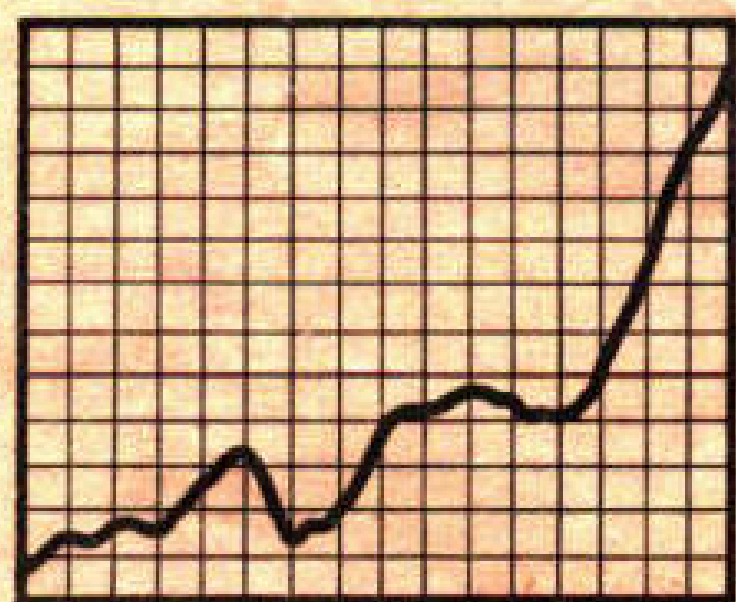


the next step

No38 August 1983

review of the Revolutionary Communist Party 20p

The working class lives!



Fighting unemployment

Socialist parties in Europe

Andropov, Walesa and the Pope

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the next step

No 38

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The world recession reveals that the capitalist system is rotten to the core. The survival of capitalism depends on mass unemployment and poverty in the West and famine and mass terror in the Third World. Today the superpowers fight to save their system in Lebanon, El Salvador and Southern Africa. They are building up conventional and nuclear weapons for a final showdown.

In Britain the Conservative Party won a landslide victory in the 1983 General Election on a programme that promised higher unemployment and lower living standards and the denial of political rights to trade unionist, women, blacks and the Irish people. The Tories won, not because their policies were so appealing, but because the Labour Party's alternative was so pathetic and unconvincing. The traditional party of the working class has lost the allegiance and the confidence of most working

class people — Labour can no longer camouflage its irrelevance.

The recession and the disintegration of the Labour Party open up prospects for a brighter future. Never before has the necessity for a new way of running society seemed so urgent. Never has the creation of a new party of the working class, to get rid of the present system, appeared a more practicable proposition. *Preparing for Power* begins from the need to defend the working class against the Tory onslaught and points the way forward to the establishment of communism.

First produced for the 1983 election campaign, the programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party has now been published as a pamphlet at 30p. It includes a new introduction and an extended conclusion, taking account of the electoral collapse of the Labour Party.

TAKING CONTROL

A handbook for trade union militants

Mike Freeman

Out soon
from junius

Five years ago the Tories and the press screamed about the unions being too strong, claiming that union power was ruining the British economy. The recession has exposed the myth of union power. Hundreds of thousands of redundant workers can testify to the ineffectiveness of their unions and millions more can tell how workplace union organisation has been effectively destroyed. While the union leaders grovel at the Tories' feet, their members either join the dole queues or face harsher working conditions and lower wages.

After 40 years and more of operating in the shadow of the state and with the cooperation of the employers, the unions have become remote from their members and irrelevant to their needs. Forms of organisation and methods — recognition, bargaining procedures, the closed shop, shop steward and convenor systems, the check-off — have become a means of containment operated jointly by employers

and union officials. In the workplace and beyond, the unions have been transformed from instruments of collective defence and combat into a bureaucratic machinery for defusing class struggle in industry.

Taking control is a handbook for trade union militants who want to take control of their own organisations from the workplace upwards as the first step towards taking control over the whole of society. It examines the working class as it exists today and its present organisations. It analyses the trade union bureaucracy and its reliance on state intervention in industrial relations. It looks at the problems confronting active workers in the recession — wages, conditions, redundancies, unemployment. And it explores the relationship between trade union activity and broader questions of working class politics.

Taking control outlines a strategy for reclaiming our unions and rebuilding them into effective fighting organisations for the working class.



the next step

The working class lives!

THE LABOUR PARTY has worked out an explanation of why it lost the General Election. Labour's collapse has been attributed, by commentators from the *Guardian* to the *Morning Star*, to the changing structure of the British working class. Labour's vote relied heavily on manual workers, especially those employed in the public sector who live on council housing estates in the traditional Labour heartlands of Scotland, the North and inner cities. The problem is that this section of the working class is declining rapidly in favour of what the pundits call 'the new working class'. Labour fared badly among white-collar and skilled workers, people who tend to work in private industry and services, own their own houses and live in the south of the country. As top pollster Ivor Crewe put it, 'the old working class is now too small to give Labour electoral victory, the new working class too big to be ignored' (*The Guardian*, 13 June).

Labour politicians attribute their defeat to the decline in working class consciousness resulting from Britain's shifting occupational profile. According to this view Labour has lost out because the working class has moved to the right. The patriotic appeal of the Falklands War, the popular resonance for the prejudices of Thatcherism and the nasty media are all blamed for promoting anti-socialist views among potential Labour voters.

Right-wing Labour MP Giles Radice summed up the implications of the prevailing interpretation of the election debacle for Labour Party strategy in *The Guardian* on 8 July:

'Unless it can get the support of enough of the skilled white collared employees, the owner occupiers and those in work, it will be able to do very little for its traditional clientele.'

Radice's view was that Labour should dump its unpopular 'left' policies in favour of a more 'realistic' approach. The party should support home-ownership and renounce 'over-ambitious claims' — such as the one that a Labour government would ever reduce unemployment to one million. All the candidates in Labour's post-election leadership battle have endorsed this approach. Neil Kinnock now keeps quiet about unilateral nuclear disarmament and even Eric Heffer has effectively abandoned the call for withdrawal from the EEC. Roy Hattersley is all in favour of home-ownership. All are concerned about Labour's narrowing social base and lack of popular appeal. But is it true that the working class is withering away in the North while it moves to the right in the South?

It is certainly the case that the industries which launched British capitalism and whose workforces founded the labour movement are in decline. Today they employ only around one third of the modern working class. It is true too that the majority of workers now have jobs in services, especially public services. Manual workers are now (narrowly) outnumbered by non-manual workers. But so what? The working class is a creation of the economic system: it has been continuously transformed as capitalism has developed since the Industrial Revolution.

It is nothing new for workers in manufacturing industry to be a minority of the working class — indeed they always have been. When Britain was the workshop of the world in the late nineteenth century, there were more workers on farms, in domestic service and in trade and transport than there were in all the factories,

mills and mines put together. Over the past century the composition of the working class has changed. Old industries have declined and new ones emerged. The state has increasingly taken over both industries and services since the Second World War.

The recession has accelerated these trends and created new divisions in the working class. The most important split is that between workers with jobs and the four million unemployed. But none of these changes has altered the defining reality of working class life. The large majority of people in Britain can survive only by selling their capacity to work — their labour power. This is exploited by capitalists (or their state) to produce commodities or provide services. All workers have a common experience of capitalist exploitation. Their collective relationship to capitalist production defines them as a class.

Workers' awareness of themselves as a class ranged against the capitalists depends to some extent on the type of job they do, which affects their perception of exploitation. Workers' relationship with their employer may be authoritarian or paternalistic; the labour process may be dirty and dangerous or in an air-conditioned office; they may work in a vast industrial plant or in a small unit; they may be paid weekly by the hour with productivity bonuses or in a monthly salary with fringe benefits. All these factors influence workers' views about the capitalist system. A key factor influencing workers' views is whether they work for a private capitalist boss or under the state, in nationalised industries or services. State intervention has played an important part in disguising the relations of exploitation at the root of capitalist society and thus in weakening working class consciousness.

The decisive factor in determining the class consciousness of workers at any stage in history is the balance of political forces in society and in the labour movement. For half a century and more the British labour movement has been dominated by a servile reformist bureaucracy organised in the trade unions and the Labour Party. This parasitic layer has relayed pro-capitalist prejudices throughout the working class movement. It has promoted class collaboration in industry and delivered official labour movement approval for every reactionary policy of the British capitalist class — from support for any imperialist war abroad to backing for the oppression of blacks and women at home. The weakness of the left in Britain has ensured that Labourism has retained its fatal influence on the working class.

Has the working class moved to the right? The answer all depends on what you mean by 'left'. Many workers have repudiated the defining policies of the Labour left — unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from the EEC. But neither of these is in any real sense a socialist policy. The first is an expression of patriotic moralism, increasingly expressed in terms of anti-American chauvinism and a commitment to stronger conventional 'defence' for British imperialism. The second is a nationalist appeal to protect British capitalism and the British constitution from 'foreign' competition and interference. Nor do workers share the enthusiasm of Labour's state-salaried middle class activists for state intervention. They know nationalisation means mass redundancies and falling wages. They know that state housing, health and

education means third rate services for working class people. What is socialist about workers accepting poor standards if they can do better on their own?

The 'new working class' did not vote Labour because it has no strong historical allegiance to Labour and it found Labour's hope for a return to the 'sixties' an unconvincing alternative for the 'eighties'. The 'old working class' stayed with Labour often out of habit and sometimes because of its illusions in the progressive potential of state intervention. The latter is not a left-wing position, and the former does not indicate a shift to the right.

Yet the British left generally accepts the apologetic analysis of the Labour leadership. The working class largely gets the blame for the failings of the Labour Party. This is the real meaning behind the left's tirades against the media. The left unites to vilify the press and television. But underneath lies its resentment at a working class which was so gullible as to believe all the lies and slanders. A letter to the *Morning Star* drew out this logic after complaining about Fleet Street's portrayal of Michael Foot and his 'hopelessly divided party':

'Let's be realistic: the political understanding of millions of voters, nurtured for years on tabloid trash and trivialised TV politics, doesn't really go much deeper than that.' (29 June)

The problem was not Labour's politics, but the superficial 'political understanding' of working class people.

