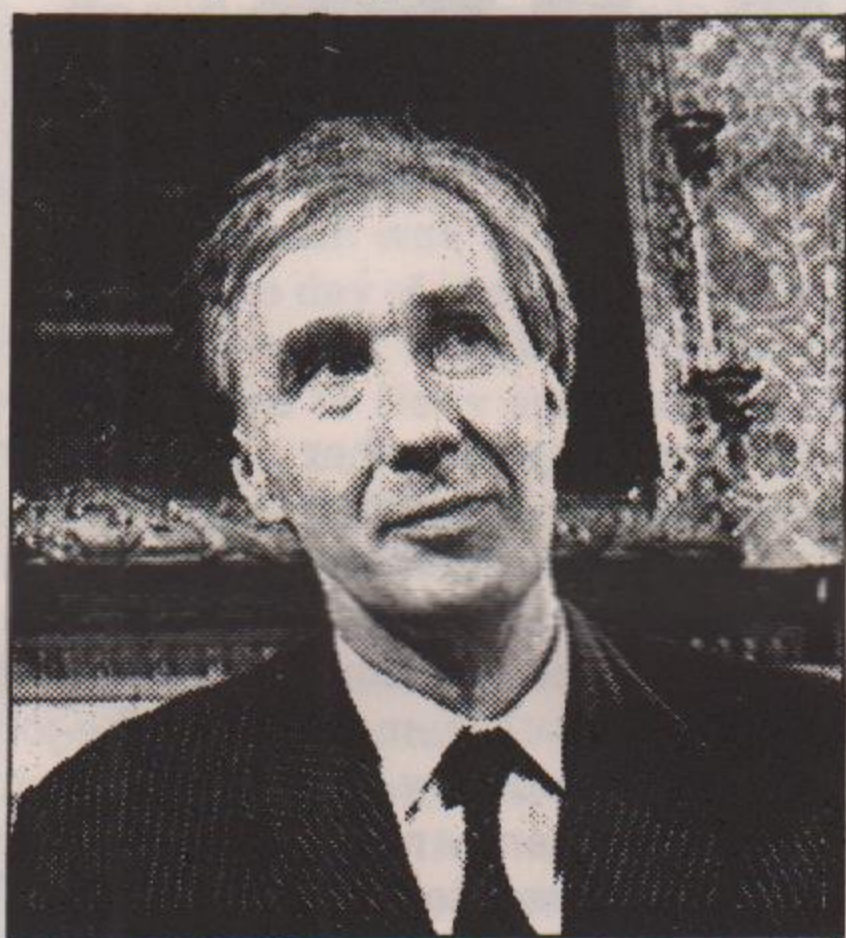
sacrifices to 'lawfulness at any price'.

Secondly they sabotaged local government resistance to the Tory cuts and to the vicious attack on democratic rights that it represented. They have moved heaven and earth to prevent the massive hatred of the Scots for Thatcher and the Poll Tax from erupting into a campaign of outright defiance. And most recently they have deliberately defused working class anger at the butchering of the health service into a campaign of harmless lobbying.

With their eyes fixed on Election '92 they have no proposals for resisting the Tories here and now beyond luring Tory 'wets' into back-bench rebellions and urging the feudal fossils of the upper house to moderate the severity of Thatcher's legislation.

No-one in their right mind could expect leaders like Wilson, Callaghan, Foot and Kinnock to do anything about socialism beyond using it to assuage the gullible ranks of a Labour conference. But these gentlemen have always insisted that they are democratic socialists. Now it becomes clear that their commitment to democracy is of a piece with their commitment to socialism.

In fact, as ever, it falls to revolution-



Lord Belstead, leader of the Lords

ary communists to defend democratic principles, not because bourgeois democracy can meet the historic and immediate needs of the working class but because it at least clears the stage of all the old rubbish of benevolent monarchs and princes and 'impartial' peers and judges. The very existence of the monarchy and the House of Lords is a slap in the face for bourgeois democracy—for the idea that representatives elected by universal suffrage should be sovereign.

It is bad enough that five periods of Labour government have left these mediaeval relics in existence. It is worse now the Labour leaders endorse and sanctify these institutions by urging their intervention against the House of Commons.

In the face of this cringing adherence of the Labour leaders to the unelected House of Lords we remember and repeat the words of the Internationale:

'No saviours from on high deliver
No trust have we in prince or peer
Our own right hands the chains
must sever'

Does this mean that some sort of democratic revolution is needed separate from the socialist revolution? Not at all.

No force apart from the working class exists which has the interest and the will to repeat the words and the deeds of the only revolutionary democrats of British history, Cromwell's New Model Army and the Chartists. How far 'our leaders' are today from their forebears is symbolised by the fact that where Cromwell told his troopers to 'take away this bauble' (referring to the mace of the House of Commons) Neil Kinnock joins with the Tories in urging the removal of a Labour MP who inadvertently dropped it. Only the new broom of workers' revolution can sweep this gaudy garbage into the rubbish bin of history. ■

by Dave Stocking

Tories target anti-racist schools

IN 1986 Ahmed Ullah (13) was murdered in a racist attack in the playground of Burnage High School, Manchester. Two years later the media seized upon a council report which criticised the school's anti-racist education programme.

Although the report did not identify anti-racist education as the cause of the attack, the gutter press ran riot. Left wing 'indoctrination' and 'brainwashing' were held responsible for creating racial tension at the school.

Riding this tide, the Tories have taken their first steps against official anti-racism in schools. Starting with Brent council, they are demanding new conditions for government money spent on anti-racist and multicultu-

ral education. They are gearing up to introduce a 'Clause 28' for black people.

Anti-racist and multicultural education is now the policy of 80 local authorities. But it is a policy based on the liberal supposition that racism is a problem of individual ignorance. In the name of 'multiculturalism' schools are allowed to ram all sorts of reactionary religious ideologies down children's throats instead of just the usual one.

Despite this we must defend the right of local authorities to make anti-racist policies free from control by the ex-colonial governors and plantation owners in Whitehall.

Trade union and student control over anti-racist education and equal

opportunity policies is essential. We have to take control out of the hands of councils like Brent and Manchester. Their anti-racism never extends to supporting the life and death struggles of black people; their equal opportunity policies offer black and white workers an equal share of service cuts and job losses.

It is teachers and working class youth who have the interest and the means to fight racism in schools, not just through control of the curriculum, but through fighting for support for black self defence and against all deportations and immigration controls.

As part of this strategy we must fight to smash any government veto on anti-racist education. ■

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Fund Appeal

Our target for our £5,000 fund goal was June. This month we got £993.37. Our running total is £4,382.16. So we are £617.84 short of our goal. We aim to make up the shortfall this month, so rush money in now. Our thanks to readers in:

Leicester - £20, Sheffield - £45,
Central London - £690, Reading -
£38.37, East London - £170

TUC in crisis Fight scab unionism

IN YET another bid to answer the question 'what role for the unions?', the top brass of the TUC are debating a Code of Conduct on single-union deals.

The draft Code reveals the extent to which new realism—or to call it by its proper name, bootlicking the bosses—has triumphed inside the TUC. Spurred on by their failure to smooth the path towards a single-union deal at Dundee, the bureaucracy is trying to find the means to regulate inter-union disputes and reassure prospective bosses.

The draft Code accepts that single-union deals, on the bosses' terms, are good. They will supposedly encourage 'inward investment', and therefore jobs. They will, so the union leaders hope, stabilise union recruitment and finances. The only rider added is that:

'Unions should not conclude agreements in exchange for recognition which specifically remove or are designed to remove the basic, democratic, lawful rights of trade unions to take industrial action.'

This provision however, does not constitute opposition to 'no-strike' deals in principle. Far from it. The TUC acknowledge that in specific cases—they cite GCHQ and News International—no strike deals will be opposed and that their opposition

'... is not meant to deter unions using arbitration, pendulum or otherwise, at the request of one party or both parties'. Every trade union militant must recognise the draft Code endorsement of deals that trade off our rights, conditions of working and living standards in exchange for union recognition. As the bosses' journal *The Economist* put it, '[single union recognition]... will not provoke more

strikes; it will let employers get away with more favourable terms.' (28.5.88)

As ever the union bureaucrats can agree that class treachery is carried out in the interests of the bureaucracy as a whole and not at the expense of some sections of it. This explains why the draft Code could not be ratified last month. And it explains the continuing conflict between the majority of the TUC and the far-right EETPU/AEU axis of the General Council.

EETPU are clear that no TUC rules will prevent them reaching single-union and no-strike deals with the bosses. In particular they are prepared to help the bosses tear up pre-existing union agreement. Hammond has moved into Japanese Orion in South Wales and Christian Salverson in Warrington despite the presence of other unions. On top of their refusal to repent for their scabbing at Wapping, these actions have proved too much for the TUC to swallow. Censure and possible suspension are now on the cards. For its part the EETPU has signalled its willingness to build an alternative scab union federation—with bosses' narks like the UDM—outside the TUC.

The vote to move against EETPU at the General Council was 32 to 2. The two against were Jordan and Laird of the AEU. The AEU leadership is every bit as prepared as Hammond to make sweetheart deals with the bosses. But they are not yet convinced of the need for a complete rift with the TUC.

The reasons for this are twofold. First, they believe that they can swing the TUC round to a position of endorsing 'no-strike' as well as single union deals. The extent to which they

have already pulled the bulk of the trade union leadership into line behind their far-right policies encourages them.

Moreover if their planned merger goes ahead with the EETPU, they will form a very powerful force inside the TUC, capable of calling even more of the shots.

The second reason for the AEU's caution is the leadership's inability to secure the dictatorial control that Hammond has won over his union. Particularly at the National Committee level, Jordan and Laird have suffered defeats over flexible working and over the 'accountability of officials'. A premature attempt on their part to leave the TUC would split their union, and they know it. This is another factor explaining their enthusiasm for a merger with the EETPU. It would help them destroy the internal opposition in the AEU.

Jordan and Laird's hesitancy should be no cause for complacency. If EETPU set up a rival federation it would only be a matter of time before the AEU joined it. Precisely because of this there should be no delay in fighting the single-union double dealing that is at the heart of the dispute.

To launch such a fight we must be clear who our friends are. The supposed TUC 'loyalists' like the GMB and the TGWU agree with the single-union strategy. The GMB is itself involved in a dirty war with the MSF at BICC Labels in Whiston to secure a sweetheart deal. The GMB also agree with the AEU that the Code of Conduct should not be binding on affiliates. Edmonds, the GMB leader called for it to be like the Highway Code. This explains why the Code did not get passed. It tried to satisfy eve-

The EETPU scab leaders are spoiling for a fight with the TUC. Willis and the new realists are out to make single union deals the norm. The AEU plans to merge with EETPU and stay in the TUC. Mark Hoskisson looks at what all this means for trade union militants.



Hatching a new no strike deal—Hammond eggs on Laird

ryone but pleased no-one.

Willis and Todd favour stricter TUC regulation of all such deals. But these gentlemen are no friends either. Willis was a recent guest at the Police Federation Conference, plotting with them how to destroy effective picketing. Todd was a key figure in selling short the Ford strike earlier this year.

As for the 'left' within the TUC, where is it? In the CPSA the Broad Left has been smashed. The FBU, one of the unions that enthusiastically supported Benn in 1981, is now eagerly backing Kinnock and Hattersley. And in the NUM the regional leaders have muzzled Scargill and are, for the most part, pursuing a pit-based version of new realism with British Coal.

Despite this the new realists can be fought. The rash of strikes in February and March, the continuing determination of the Dover Seafarers, the development of significant, albeit unorganised oppositions to the leader-

ships of NUPE, the FBU and others, all reveal that the forces for a fight-back exist. These forces must be organised into a rank and file movement within and across every union with the aim of smashing new realism. In the immediate period ahead the key goals militants must fight for are:

- Opposition to the bosses' and bureaucrats' single-union deals.
- Against all no-strike deals.
- No compromise with the Wapping scabs—expel EETPU now.
- Defeat Jordan and Laird's plans to merge with the EETPU—no fusion with the scabs.
- Solidarity with all workers in struggle—defy the anti-union laws.

In other words, fight the new realists with class struggle methods, not bureaucratic Codes of Conduct.

P&O dispute Anatomy of a sell out



Rank and file give McCluskie stick

THE DECISION of Sam McCluskie and the NUS executive to call off all solidarity strike action in support of the P&O workers is a massive set back to the chances of victory in this heroic eighteen week dispute.

The scrapping of hard won conditions and the sacking of seven hundred strikers has been met with determined and militant resistance from the Dover workforce. Support has been shown up and down the country in donations, rallies and strikes in the ports. The arguments of the pessimists and 'new realists' in our movement that the working class is no longer prepared to fight have been confounded once again.

The NUS leadership has displayed cowardice in the face of the bosses' most powerful weapon—the anti-union laws. For its passive endorsement of the solidarity strikes, the union has faced sequestration of its £2.8m assets, together with damages, fines and legal costs. This has been the only result of one element of the leadership's strategy—legality at all costs.

Yet the miners' and printers' strikes have proved that the laws are designed to prevent precisely those forms of solidarity necessary to make any strike effective.

The trade union bureaucracy's fear of the laws was summed up by McCluskie after he ordered the return to work: 'We all knew this day had to come'. What an insult to strikers in Portsmouth, Harwich, Liverpool, Hull and Scotland who had been prepared to defy the laws to defend their union and their brothers and sisters in Dover.

Has this climb-down placated P&O and the Tory judges? Not a bit. Before restoring the NUS' assets they have now demanded an end to all effective picketing at Dover itself. McCluskie's response, 'We want to stay within the law', can only mean that he is ready to call off mass picketing and hand P&O victory on a plate.

The other element of the leadership's strategy has been negotiations with P&O's major rival Sealink for 'assistance' in return for lifting

action against their ferries. Sealink originally offered to take on 450 of the sacked P&O workers in summer 'jobs'. They put the screws on McCluskie by reducing the offer to 180 before he called off the strike. And it should not be forgotten that Sealink, far from being a friend of the P&O strikers, was the company that initiated the court action for the sequestration of NUS assets!

Sealink's real motivation is clear. They hope to gain fat profits at the expense of their competitors. The weakening of the NUS will benefit all shipowners in the long run. British Channel Ferries have already joined P&O in refusing to recognise the NUS. At the same time we have been confronted with the sickening spectacle of TUC General Secretary Norman Willis slavishly repeating Sealink's slogan: 'Sail Safe, Sail Sealink'.