In another letter former Communist Party National Organiser Dave Cook echoed the Labour leaders. He admitted that 'the heart-breaking truth is that Labour's support among the traditional working class is declining and it has lost the "new" working class, at least in the South' (*Morning Star*, 17 June). His solution is to turn away from the working class entirely:

'We urgently need a discussion that gets to the heart of this crisis; to issues like the problems of alliance between the labour movement and other movements.'

Giles Radice seeks 'to create a new grouping of social forces' as a base for Labour's revival; Dave Cook calls for 'broad democratic alliances' to build 'a popular majority against the Tories'. Cook and his Eurocommunist co-thinkers support the Alliance call for proportional representation to advance this cause. While Cook looks beyond the 'new working class' to make links with feminists and black separatists, the pro-Moscow wing of the party insists on hammering away with the same old policies in the same old labour movement. Neither style of Stalinism indicates any way forward for any section of the working class.

For the Socialist Workers' Party the 'theory of the downturn' explains everything. Labour lost the election because there have been very few strikes lately (*Socialist Review*, June). The SWP agrees with the Labour Party that the working class has shifted to the right. In a recent interview the party's two top industrial organisers John Deason and Andy Strouthous blamed rank and file workers for pushing the trade union bureaucrats to the right:

'There is no doubt that the class as a whole is demoralised at present. This demoralisation leads to a rightward political shift; full time officials have no choice but to adapt to this in order to keep in touch with their membership' (*Socialist Review*, June)

In fact this is the reverse of the truth.

To the extent that workers in some industries have become demoralised this is largely the result of the acquiescence of their union representatives, from workplace to national office, in rationalisation programmes. The result has often been a long series of redundancies, deteriorating conditions and wages, sometimes culminating in closures. When union officials have called for industrial action, often as a last face-saving gesture for themselves and the union, they have found workers did not want to know. This has been a common experience in steel, motors, engineering and in coal mining. When workers have taken independent action — in the NHS or at BL's Cowley plant — they have invariably found their full-time officials urging them to scale down militancy and return to work. Not surprisingly many workers have lost confidence in the trade union leaders and their allies in the Labour Party. But this is not a 'rightward shift', simply a response to betrayal.

While the Labour Party tries to woo the 'new working class', the SWP is looking around for the section of the working class from which 'the upturn' is going to come. Party leader Tony Cliff has located 'the prologue to the upturn' in recent strikes, including those at Ford, BL and Tilbury docks. These strikes all followed new investment. Cliff considers these industries as potential growth points in the economy which will foster militancy in the same way that industrial revival did in the 'thirties. Cliff's faith in the regenerative powers of British capitalism exceeds that of most of the capitalist class. It is obvious to them that there is little future for the British motor industry and still less for the docks. But Cliff's quest for a ready-made vanguard is itself a mis-conceived project.

Workers do not become anti-capitalist fighters spontaneously; revolutionaries are made, not born. Workers will become a revolutionary force in society through struggle around a programme that directs working class action in an anti-capitalist direction. The programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party, published this month in pamphlet form, is an active intervention in the class struggle. Our object is to make workers into revolutionaries by confronting the obstacles to the development of a broad working class consciousness.

This is why it is important to understand the changing structure of the working class. Our aim is not to appeal to the prejudices of one section (like the Labour Party) or identify another as proto-revolutionary (like the SWP). We want to challenge the barriers to raising class consciousness and uniting the working class. One of the most important problems is the illusions created by state intervention among the seven million or so workers employed in the public sector. Many workers see the state as the representative of the whole of society — not as the agency of the capitalist class. They thus accept its role as arbitrator and mediator and even look to the government to resolve their problems — through nationalisation, investment, import controls, etc. Combatting these notions and the labour bureaucracy that advocates them is a central theme of our programme. We urge workers to rely on their own energies and initiatives, to take control over their own organisations and reject the interference of the capitalist state. Our objective is to forge a class conscious vanguard that can lead the working class, 'old' and 'new', to power.

Tough talk-less action

Margaret Thatcher won a landslide majority in the House of Commons. But the Tories are by no means clear what to do with it. Rob Knight looks at Thatcher and 'Thatcherism'.

HANGING is the ideal issue for the Tories after the General Election. It generates plenty of prejudice and reaction; it focuses public debate on crime and terrorism and law and order, rather than on Britain's continuing economic collapse and rising unemployment. And it is very unlikely to have any practical consequences. Thatcher has made it clear that even if Parliament votes for the death penalty, the Government will not be in any hurry to change the law.

While the great debate on hanging rages the Tories have backed down on many of their more controversial proposals. The Government legislative programme consists principally of items left over from the last Parliament, such as the Police Bill, and further limited measures of privatisation of sections of nationalised industries. The education voucher scheme has been abandoned, together with plans for compulsory health insurance as an alternative method of health service funding. The abolition of the GLC has been postponed. While legislation is threatened to impose compulsory strike and election ballots on trade unions, measures against the political levy have been put off pending consultations with the TUC. The programme of the new Government indicates no radical departures, simply the continuation of the approach of the past four years. Thatcher's style is characterised by a strong emphasis on creating a reactionary consensus and a pragmatic pursuit of the interests of British capitalism.

Consensus

The 'new right' originates in the Tory response to the party's 1974 election defeat. From Heath's experience in the early 'seventies the 'new right' concluded that before pushing ahead with its plans to restore profitability it would have to replace popular support for Keynesian economic policies with a new consensus.

The 'new right' backed Thatcher for party leader in 1975 because it recognised in her the potential for forging a new consensus which would favour the introduction of its counter-crisis strategy. Thatcher combined an ability to appeal to populist sentiments on law and order, patriotism and racism with the toughness which reassured the middle classes frightened by the recession.

Tory intellectuals set about replacing the paternalistic 'one nation' Toryism of Harold Macmillan and the 'fifties with a more abrasive bourgeois ideology. Under the editorship of Roger Scruton the *Salisbury Review* played an important role in serving up the atavistic prejudices of the *Daily Mail* in pretentious philosophical verbiage. Scruton explained the project:

'It is necessary to establish a conservative dominance in intellectual life...because in the long run it is the only way to create a climate of opinion favourable to the conservative cause.' (*Salisbury Review*, No 1)

The *Salisbury Review* is for the compulsory repatriation of immigrants, strict censorship and the break-up of the welfare state. It is intensely patriotic — after all, 'national consciousness provides...one of the strongest experiences of the immemorial of God'. Thatcher's role was to translate this reactionary package into a populist appeal to the nation.

How Labour helped

While the Tories languished in opposition between 1975 and 1979 the Labour Government paved the way for Thatcherism. Through the Social Contract it persuaded workers to make the sacrifici-



Thatcher still has her plate full saving British capitalism

ces necessary to get British capitalism out of crisis. The result was rising unemployment, falling living standards and growing demoralisation — and the crisis just got worse.

All the elements of Thatcherism were apparent in the policies and pronouncements of the Labour Government. Denis Healey declared that wage rises caused inflation and unemployment. The Government blamed striking workers for the country's problems. It turned out the army to smash the firemen's strike and picked on the lowest paid public service workers to teach a lesson to the rest of the labour movement. When the workers fought back, the Government signed its 'Concordat' with the union leaders that imposed greater restraints on militancy than anything yet proposed by Norman Tebbit. Labour drafted what later became the Tories' racist Nationality Act and waged the war in Ireland ruthlessly. James Callaghan even tried to promote the values of family life to improve Labour's popularity.

Thatcher took over where Labour left off, but for the first two years it was a very rough ride. By the middle of 1981 both unemployment and inflation had soared, the miners had forced a Government retreat over pit closures and the Director-General of the CBI was threatening a 'bare-knuckle fight' with the Government over its economic policy. In September 1981 there was open rebellion in the Cabinet with every Minister refusing to implement cuts in his own department. Thatcher's popularity at the polls was the lowest on record for a Prime Minister.

Thatcher and the 'new right' strategy were saved by the intensification of the recession. There simply was no alternative for capitalism but hard-line Tory policies. The Tory wets, the inheritors of Macmillan, were crushed when it became clear that all they had to offer was a return to the failed policies of Keynesianism. Leading wet James Prior was exiled to the Six Counties. Thatcher's personal popularity began to recover slowly. The failure of Labour to offer any coherent alternative helped her all the way. Then the Falklands War, which demonstrated the resolute approach to perfection, ensured a second Tory term.

Pragmatism

Throughout her first four years as Prime Minister, Thatcher has moved step by step to achieve the Government's objectives. The rhetoric has always moved well in advance of the action, helping to test the water and marginalise resistance. The offensive against the unions reveals the Thatcher approach. First the Tories stirred up anti-union prejudices among the middle classes — and skilfully exploited many workers' resentment over the role

of their unions during the Social Contract period. Having created a climate of public hostility against the unions, the Government moved ahead with anti-union laws. The measures introduced by James Prior in 1980 were aimed mainly to curb rank and file militancy, blacking and picketing. Encouraged by the lack of response, Norman Tebbit pressed ahead in 1982 with more limited measures to curb strike action and the closed shop. After several months of well-prepared propaganda against the unions' undemocratic practices, he is ready to take another bite at the labour movement.

Nor, despite her affection for military metaphors and methods, has Thatcher launched an all-out attack on the working class. The Government has only sought confrontation where it was sure of victory — with the weakly-led steel workers, or the divided railway workers — or where it could afford to face down strike action — in the civil service and the NHS. It has picked off sections of the working class one at a time, making tactical retreats where necessary (with the miners, 1981), but putting the boot in ruthlessly when it got the chance.

The Tories pursued a similar approach towards the nationalised industries and public services. There has been much bluster about the virtues of the entrepreneur and the free market economy — but a pragmatic approach to propping up old industries and boosting new ones. The leaks from the Tory Family Policy Group have hinted at the transfer of virtually every sphere of welfare services — health, education, care of the elderly, children, etc. — back to the family. The Tories have taken advantage of the reactionary 'anti-welfare' climate they have helped to create to cut services and put out hospital laundry and cleaning to private tender. But they have stopped far short of dismantling the NHS. As the *Financial Times* commented last September, the Tories still have some way to go before they can achieve this:

'While voters may respect her firmness, there is little evidence that the majority supports her desire to roll back the public sector and the welfare state. The Tories have yet to win the depth of consent needed to establish a new consensus for the rest of the century.'

What next?

There are three main problems facing the Tories. First, the collapse of the Labour Party in the last election concealed the limits of Tory support. Their overwhelming majority in Parliament hides a fall in their popular vote of nearly 700 000 since 1979. A little more than 30 per cent of the electorate voted Tory. Without a real mandate for radical change the Tories will proceed as carefully as they did in the last government. Second,

although it has been weakened by unemployment and paralysed by Labourism, the working class is by no means defeated. A frontal assault on the public sector or the introduction of large wage cuts could risk mass opposition. It is still necessary to proceed against the unions with caution. Hence Tebbit has held back on measures recommended by sections of the ruling class to make strikes in public services illegal and contracts legally enforceable. Third, the economy is nowhere near to recovery. The recent much-vaunted consumer-based expansion has had only a marginal impact in Britain. Production remains stagnant, the trend of inflation is once again upwards and long-term unemployment continues to rise. With no signs of new investment or serious restructuring, the Tory economic strategy could soon be lying in ruins. This will bring pressure for more drastic solutions. The ascendancy of the youthful 'new right' in Thatcher's new Cabinet — Norman Tebbit and Cecil Parkinson, Nigel Lawson and Leon Brittan — indicates the inevitability of more brutal Tory policies ahead.

Despite the problems, as long as there is no effective political opposition the Tories will be able to continue trying to solve the crisis at the expense of the working class. The paralysis of the left in the face of this bourgeois offensive is well documented in the recently-published collection of articles from the Communist Party's *Marxism Today* — *The politics of Thatcherism*. The weakness in its analysis lies in its inability to recognise that the present attack on the working class is not a policy option for the bourgeoisie, but a necessity for the survival of capitalism. Thatcherism is simply bourgeois strategy for shifting the balance of class relations in its favour. Instead of challenging this head on with working class politics, *The politics of Thatcherism* presents radical Keynesianism as if it were a solution which could work both for British capitalism and the working class.

The 'alternative' to Thatcherism is the 'alternative economic strategy': reflation, import controls, wage controls and increased public spending. Not surprisingly, the prospect of 'socialist' wage controls as advocated in *The politics of Thatcherism* did little to build support for Labour in the election. Nor is the siege economy a viable solution for parasitic British capitalism. Only a working class defeat of historic proportions can provide the conditions necessary for the restructuring of British industry and the return of profitability. The bourgeoisie knows this and is preparing the way, the left is still afraid to admit it. It still dreams of a return to the Social Contract when what we need is a decisive break with the politics of class collaboration and a real counter attack against the Tories.

Where 'left' means 'right'

Tory Employment Minister Norman Tebbit has announced new anti-trade union laws. He intends to impose ballots for union leaders, ballots for strike action and periodic ballots for unions to decide on their political affiliations and funds. On the right of the trade union bureaucracy, engineers' and managers' association chiefs Terry Duffy and John Lyons say the TUC should talk to the Tories. On the left, transport workers' leader Moss Evans declares his willingness to go to prison in defiance of the Tory legislation.

Mike Freeman argues that there is nothing left-wing about the TUC left.



Forty years ago NUPE was the only exclusively public service union in the top 20 of the TUC, and it was 13th. Today NUPE is the fifth largest union and there are nine other public service or white collar unions in the

TUC's top 20. Yet the TUC retains its obsolete structure; its politics are even more obsolete

TEBBIT takes on a TUC that is already reeling from a succession of body blows. Figures just announced admit a decline in membership of around five per cent; the real loss is undoubtedly much higher. In 1979 there were 13.5 million trade unionists — now there are officially 10.5 million. Some unions — the transport and general workers, the engineers, the steelworkers — have lost more than a quarter of their members since the Tories came to power. The Tories have openly snubbed the union chiefs and in every opinion poll union members have indicated their low regard for their leaders. Then came the election.

For the last four years the TUC barons have staked everything on the return of a Labour government. They took over the Labour Party machine, installed former trade union hack Jim Mortimer to run the organisation, sorted out the finances and took firm control of the national executive. They also put Michael Foot in as party leader which turned out to be not such a clever move. As John Lyons put it 'the General Election result leaves us up the creek without a paddle' (*The Guardian*, 11 July). Labour's election disaster has accelerated the fragmentation of the TUC and intensified its internal conflicts.

Polls apart?

On one extreme of the TUC stands a group of trade union leaders — the electricians' Frank Chapple, the engineers' Terry Duffy and Roy Grantham of APEX. Shortly after the election Chapple posed the choice before the TUC bluntly as 'socialism or survival' (*The Times*, 17 June). There was little doubt as to which he would prefer. Chapple's view was that 'instead of giving our money to a no-hope Labour Party, we should donate it to the cause of proportional representation'. This he saw as the only way of preventing 15 years of

Tory rule. In the meantime he emphasised that the Labour Party 'should not be an obstacle to our dealing with any non-Labour government'. Like Lyons, Chapple wants to loosen the TUC's ties to the Labour Party so that it can negotiate directly with the Conservative Government.

Chapple represents the interests of a number of unions whose base is largely in private manufacturing and services. They have little enthusiasm for the Labour Party and its affinities for state intervention. They calculate that their best chance of salvation is through doing deals with employers in the few growth areas of the British economy, especially in the new technology sector. To promote these objectives such union leaders are willing to talk to the Tories. And some were sufficiently indifferent to Labour's election prospects to recommend a vote for an SDP candidate (Chapple) or tactical voting for the Liberals (Grantham).

At the opposite extreme of the TUC General Council sit TGWU boss Moss Evans, NUPE leader Rodney Bickerstaffe and Arthur Scargill. Their response to Labour's election defeat has been to issue blood-curdling warnings to the Tories of the consequences of their policies and threats of mass extra-parliamentary action to defy the government. These union leaders remain adamantly opposed to any talks with the Tories. Scargill likened discussions with the government to collaboration with the Nazis during wartime.

Scargill represents in a particularly forceful way the concerns of unions which organise in the nationalised industries and public services. Their bond with the Labour Party is state intervention. Their only hope of survival, as the Tories move to curb public spending and extend privatisation, is through defending the state sector. The best way of doing this would be to get Labour back into power. Failing

that, the only alternative is to mobilise public opinion and protest against measures which would decimate their unions. It is significant that during the election campaign unions like NALGO and the CPSA which are not even affiliated to Labour, made very clear gestures of support to the public sector party. Both unions are directly threatened by service cuts.

The Chapple wing of the TUC is conventionally labelled 'right' and the Scargill wing 'left'. These labels are reinforced by Chapple's stock-in-trade of anti-communist, red-baiting rhetoric and by Scargill's socialist oratory. But in terms of their political content, the positions of both wings of the TUC are simply the pragmatic responses of bureaucrats in different sectors of the economy. Scargill told the miners' conference in July that he was prepared to fight 'to the death if necessary to save the British coal mining industry'. But Scargill's commitment to a state-owned industry and his long record of collaboration with its managers is no more socialist or left-wing than Chapple's loyalty to privately-owned British firms. The difference is one of approach. Scargill declares he wants to fight the Tories to save British mining; Chapple says he is prepared to work with the government to help salvage British industry. The consequences in both cases are the same — trade union members pay the price in jobs and conditions for their leaders' deference to British capitalism. 'Left' class collaboration and 'right' class collaboration both point towards disaster.

No leftward drift

The myth of the TUC left wing is apparent in another current controversy — the reorganisation of the General Council of the TUC. For the past two years the TGWU has led a vigorous rearguard action against plans to restructure the General

Council to take account of the fact that the working class has changed in the 60 years since it was first established. The proposal is backed by a number of largely white collar unions which are at present under-represented on the General Council. The TGWU is backed by a number of declining industrial unions. The TGWU's position is clearly a defence of vested interests in preserving an obsolete structure. But it is dressed up as a left-right struggle, with the TGWU upholding democracy and progressive policies.

Former Communist Party industrial organiser Mick Costello has recently produced a detailed apology for the 'left' opposition to restructuring the General Council (*Morning Star*, 16 June). The Communist Party's friends in the trade union bureaucracy tend to be in the declining manual unions which will lose out through restructuring. Costello claims that restructuring is a right-wing conspiracy to thwart the leftward-moving policies of the TUC on social and political questions. It is true that some of the white collar union leaders are not keen on some of the TUC's official policies. But have they moved left?

Costello cites some obscure resolutions on international matters, and growing sympathies for international Stalinist trade union fronts. What else? He notes that last year the TUC 'unequivocally rejected incomes policy under Tory, Labour or any other government'. He does not comment on the TUC's unequivocal endorsement (backed by two Communist Party members on the General Council) of Labour's incomes policy manifesto only months later. Costello also notes TUC policy in favour of nuclear disarmament and the alternative economic strategy — both commitments sufficiently meaningless to be endorsed by any section of the labour movement. He concludes by claiming that last year's TUC voted by 'a huge majority' for 'breaking off class collaboration with the Tories and employers within the National Economic Development Council'. In fact the TUC voted by 3 million votes to stay in the NEDC.

The NEDC vote at last year's TUC was significant as conference's major set-piece confrontation between left and right. The left's proposal that the TUC should boycott the NEDC, the most prestigious quango on which it still sits, seemed a bold break with the past. In fact the left was not proposing an end to the integration of the official labour movement into the machinery of the state. It simply wanted to make an anti-Tory gesture. An amendment calling for union withdrawal from all state bodies fell because its proposer could not find a seconder. Communist Party leader Ken Gill denied that the proposed boycott was 'a petulant action'. It was simply 'a public statement that the Tories do not consult the trade unions'. The TUC top brass opposed the motion and easily carried the day against the left. But as the left was not proposing any serious measure of disentanglement of the labour movement from the capitalist state, this can scarcely be seen as a defeat for left-wing socialism.

The road to disaster

The TUC is now well on the way to talks with Tebbit. It will simply have to grovel and accept the Tory terms. The Tories have taken advantage of mass unemployment to undermine the labour movement and then re-establish relations, with the unions in a much more subservient position. This year's TUC will see more shadow boxing between left and right. But all Scargill's huffing and puffing will not be able to disguise the reality of an official labour movement on course for humiliation at the feet of the Tories. We just have to make sure that they don't take us with them.

Policing the unemployed

Over the past five years a new generation has grown up to find its future mapped out on the dole or in the endless acronyms of the Manpower Services Commission — from YOP to WEEP to YTS. Joan Phillips looks at the state's attempts to deal with youth unemployment — and at the complicity of the official labour movement.