The depth of the strikers' determination and the extent of the solidarity action shows what could have been accomplished. 180 strikers at Portsmouth only returned after forcing P&O to drop proposals for a 'no-strike' agreement. A third of the delegates at the recent Hull Conference of the NUS voted for a resolution rejecting the executive's 'deplorable recommendation'. Criticism of McCluskie was so severe that he walked off the platform.

To regain the initiative the mass pickets must be reinstated immediately. The use of the bosses' anti-union laws must be met with widespread strike action in ports up and down the country. Joint committees must be built to win action from dockers, railway workers and T&G drivers. International solidarity must be developed.

To achieve this seafarers must tackle the sell out individuals who run the union. Moves are afoot to create a new 'Broad Left' in the NUS, as has been argued for in the *Militant* newspaper. But if it concentrates simply on electing 'left' officials it will not succeed. McCluskie himself was the product of just such a campaign in the '1960s. ■

by Dave Green

Militant in power

Civil servants pay the price

Militant's 12 month reign in the CPSA ended in disaster when the right swept to power last month. It was a defeat rooted in Militant's centrist politics, argues *Jeremy Dewar*

MILITANT IS one of the largest tendencies on the British left that claims to be Marxist and Trotskyist. Militant's role in both Liverpool Council and the Labour Party Young Socialists, has proved the tendency to be a relatively significant force on the left of the Labour Party.

Yet the struggles in Liverpool and the LPYS went down to defeat. In the latter case *Militant* did not even bother to mount a fightback. Here was a 'Marxist' tendency making ever more concessions to the right wing of the Labour Party.

This fact speaks volumes about Militant's Marxism. Their Marxism is reserved for platform rhetoric. Their practice in the class struggle is not revolutionary. And the consequences of this can be disastrous for workers. Recent events in the largest Civil Service union, the CPSA, have demonstrated this all too clearly.

In May 1987, with the CPSA and SCPS in the middle of a national pay campaign of strike action, the Militant dominated CPSA Broad Left was swept into office. They won 19 out of the 29 seats on the National Executive Committee (NEC). Whilst not all 19 were Militant supporters, they were all elected on the Broad Left programme which was, in fact, Militant's. In May 1988 the same Broad Left, still controlled by Militant, failed to win a single seat. The right wing swept the board. This turn around is not primarily due to media hostility, or the sabotage of right

wing full timers, or the large turn-over of members as Militant claim. It is rooted in Militant's politics.

On taking control of the union, the NEC were faced with a pay campaign dangerously close to collapse. The strategy of selective and sporadic action was getting nowhere. An urgent escalation into all out action was needed if members' anger was not to turn into demoralisation. Yet the Broad Left hesitated. They refused to call out those offices already won to all out indefinite action. The NEC didn't even counter the anti-strike mouthings of the right wing general secretary John Ellis and the SCPS leaders who undemocratically called off their own action. Worse still, in most area groups as well as nationally, Militant wound down the Broad Left organisations!

Despite this, nearly 20,000 CPSA members voted for an all out, indefinite strike in June. In the run up to the ballot hardly any agitation for a 'yes' vote was organised, either officially or through the Broad Left. These 20,000 members, plus the thousands in the SCPS and other civil service unions who were refusing to cross picket lines despite their unions' sell-outs, should have been mobilised to defy the anti-union laws. They should have struck early and had the arguments out on the picket lines outside other offices, or addressing mass meetings inside them if necessary.

Strike committees in and across these offices, the best organised and most militant,

should have been encouraged by the NEC to take control of the strike. This was the best way to isolate Ellis, and Christie of the SCPS, and to win the vote for all out strike action. More importantly, revolutionaries could have used the strike to rally other sections of workers into action and set back Thatcher before she had got into the stride of her third term!

The defeat of 'Pay '87' was a major setback. Despite Militant's declaration that the 'Tories will interpret this vote as a sign of weakness at their peril' (*Militant* 17 July 1987), Thatcher did just that. It is to the eternal credit of CPSA's rank and file that they did not lie down and die. To Militant's shame, the same mistakes were repeated throughout the year.

Casualisation of the civil service in order to attack pay and conditions and to undermine the unions has been a major plank of the Tories' recent attacks. Limited Period Appointments (LPAs) were brought into the DHSS and YTS was introduced into the Department of Employment (DE). Both were resisted with strike action. Yet both struggles were kept isolated at the level of the individual offices. Militant supporter, Kevin Roddy, even rejected demands for a national strike against LPAs saying: 'The vote is not there to be won'. He said this, when over 40 offices were already on strike!

More recently, the London DE strike wave against job cuts and compulsory transfers was given no lead by the NEC. Rank and file militants had to build the strike themselves, without any help from the Broad Left. Militant's answer was a ballot for a London-wide strike three months into the dispute!

In both cases Militant failed to give a lead. Even on the basis of a purely militant trade union strategy, using existing struggles as a means of generalising a fight back throughout the union is ABC. When you control a union's executive as totally as Militant did then the possibility of campaigning to win support from the national union for vital struggles is much greater than normal. Why then didn't they do it?

Quite simply because their electoral success did not rest on a solid, rank and file base. Militant got into power on a wave of anger but did not use their power to consolidate the anger of the members into a powerful movement. Thus in power they have their eyes firmly fixed on the next elections. They were terrified of doing anything that would upset their chances of repeating their electoral success this year. In essence this meant not upsetting the right wing. For although the right were temporarily isolated at a leadership level they were in a stronger position—outside of the context of militant struggle—to play on the backward ideas of many of the CPSA's members, particularly those outside the big government departments. Thus Militant opted to appease the right, by refusing to generalise action, rather than openly confront them and thereby stand a chance of winning the mass of the members to a policy of class struggle.

Militant doesn't only have a bad track record at the level of trade union militancy. At a more general level this 'Marxist' tendency consistently refused to use its leadership of the CPSA to spearhead a campaign against 'new realism' inside the TUC.

John Macreadie has spent 12 months on the General Council. His most significant contributions—supporting FAB, opposing single union deals, calling for a one day General Strike to defend the NHS—have remained confined to Congress House.

The end result of Militant's cowardly policy has been a massacre, a night of the



Macreadie and Ellis

long knives on the NEC. Yet, their response to their defeat in the elections has been of a piece with their response to every other defeat. They acknowledged their trouncing as a setback, albeit a 'temporary' one, but added:

'This defeat represents only a pause in the leftward march of the CPSA. In the campaign to resist the government's attacks and overcome the right wing's collaboration with the government, support for Militant will grow dramatically in all sections of the union. This will be the pattern not just in the CPSA but throughout the trade union movement.' (*Militant* 13 May 1988)

Putting a brave face on it, or refusing to look reality in the face? We think the latter. Militant present political life in the unions and the Labour Party as though it were an ever upward progressive march. It isn't. Defeats weaken the working class. Setbacks strengthen right wing misleaders. And groups like Militant who try to appease the right in the name of 'Marxism' discredit the left in the eyes of many workers.

Our starting point in the CPSA is different. We appraise the election result for what it was—a defeat for the left and a triumph for the right. It is a defeat whose consequences can and must be combated by addressing the most urgent tasks facing CPSA rank and file militants. To do this we must break with Militant's chronic electoralism, with their strategy of building Broad Lefts as vote gathering machines on behalf of would-be left bureaucrats.

In the coming year, all members wishing to fight will be faced with a hostile, right wing executive. What this means in practice was revealed at the civil service unions' Conference last month. Both major unions (the CPSA and the NUCPS, formed by a merger of the old SCPS and CSU) are recommending their members accept a paltry pay offer of 4.5%. John Ellis even urged us to welcome the break up of the civil service by saying: 'The civil service unions must make the agency concept a success if we are not to face wholesale privatisation'. But the agencies are the Tories' chosen means to privatise us! This is craven grovelling before an employer on the offensive.

Workers Power recognises the need to organise against this retreat. The left should continue to fight for and use positions of leadership at all levels of the civil service unions. But we should do so clearly outlining a programme of action both to defeat the Tories and to go on the offensive to expand the welfare state under workers' control. We should also veto all work which maintains the state's control over the working class, such as immigration controls, trades and diplomatic services to South Africa and so on.

Most importantly, whilst fighting for leadership on these policies, we should make it clear that victory will depend, not on getting 'lefts' like Macreadie onto the General Council, but on transforming the unions from the bottom up into rank and file controlled, anti-capitalist organs of struggle. To do this, we need a civil service rank and file movement. ■

Reg Groves 1908—1988

Last month one of the few surviving founders of British Trotskyism died. To a wider working class audience Reg Groves will not be remembered for his contribution to the early 'dog-days' of the Trotskyist movement. After all, he became a conscious fighter for the ideas of the International Left Opposition only in 1931 and had by the end of 1937 broken with his comrades once and for all.

However, though limited in its political scope his opposition to Stalinism did help bring together a small group of communists who were to form the nucleus of British Trotskyism.

After his break with Trotskyism, Reg Groves went on to write *The Peasants Revolt of 1381, Rebels Oak, Sharpen the Sickle*. But perhaps his best work was written while still active in the Marxist League and published in 1938—*But We Shall Rise Again*—his history of the Chartist movement and an excellent defence of the revolutionary tradition of the British working class.

While in the Communist Party Groves found himself at odds with the ultra-left 'Third Period' line of the late 1920s. It was Harry Wicks' return from the Lenin school in Moscow in 1930 and Groves' coming across copies of the US Trotskyists' paper the *Militant* a year later that gave Groves' oppositionism an internationalist dimension. He was made aware of the dangerous course being steered by the Comintern in Germany with its refusal to join with the reformists in common action to defeat Hitler.

Direct contact with the US Trotskyists at the end of 1931 convinced Groves and the 'Balham Group' of oppositionists in the British CP to publish a clandestine paper but not yet to constitute a section of the ILO. Events moved rapidly, however and the leadership's intolerance of any criticism led to Groves' expulsion in August 1932.

But Groves never really came to terms with the tasks of a small group of thirty,

heterogeneous in their political make-up. Although a very cultured worker himself he resisted the efforts of the Communist League to prioritise propaganda on general problems of programme and perspective for the international movement which was engulfed in crisis after crisis in the 1930s and was the key to winning and orienting communist cadre for the future.

He counterposed to this the need for mass work in the working class aimed at addressing their immediate needs. In part this was behind his resistance to taking Trotsky's advice and entering the ILP to take advantage of its political crisis. Groves preferred work in the main reformist party—the Labour Party—which had less to offer the Trotskyists in the 1933-35 period simply because it was more rooted in the broader sections of the working class. This organic opportunism led him to respond to his being prevented attending the 1934 Labour Party conference as a delegate, due to his Communist League membership, by dissolving it and forming the Marxist League in 1934, which Trotsky correctly called 'a vague centrist trend'.

After this Groves joined the Socialist League and became prominent in the leadership. With the demise of the Socialist League in 1937 Groves' disillusionment and impatience was complete. His residual 'Trotskyism' was a barrier to the deepening of his work in the unions and Labour Party. Henceforth, he devoted himself to reformism and after the war even returned to his roots in Christian socialism.

Groves abandoned Trotskyism just at the time when its first programmatic codification was being written—The Transitional Programme—and on the eve of the foundation of the Fourth International. As we prepare to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of these events we should commemorate Reg Groves' contribution to laying the foundation stones of its presence in these islands. ■

'Tyrants, believe and tremble!'

The example of Chartism proves there is a revolutionary tradition in the British working class writes *Stuart King*

'The era of Chartism is immortal in that over the course of a decade it gives us in condensed and diagrammatic form the whole gamut of proletarian struggle—from petitions in parliament to armed insurrection. All the fundamental problems of the class movement of the proletariat . . . were not only crystallised out of the progress of the Chartist mass movement, but found in it their principled answer.' (*Trotsky 1925*)

CHARTISM BURST into British politics one hundred and fifty years ago in May 1838. Described by Engels as 'The first working men's party the world ever produced', it shook British capitalism to its foundations, mobilising hundreds of thousands of working men and women in a fight to transform society. Its spectacular failure during the revolutionary upsurge of 1848 marked its end as a mass force.

The ensuing decades saw the accumulation of all the religious, pacifist and reformist baggage which clutters the ideas of the British working class movement to this day. But the example of Chartism disproves those who say that 'revolution is not in our tradition'. One hundred and fifty years later the Labour left's policies are still dwarfed by the words and deeds of the Chartist workers.

Class rule in Britain was far from secure in the 1830s; it had only just survived a major political crisis. A powerful alliance of the new factory owners, the urban middle class and the factory workers had forced the landed aristocracy to grant the Reform Act of 1832. This gave the vote to the employers and middle class.

The Reform Act split in two the mass movement that had won it. As the 'middle class' scrambled to secure for themselves parliamentary office and influence they were only too happy to ditch the mass of workers whose 'riotous assemblies' had frightened the landlords into submission.

Chartism was born out of this betrayal. The first act of the 'reformed' parliament was to crush the emerging mass trade union movement—the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union. In 1834 Lord Grey's Whig (forerunners of today's Liberal Party) government set up the notorious 'workhouse system' of forced labour for poor relief. Little wonder then that this mass of impoverished 'factory hands' threw itself behind the campaign of 'The Charter'.

The Charter was a programme of democratic demands drawn up by the London Working Men's Association (LWMA) in 1838. It called for votes for all adult men, the secret ballot, annual elections, equal electoral districts, the payment of MPs and the abolition of the 'property qualification' which barred workers from standing for parliament. But its demands were not an end in themselves. They were seen by the mass of workers as a means of abolishing the evils that flourished in early capitalism—poverty, starvation, child labour, the 16 or even 18 hour working day. The workers' failure to improve their situation through industrial conflict repeatedly focused their attention on political democracy as the way of ending exploitation.

The LWMA was a 'moderate' group, largely made up of skilled artisans and craftsmen. Its leaders came to be known as the 'moral force' wing of Chartism.

William Lovett, a cabinet maker and LWMA leader, for example, detested violence, even the just violence of the oppressed. So he put his faith in the power of moral persuasion as the means of giving workers the vote. His moderation in the end did not save

him from the oppressor's gaols.

Lovett drew up the Charter, along with Francis Place, specifically as a bill for Radical MPs to support in parliament. Such was their concern to win support from the 'Radicals' that Lovett and Place refused to criticise them, even when they condemned trade union action in parliament.