MASS UNEMPLOYMENT is a threat to social stability. For the capitalist class it is a weapon against the working class, but with 1 300 000 people under the age of 25 on the streets there is a constant risk of disaffection and riot. For the trade union leaders unemployment means falling membership and bargaining power. But it also provides an opportunity for the labour leaders to prove their worth to the establishment — by helping the state to contain unemployed youth. While the TUC has been snubbed by the Tories over most areas of government policy affecting the unions, it has become an eager partner in policing the unemployed.

Crowd control

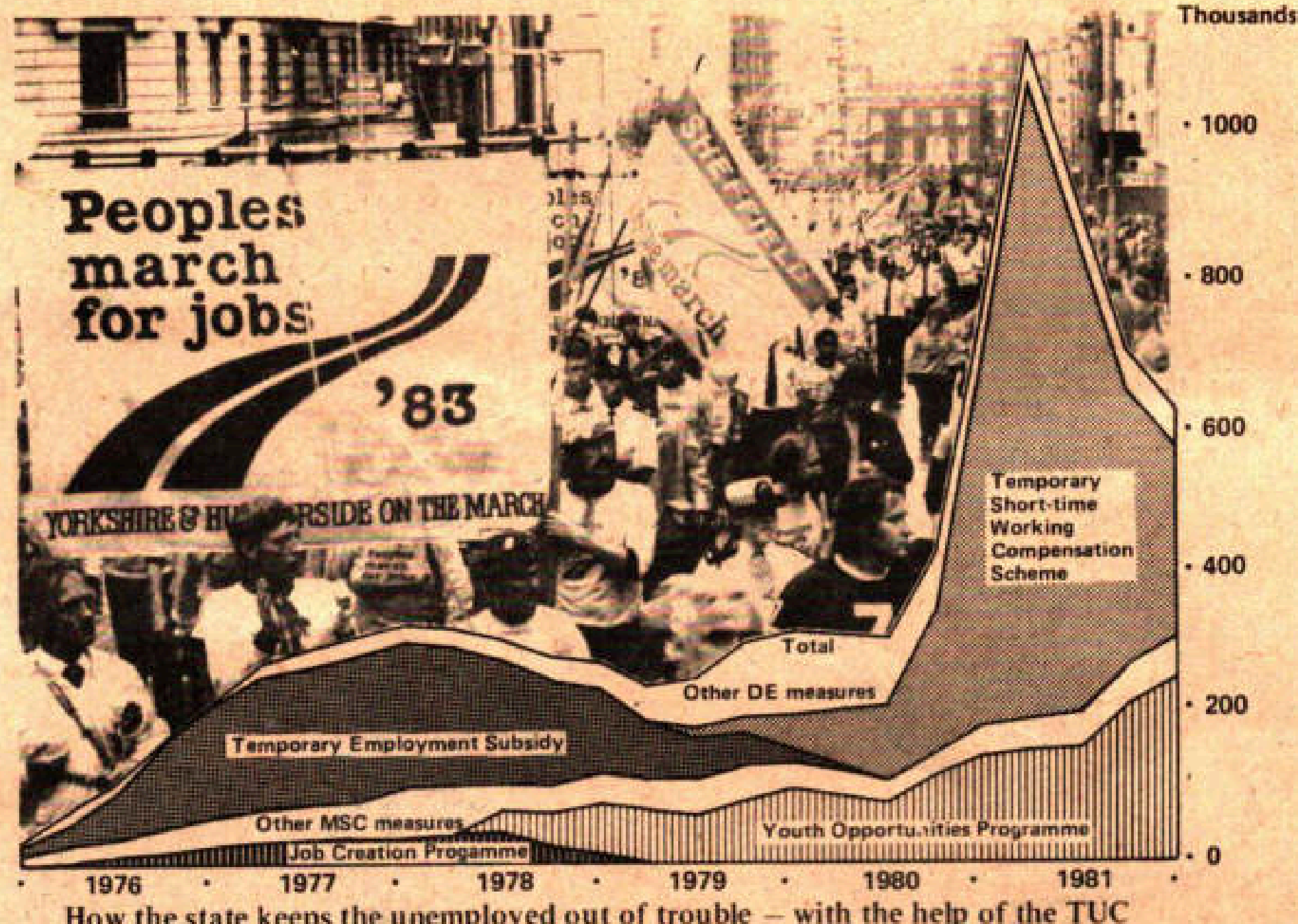
'Special employment measures' is the government's term for the series of schemes it has devised for keeping the unemployment figures down and the unemployed out of trouble. *The Times* recently complimented the Manpower Services Commission on its myriad schemes:

'All this bustle served only to keep people temporarily off the streets. But in the absence of political inspiration in coping with mass unemployment the MSC has performed well its sisyphian task of pushing numbers off the top of the unemployed aggregate.' (25 June)

The MSC was established by the Labour Government in 1974 to work out how to contain the rising reserve army of labour while taking advantage of it to cheapen labour costs and reduce living standards. A succession of MSC schemes has seen a mounting offensive against both the unemployed (who have been turned into casual cheap labourers) and the employed (whose jobs have been substituted and wages squeezed).

Special employment schemes have been used to subsidise private employers to take on cheap labour 'trainees' and to facilitate cuts in local government spending. One of the MSC's early enterprises — the Job Creation Programme — was eventually transformed into a variety of schemes to deal with youth unemployment on the one hand (Youth Opportunities Programme, Youth Training Scheme) and the long-term adult unemployed on the other (Special Temporary Employment Programme, Community Enterprise Programme). The Job Creation Programme was supposed to provide 'short-term jobs of social value' — such as counting the number of lamp-posts on streets and the number of cars on roads. As the MSC admitted in its report on JCP and the Work Experience on Employers Premises (WEEP) scheme, workers were being used to compensate for cuts in the public sector, doing 'relatively low priority local authority jobs at a time when authorities are having to cancel or defer more important work because of public expenditure constraints' (MSC Report 1977).

The JCP was abandoned because it paid wages. When the Youth Opportunities Programme was launched in 1978, young people were offered a 'weekly tax-free allowance' of £23.50. By the time YOP came to an end in March of this year, more than 1.8 million people had passed through it. Of these, more than 75 per cent were thrown back on the dole queue after six months. The majority of YOP



How the state keeps the unemployed out of trouble — with the help of the TUC
'Other Department of Employment measures' include the short-time working compensation scheme and various other employment subsidy schemes. The temporary short-time working compensation scheme was often a prelude to mass redundancy. 'Other MSC measures' include Community Industry, Special Temporary Employment Programme, Training in Industry, Job Introduction Scheme, Work Experience Programme and Community Enterprise Programme. The introduction of YTS in September 1983 will mark a major expansion in the youth-oriented measures. (Source: *Social Trends* 1983)

schemes — 63 per cent — were based on work experience on employers' premises. The remainder were work preparation courses and community projects. The MSC's own report admitted that 30 per cent of the WEEP scheme was used to substitute for permanent jobs. Given the scale of the 1981-2 programme, this meant that 60 000 jobs were lost.

Uniform opportunities

The YOP scheme was abandoned because it was too expensive, increasingly difficult to sell to employers and unemployed youth and it was not compulsory. Its replacement by the YTS does not mark a radical break with the past — merely a further refinement of exploitation and control. The YTS is the fruit of an MSC document submitted to the government in May 1981 entitled 'A new training initiative for the training and retraining of Britain's workforce'. The 'training' involved in the YTS is less training in useful skills and more training in subservience to capital. Junior employment minister Peter Morrison explained:

'The scheme was not a social service. It was there to teach the youngsters what the real world of work was about: arriving on time, giving of your best during the working day and maybe staying on a little longer to complete an unfinished task.' (*The Times*, 9 July)

Labour spokesman Barry Jones declared that he hoped the scheme would be 'a rattling good success'.

The YTS improves upon the army adventure camps of the past by allocating 5200 places in the armed forces and hundreds more in the police force.

The YTS is an amalgamation of three existing schemes — YOP, WEEP and the 'training for skills' programme — all of which were initiated by the last Labour Government. The MSC aims to provide 450 000 young people with places on YTS when it is officially launched in September but it is having difficulties in achieving the target of places because of the dearth of large firms able to provide sponsorship.

Employers are being encouraged to take on YTS workers to accelerate deskilling, undercut trainee wages, undermine trade union organisation and scrap apprenticeships — which have fallen from 110 000 to 45 000 during the last four years. The YTS has been linked to the new Young Workers Scheme, under which employers receive a subsidy of £15 a week from the government for every 16 or 17-year-old they employ at a wage of less than £40 a week. Thus employers can

engage YTS workers at £25 a week for a year and YWS workers at £40 or less for a second year.

Bureaucratic complicity

The TUC has not only rubber-stamped every temporary employment measure, it has also been complicit in drawing them up and ensuring that they operate smoothly. Today, the TUC has three members sitting on the MSC — general secretary of SOGAT '82 Bill Keys, assistant general secretary of the TUC Ken Graham and senior national officer of the GMWU Ken Baker. Five trade union bureaucrats sit on each of the 54 'area manpower boards'.

When YOP was first introduced, the TUC was more committed to it than the CBI, the employers' organisation. It felt that YOP was an 'immediate and constructive contribution to the alleviation of the problems caused by the intolerable levels of youth unemployment'. The riots of the summer of 1981 strengthened the bureaucracy's commitment. Len Murray told the Youth Aid AGM in December 1981 why the TUC backed YOP:

'The TUC has got substantive criticisms of YOP. But we do not support the cry that YOP is a fraud. That would condemn hundreds of thousands of young people to the streets. And we saw some of the consequences of this in Brixton and Toxteth in July.'

The bureaucracy's cringing willingness to preside directly over the exploitation and containment of the unemployed has been given due recognition by the state. Thus when employment minister Norman Tebbit first formulated the proposals for YTS, he was prepared to listen to and discuss some of the TUC's objections. The bureaucrats asked that the scheme should be voluntary and that people should not be deprived of social security benefits if they refused to participate. The TUC also demanded that the trainee allowance be raised to £30. The union leaders won none of their demands — refusal to participate in YTS will mean loss of dole money for six weeks and Tebbit has refused to budge from £25.

Yet the TUC was happy enough simply to be consulted. It issued 250 000 copies of its guide to the scheme. Ken Graham was overwhelmed by the historic significance of the YTS negotiations:

'For the first time unions should have a direct role in negotiating with employers on the terms and conditions of trainees.' (*Financial Times*, 24 March)

In reality this means consenting to cuts in trainee wages and the scrapping of apprenticeships. Electricians' union leaders Frank Chapple and Eric Hammond have already taken a lead from the CBI and slashed trainee rates by 30 per cent.

Bureaucratic stranglehold

The TUC's finest contribution to policing the unemployed is the national network of unemployed centres. These were the answer to a question first raised by Len Murray back in 1980:

'How can we ensure that unemployed young people do not become alienated from the trade union movement as well as from other institutions in our society and do not become easy recruits for extremist anti-democratic groups?'

Today 160 unemployed centres, mostly jointly operated by the MSC and the TUC, provide tea, ping-pong, cookery and keep-fit courses for the unemployed. The fact that so few people use these centres testifies to the alienation of the unemployed from the official labour movement. A recent survey of 90 unemployment centres by *Labour Research* revealed widespread feelings of hostility, scepticism or indifference on the part of the unemployed towards the trade unions.

Despite their obvious failure, however, the TUC has no option but to continue with these centres — after all, they are its only gesture to the unemployed. Meanwhile, it is happy to blame its own sordid record on the strings that are attached to MSC funding. The suspension of funding to Sheffield Unemployment Centre for engaging in 'political activity' and the withdrawal of MSC money to all centres prior to the People's March for Jobs, pending talks with the TUC on tightening the curbs on political activity, have been a source of embarrassment for the trade union bureaucrats. While it has given its blessing to the MSC-imposed straitjacket on political activity, the union bureaucracy is well aware that it cannot afford to be discredited any further. Thus Len Murray has launched an appeal for trade union funds to enable the centres to become financially independent. The aim is not to transform the centres into effective instruments of working class combat — but to distance the TUC from the MSC and to centralise and reassert bureaucratic control.

Fighting back

The labour bureaucracy has succeeded in paralysing the will to fight of the unemployed. While it expresses sympathy and concern for their plight, it has presided over the destruction of thousands of jobs. It has exacerbated divisions in the working class between employed and unemployed. The unemployed have been allowed to languish in isolation for too long.

It is up to the working class to organise their defence. This requires concerted opposition to all redundancies, voluntary and compulsory, and all schemes aimed at redistributing unemployment among the working class — job sharing, early retirement, retraining, shorter working-week, and short or part-time work. It also requires a rejection of all state-run employment schemes designed to contain the unemployed. We must organise our own programme of work schemes under working class control and force the state to finance them. The working class — not the bosses — must decide the level of wages and welfare benefits necessary to maintain living standards. Most importantly, to defend the unemployed means wresting control out of the hands of the bureaucracy and organising independently. Led by the bureaucrats, the fight against unemployment leads only to demoralisation and despair. If it is taken out of their hands, it has the potential to unite all sections of the working class as the first step on the road to workers' control.

Fighting unemployment in Tameside

Unemployment was a central issue in the Revolutionary Communist Party's recent election campaign in Tameside near Manchester. On 28 June Tameside council agreed to provide rent and rate-free premises for an unemployed workers' centre in response to a year-long trades council campaign. Trades council secretary and RCP election candidate Dave Hallsworth reports on the struggle for an independent unemployment centre in Tameside.

THE LEADERS of the labour movement in Tameside have done little to defend jobs and even less to organise the unemployed. This year, the Labour council's 'Operation Jobline' created only 100 jobs — 9000 people applied for them. The other 8900 are still on the dole. The trade union leadership has put up even less resistance to unemployment. The AUEW's response to the June redundancies at Adamson and Hatchet in Dukinfield was typical. Far from organising a fight against the employers' demand for 79 voluntary redundancies, the workers' AUEW convenor was among the first to apply for his redundancy money.

The working class needs a completely different approach. Our only concerns must be our jobs and living standards. To pursue our independent class interests, we need independent working class organisations. We need to reassert rank and file control within the unions. Equally importantly, we need to build broader organisations which can unite all sections of the working class — employed and unemployed, black and white, men and women — around an independent programme to defend our class. Unemployed Workers Centres, run by the unemployed and used as a base for organising against the employers' offensive, are one example of the forms such organisation could take.

Direct action

That's why the RCP has fully supported the campaign, begun by Tameside Trades Council and backed by sections of the

local Labour Party rank and file, to press the council to provide a building for such a centre. Our aim has been to raise the tempo of the campaign through public initiatives and to give it a political coherence. During the run-up to the election we organised a picket of the council meeting at which the Mayor of Tameside was inaugurated. At that stage, the council offered two sites for the unemployed workers' centre — one of them was a useless wreck, the other would have cost over £1000 a year in rates. Our picket was organised to make it clear that this was not good enough. The unemployed of Tameside could not be expected to pay for their centre; the council must set it up free of charge.

The picket, and the Labour leadership's response to it, illustrated the difference between our working class approach to organising against unemployment and the council's bureaucratic commitment to working within the limitations imposed by the capitalist system. While RCP supporters mobilised unemployed Tameside workers in an active display of support for an independent centre, the council was bogged down in the politics of committee rooms and book-balancing. The statement made by Labour council leader Roy Oldham was typical:

'We might be able to waive the rent, but the rates are more difficult. They are payable to the county as well as to us, but the whole matter is being processed through the appropriate committee. We appreciate the anxiety but there are formalities to go through.' ('RCP in jobs protest', *Ashton Reporter*, 27 May)

For workers' control

Unemployed workers have no use for 'appropriate committees' or 'formalities'. What they need is a straight commitment to fighting for jobs. To underline the necessity for an unemployed workers' centre to be both free of charge and free from any bureaucratic control, we followed up our picket by petitioning across Tameside. The petition made 3 demands on the council (see box).

In just two weeks, our petition was signed by a thousand unemployed workers and presented to the council's June meeting.

The unemployed workers' centre we need

- 1 'That the council must provide a centre free of all charges of rent, rates, lighting, telephone etc.' Unemployment and the atomisation of the unemployed are the responsibility of the capitalist class and their system. The bosses and their state must be made to pay for the jobs and services the unemployed need. A council like Tameside is as much a part of the state as the Houses of Parliament or the police. It must be made to provide for the working class irrespective of what the system can afford
- 2 'The council must hire 2 unemployed workers at an average industrial wage to administer the building and a trained nursery nurse to look after the children of centre-users.' These workers would play a purely technical role in maintaining the building. They would have no role in running the centre's activities and would be responsible to the unemployed workers, not the council. The taking on of a nursery nurse is particularly important, to leave women workers free to be fully involved in the centre's campaigns
- 3 'The council must guarantee that there will be no political interference in the centre's activities from the council or any other state body. The centre must be run by a committee elected from and by the unemployed workers themselves.' Unemployed centres which exist today are run by the TUC and Manpower Services Commission to contain unemployed workers, not to organise them. They are open for pool but not politics. We need a centre run by unemployed workers which can be used to organise a fight for jobs, decent benefits and against all attacks on any section of the working class.

Our petition to Tameside council

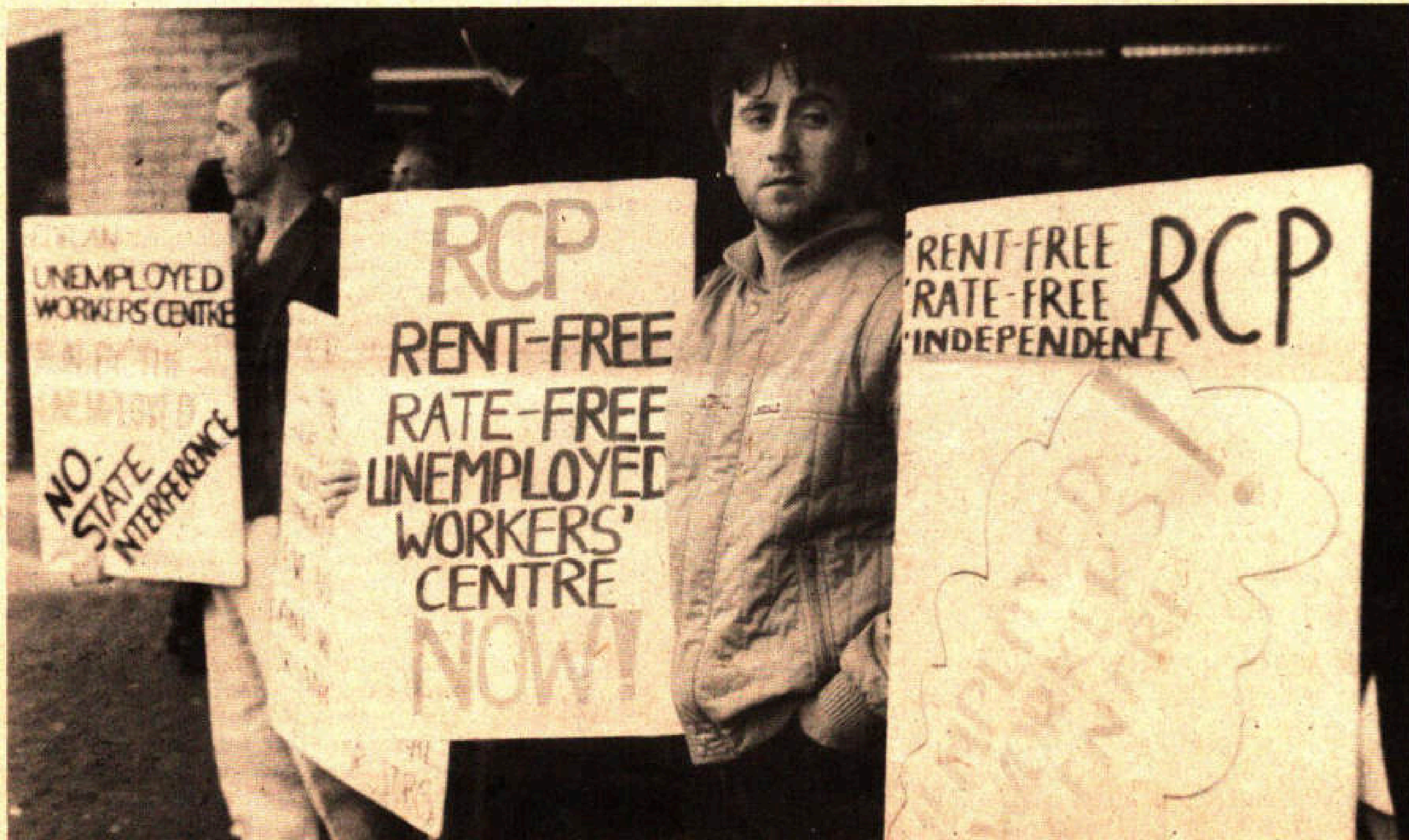
The council refused to discuss it — on the grounds that Roy Oldham wasn't there to receive it. But by now it felt under enough pressure to agree to set up a centre free from rent and rates. The building it offered in July shows the council's contempt for the unemployed. Inside and outside were completely wrecked. We welcome it as a partial victory, but we do not accept it as final. The council has tried to

get itself off the hook by agreeing to pay for the centre. But it still baulks at the idea of letting the unemployed run their own organisations.