In opposition to the LWMA's 'moderation' a different strand of Chartism emerged. Led by George Julian Harney, Bronterre O'Brien and Feargus O'Connor, the 'physical force' wing of Chartism attempted to combine the radical Jacobinism of the French Revolution with a social programme for the working class. They were not socialists in the modern sense, but their demands rallied thousands of workers to the strategy of insurrection as the means of gaining the Charter.

Their great political strength lay in the recognition that only the workers, organised independently of the bosses, could win the Charter.

The Charter was launched as a huge petition at a series of mass meetings in 1838. At the first meeting in Glasgow there were 150,000. Four months later, a quarter of a million gathered on Kersal Moor outside Manchester to vote for the petition and elect delegates to a national Chartist convention.

The mood of these meetings was reflected in the banners and slogans carried by the workers: 'For children and wife we'll war to the knife', 'Bread and Revolution' and 'Tyrants, believe and tremble!'. Tremble they did. In addition to the meetings, widespread drilling of armed detachments and sporadic guerilla attacks on the army took place. And the ruling class had little of the repressive national or-



rganisations of the modern state.

In this atmosphere the General Convention of Industrious Classes—the Chartist 'parliament'—met in London in February 1839. It was immediately posed with the question: what to do when Parliament threw out the 1,200,000 signature petition? In the end the 'moral force' wing carried the day; deciding on a whole series of measures including striking for one month, withdrawing money from the banks, maintaining arms, and abstaining from alcohol! Harney protested:

'The only one of the plans proposed here, which appears to me feasible is the "National Holiday" and this I am prepared to show means nothing less than insurrection.'

But although the physical force-ists conducted widespread propaganda for an insurrectionary general



Attack on Stockport workhouse, 1842

strike, they had no organisation to achieve it.

When the Convention re-assembled in Birmingham the police attacked a mass meeting in the Bull Ring, provoking several days of pitched battles. When parliament rejected the petition by 235 to 46, the Chartists made a half-hearted attempt to call a general strike. It had only patchy support because workers could see it was only a gesture.

Mass repression followed. Arrests and imprisonment left over 500 Chartists in gaol by spring 1840, including O'Connor, Lovett, O'Brien and many other leaders. Meanwhile local Chartist groups launched armed risings in Bradford and Sheffield. In Newport soldiers fired on a 20,000 strong march of miners and iron workers killing at least ten Chartists and provoking the legendary Newport Uprising.

With the temporary triumph of reaction, workers turned again to the struggle over wages and conditions. In 1842 a dramatic recession produced wage cuts and mass redundancies in the mining and textile sectors. By the summer mass starvation and homelessness cast a terrible shadow over the workers' districts. Starting with a miners' strike in Staffordshire, a rolling general strike began which engulfed Lancashire and Yorkshire. Day after day workers marched through the industrial towns, 'turning out' the workers mill by mill, confronting the army and organising daily mass meetings of up to 20,000 people in every town.

Although the slogan of the strike was for 'a fair day's pay for a fair day's work', at every mass meeting the demand for the Charter found immediate and spontaneous support. John Muirhouse, a Chartist worker, addressing one of the first strike meetings in Hyde, spelt out the connection between the wages struggle and politics:

'My friends and fellow workmen I

must inform you that we are not met here for a wages question or a religious question, we are met here for a national question . . . we will proceed from factory to factory and all the hands that will not willingly come out we will turn them out, until the Charter which is the only guarantee you have for your wages, becomes the law of the land.'

A series of 'trades conferences' culminated in a Grand Delegate Conference in Manchester on 15 August. Meeting for two days, the conference of strike delegates elected an executive and sent out delegates to every region to spread the general strike.

The National Charter Association, meeting immediately after, also issued the call for a general strike. The conflict spread to London, where large crowds surrounded the railway stations as army regiments embarked for the north to put down the strike.

At its height the strike involved half a million workers. No longer able to castigate them as 'riotous mobs' the bosses press had to report that the strike committees were effectively running society: issuing vouchers to shopkeepers, considering requests for exemption from bosses, organising food or welfare.

The strike was eventually crushed by military force and starvation; not inevitably, but because the Chartist leaders had no policy of armed insurrection and could not decide to link the Charter unconditionally to the economic demands and violent actions of the workers.

After a four year period of retreat a renewed economic recession and the revolutionary wave sweeping Europe brought Chartism alive again as a mass force. A third petition was drawn up in 1848 and the Chartist Convention decided on a mass meeting at Kennington Common in London. From there it was planned to march to Westminster and present the petition. Despite the intentions of

the leadership, both government and workers interpreted this as a call for insurrection. Estimates vary from twenty thousand to half a million for the crowd that gathered on 10 April 1848.

It found every bridge across the Thames barred with police and cannon, every major building sand-bagged and occupied by troops, but O'Connor appeared and pacified the crowd. At the crucial moment once again, even the physical force leaders were lost for a strategy to turn the insurrectionary mood of the workers into power.

Chartism represented a turning point in the history of the British class struggle. It was a struggle fought with ideas inherited from the French bourgeois revolution, but fought by workers, and with the methods of working class struggle—the mass strike, the flying picket, strike committees, workers' councils and the workers' militia. At its most radical, the programme of the physical force Chartists was a fusion of democratic and 'social' demands. Political democracy was to be the means to ending economic slavery. But in so far as it had a social goal, Chartism envisaged only the schemas of the utopian socialists.

Ruling class and labourite historians have worked for years to diminish the significance of Chartism, to render it a safe subject for the school syllabus, a 'tragic failure' or a 'hopeless dream'.

For us, as for Trotsky, the history of Chartism has a different meaning:

'The British working class can and must see in Chartism not only its past but also its future. As the Chartists tossed aside the sentimental preachers of moral force and gathered the masses behind the banner of revolution, so the British proletariat is faced with ejecting reformists, democrats and pacifists in its midst and rallying to the banner of a revolutionary overturn.' ■

The right on the rampage

by Helen Ward

AFTER THREE election defeats Labour's leadership has embarked on a radical review. Purging the left, combined with evading difficult issues at the last election, still didn't get Kinnock into office. It required a new set of policies to convince the bosses and middle class voters that Labour was fit to govern.

So Labour decided to become the 'Listening Party'—listening to 'the people' to find out what they wanted. Every previously held position of the Party is up for grabs. If it doesn't appeal to popular opinion then it will have to go. For Kinnock this has meant dropping the supposedly unpopular old shibboleths of Labourism—nationalisation, taxing the rich to provide welfare for the poor, and unilateral nuclear disarmament.

However, like the high street bank which shares the 'listening' slogan, one point of policy is sacred. That is their unwavering commitment to managing capitalism in the interests of the bosses. This fundamental position is shared by the old guard Labourites and the new realists alike.

The first phase of the policy review is now bearing fruit. At the NEC on 25 May seven draft documents were passed which codify the kind of manifesto which the leadership want. The positions in these drafts show just who Kinnock has been listening to. The media, the academic election watchers and most importantly those sections of the bosses who fear the future of the economy under Thatcher. They have clearly not listened to the health workers, the seafarers, the unemployed and others struggling against the devastating effects of Thatcherism on their lives.

Gould and Kinnock are pushing through a set of policies for the looming recession. They want Labour to enter the next election ready to take over an ailing economy suffering from the end of oil money, with unemployment still high and the trade deficit mounting. Their economic documents, "A Productive and Competitive Economy" and "Economic Equality", present an argument for investment in industry rather than the current expansion in consumer goods which fails to tackle the underlying problem of British capital's lack of competitiveness. To reorientate the economy like this, pay cuts will be needed to cut down on credit-financed consumption. Gould's whole policy is for a government which recognises that market processes 'do of course spur competition, stimulate innovation and widen consumer choice'. Nationalisation has gone, replaced by methods of ensuring government influence in essential service monopolies like Gas, railways and Telecom.

On the direction of indus-

try Labour would ensure that 'government agencies and local authorities work in partnership with firms, the CBI, trade associations, chambers of commerce so that the process of policy making and industrial development is one of concerted action'. Unlike previous Labour plans for tripartite industrial bodies, where the government, the employers and the unions got together, this new policy fails to give the unions even a nominal role.

The other major policy which alienated the bosses at the last election was unilateral nuclear disarmament. Rather than tackle this issue immediately the details of defence policy have been left to the second year of the review. What is already clear is that the non-nuclear defence strategy is going to be much more 'flexible', with Kinnock accepting that a non-nuclear Britain would still be part of the nuclear umbrella in NATO. The debate on this will probably be the most heated at this year's party conference, since many of Kinnock's supporters cling to unilateral nuclear disarmament whilst supporting his right wing moves on everything else.

The Labour left only ever fought against Britain's nuclear weapons, arguing they have no role in the overall military strategy of British imperialism. So they themselves were disarmed when, during the election, Kinnock presented his 'non-nuclear policy' in the jingoistic voice of the 'big Navy' lobby. Even this proved too dangerous for the British ruling class, leaving Kinnock with the still unfinished task of ditching nuclear disarmament altogether.

The seven policy documents were passed easily at the NEC. Only 4 people opposed them—Benn, Skinner, Livingstone and Douglas. This indicates just how marginalised the left has become in the leadership. The documents will sail through conference thanks to the union block votes. Kinnock and Gould's arguments about the need to capture the minds and votes of the yuppies, which they failed to do in the last election have obviously won the support of wide sections of the party and the unions. They have conceded to Thatcherism the ideological ground of individualism and the get-rich quick mentality to which she appeals.

The policy review will not fundamentally change the nature of Labour as a working class party with a pro-capitalist programme and leadership. But it will represent a defeat for those sections of the Labour left within the party who have, under pressure from the workers who support Labour, fought for policies which represent in a limited way their immediate interests. ■

TONY BENN has called his fight for the Labour leadership a 'campaign for socialism'. Already the union block votes are lining up to make sure that 'socialism' runs a poor third at the October party conference. But for once this is not just a product of bureaucratic control. Millions of workers remain unimpressed by Benn's campaign. As a practical alternative to Kinnockism it is a fight over too little, too late.

Since Kinnock and Hattersley were elected in 1983 the Labour left has failed to fight. When the miners were locked in battle nobody challenged Kinnock for leadership despite his record of betrayal and condemnation of the strike. Even as Eric Heffer walked out of the 1985 party conference in protest at Kinnock's attack on Liverpool he and Benn were walking away from a fight for the leadership.

Election time reduced the left to silence. 'We have to be the most loyal to party policy' Benn said, while Kinnock and co tore up policy after policy at the bidding of the employers. Even the suspension of Sharon Atkin as prospective parliamentary candidate for Nottingham East, after she labelled Labour as racist, failed to produce a public protest from the Campaign Group.

Only now, when they have least chance of rocking the boat, and least chance of winning, have Benn and Heffer summoned up the courage to take on Kinnock himself.

Betrayers

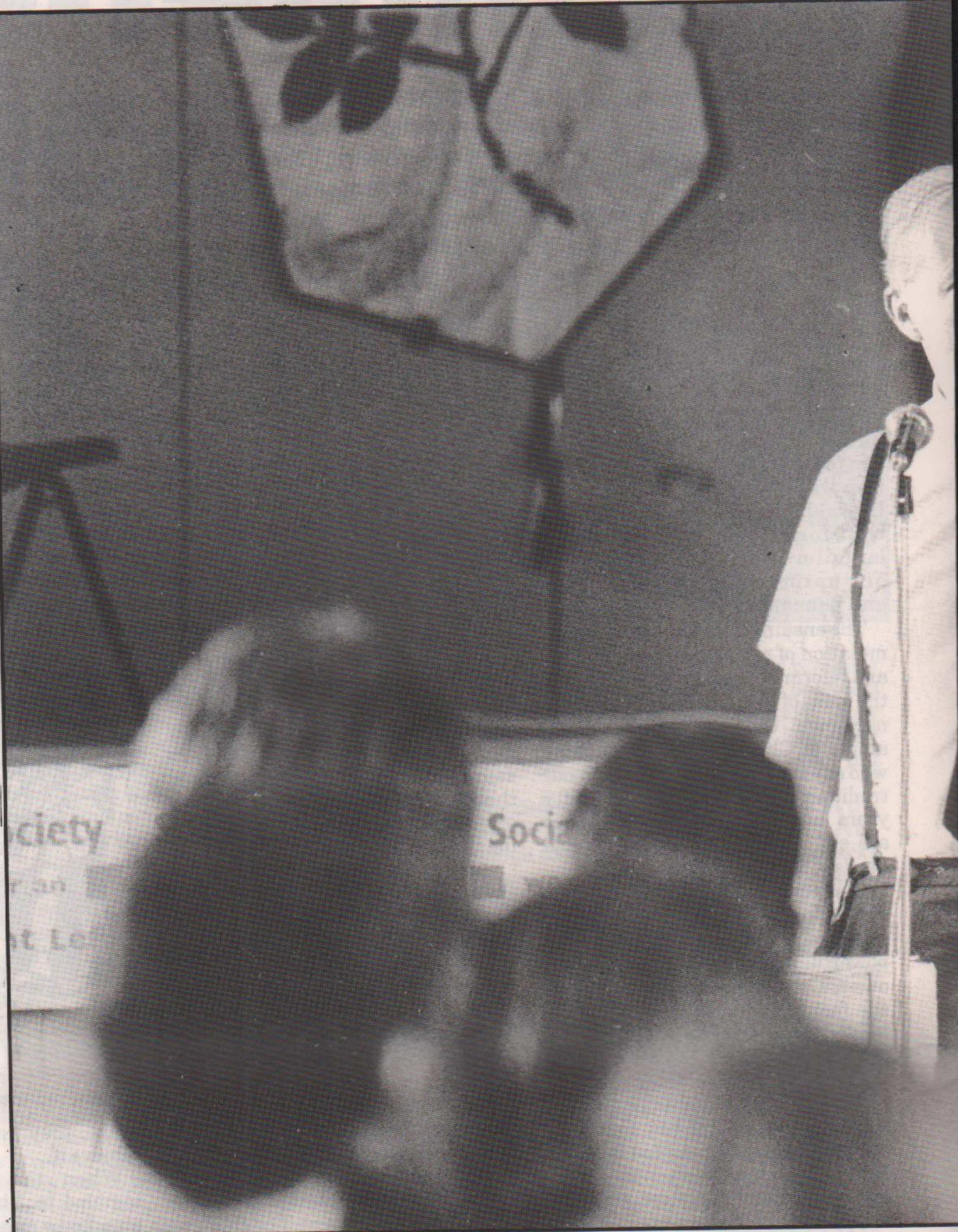
Throughout the years he failed to fight, Benn justified his stance with the maxim 'politics not personalities'. Pointing to individual traitors was labelled as 'counter-productive' by Benn. It would certainly have been a full-time occupation! Not only have Kinnock and Willis continued to betray the working class. So too have whole sections of the Labour left in local government like Linda Bellos and David Bookbinder.