No compromises

Labour councillors have produced varied explanations for their refusal to allow the centre to be independent. Some have openly slurred the unemployed with accusations that the centre would become a 'gambling den' full of giro-losing idlers if it was not properly supervised. Others have directed their attacks at the RCP's involvement, claiming that 'you just want it to be an RCP centre'. This exposes the Labour leader's real fear of the influence of working class politics on the unemployed. The only way such an organisation could become an 'RCP centre' would be if the unemployed workers were prepared to fight for the RCP's programme. We do not have the bureaucrats' machine for imposing our political will on unwilling workers. But we appreciate their sense of the irrelevance of their political outlook to the needs of the unemployed and their fear of losing influence entirely.

The future of the campaign for an independent unemployed workers' centre in Tameside now hangs in the balance. Trade unionists and Labour Party activists are faced with a choice of accepting the council's compromise or continuing the struggle for effective, fighting organisations of the working class. In effect, this is a choice between defending our class or defending the bureaucrats' machinery of compromise and control. The RCP in Ashton will be pursuing our full demands for the centre. We call on all those who are serious about working class politics to join us.



Fighting to defend the unemployed — Manchester RCP lobby the council

After the June elections



As Gerry Fitt leaves his burnt-out home in West Belfast for the House of Lords, and the man who displaced him as local MP — Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams — heads for a trip to Britain, Mike Wall assesses the new balance of forces in the nationalist community in the Six Counties.

UNIONISTS won 15 of the 17 Six County seats in the General Election. This resulted from two factors. First, the fixing of constituency boundaries — to guarantee an even greater Loyalist parliamentary majority than their in-built superiority in numbers would automatically ensure — has been a feature of the Six-County state since it was set up in 1920. It was maintained by the constituency reorganisation of the late 'seventies as the Unionists' reward for propping up the ailing Labour Government. Second, the Unionists came out so far ahead because the nationalist vote was much more evenly split than their own. The results showed James Molyneux's Official Unionists well ahead of Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists, with 11 seats to three. Independent Unionist James Kilfedder makes up the Loyalist bloc at Westminster to 15.

The nationalist vote was divided between Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic and Labour Party. With 102 000 votes Sinn Fein won 42 per cent of the nationalist vote — but only one seat; that of Gerry Adams in West Belfast. In Mid Ulster *An Phoblacht/Republican News* editor Danny Morrison missed election by only 78 votes. In Fermanagh-South Tyrone sitting MP Owen Carron lost his seat to the Unionists as a result of the intervention of the SDLP. The SDLP won a narrow majority of the total nationalist vote, 56 per cent, with 137 000 votes in all. Only John Hume the party's leader won a Westminster seat — at Foyle, in his native Derry. No other SDLP candidate came within 1000 votes of winning a seat.

Success!

The election results marked a considerable success for Sinn Fein. After only a few months in the field of electoral politics it managed to beat its target (90 000 votes) and increase its share of the nationalist vote from 35 per cent (in the October 1982 Assembly Election) to 42 per cent in June. Sinn Fein's success was marked in the working class areas of Derry and Belfast (where Adams won a substantial 5500 vote majority) and in the poorer rural areas. In the two big country constituencies of Mid Ulster and Fermanagh-South Tyrone, Sinn Fein won a total of more than 35 000 votes — around 1500 more than the SDLP. Sinn Fein was the only

party in the entire 'United Kingdom' that succeeded in mobilising young people on a large scale in its election campaign.

Sinn Fein triumphed against the combined forces of the Church, the state, the media and the SDLP. Bishop Daly and others proclaimed that a vote for Sinn Fein was a vote for IRA violence. Evidently many of his flock found that no reason not to support Sinn Fein in a country which has been subjected to the violence of the British Army for approaching 14 years. The army and the RUC harassed Sinn Fein candidates and election workers. But they could not stop people voting in tens of thousands for a party that was prepared to fly the tricolour in British occupied territory in defiance of the state's military forces.

The newspapers and the television kept up a relentless stream of anti-republican propaganda: the Twenty-six Counties state-controlled radio and television network maintained its long-established policy of pretending that Sinn Fein does not exist. The British media broadcast Gerry Fitt's every hysterical condemnation of the anti-imperialist struggle, not to mention his nostalgic reminiscences of the days when he had some support in West Belfast.

Fitt wisely decided not to do walkabouts in the constituency as part of his election campaign. He excused this on the grounds that everyone knew where he stood. Certainly nobody was convinced by his attempts to present expressions of support for his candidature from Loyalist organisations, as proof of the possibility of working class unity. When he was beaten into third place Ian Paisley, James Prior and Michael Foot united in lamenting this 'tragedy'.

Mister Londonderry

The waning fortunes of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), which Fitt left in 1979, are illustrated by its attempts to fend off Sinn Fein pressure in Derry. SDLP leader John Hume won at Foyle but his election was the result of anti-Unionist tactical voting rather than an endorsement of SDLP politics. Hume's solitary position as SDLP representative at Westminster merely confirms his party's status as a one-man party with some backing among middle class Catholics. By contrast Sinn Fein's vote reflects active support

for the republican movement in working class nationalist areas.

Sinn Fein's election campaign set out to turn the screws on the SDLP. In the run up to the election the SDLP-controlled Derry City Council rejected a proposal to remove the prefix 'London' from the city's official name. The SDLP's refusal to remove this symbol of imperialist rule aroused the scorn and hostility of the nationalist population. The SDLP has since tried to revive a moderate nationalist image. The council has now stopped flying the Union Jack over municipal buildings and in June ended the 10-year-old 'power-sharing' agreement whereby the posts of Mayor and Deputy Mayor rotated between SDLP and Official Unionists. The resignation of former Mayor Hugh Doherty in protest at this snub to the Unionists, shows how any attempt by the SDLP to win the support of the nationalist working class risks alienating its middle class supporters.

The SDLP is a victim of 14 years of war. The unremitting terror of the British occupation against the nationalist community has made its attempts to mediate increasingly futile. Especially since the hunger-strikes in 1981, the SDLP has lost support and morale as it has tried to find a middle way between British imperialism and nationalist anger.

The SDLP's problems are compounded by the fact that the British government can now do little to keep the party afloat. In the past the party's survival depended on it having a role to play in British 'political initiatives'. As Anthony Verrier points out in his recent book — *Through the looking glass: British foreign policy since the war* (Cape 1983) — British intelligence helped to launch the SDLP in 1970. Far-sighted British agents appreciated the advantages to British strategy of a moderate nationalist party which could be used to contain the nationalist working class in the Six Counties.

But all Britain's efforts to establish a stable political facade to conceal its brutal war in Ireland — from 'power-sharing' to the devolved assembly — have been frustrated. Direct Rule remains the only option. Margaret Thatcher has allowed James Prior's Assembly to eke out its miserable existence, although its use in disguising the day-to-day barbarism of British rule is distinctly limited. It keeps Loyalist politicians out of harm's way, but it is apparent to everyone in the Six Counties that it is only a sideshow. John Hume bitterly regrets Britain's failure to provide an arena in which the SDLP could flourish:

'I told Jim Prior we couldn't support the Assembly — it was just another talking shop. He didn't seem to realise that he had left us no ground to stand on.' (*Sunday Times*, 8 May)

Having received no succour from the British government, Hume has staked his party's future on the Dublin Forum. This forum only exists to try to relieve the plight of the SDLP. Hume's strategy is to make speeches assuring Loyalists that there would be a place for them in a United Ireland. The Dublin Government is alarmed at the crumbling of the SDLP and the growth in support for Sinn Fein. It fears the spread of anti-imperialist conflict into the Twenty-six Counties. The Irish ruling class is more than ever aware of the need to convince Irish workers that there can be a constitutional resolution of the 'Irish Question'. To do this it needs to salvage the SDLP.

The Armalite and the ballot box

The General Election and Sinn Fein's participation in it did not stop the war against British imperialism. The IRA

maintained a high level of activity throughout the election campaign. On 24 May the RUC barracks on the Catholic Falls Road was demolished in a spectacular bombing. In Armagh British Army helicopters have come under fire from groups of volunteers. The heavily protected Belfast city centre has been the target for a series of incendiary bombings and on the anniversary of the death of hunger-striker Patsy O'Hara, Derry's nationalist youth maintained a sustained attack on the RUC.

At the same time Sinn Fein has raised a much higher profile than ever before. In the last year it has opened advice centres all over West Belfast — Divis, Beechmount, Ballymurphy and Andersonstown — and five in Derry. Republican activists have plunged into active community work, especially on housing issues. This activity has helped to consolidate Sinn Fein's position in the nationalist community.

After its triumph in the General Election and Alex Maskey's success in a more recent West Belfast council by-election, Sinn Fein is planning more electoral activity. Activists are already planning their intervention in next year's local elections in the North and the coming elections for the European Parliament. And Sinn Fein intends to stand 200 candidates in the local government elections in the Twenty-six Counties in autumn next year. A good showing in these will encourage Sinn Fein to contest seats in the Dail.

Sinn Fein's electoral strategy has aroused speculation about the relative weight that the republican movement will give to the 'ballot box and the Armalite'. At the moment there seems little scope for the transformation of Sinn Fein into a purely constitutional force. As long as the British occupation continues so will the armed struggle against it. The vote for Sinn Fein was a vote of the most oppressed sections of the nationalist people in support of the IRA's 14-year battle against the British forces. The continuation of the military campaign during the election and the reference to support for 'the armed struggle' in Sinn Fein's election broadcast confirm the central importance of the Armalite in the nationalist vote for Sinn Fein.