Having decided to challenge Kinnock for leadership, Benn's concern to de-personalise the contest has still not gone away. Instead of naming the traitors and cataloguing their crimes, Benn has chosen to fight on the moral high ground of 'socialist principles'. What this means in practice is a policy of diplomacy.

Rather than exposing the witch-hunters, the corrupt MPs, the betrayers of Wapping and of the seafarers' dispute, in order to challenge their leadership and kick them from office, Benn prefers a less confrontational approach.

Benn advocates a 'battle of ideas' with the Labour right. But it is precisely on the terrain of ideas that Benn's campaign is at its weakest.

Benn's platform 'Aims and Objectives of the Labour Party' starts from a defence of democratic rights and 'socialist' principles. The right to life, the right to work, the right to a decent standard of living... rights which, when left at the level of abstract principle, no Labour Party member, of the left or



right, could disagree with and still claim to be any sort of socialist. Indeed Kinnock's own policy review documents include such grand 'aims' as to 'banish want and poverty from Britain'. Without a concrete guide to how they can be achieved there is little to differentiate Benn's 'aims' and beliefs from those of Kinnock.

Take for example the Campaign Group statement that: 'We believe that the people of every nation have the right to govern themselves and to be free from any form of colonial or imperial domination.'

If this means that Benn and Heffer are against the imperialist domination of Ireland by Britain then they should say so and argue for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. On this Kinnock would disagree fundamentally, arguing that the Loyalists 'right to self-determination' means granting them a veto over the question of a united Ireland. Benn and Heffer's 'beliefs' avoid clarifying where they stand on such issues.

Differences

The main point of divergence between Benn/Heffer and Kinnock becomes clearer where the 'Aims and Objectives' document says:

'These rights cannot be fully realised in any society under capitalism which has entrenched by law the power of capital over labour and subordinated human values to the

demand for profit at the expense of peace and social justice.'

So how can capitalism be abolished? How can the laws which protect it be overcome? In 'The policies we want' Benn and Heffer spell out their strategy on the economy and the state. In doing so they reveal that much of what they call 'socialist principle' is in fact the capitalist practicality of the post-war years.

As a means for guaranteeing the right to work, Benn and Heffer call for the 'common ownership' of the commanding heights of the economy, the banks and the land, under 'democratic control and management'. The first problem is that they do not mention compensation. If this means Benn and Heffer are in favour of no compensation to the bosses,

then we agree. To take away the property of the employers without compensation is to expropriate them, destroy them as a class and take a major step towards production for need not profit.

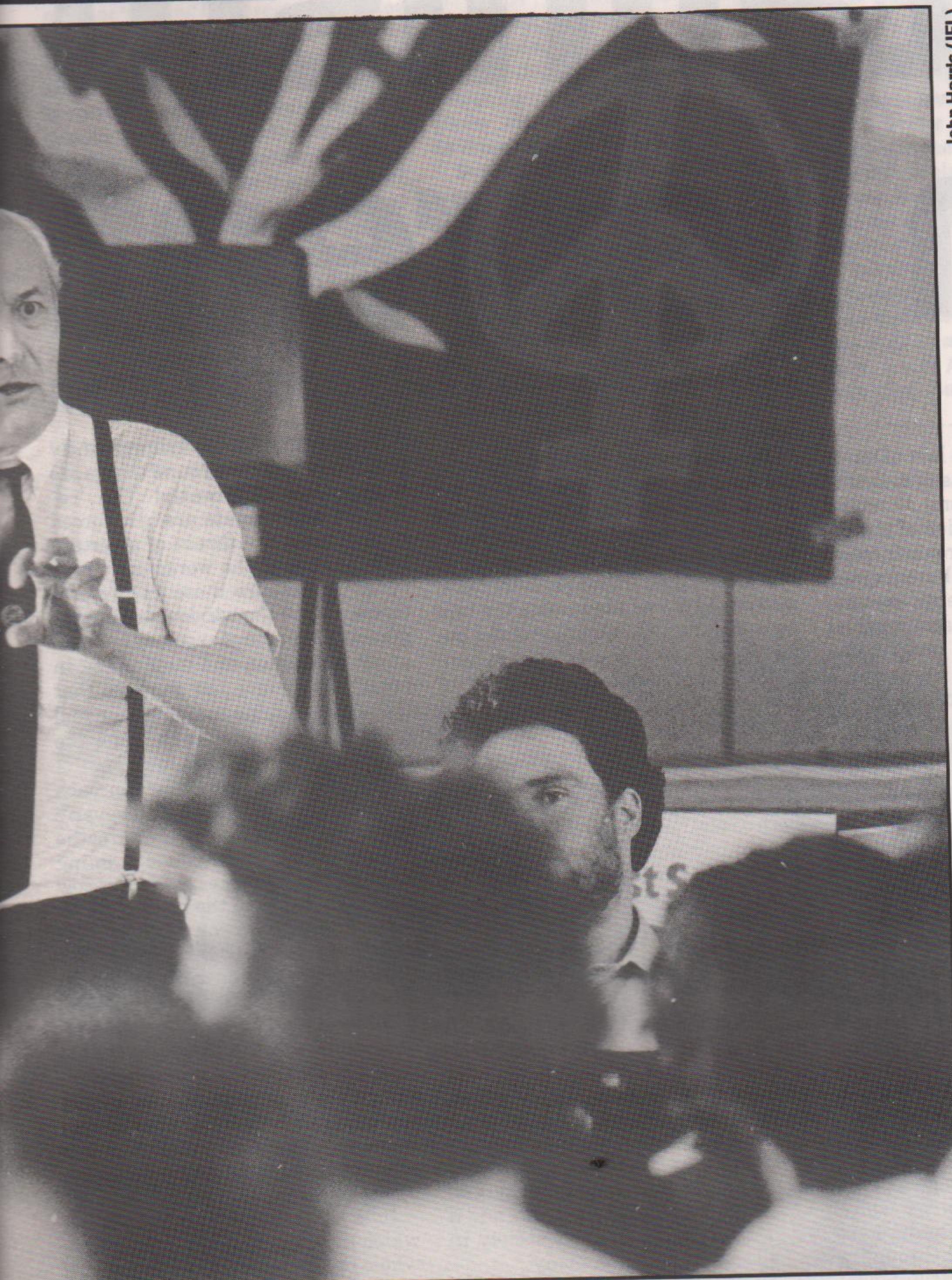
But there is nothing in their record to suggest this is what they mean. The 1945 Labour government, held up by generations of the Labour left for its nationalisation policy, compensated the capitalists to the tune of millions. So much so that British Coal even today pays out a fortune in compensation to the old coal mine-owning families. These payments will continue until the day Cecil Parkinson sells BC back to the modern energy conglomerates. State-capitalist nationalisation doesn't abolish capitalism.

by Julian

Too too

T IN CRISIS

HEFFER



John Harris (IFL)

of a union or a whole industry is at stake, it is necessary to advocate and organise breaking the law—the illegal defence of picket lines, the illegal call for solidarity action, illegal secondary pickets, illegal occupation of union offices against sequestration.

Benn and Heffer may have appeared on the picket lines and even cheered on law-breaking workers' struggles and Labour councils but they have never advocated and organised such action. Nor do they see it as an integral element of the fight for socialism. It flies in the very face of the strategy outlined by Benn in Arguments for Democracy:

'To ask the British labour movement to abandon democracy and go for a short cut to socialism by some coup d'etat is to ask us to repudiate our history, we will never do it, so long as the route to peaceful change remains open to us.' (p178)

Illusion

The socialist revolution is not a 'coup d'etat' carried out behind the backs of the masses. But revolutionary socialism does start from the fact that the 'peaceful road' is an illusion. It recognises the roots of the future workers' state in the very organisations workers are obliged to throw up by the attacks of the state; councils of action, strike committees, picket line defence teams. And it recognises the need for a party to lead the fight: a party which does not rest idly on its often vague socialist principles, but offers a guide to action now.

Labour can never be transformed into such a party. It is a party whose politics are dictated by the union leaders and the parliamentary leadership, and which exists to manage capitalism.

Benn thinks otherwise. He believes, despite the history of six Labour governments, every one of which loyally served the bosses and attacked the living standards and organisations of the working class, that Labour has a socialist heart and soul that can be rediscovered by an appeal to 'principles'. For an example of how quickly principles are dragged through the mud once the Labour Party is in office we need only look at the 'hard left' Labour councils. One by one over the last twelve months they have turned on those they are meant to serve, cutting services and sacking workers. In line with Benn's advice they refused to 'renounce their history' or go beyond a local 'democracy' rendered impotent by the law.

The splendid isolation of Benn and Heffer from political responsibility is all that separates them from this fate, hence their reticence to name the traitors.

'Bennism' is a set of ideas useless to a capitalist class outside a major crisis and inadequate for the working class in any period. It has more in common with the capitalism of yesterday than the socialism of tomorrow.

Its aims, beliefs and principles are nothing but sugar coating on Labour's familiar medicine for the ailing capitalist system. ■

for abolition of the monarchy), administered by the democratised police force and cheerfully waved through by the armed forces.

It is not some theory in the heads of revolutionary socialists which makes us think this is an impossibility. It is the lesson of history. The Chilean coup of 1973, the Turkish coup of 1980, the US invasion of Grenada are just the most graphic and recent examples of the role of the 'apparatus of the state' where capitalism is threatened. Even against the Wilson government in the 1960s British intelligence and defence chiefs plotted coups and dirty tricks.

Even the most democratic bourgeois parliament could not legislate socialism because it could not control the state machine. That machine exists to protect capitalism; to destroy the profit system we first need to destroy its armed guards, replacing the army, police, courts and state bureaucracy with a regime of workers' democracy, exercised through workers' councils (soviets) and a workers' militia.

This too is not just a difference of 'principle' between revolutionaries and the Labour left. It is a practical difference every time workers are faced with the police on the picket line, or court seizure of union funds. The campaign document's sanctimonious phrase 'there is no moral obligation to obey unjust laws' is hardly a guide to action. Where the life or death

that the employers have no use for, and which the working class cannot see any peaceful way of achieving.

Which brings us to the question of the state. Benn and Heffer recognise that capitalism is 'entrenched by law'. How do they propose to overcome this obstacle? The campaign document calls for 'a major programme of democratic reform of the apparatus of the state'—abolition of the House of Lords, democratisation of the courts and local control over the police.

For all Benn's talk of building socialism 'from the bottom up' this democratic reform programme holds massive illusions in parliament and the state as the vehicle for socialism. It is a socialism which will be enacted by parliament, and assented to by the Queen (nowhere does the campaign call

little late

Cholefield

In fact its role for the British bosses after 1945 was to save capitalism, running essential industries at a loss in order to keep the whole profit machine ticking over.

Benn is unclear on this issue in general, and specifically on the question of re-nationalisation of the industries privatised by the Tories.

Tragedy

This highlights the 'tragedy' of left Labourism. At times of extreme crisis for the bosses, its programme of state intervention, ownership and economic nationalism (expressed in the left's call for various forms of import controls) is used to bail out the system. At all other times it is left with a strategy

SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

Fight new realism

by Chris Ramsey

LAST YEAR 2000 people attended the first Chesterfield conference. This year the organisers expect even more. A veritable Socialist Conference industry has been set up, with regional conferences, newsletters and discussion papers. And many local Campaign Groups have now been formed.

Precisely what they are 'campaigning' for is not clear. It doesn't seem to be for Benn and Heffer's leadership challenge. Not only did one of last year's key 'socialist' speakers, Dawn Primarolo, leave the Campaign Group over the issue of Benn challenging Kinnock, but rank and file activity in support of Benn and Heffer in the Labour Party and the unions has been minimal so far.

What the Socialist Conference organisers seem to be campaigning for is... more conferences. These will provide a comfortable home for hundreds of Labour lefts who find it too difficult to really fight for their 'socialism' in the Labour Party and the unions.

Although opposed to creating a new party, the organisers nevertheless find refuge in debating policy documents. Unfortunately, these parallel rather than challenge the new realist policy review in the Labour Party.

Many people who attend these conferences believe that these gatherings can become an organising focus for left campaigns—on women's rights, anti-racism, the fight against Section 28—and a forum for debate. The desire to build a fighting wing of the labour movement which takes up these issues is healthy—it contrasts with the craven capitulation to the bosses and the Tories which characterises the new realist policies of the present leaders. But where was the Chesterfield movement in the seafarers' dispute as McCluskie urged compromise and sell-out? Benn congratulates the left for forcing the NEC to pass a

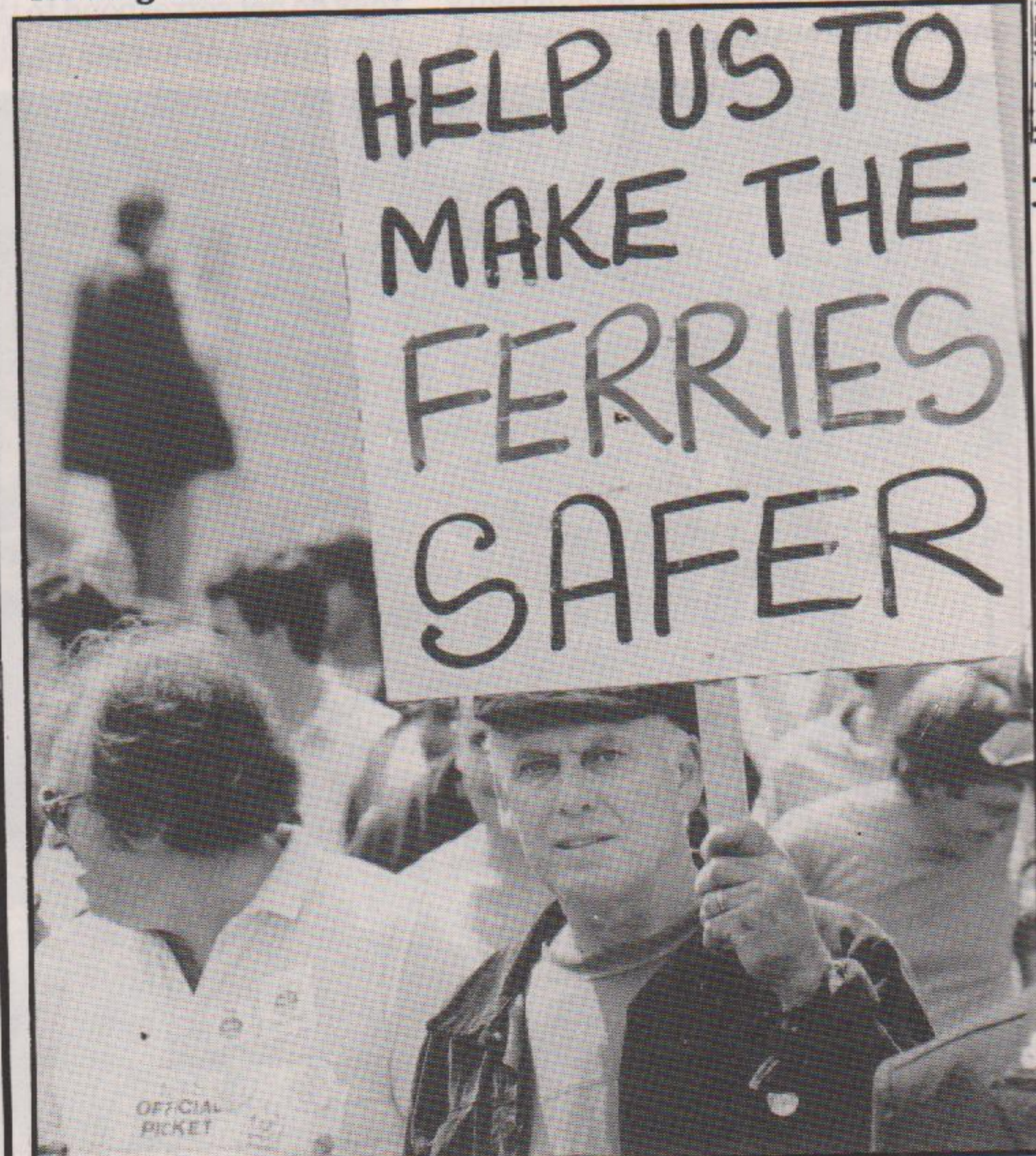
resolution in support of the dispute and urges activists to raise money and offer support. But what was needed was a clear call for defying the law, massive solidarity action and the organisation of physical defence of the picket line and the NUS headquarters.

This example highlights the weaknesses of the Chesterfield 'movement'. There was agreement on aims, discussion of principles but no common commitment to action by the leaders or the activists. The fight against new realism will not be won or lost in the pages of Campaign Group News, but on the picket lines, the demonstrations and at union conferences, by fighting the misleaders at every turn.

The second Chesterfield conference will only contribute to this struggle if it commits its supporters to building such joint action. One of the key tasks it should undertake is to take the Benn/Heffer campaign into all levels of the unions and Labour Party with meetings and arguments, inviting them into workplaces and branches. Left union leaders must be called on to organise a campaign for support in their unions.

Any MP or trade union leader who refuses to support Benn/Heffer must be written off as useless in the struggle against new realism. Benn and Heffer's policies are no answer to new realism, but they must be forced to head a movement of resistance to the wholesale sell-outs of the right wing. We will support them by trying to build such a movement.

By linking the leadership campaign to a practical defence of workers' interests the limitations of their political leadership will become clearer. So will the limitations of the socialist conference movement. Founded on the refusal to build a revolutionary combat party, it will continue to fail the working class in the test of struggle. ■



John Harris (IFL)

P&O: Where was the 'movement'?

Perestroika

Jack Tully reviews
The challenge: economics of perestroika
 by Abel Aganbegyan
 (Hutchinson, the Second World 1988
 £8.95 248pp)

ANYONE WHO is any doubt about the right wing logic of Gorbachev's economic reforms should read this book. Aganbegyan, a 56 year old Armenian economist, is one of the leading ideological forces behind Gorbachev's movement.

Aganbegyan's book, as yet unpublished in the USSR, is designed to seduce Western intellectuals into supporting Gorbachev not only in the sphere of arms reduction (that job is largely done), but also in terms of his 'restructuring' (*perestroika*) of the Soviet economy. It is also a clear invitation to the ruling class in the capitalist West to take advantage of the possibilities (for capital!) being opened up by Gorbachev through forming joint stock companies with the Soviet bureaucracy.

Despite being written in an unimaginably turgid style, the book does give some useful insights into how the leading sections of the bureaucracy view Gorbachev's programme, how they situate it in the history of the USSR, and what price the Soviet working class is going to pay.

The basic message of *perestroika*—the policy and the book—can be summed up in two words: the market. Aganbegyan repeats this point mercilessly, contrasting the 'administrative mechanism' of planning (i.e. the bureaucratic plan) with the 'economic mechanism' (i.e. the market), singing the praises of the latter. He makes quite clear what exactly this will mean:

'The adoption of this economic management mechanism will greatly increase the role of prices, of finance and credit conditions, and of incentives to work' and 'Under the new conditions of economic management salary levels will be more and more linked to the quantity and quality of work.'

Enterprise

The whole argument of Gorbachev, Aganbegyan and co is that the major brake on Soviet industrial development is the bureaucratic plan, and that this must be replaced by a greatly increased role for the market. This implies that prices will rise as high as the market can stand, with the enterprise determining prices and reaping the benefits. Wages will be based on work done, inevitably implying an increase in productivity and the oppression of Soviet workers.

Aganbegyan is careful to skirt round the key problem of subsidised meat and milk prices, arguing repeatedly that these prices will only be determined after 'democratic discussion' with the workers. The reason for this is obvious: were the bureaucracy to allow the 'social wage' to be attacked by letting food prices rip, they would be in severe danger of provoking a massive response from the Soviet workers.

What does this project imply for the post-capitalist nature of the Soviet economy? Aganbegyan deals with this point by asserting that there will be no attack on the 'socialist' nature of the USSR. There will continue to be no private property, no stocks and shares, no capitalists. Initially this is true. This is not the object of Gorbachev's reforms. But there is a logic within his plans which will enormously encourage restorationist forces within the USSR.

Plan

The economy of the USSR is based upon the bureaucratic plan, a plan which acts against the law of value, the fundamental law of capitalism. This law asserts that all commodities—including labour power—are exchanged at their value, with value being determined by the amount of socially necessary labour time needed to produce the commodity under the particular historical conditions. Although the selling price of any commodity is not equal to its value it is based on it, and the sum total of values equals the sum total of prices paid. One consequence is that investment is directed not according to need, but according to the profit an individual capitalist thinks can be made.

A great gain of the October 1917 Revolution was to suppress the law of value as a general tendency in the Russian economy. This gain remains, despite the distortion of 60 years of Stalinist bureaucratic rule and mismanagement. Resources are directed and prices are fixed according to the plan, which the bureaucrats attempt to elaborate on the basis of their perception of the needs of the USSR, and on what they think the working class can be persuaded to accept. Thus, although there is a dire shortage of certain products such as meat, the prices are extremely low, as part of the 'social wage'. To allow the 'market' to determine prices would, in the final analysis, mean a massive increase in the role of the law of value. Aganbegyan acknowledges this when he complains:

'The system of pricing is excessively rigid and centralised so that prices may not reflect reality because they do not correspond to the costs incurred and efficiency in the produc-

tion of goods'.

Although letting the law of value rip would not in and of itself mean the recreation of capitalism, it would both weaken the situation of the Soviet working class and create increasing tensions within the bureaucracy, allowing space for openly restorationist currents to grow and put their counter-revolutionary programme into practice. Under Gorbachev's plans the workers will be faced with demands for increasing productivity and cuts in living standards as prices increase under the impact of the law of value. Despite the protestations of Aganbegyan, unemployment will grow as workers are 'sacked and inefficient productive units are closed'. Further, an increasing number of these workers will be *exploited* as the western capitalists invest in joint stock companies.

Enterprises will be encouraged to engage in 'economic emulation'—an old Stalinist euphemism for competition. The inevitable tendency will be for managers and directors of the factories to wish to keep a certain part of the surplus for themselves. Whether they realise it or not, the advocates of *perestroika* will encourage openly counter-revolutionary forces which will finally be forced to try and restore capitalism to the USSR through a bloody civil war. Neither the Soviet working class, nor the international proletariat, has any interest in seeing this happen. Quite the opposite: this reactionary project will have to be stopped.

As Aganbegyan explains, the CPSU proposes to largely do away with the Plan. The central planning mechanisms will simply determine the general lines of economic development. It will then be up to each enterprise to fulfill the plan over its five year duration. There will be no question of continual bureaucratic checking up as there is now, which, as a few choice examples given in the book show, quickly lead to enormous inefficiency and bureaucratic bun-

gling.

Despite the audacity of the scale of *perestroika*, the central idea is not new to the USSR. Aganbegyan shows quite clearly how the Soviet bureaucracy attempted much the same kind of restructuring in the 1950s and 60s, and implicitly demonstrates the link between the political crisis of the bureaucracy and its attempts at economic reform. Following the death of Stalin in 1953 and following the overthrow of Khrushchev in 1964, attempts were made to increase the role of the market at the expense of the central planning mechanism. In both cases they failed.

Aganbegyan's account of the post-Khrushchev period is particularly interesting because he was personally involved in the commissions that tried to enforce the previous reform attempts. The failure of this attempt was extremely important in determining the political programme of a whole layer of young intellectuals and bureaucrats, such as Gorbachev and Aganbegyan. As Aganbegyan himself points out, the three main conclusions drawn by these people were as follows:

1. 'A fundamental restructuring can only succeed if it is complex and if it involves the whole of society, in all sectors of the economy'.
2. The restructuring should not be administered by GOSPLAN (the central planning agency), but by a government commission.
3. 'It is necessary to have the strongest possible democratisation of society. This is an indispensable condition for succeeding with the restructuring.'

Levers

In order to carry out this plan, Gorbachev and his co-thinkers have had to wait until they had the decisive levers of the Soviet state in their hands. The recalcitrant behaviour of the GOSPLAN organs in the 1965-6 period obviously left its mark on

Mikhail Gorbachev's 'perestroika' has rocked the Stalinist world. Jack Tully examines the truth behind the slogans. John Hunt looks at the ructions in the Hungarian CP. Sue Thomas explores the possibility of an Afghan style pull out from Angola

Stalinism in retreat

Aganbegyan. As he triumphantly points out: this time round things are being done differently! The 'reformist' bureaucrats are also forced to rely upon the threat of a certain mobilisation of the working class in order to pressure those anti-reform forces. Hence the window dressing of *glasnost*, the idea of exposing bureaucratic corruption and inefficiency, in order to convince the workers that there is a genuine campaign for real change, and to prepare them for the sacrifices they will have to make.

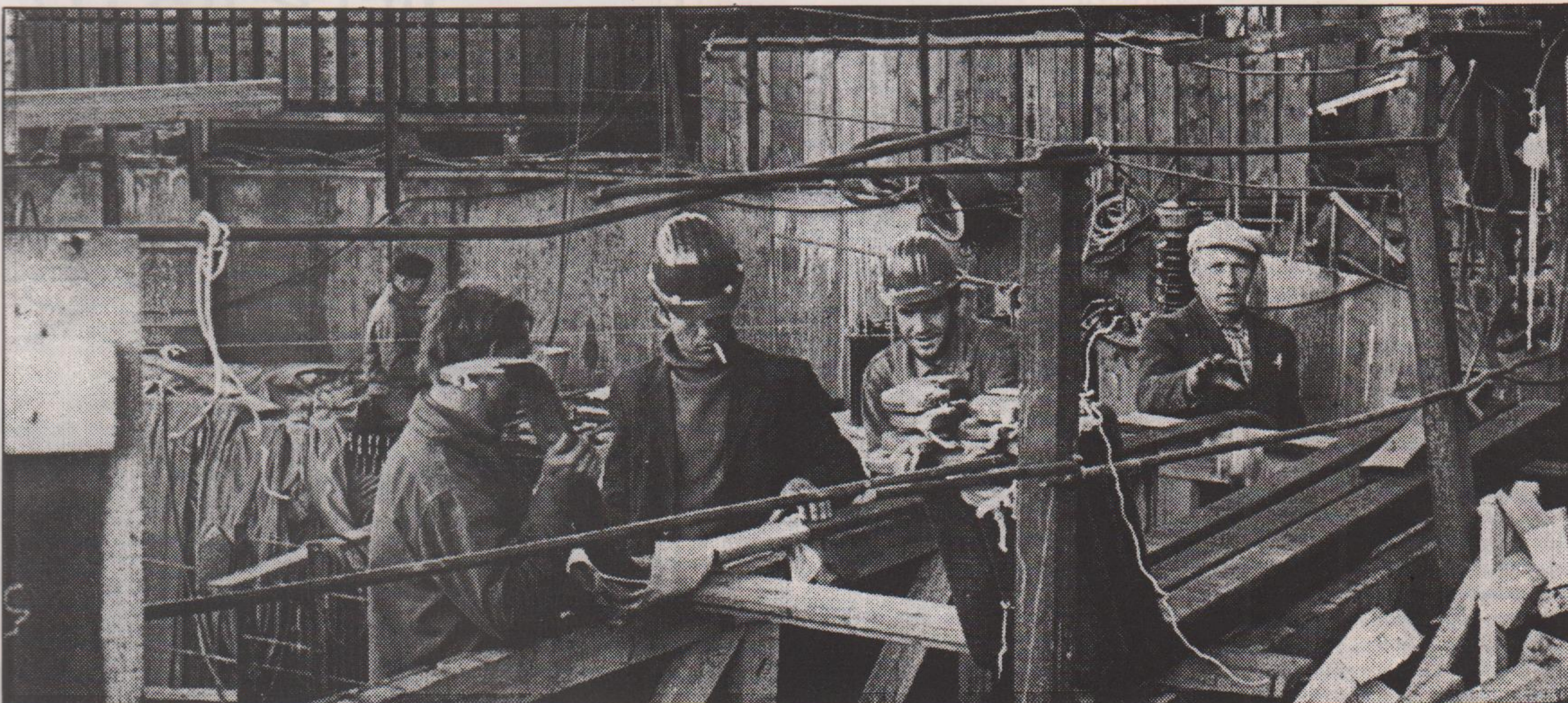
The problems with this approach are clearly revealed in Aganbegyan's book. He attacks the corruption of the Brezhnev years (without naming names), the injustices of the Moscow trials (1936-7) and the horrors of the forced collectivisations (1930s). He also provides the usual *glasnost* fare of ridiculous bureaucratic mismanagement in the USSR of the 1980s, whereby collective farms are forced to buy combine harvesters they do not need or want. However, he fails completely when it comes to answering the key question that every Russian worker will ask: How could all this come about in the country of 'socialism'?