Yet the British authorities are putting considerable resources into drawing the republican movement into respectable politics. Prior still refuses to meet Adams, but contact between junior ministers and civil servants and Sinn Fein representatives have proliferated. The government has made facilities and funds available to encourage Sinn Fein involvement in housing, social security and community issues. The authorities hope to integrate the republican movement into the administrative structures of the Six Counties. But these are structures which enforce the oppression of the nationalist people — they cannot be used to alleviate oppression. The problems of unemployment, housing and poverty in the nationalist ghettos cannot be fought effectively through local councils, the housing executive or any other quangos because they result from the domination of British imperialism. The British state aims to encourage the separation of campaigns to improve basic living standards from the armed struggle. The future of the anti-imperialist movement in Ireland depends on how far it is successful.

A myth destroyed

The General Election in the Six Counties confirms the intense polarisation of Irish society as a consequence of British domination. It also confirms the mass popular support among the nationalist population for the anti-imperialist struggle. The hunger-strikes, the Assembly Elections and now the General Election have effectively destroyed one of the central myths that justifies British terror in Ireland — that the republican movement is an isolated, conspiratorial clique. The results of the elections thus provide new opportunities for challenging British prejudices and building solidarity with the Irish cause in Britain.

Things fall apart

The Republic of Ireland seems to be becoming ungovernable. In six months of Fine Gael/Labour coalition government Dublin streets have echoed to protests from every section of Irish society from 3 000 disgruntled publicans to 100 000 workers. In May the Dail was suspended after Dundalk farmers stormed a Dutch ship and dumped its cargo of imported potatoes. Mick Hume examines the cracks in the social fabric of the Twenty-six Counties.

BEHIND THE SOCIAL TENSIONS of Irish society lies a collapsing economy. The recession has brought the heady days of state-sponsored foreign investment and credit-boostered spending to an abrupt end. Foreign capital is pulling out in search of more lucrative ventures and the loans are falling due for repayment. Investment in the Republic's industry is expected to fall by eight per cent this year. The closure of foreign-financed firms has pushed official unemployment close to 200 000 out of a total workforce of one million. The Dublin government is left with a devastated economy and a state debt equal to 3 500 punts (£1) for every person in the Twenty-six Counties — the highest per capita debt in the world.

Parliamentary charades

The consequences of the recession have permeated every aspect of Irish life. Any country dominated by imperialism like the Twenty-six Counties has trouble keeping up the appearances of bourgeois democracy at the best of times. The Dail (parliament) has always been a pale shadow of the British House of Commons. Now the whole charade of Irish parliamentary politics is grinding to a halt. The Dail has been virtually moribund during the debate and counter-debate over the proposed anti-abortion amendment to the constitution. The fact that a few Dundalk farmers could cause parliament to be suspended by attacking a Dutch potato ship indicates the fragility of political life in the Twenty-six Counties.

Faced with the pressures of a disintegrating society, all the established parties are suffering internal squabbles and external impotence. Coalition government ministers have come close to blows over the scale and speed of spending cuts required to salvage the economy. As the powerless junior partner in the coalition, the Labour Party has particularly serious problems. Its lack of political independence from the major bourgeois parties has always made its relations with its small working class base tense and unstable. The Labour Party's role in the anti-union activities of the current administration has raised the threat of union disaffiliations. The weak labour bureaucracy has become increasingly frustrated by Labour's inability to secure it a voice in government. At their June conference, leaders of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union warned that the party was 'on trial' for its life. The Fianna Fail opposition is faring little better. Attempts by its corrupt leader, Charles Haughey, to purge constituency organisations of members who dislike his sleazy brand of machine politics have been met with open rebellion.

Coercion

To counter the social crisis, the Twenty-six Counties state is being forced to drop its shaky democratic facade and revert to open coercion. The weak Irish ruling class understands that to maintain its reputation as a reliable guarantor of imperialist interests in the area, it must prove its ability to deal with all unrest and discipline the working class. Fine Gael Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald summed up the bourgeoisie's problems in a June speech, when he blamed working class militancy, vandalism and crime for the Republic's decline during the 'eighties. Such things, FitzGerald declared,

'have meant that over this period of 3 years Ireland was acquiring a reputation more like that of an unstable Latin American country, in total contrast to our solid record during the 1960's and 1970's. There is no doubt that our

standing abroad has been damaged.' (*Irish Times*, 11 June 1983)

Repairing the damage to the Twenty-six Counties' standing abroad means convincing the imperialists that their investments have a stable future in Ireland. FitzGerald's conclusion set out the precondition for such repairs. If the Republic is going to acquire a 'Latin American' reputation, then so is its government. The sort of austerity and repression which has long characterised imperialism's domination of the Third World is coming to Ireland. 'It is important', FitzGerald emphasised, 'that the message is understood'.

The coalition government has already set about getting its message across to both the working class and the imperialist powers. The machinery of negotiation and class compromise created during the boom is being by-passed in favour of direct state intervention against the labour movement. Thus, when foreign investors complained about the 'irresponsibly' high wage settlements being proposed by the Labour Court (an ACAS style mediator) the government moved in to put direct pressure on Irish employers who were promising to pay up. But the state's new 'resolute approach' is likely to go much further than behind-the-scenes ministerial phone calls. At every turn, the dynamic of the class struggle is away from the negotiating table towards picket-line punch ups and jailing strikers. The use of injunctions against factory occupations is on the increase. The Twenty-six Counties' army, which is organised for internal use, has already been used to break minor strikes. The institutionalised repression, never far from the surface of Irish society, is being prepared for action. Emergency legislation designed for use against republicans stands ready to be used against workers. There are strong lobbies for increasing the powers of the gardai. And the Republic has a long-established and extensive system for containing those who threaten imperialism's needs in Ireland. Despite its overcrowded jails, the Republic is the only country in the world with more prison officers than

prisoners. The state is gearing up for a scale of confrontation which will put them to good use.

The preparations for open repression indicate the limited social power and collapsing confidence of the Irish ruling class. But the political weakness of the Irish labour movement has prevented the working class from taking advantage of imperialism's difficulties. This is a lasting consequence of the partition of Ireland in 1921.

Classless conflicts

Partition divided the Irish working class and stunted its political development. While Irish workers established a proud tradition of industrial militancy, proletarian politics failed to develop alongside working class organisations. The result is that the Irish labour movement has remained under the political domination of the middle classes. This domination has encouraged a classless outlook amongst Irish workers. In practice, it has meant that they have responded to the crisis more often as citizens of the Irish Republic than as members of the working class. Workers' frustration over unemployment and falling living standards has produced a series of strikes and demonstrations. But these militant actions have all too often missed the target. They have been aimed not against the state, but against the 'social criminals' blamed by the official labour movement for the collapse of the Twenty-six Counties' society — drug-pushers, unpatriotic flour-importers or tax-dodging farmers.

Whatever the immediate issue or tactics used, all of these protests have effectively caused Irish workers to unite with the state in defending the Twenty-six Counties against everything alien to the 'Irish way of life'. The net effect is to divert working class anger from what is really alien to Ireland — the continued dominance of British imperialism throughout the island. The clearest expression of the labour movement's diversion from tackling the real problems of Irish society is its preoccupation with tax reforms aimed at forcing the farmers and the self-employed to pay their 'fair share' of the country's tax bill, and do their bit to pull the state out of its current difficulties.

Deliberate diversion

The taxation protests have been fostered by the trade union leaders as a soft alternative to taking on the bosses on the real issues of jobs and wages. Officials of the major unions — the Irish Transport and General Workers and the British-based Amalgamated Transport and General Workers — have exploited their members' concern over massive public

spending cuts, and channelled it into an irrelevant campaign against the notorious taxation advantages and poor payments record of the farming community. The union leaders have set out to convince workers that it is not imperialists but farmers who are to blame for the swingeing cuts in social services and the drive to impose a public sector wage freeze. Not surprisingly, this approach has been welcomed by the bourgeoisie. When the tax campaign reached its latest peak in April, the Federated Union of Employers and the *Irish Times* both complained about the disruptive effect of 100 000-strong demonstrations, but endorsed their political thrust. The labour movement's only complaint against the ruling class was that it had not supported the campaign actively enough!

Lack of any independent class perspective has characterised the response of the Irish labour movement to the crisis. Workers' concern with the well-being of the state and the stability of Twenty-six Counties society has enabled the union bureaucracy to co-opt the most militant and unofficial of strikes. It has led to wage settlements below the inflation rate, and the selling of jobs while the unions occupy themselves in squabbling over the level of redundancy payments.

For independence!

More dangerous still, the classless outlook of the Irish labour movement has allowed the petit bourgeoisie to retain its influence over broader political issues. Charles Haughey and Fianna Fail may be out of government; but their radical nationalist rhetoric still has a role to play in rallying the population of the Twenty-six Counties around banners which seem to fly above diverging class interests. Haughey's republican posturing over British defence secretary Michael Heseltine's derogatory remarks about Irish neutrality in May — 'this impertinent intrusion in our affairs' — forms a vital part of the ideological stranglehold which binds Irish workers to the Twenty-six Counties state. Beside Fianna Fail stands the Catholic church. Both institutions have suffered a loss of face in the crisis. But they still have the ability to draw the Irish people into future compromises with imperialism. Militancy is not sufficient to combat the political influence of the petit bourgeoisie; what is required is working class politics, politics which can direct workers' struggles against imperialism and Partition, not abortion and taxation. Re-establishing a proletarian outlook in Ireland will not be easy; but once achieved, there will be nothing to stop the Republic's social instability from progressing to social revolution.



Ireland's dole queue generation is a major threat to the Dublin regime

Rome rule means London rule

THE PRO-LIFE Amendment Campaign was launched in 1981 by members of the Doctors' Guild. Its aim was to campaign for an amendment to the constitution to guarantee 'the right to life of the unborn child' — to ensure the absolute illegality of abortion in the Twenty-six Counties. Abortion is already illegal in the Republic. Under the Offences Against the Person Act, imposed throughout Ireland by Britain in 1861, anybody who has an abortion or assists in the procurement of an abortion risks life imprisonment. The right-wing fraternity of consultants and professors of medicine who came together in the Doctors' Guild in 1971 however, detected 'a perceptible decline in ethical values' and feared the imposition of abortion on Ireland by the European Court or liberal judges. Its links with the Irish political establishment through figures like the professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at University College Dublin, ensure that it retains its influence over the strategy of the pro-amendment campaign.