It is the answer to this question which threatens to blow Gorbachev's whole project apart. The problems of the Soviet economy are enormous, as this book makes clear. Its roots do not lie in the inability of a planned economy to meet the needs of the masses. Far from it; it is the nature of the planning which is at the root of the problem. Up to now that planning has been bureaucratically mis-managed and the only people to have really profited from it have been precisely those bureaucrats. This lesson must lead to only one conclusion; it is the nature of the plan, and of the control of society in general, which will have to be changed.

Gorbachev's proposed 'mixture' of general plan with increased market activity will do nothing to improve the conditions of the working class. Instead it will open up a new round of oppression from which the workers cannot gain. This situation will provoke enormous tensions within the bureaucracy itself, as anti-reform minded elements organise to block the *perestroika*, much as they did in the mid 1960s.

More decisive will be the role of the Russian workers. Once they realise the dangers of the economic *perestroika*, and the fact that *glasnost* will not change the fundamental question of 'who rules?', Gorbachev's days will be numbered. Either the workers will effect a political revolution on a wave of industrial unrest, or there will be a bureaucratic coup in reaction to the programme of *perestroika*.

Against Aganbegyan's best intentions, the whole analysis of this book point to this conclusion. The sorcerer's apprentices of *perestroika* are intent on calling up a series of forces that they will be unable to control; through their meddling the Soviet workers will have a key opportunity to settle account with their bureaucratic rulers.



Building for the market or laying the foundations for the plan?

Angola

WILL ANGOLA follow Afghanistan in another 'victory' for perestroika? After a recent meeting between Chester Crocker, the US Assistant Secretary of State and Anatoli Adamishin, the Deputy Soviet Foreign Minister, the latter declared that for the first time the USSR and USA were looking for a solution 'along the lines of the agreement reached in Afghanistan'. If such a deal is struck it will be another blow against all those forces fighting against the domination of South African imperialism in southern Africa.

The MPLA government in Angola came to power in 1975 at the end of the struggle against Portuguese imperialism. Soviet and Cuban involvement

in the country goes back to then, when the MPLA, following the Portuguese withdrawal, sought their aid to throw back a South African invasion aiming to put a UNITA stooge government in power. South Africa and the USA, have given military backing to Jonas Savimba's UNITA ever since.

South Africa needs a continuing civil war in Angola in order to guarantee its occupation of Namibia. The Namibian liberation organisation, SWAPO, maintains camps inside Angola which have been the subject of frequent military raids by South African forces. In the last year, the South African Defence Forces (SADF) have stepped up their intervention, first to save UNITA's key

base at Jamba from an Angolan Army offensive, then to go on the offensive themselves.

South Africa threw over 9000 troops into an attempt to seize the strategically defensive town of Cuito Cuavale last March. The presence of the Cuban troops and especially the air cover provided by MiG 23s prevented what would have been a major South African victory.

What the South Africans have failed to gain on the battlefield they now hope to achieve courtesy of Gorbachev and Chester Crocker. In March the South African defence chief, General Magnus Malan, noting Gorbachev's moves in Afghanistan to achieve a 'neutral and non-aligned government' declared:

'We realise that a future government in Luanda, seen against the tension in East and West, must certainly follow a non-aligned and neutral political attitude. South Africa is prepared to live with that. But then the Soviet Union

must also state clearly that it is not interested in a pro-Moscow government in Luanda. The MPLA and UNITA must come to a settlement on the basis of reconciliation.'

In other words Pretoria wants a government that poses no threat to their hegemony over Namibia, which denies SWAPO a base to organise from and which opens up Angola to their dominance as well.

Botha's government has always insisted that Cuban troops should be withdrawn from Angola as a precondition for South African disengagement. Of course this apparent 'equation' is nothing of the sort, either in terms of bourgeois international relations, or real force. The Cuban troops were invited into Angola to defend the MPLA government against South African imperialism. The SADF has never waited for an invitation anywhere.

Cuban troops are expected to withdraw thousands of miles. South Africa's will stay on Angola's borders! A

Cuban withdrawal could leave Angola prey once again either to direct South African attack, or continued harassment from South African backed forces. Angola has before it the example of the 'deal' South Africa struck with Mozambique, where in return for throwing out the ANC, South Africa proceeded to wreck the economy via its support for the MNR terrorists.

The MPLA is still demanding guarantees on Namibian independence and no interference from the Republic before it gives the go ahead for a timetable for Cuban withdrawal. It is looking to a deal between the USA and the USSR to ensure this. But there is no evidence that the USA can ensure South African acceptance of such a deal, or even that they think it is necessary given the Soviet Union's desire to 'disengage' from Africa.

There can be no lasting peace in south-west Africa while the source of the war, South African imperialism, remains intact. Yet the Gorbachevites are preparing not only to ensure that the USSR and Cuba leave Angola to its fate but are also seeking to push the ANC into a negotiated settlement with apartheid.

This was made clear last year by Victor Goncharov of the Institute of African Studies. After noting that the Soviet Union had 'no desire to interrupt those traditional ties between some countries of Southern Africa and some western powers', he went on to call for greater 'flexibility' and 'objectivity' from the ANC. In particular he criticised any attempt by ANC members to 'put before the national liberation movement now the tasks of socialist revolution' as something which could lose 'potential allies' (i.e. the progressive bourgeoisie) in the South African population.

Once again the Stalinist bureaucracy is showing its true worth as an ally of peoples seeking liberation from imperialism and racism. It continues to push its allies into fatal compromises. It opposes the overthrow of capitalism. Its strategy would leave all the gross inequalities in southern Africa intact.

Fortunately, the people of the front line states have an ally which in the long run will prove more trustworthy and more successful in the challenge to South African imperialism than the Kremlin traitors. The South African working class, despite setbacks and repression, lives to fight again. This is the alliance that really matters. It is an alliance that can smash imperialism's domination of Southern Africa once and for all.



Soviet firepower in Angola—likely to be sacrificed to peaceful co-existence

Hungary

JANOS KADAR, Hungarian Party boss for thirty-two years, is the latest victim of the political and economic crisis gripping Eastern Europe. The man who presided over the crushing of the Hungarian workers' revolt in 1956 has been kicked out of the Politburo along with his closest cronies.

Not so long ago it was fashionable, East and West, to talk of the Hungarian miracle. Market reforms, it was claimed, had given Hungarians living standards and rights that were the envy of Eastern Europe. This is the model reform-minded economists in the USSR wanted to emulate.

Now the talk is not of success, but of crisis and problems. The bitter fruits of the market are there to see. Inflation is running at around 20%. Hungary's foreign debt—£9.6 billion—is the largest per capita debt in Eastern Europe, even outstripping Poland. The threat of redundancy hangs over many workers in the old traditional industries. An austerity programme authorised by Kadar has pushed up taxes and severely cut living standards.

The very real hardships that Hungarian workers in particular are experiencing served to seriously undermine the political stability of the Kadar regime. Political clubs and inde-

pendent youth organisations began to mushroom. Calls for the forming of independent trade unions have been heard as workers attempted to defend themselves against the effects of the austerity programme. The mounting political crisis was reflected at the highest level of the Party itself and came to a head at the Party Congress in May.

In a move unprecedented in ruling Stalinist parties Congress booted out Kadar and elected a Politburo with six new members out of eleven. Reputed 'democratic' reformers like Pozsgay and Nyers were elected. Karoly Grosz replaced Kadar as party secretary. *Pravda* rushed to congratulate Grosz whom it hailed as a 'communist of principle'.

Grosz is nothing of the sort. He is a time-serving bureaucrat well practised in the art of knowing which way the wind is blowing. Back in 1956 he became party boss in Miskolc when his other so-called leading comrades ran away. He liquidated the local party and gave its funds to the Workers' Council and the Social Democrats. Having backed a loser he changed course and by 1961 was back on the Central Committee of Kadar's ruling party. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s he rose to prominence in the party as the hardline scourge of party liberals. Now he has

reached the top as the champion of reform.

It is not hard to see why even Karoly Grosz is forced to talk of the need for reform. If the party is to push through its austerity plans it has to restore its credibility and authority. As new Politburo member and reputed 'radical' Pozsgay has put it 'our biggest problem is now to regain the trust and confidence of the people'.

The means advanced for doing so are concessions to various democratic demands that have been raised, particularly within the intelligentsia. Grosz has promised an end to censorship and to the party's monopoly of power. Nyers and Pozsgay are openly promising guarantees of pluralism and independence for the previous rubber stamp parliament. It is hoped in return that the regime can secure support to push through even further cuts in the living standards and job security of the Hungarian workers.

This is revealed by the economic programme of Karoly Grosz, a self-confessed admirer of Margaret Thatcher's economic policy. He intends to step up the pace of market-oriented reform in the immediate future. Stock and share holding is now to be encouraged. At the time of the Congress a co-leader of the Party, Berecz, urged an end to all restrictions on private wealth accumulation. In true Thatcherite manner he declared:

'Whether a rich citizen becomes richer is up to him—it depends on the success or failure of the enterprise.'

Income tax which has clobbered the living standards of Hungarian

workers will not stand in the way of the new Hungarian rich amassing their wealth. 'Enrich yourselves' is the cry of the Hungarian bureaucracy to its licensed entrepreneurs. 'Tighten your belts' is its message to the Hungarian workers.

The crisis of the Hungarian bureaucracy poses real opportunities as well as dangers for the working class. The party is at an acute stage of decomposition as a monolithic formation. Its apparatus of repression and control is accordingly weakened. Yet it is under strict orders from its creditors to crack the whip over the workers and let market forces rip even further. Its promises of greater democratisation are the sugar coating on the bitter pill of the market norms it is seeking to impose on the workers.

Hungarian workers have no interest in indulging in the charade of parliamentary democracy with the Stalinist bureaucracy. They must resist all attempts to give parliamentary legitimacy to wage cuts and unemployment. However, as the Stalinist bureaucracy loosens its grip as a result of its internal crises the workers must take the opportunity to organise independently. Of course they must organise independently of the Stalinist bureaucracy. But they must no less remain independent politically from the liberal and social democratic intelligentsia whose plans to 'democratise' Hungary in a western parliamentary sense go hand in hand with their plans to restore capitalism.


Grosz and Pozsgay are holding out their hands to such restorationists.

The working class must and will be their most implacable enemies. There must be a programme of workers' councils and democratically centralised planning. That is the proletarian alternative to parliament and the market. Return to the tradition of the mighty workers' revolt of 1956, not to the policies of those who have made their careers from burying it!

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'APOLITICAL earthquake' is how French fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen described his 4,367,926 votes in the first round of the French presidential election. For once, this former paratrooper and torturer was right. Although workers danced in the streets after the right-wing Prime Minister Chirac was trounced by Mitterrand in the second round, Le Pen's 15% vote has sent shock waves through the European left.

In this month's parliamentary elections, Le Pen's party, the National Front (FN) will be going all out to build on their success in the presidential ballot. Their campaign will be far more than a peaceful vote gathering exercise. They will attempt to use the elections and their aftermath to organise their voters into an embryonic fascist movement.

Therefore workers must not be lulled into thinking that simply voting for the Socialist Party (PS) or Communists will be enough to stop Le Pen's advance. Even though we advocate such a vote on the basis of critical support we add that it is vital for workers to organise to fight. In France this means organising to fight both for the vital needs of the working class against whichever capitalist government is elected and against the threat posed by the FN. Indeed how to stop Le Pen is the key question now facing French workers.

The rise of Le Pen is clearly the result of the first Mitterrand presidency (1981-1988). In 1981 Le Pen, a long time fascist, was not even able to get onto the ballot. Five years later his racist message, spewed all over the country, gained the FN over 30 MPs in the 1986 parliamentary elections. They got a greater share of the vote than the PCF. And in April this year, Le Pen got over twice the number of votes for the PCF candidate in the presidential elections.

What created the climate within which the FN's policies of race-hate could find such fertile ground? Undoubtedly the major factor was a lurch to the right in economic policy taken by the PS/PCF government in 1982.

Following the launch of an austerity programme and an offensive against the working class, there was a massive growth in unemployment and a sharp drop in workers' living standards. The social security system became increasingly unstable leaving thousands of jobless workers without any benefits at all. The outlook for youth became ever more bleak.

Despite minor reforms (the abolition of the death penalty for example), France under the PS/PCF bore a striking resemblance to Reagan's USA or Thatcher's Britain. There was one important difference though. In France right wing policies were being carried out by parties which claimed to stand for the interests of the working class. In fact the working class base that these parties rest upon did not stop the PS/PCF leaderships from being loyal servants of the bourgeoisie. In the case of the PCF, its willing participation in this austerity programme was to cost it dear. Over half the PCF's voters have abandoned the party.

Restrictions

The 1981-1984 PS/PCF government was not only reactionary in its economic policy. It also played the racist game over immigration. New restrictions were imposed, repressive measures were instituted against clandestine immigrants, and the PS/PCF government started encouraging immigrants to go 'home' by giving them financial aid. Immigrant workers, who in the 1950s had been recruited by French imperialism to do the worst jobs, were being made to carry the can by both left and right.

In the 1984 European elections the FN made a major national breakthrough, getting 9% of the vote in the European parliamentary elections. The left, whose own economic and immigration policies had paved the way for the FN's advance then tried vainly to stop its growth. The PS took the initiative, sensing that votes could

Unite to crush Le Pen



be garnered from the 'second generation' immigrant youth. They organised SOS Racisme, an organisation which rapidly became one massive publicity stunt, without any organised roots in either the immigrant community, the labour movement or the youth.

The high-point of SOS Racisme was in 1985-86 when they organised two massive rock concerts and sold over a million badges proclaiming 'Hands off my mate' (a slogan not exactly explicit in its anti-racism). The PS reaped some benefit from this limited campaign against the FN's overt racism in the presidential election of 1988. Following a massive campaign to register second generation youth as voters, Mitterrand gained hundreds of thousands of valuable votes. But no organised force had emerged capable of smashing the FN altogether. The passive resistance of SOS Racisme was supplemented by purely electoral opposition to Le Pen.

Since the launch of SOS Racisme no effective or systematic anti-racist or anti-fascist work has been carried out by any of the major parties of the working class. Sporadic demonstrations have been organised by the PCF or by small local anti-racist bodies, but no sustained attempt has been made to oppose the FN on the streets. Especially notable was the absence of any significant mobilisation during the election campaign. SOS Racisme argued that mobilising to crush Le Pen 'played into his hands'. In reality refusing to mobilise mass forces against Le Pen is what plays into his hands.

Although Le Pen is a long time fascist who aims to construct a fully-fledged Nazi-like party, he has so far hidden his intentions behind the smokescreen of parliamentary legality. He has to date refrained from publicly identifying himself as a fascist. At the moment he is concentrating on portraying the FN as a racist and populist party that can protect France and its 'true born' people.

He attacks immigrants as being the source of French capitalism's problems, and proposes a programme of forced repatriation. He exaggerates the levels of crime, blames it all on the immigrants and calls for tougher policing. On the question of AIDS, he claims that all HIV-positive people should be forcibly hospitalised. He rails against the power of organised labour and proposes to 'regulate' the unions. He has yet to take the decisive step of organising his followers into street groups capable of carrying out their policy by force. But no one should be deceived. It is only a matter of time before they attack picket lines. Already his thugs regularly carry out racist attacks by the score.

His main audience (over 60% of his voters) is the petit bourgeoisie: self-employed shopkeepers or small businessmen, the classic human material

Last month Jean-Marie Le Pen took 15% of first round votes in the French elections. *Emile Gallet* of *Pouvoir Ouvrier* charts the resistable rise of Le Pen's 'Front National'.

of fascism. Squeezed between the two major classes, these layers are not only attracted by his racist message. In many areas where there are very few immigrants Le Pen did extremely well. For example in eastern France he got around 19% of the vote. Here workers and small farmers are frightened by the prospect of the European open market of 1992, something which all the other parties have made a major point of supporting in their campaigns over the last year. Le Pen is able to set himself up as the champion of a rancid French nationalism, both in his anti-immigrant rhetoric and his defence of small French capitalists and petit bourgeois against the horrors of unbridled foreign competition.

Although it is clear that the vast majority of Le Pen's voters are either middle class or retired, around 20% of his votes came from the working class. Many of these are non-class conscious workers (supervisors, foremen etc) who in the past have voted for the RPR or the UDF. If any PCF voters have switched their vote to the fascist Le Pen, the PCF are entirely responsible. For over 50 years they have systematically courted the French ruling class by aping the nationalism of the bourgeois parties (flying the French tricolour, signing the national anthem, renaming their party the French Communist Party).

Their nationalistic policy of 'Produce French' and import controls encourages the growth of racism amongst French workers. This policy took a particularly nasty turn in 1980 when the PCF began campaigning, in disgracefully racist terms, against the number of immigrants in the Paris suburbs. The low point of this campaign was the notorious attack on an immigrant workers hostel in Vitry, when the PCF mayor personally drove

a bulldozer into the building! With these sort of 'friends', immigrant workers don't need enemies!

Despite Le Pen's massive electoral support, the French left continues to ignore the threat. On May Day, Le Pen organised a march in Paris. This provocation not only constituted an affront to all workers on a day of international proletarian solidarity, it was also a clear opportunity for the FN to consolidate its new found electoral support into a confident street-level force. Workers and immigrants had to be organised to physically stop Le Pen. Faced with this burning necessity, the trade unions and the left managed to organise three separate marches, one in the morning (CFDT/PS), one in the afternoon (CGT/PCF), and one march to unite the two (LCR/Renovateurs)!

Unhindered

Meanwhile, Le Pen and 40,000 racists, fascists and far right Catholics marched unhindered on the other side of town. And as a result every petit bourgeois who went on that march and got home in one piece grew in confidence that the FN was just the party France needs. The smashing of such a march by the organised working class could have helped undermine that confidence and frighten thousands from ever marching with the FN again.

At the root of this complacency is the left's refusal to recognise in Le Pen and the FN the rise of a fascist threat. Fascism differs from far right conservatism in one crucial respect. It seeks to mobilise a mass force to crush the organised working class. It mobilises the shopkeepers and foremen, the wretched layer of de-classed petty criminals and the unemployed white youth driven to despair by poverty and abandoned by the labour movement. It gives this atomised section of society courage and big ideas by first of all demonstrating its power over organised workers on the streets. In the process it apes the rhetoric and culture of the workers' movement.

'We must organise a vanguard' said Le Pen to the assembly of ex-paratroopers, right-wing students and skinheads on 1 May. If, as is likely the abolition of proportional representa-

tion severely limits Le Pen's parliamentary advance, then this 'vanguard' will play an increasing role in the growth of a real fascist threat to workers and immigrants. The fact that at present this threat is hidden behind a façade of statesmanship and democratic legality does not mean the left should wait.

How can Le Pen be stopped? Hitler himself once spelled out the answer:

'Only one thing could have stopped our movement—if our adversaries had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed with the utmost brutality the nucleus of our movement.'

The danger is that major groups of the French left such as Lutte Ouvrière, a centrist organisation with real roots in the working class, will comfort themselves with the abstract formula Mitterrand equals Chirac, Chirac equals Le Pen right up until the day their offices and meetings and factory cells are broken up by Le Pen's 'vanguard'.

The British SWP has recently published an open letter to the French left on the subject of Le Pen, and distributed thousands of copies in France (*Socialist Worker* 23 May). It attacks Lutte Ouvrière for not organising to physically smash the FN. It claims that no-one on the French left argued for this. The SWP should research their facts more thoroughly, because in the days running up to the 1 May, and on the day itself, several groups were arguing for workers to organise to stop the FN, including Pouvoir Ouvrier, the sister organisation of Workers Power. In a leaflet given out on May Day, Pouvoir Ouvrier argued clearly for the need to crush Le Pen, to physically stop his May Day march in order to stop the transformation of the FN's voters into hardened fascist thugs, who could swell the ranks of the core of would-be stormtroopers inside the FN. This meant organising masses of workers to physically confront the FN on May Day, and to smash up their election campaign and paper sales in the coming weeks.

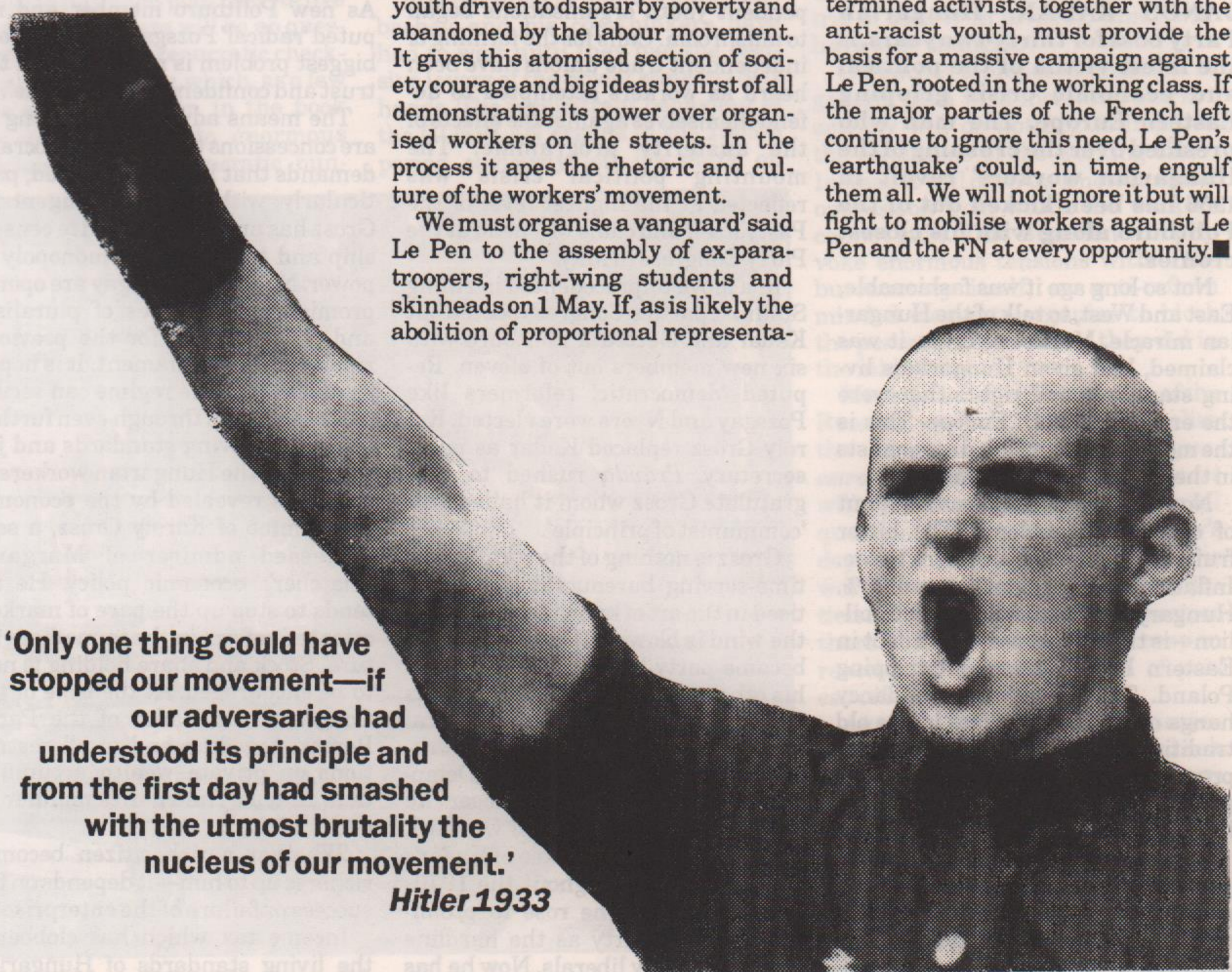
Confrontation

French workers must organise a united front against racism and fascism now, taking up the question of physical confrontation with the fascists, defence of the immigrant communities against racist and police attacks, and opposition to all immigration controls. The necessity of such a campaign is clear. The possibility of organising workers around these slogans is obvious.

Tens of thousands of militants have shown themselves willing to march against the fascists and even, in small local mobilisations over the last few years, to occupy meeting rooms and break up fascist meetings. These determined activists, together with the anti-racist youth, must provide the basis for a massive campaign against Le Pen, rooted in the working class. If the major parties of the French left continue to ignore this need, Le Pen's 'earthquake' could, in time, engulf them all. We will not ignore it but will fight to mobilise workers against Le Pen and the FN at every opportunity. ■

'Only one thing could have stopped our movement—if our adversaries had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed with the utmost brutality the nucleus of our movement.'

Hitler 1933



Anti-imperialism and Leninism

We would like to take up some of the points you raised in your article 'For Workers in Britain and Iran: the main enemy is at home' (*Leninist* No 61) and reply on behalf of the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI).

Firstly, to correct one straightforward misrepresentation of our position on the Iran/Iraq War. You quote from the paper of our British section, *Workers Power*, which outlined why *Workers Power* believed that the war had changed its character by 1982, 'from being a legitimate war of defence by Iran, to being a thoroughly reactionary war on both sides'. You follow this by saying, 'Now of course *Workers Power* says Iran is fighting a progressive war once more'. This is not the position of *Workers Power* nor the MRCI on the Iran/Iraq War which is one of defeatism on both sides. What you are doing here is confusing (deliberately?) our position of defence of Iran against US aggression with our position on the Iran/Iraq War.

Now on this question there is a real difference between our position and yours. While the MRCI takes a Leninist position of defence of Iran against the attacks on it by US imperialism, and stands for the *victory* of Iran in any engagement with US forces the *Leninist* refuses to take sides. This should not be surprising to anyone familiar with your position on the Malvinas War where you refused to stand with Argentina against British imperialism. Before you once again accuse us of being 'cheerleaders for Khomeini' (please bring forward the evidence of where, in what paper, we ever 'cheered' the Khomeini regime!) we would point out that we have consistently called for the overthrow of Khomeini, even while supporting Iran against US aggression. Likewise we called for the Argentinian workers to overthrow the Junta, while at the same time supporting Argentina in a just war against British imperialism.

How does the *Leninist* justify its refusal to support nations under direct attack by imperialism? In the same way that those well known defenders of oppressed nations, the likes of *Socialist Organiser* and the *iSt* do, by a systematic attack on Lenin's theory of imperialism. In the case of both Argentina and Iran the *Leninist* justifies its position by implying they are imperialist countries. We have to say 'implying' because you appear to be afraid to openly characterise them as such. This reticence on your part (or more accurately evasiveness) is justified because the evidence for your assertions is sorely lacking. A fact we often stress the importance of 'theoretical analysis'.

Thus we are told that the Iranian government's intervention in the economy since World War Two has produced the merger of 'banking capital and industrial

What is the revolutionary communist position on anti-imperialist wars? We print an exchange on this question between the MRCI and the *Leninist*, paper of the 'Leninists of the CPGB'

capital... producing native finance capital. Lenin included this in one of his five criteria of imperialism'. He did but he also included several others. That capital had reached such a high stage of development and concentration that 'monopolies play a decisive role in economic life'. That the 'export of capital acquires exceptional importance'. That these international monopolies 'share the world amongst themselves'. Does the *Leninist* really believe that these are the defining characteristics of Iranian capitalism? Yet on the basis of a single quote from Fred Halliday and a couple of dubious assertions, Alan Merrick is willing to abandon the Leninist position of defence of a semi-colonial country, Iran, against the world's major imperialist power. What a Leninist! (And if you think Iran is an imperialist power, why do you not support Iraq? Or is that too imperialist? And Syria, Jordan etc, etc?)

Finally, in an aside in the same article, you attack the MRCI on the question of our response to the Enniskillen bombing, on the basis of a supposed difference between our Irish and British sections. The MRCI has always recognised

that there is a difference between communists' duty in Britain and in Ireland. In Britain we place to the fore, especially at times of anti-republican hysteria whipped up by the bourgeois media, our unconditional support for those fighting British imperialism. We are not however uncritical of the tactics, strategy and politics of petit bourgeois nationalism. In Ireland our comrades of the Irish Workers Group are a communist organisation in direct conflict with the influence of the petit bourgeois republicans over sections of workers, and with their bankrupt strategy of 'guerrillism'; a strategy which is counterposed to, and therefore demobilises, the mass struggle against imperialism. The struggle around the H-Block hunger strikes was a classic example of this. At times this strategy e.g. Enniskillen, actually plays into the hands of imperialist reaction and therefore must be condemned *in this context*. This is the common position of the whole of the MRCI. We would point out the same issue of *Class Struggle* made clear its defence of, and support for the IRA in its struggle against British imperialism and its armed forces.

We note however that the *Leninist*, in its critical exchanges with the IRSP never manages to raise a Leninist critique of petit bourgeois 'guerillaist' deviations, despite the fact that this was an organisation completely wrecked by this strategy, despite its socialist pretensions. (The same approach to your silence on the bankrupt guerillaist strategy of the South African Communist Party which goes hand in hand with its slavish commitment to the popular front.) How different is the *Leninist's* approach to that of Lenin and *Iskra* in their consistent struggle against the petit bourgeois tactics of the Narodniks in Russia, a struggle vital to form a Marxist cadre against the policies and influence of Narodism.

We apologise for the length of this letter but serious issues, as you know, require serious and sometimes lengthy argument, especially in defence of Leninism. It will come as no surprise to those who have correctly analysed the degeneration of the 'world communist movement' under Stalinism, that it is left to the Trotskyists of the MRCI to defend Lenin's positions in the pages of your paper.

Yours in comradeship,

J McKee
For the MRCI Secretariat.

The Leninist

Our friend McKee need not apologise for the length of his letter. He has woven ample rope. Let us first pull the trap door on the bogey of our 'straightforward misrepresentation' of *Workers Power's* position on the Gulf War. Fact, it supported Iran against Iraq until 1982, because Iraq was the aggressor and Iran 'had just been through a mighty popular revolution which had overthrown US imperialism's trusted ally and regional gendarme, the Shah'. Marxists are not concerned with who is and who is not the aggressor but which side is progressive. It is only on this basis can we give any support.

Neither Iraq nor any section of the Iranian theocratic regime is in any way progressive. Since 1980, when the Islamic Republic was established the revolution was dead. This did not stop *Workers Power* 'defending' Iran against the equally reactionary Iraq or in effect calling workers in Iran to join Khomeini's armed forces because of the presence of the US fleet in the Gulf.

We do take sides: with the working class against their rulers. Unless such a stand is taken the left acts as a recruiting sergeant for reaction and tragedy results. This was the case in Argentina.

We 'imply' nothing about countries such as Iran and Argentina. They are not imperialist but have imperialistic tendencies because they are 'medium developed capitalist countries'—a concept employed by Lenin, and the basis of comrade R Yurukoglu's *Turkey—Weak Link of Imperialism*. *Workers Power* cannot plead ignorance of this work. Clearly the MRCI prefers accusations of 'evasiveness' because it cannot confront our real politics, let alone answer them. It is not our level of analysis which is 'sorely lacking' but theirs.

On Enniskillen: yes, there is a difference between the tasks of communists in the oppressor and oppressed countries. But this does not excuse communists deserting principle. *Workers Power's* Irish clone, the IWG, attacked the IRA in the midst of a massive and hysterical campaign directed against it not only in Britain by Ireland, north and south. It joined the class enemy in denouncing the IRA. We defended it because it is conducting a struggle with a progressive and democratic content.

This in no way denies the necessity of independent communist organisation. In China, Lenin recommended that communists give unconditional support for the democratic content of the programme of the bourgeois nationalist

We reply:

Our support for Iran against Iraq in 1981-82 never flowed from Iraq's 'aggression'. Nor was the question at issue which side was 'progressive'. The Marxist position starts from the class character of the war. When Iran resisted Iraq it was resisting a proxy attempt by US imperialism to reassert its political control in the region. The Iranian revolution, even under the reactionary leadership of Khomeini had severely weakened that control. What prevents Iran, or Argentina, or Southern Ireland from overcoming the stage of 'medium development'—itself an evasive formula—is their economic dependence and subjugation to imperialism. It is a subjugation backed up by the constant threat of armed force. To

Kuomintang. But only conditional support for the organisation itself. Communists must fight for a communist party and working class hegemony in the revolution. We have the same position in Ireland.

Irish republicanism may fetishise the guerilla tactic, but the IWG's reaction to Enniskillen was that of the horrified petit bourgeois. Hack phrases about 'guerillaism' and irrelevant quotations from Lenin against the Narodniks are no substitute for concrete analysis of a concrete situation. The republican movement may be 'green', but where are the reds?

For a revolutionary movement such as the MRCI, the acid test is not in the imperialist countries, but at the sharp end, Ireland, where a revolutionary situation exists in the Six Counties. The IRSP is not fully communist but it has declared its intention of orientating itself towards communism. What its comrades have proved beyond doubt—as have the IRA—is that they are revolutionaries.

If our comrades in the Communist Party of Turkey had no comrades in jail, no dead to mourn, then it would indicate that they were doing nothing that posed a threat to the status quo. That is not the case. For them theory and practice are one. But not with the IWG. Mirroring their comrades in Britain, they prefer the mire of the Irish Labour Party to the struggle on the streets. This is Trotskyism in practice. Clearly we need no assistance to defend Leninism from such as the MRCI.

be precise these countries are semi-colonies, another 'concept employed by Lenin', and one which led him to support such countries in military conflicts with imperialism.

Finally, the IWG did not 'join the class enemy by denouncing the IRA' any more than we or the *Leninist* join the class enemy by denouncing the bankrupt tactics and false leaders of the British class struggle. The IWG is engaged in the fight for a revolutionary communist party in Ireland, a fight which necessitates breaking workers from their illusions in petit bourgeois nationalism, whether cloaked in 'Leninist' phrases or not, because it is republicanism which renounces the 'struggle on the streets' in the sense of mass workers' action and the arming of the masses.



Iran/Iraq War: class character decisive

Wp

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Details from Ian Hassell

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Workers Power

DEFY SECTION 28!



THE STONEWALL riot of June 1969 is an event to which even many conservative lesbians and gay men will claim allegiance. Yet nineteen years on, its aims and causes have been hidden.

This year's Pride march is one of the annual celebrations of Stonewall which in fact gave birth to the modern lesbian and gay movement. You could be forgiven, however, for thinking that it is an advertising day for the pink economy.

The riot itself was directed not only at the police who raided the Stonewall bar in Greenwich Village, but at the owners of the gay venues themselves. Many of these bar owners collaborated with the police policy of routine raids so long as they were allowed to remain in business.

The growing number of lesbians and gay men attending Pride with delegations and banners from the labour movement need to relearn this lesson. Recently the collaboration of certain stewards from the Organisation for Lesbian and Gay Action (OLGA) with the police on the 9 January demonstration at Downing Street—which led to several arrests—is a reminder that at the end of the day not all lesbians and gay men have the same interests.

Today we face Section 28, the most vicious attack on us for decades. Yet we must recognise that within the lesbian and gay community there are very different ideas on how to resist this attack. The 'Stop the Clause' campaign, now renamed 'Repeal the Section', has been hijacked by a London-based unaccountable clique who have blocked moves to take the campaign to the trade unions and fight for a policy of non-implementation of the Section. They have argued that focusing on 'straight' workers would undermine lesbian and gay 'unity'. But a unity opposed to winning working class opposition to the Section is the unity of the graveyard.

Trade Unionists against Section 28 (TUAS) has been persecuted by these misleaders for attempting to link the campaign to the labour movement. TUAS has supported health workers, Ford strikers and the seafarers as well as opposing the local government cuts which hit lesbians and gays so hard. It has consistently warned of the dangers of relying on the House of Lords. It has argued for a campaign to win those workers who will be expected to implement the Section to refuse to do so.

The case of Austin Allen, a Bradford teacher sacked for admitting he is gay, proves that industrial action is the key to stopping victimi-

sation. Austin was reinstated only after his union, the NUT, voted for all-out strike action in his defence. By contrast, 'Stop the Clause' put all their hope in a future 'democratic' government (of whom and when?) to repeal the Section. Anyone victimised or attacked in the meantime will have to put up with it until 1992 or beyond.

We in Workers Power believe the TUAS conference that has been called must become a launch pad for real action. We call on all labour movement bodies to sponsor the conference and send delegates to it. We will be arguing for a focus on workers in local government and education who will be faced with implementing the section. They must refuse to do so.

Teachers refusing to reinforce the official silence and lies about sexuality in the schools must receive the full backing of their unions, including strike action against victimisations. Workers in local government must act to prevent cuts removing the limited facilities provided for lesbians and gays. The campaign itself must show solidarity with all workers' struggles to strengthen our hand in winning unions to our defence.

**National Labour Movement
Non-compliance Conference**
in defiance of Section 28
called by
Trades Unionists Against Section 28
Sunday 26th June 9-30-5-00
See page 11 for details

Orange bigots march

THE LABOUR councils of Chesterfield and Exeter are funding and supporting celebrations to mark the 300th anniversary of William of Orange. Both councils defend their decision to promote the celebration claiming that the events are not political. This is a lie.

William of Orange is the symbol of loyalist extremism and anti-catholic bigotry in the north of Ireland. In 1690 King William III of the Netherlands (William of Orange) defeated the forces of the catholic King James II at the historic Battle of the Boyne. To this day, the annual celebration on 12 July is an occasion for anti-catholic attacks and sectarian violence.

The Orange Order was formed in 1795 as a means of rousing a section of the Irish protestant peasantry against the national revolt of the United Irishmen. It remains virulently anti-catholic, seeking to unite protestants of all classes and has between 80,000 and 100,000 members in Northern Ireland.

For decades, Orange marches under the guise of 'tradition' have been the springboard for sectarian attacks on the nationalist community. Under the protection of the RUC and the British army, they have provocatively paraded through catholic areas while republican marches are banned.

It was the Orange marches which represented the final humiliation and provocation of the nationalist youth of Belfast and Derry in the early days of the civil rights movement. Following the 12 July Orange parades in 1969, British troops were moved into Belfast on stand-by.

The crunch was to come on 12 August—the day of the Apprentice Boys' parade—when thousands of Orangemen came to Derry and encircled the city walls, commemorating the lifting of the siege of Derry in 1689. This was intended to remind the nationalist population or who was master, even in the city of Derry which has a nationalist majority of nearly two to one. The Stormont government turned down all appeals to have the march banned and the battles that resulted were to provide the excuse for the Labour government sending in the troops. Their arrival proved both that the six counties' statelet was unreformable and that the nationalist resistance could not be bought off.

In April 1970, the loyalists were out in force again to show that nothing had changed. For two hours an Orange parade marched along the Springfield Road overlooking the nationalist Ballymurphy estate in West Belfast. When the nationalists responded the British army intervened and barricaded off the area. The next evening, 600 soldiers,

supported by five Saracen armoured cars occupied the estate. This demonstrated clearly to the nationalist community that the British Army had taken over the RUC's role as protector of the Orange pogromist parades.

Such scenes have been repeated on many occasions since. Riots which broke out during the loyalist protests against the Anglo-Irish agreement started out as Orange parades and grew into a campaign of anti-catholic terror, arson and murder. In Portadown there was a major confrontation over the 'right' of loyalists to march through the predominantly nationalist 'tunnel' area. In Lisburn 124 catholic families had been forced to move. All over the six counties there were reports of loyalist threats, assaults and fire bombing of catholic homes and businesses.

In the event, the police allowed loyalists to intimidate the nationalist population. 20 homes were attacked. Such indiscriminate killings are the hallmark of the paramilitary fringes of Orangeism. Since 1969, more than 600 civilians have been murdered by loyalist gangs like the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the legal Ulster Defence Association (UDA). Even the RUC has been forced to publicly admit in a recent attack on a well known nationalist drinking spot that: 'The sole motive was to kill catholics.'

This is the real 'history' the Orange Order is celebrating with its proposed march through Chesterfield on 18 June this year.

They are not the only people supporting the 'celebrations'. The Orange Order has many supporters on the far right of the Tory Party and amongst the fascists.

A recent National Front press release stated:

'The National Front calls on Chesterfield Council to resist pressure exerted by Chesterfield Labour Committee on Ireland to withdraw sponsorship and support for the celebrations.'

So far the Council is resisting such pressure and has sponsored the celebrations to the tune of £46,000. This is a disgrace. The local LCI branch has called a counter-demonstration to force the Council to back down and to oppose the celebrations. They call on all trade unionists, anti-imperialists, socialists and opponents of the National Front to support the counter march.

- Oppose orange bigotry!
- Smash the national front!

COUNTER DEMONSTRATION
Assemble 11 a.m.
Town Hall, Rose Hill, Chesterfield
Bring banners and placards

Free Geronimo Pratt!

'If I had done the murder I'd be out by now.'

At his meeting with Gorbachev in Moscow Reagan will accuse the USSR of serious human rights violations. His hypocrisy is blatant. Apart from the well-documented crimes committed by US hatchetsmen in Central America, class war prisoners are also being brutally treated inside US jails.

Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt has served 18 years in a US jail. He is a political prisoner.

Pratt joined the Black Panther Party in 1968 and rapidly became a respected leader of its Los Angeles chapter. He was arrested in a 300-strong armed police raid on the Panther's office in 1969. While in prison he was charged with an unsolved robbery and murder in California in 1968. FBI surveillance reports showing that he was 400 miles away at the time of the incident have 'vanished'. Infiltrating Pratt's defence team and introducing a secret paid informant as a witness ensured a conviction.

This repression was a feature of the US government's Counter Intelligence Program designed 'to prevent the coalition of militant Black nationalist groups, to prevent the rise of a leader...'. Geronimo has suffered eight years in solitary, in a 5'x7' cell without books, a bed or toilet. The Parole Board refused to release him in 1987 citing his 300 letters of support as proof of his dangerous influence!

Geronimo Pratt is a victim of a racist prison system (80% of US prisoners are black, Puerto Rican or Latino compared to 16% of the US population) and a racist society which cannot tolerate militant black self-organisation. He is a class war prisoner and the international labour movement must give him its unqualified support.

Send messages of support to:
The International Campaign to Free Geronimo Pratt
PO Box 3585
Oakland
CA 94609-0585