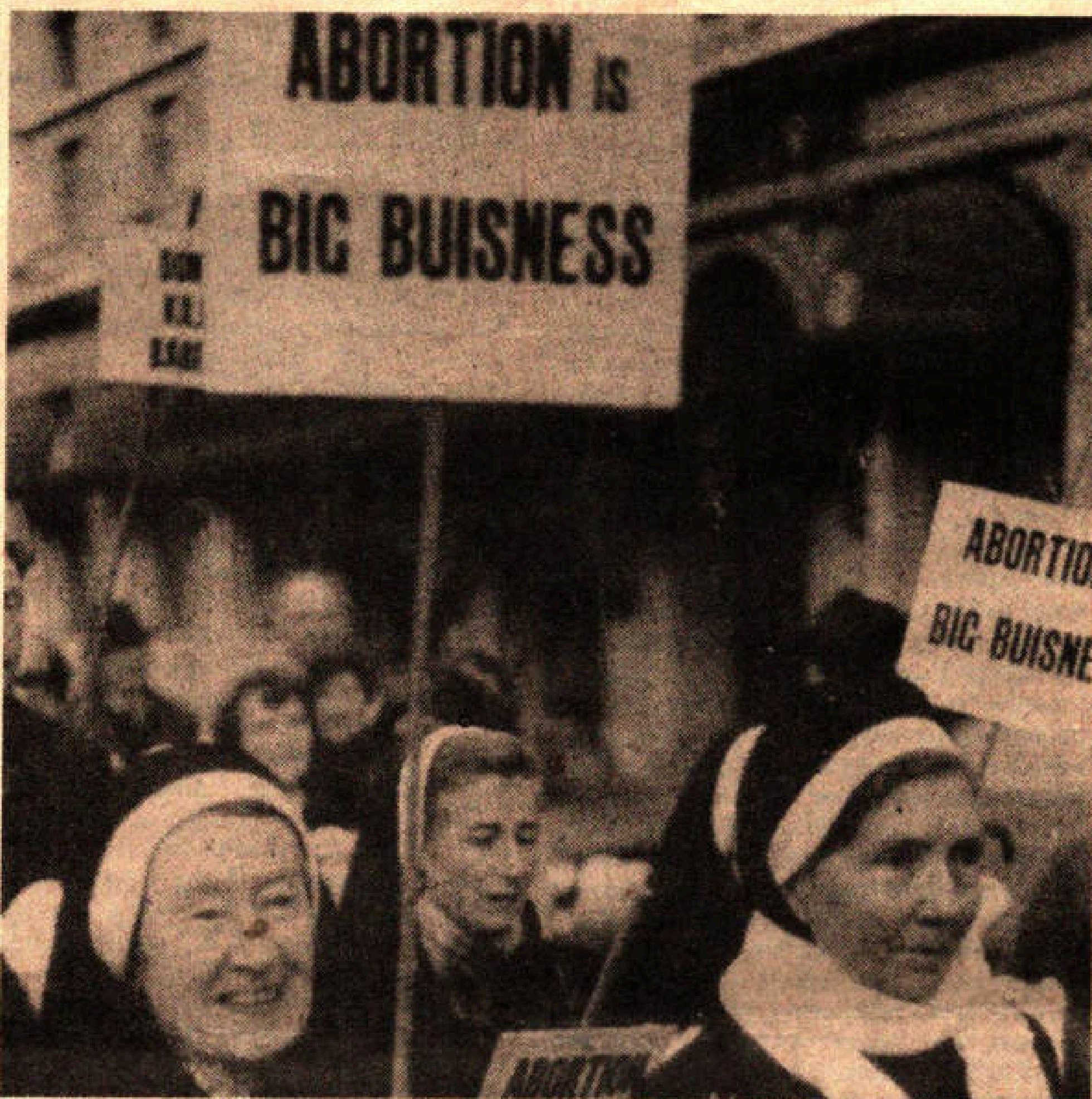
SPUC reborn

The day-to-day running of the campaign is in the hands of the London-based Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC). SPUC began its Irish operation in 1980 after the Corrie Bill to limit the 1967 Abortion Act was defeated in Westminster. They hoped to use the strength of anti-abortion sentiment in Ireland to restore the flagging fortunes of their organisation in England. The success of the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign in stirring up the abortion debate in Ireland has rejuvenated many of SPUC's moribund local branches in England. SPUC's membership in Ireland is composed of nurses, general practitioners, teachers, lawyers and other professionals. Almost all its activists are middle-class women. It shoulders most of the organisational and propaganda work of the pro-amendment campaign. It arranges meetings, provides speakers and film shows and produces a vast range of leaflets and pamphlets. For the under sixteens it has a range of publications celebrating the science fiction world of the foetus. Its obsession with the grisly detail of abortion techniques is reserved for the more mature. The mobilisation of public support for SPUC and for the pro-life campaign in general is carried out by the Catholic church.

The debate over the proposed amendment has been conducted in a country in the grip of a social and moral panic. In June this year the revelation that one in ten teenagers in central Dublin was addicted to heroin merely underlined the growing conviction in the South that the social structure was on the brink of collapse. Throughout the last twelve months parish newsletters have carried abusive articles on the opponents of the amendment. It was suggested that prominent women who opposed the amendment campaign had themselves had abortions. Doctors were invited to speak from the pulpit to show how medicine confirmed the teachings of the church. The letters pages of Irish newspapers were swamped by discussion of the meaning of 'life'. Readers were called upon to plumb mysteries like: When does life begin? Is the foetus a human being? Can it commit a sin? Does sperm have the right to life? Does the zygote carry a divine destiny? By spring of this year everyone in Ireland was a partisan in the debate. Everyone knew what an ectopic pregnancy was and everyone had an opinion on the implications of the amendment for the prescription of certain abortifacient (the coil, the 'morning after' pill) and anovulant (the pill) forms of contraception. Even the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth split into warring factions over the theological niceties of the debate.

Both major parties were keen to capi-

The proposed referendum on the constitutional status of abortion has dominated Irish political life over the last twelve months. Exchanges between the supporters and opponents of the amendment have pushed into the background the more fundamental problems of economic collapse and social disintegration in the Twenty-six Counties. All the major parties have succumbed to the carnival of reaction stirred up by the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign and the Catholic church. Ann Burton reviews both sides in the debate and examines its implications for anti-imperialists.



Clerical reaction on the march — reformists in retreat

talise on the upsurge of reaction associated with the campaign. Garret FitzGerald was the first of the two main party leaders to give an assurance of his support for a referendum on the constitutional status of abortion. But by May 1981 the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign had received a similar assurance from Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey. Even Labour Party leader Frank Cluskey promised to consider a referendum. When FitzGerald announced the new government coalition in November 1982 there was no mention of the referendum in the joint Fine Gael/Labour Party programme. FitzGerald had hoped to ride the wave of anti-abortion feeling unleashed by the campaign. His party came very close to being engulfed by it. He was embarrassed by the excesses of Catholic bigots and he faced open rebellion within the ranks of his party. The campaign undermined the progressive image of the party, threatened to sour relations with the Protestant churches and interfered with his attempts to resuscitate the SDLP. The trade union backers of his coalition partners wanted the issue dropped because the feverish conduct of the debate undermined their control over their members.

The undoing of FitzGerald

Haughey, initially more cautious in his support for the pro-life campaign, saw the opportunity presented by FitzGerald's discomfiture. Under pressure from the church Fine Gael reluctantly put a motion to the Dail proposing the constitutional change. The anti-abortion lobby was not satisfied — the zealots claimed that the wording was too vague. Haughey proposed a different wording for the amendment:

'The state acknowledge the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its law to respect, and as far as practicable, by its laws

to vindicate and defend that right.'

It was at this point that the moderate reformist Workers' Party entered the debate. It suggested replacing 'with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother' by 'subject to the right of the mother to life and bodily integrity' in an amendment to the amendment. After 'practicable' in FF's wording the Workers' Party proposed the insertion of 'without interference with any existing right or lawful opportunity of any citizen'. The aim of these adjustments was to create a loophole for abortion in cases of rape or danger to the life of the mother as a result of continuing pregnancy. The central aim of Fianna Fail's amendment — to raise the existing prohibition of abortion to the level of a national constitutional edict — was not just ignored, but in effect, endorsed.

When it came to the vote, the Workers' Party amendment fell and the Dail agreed to move towards a referendum on the Fianna Fail wording — at some time later in the year. FitzGerald was humiliated and faced immediate opposition within Fine Gael, particularly from the party's youth section, which rightly laid the blame for the debacle at his door. Sinn Fein maintained an uneasy silence throughout. It was a little disturbed at the nature of the debate but, with nothing distinctive to say, the republican movement just wished the issue would go away.

Anti-amendment, not pro-abortion

Organised opposition to the Pro-Life Campaign came from the Anti-Amendment Campaign. The membership of the Anti-Amendment Campaign shows a remarkable resemblance to its opponents. It claims an active membership of 3000-4000. Most of these are teachers, lawyers, 'progressive' churchmen, clerical workers and other petit-bourgeois liberals.

It has managed to unite outspoken supporters of British policy in the North like Senator Shane Ross and republican socialists like Bernadette McAliskey. To do this it has had to limit itself to a narrow campaign against the amendment and to avoid raising the central issue in the campaign — the question of abortion itself. Women's organisations like the Women's Right To Choose Campaign have been subsumed under the main campaigning plank of the Anti-Amendment Campaign — that because the rights of the unborn child are perfectly secure under existing Irish law the amendment is superfluous. Irish feminists justify the narrow objectives of the campaign on the grounds that once the amendment is defeated it will be possible to campaign for abortion rights. In the meantime they get on with the grim business of defending the current legal prohibition of abortion.

Church and state

An underlying theme of much of the anti-amendment propaganda was the threat to Irish society from the increasing domination of Catholicism. Indeed this was the basis of the Anti-Amendment Campaign's appeal to the Protestant churches, as the Methodist Synod's expression of support makes clear:

'The proposed amendment would increase the already divisive Catholic sectarian nature of the 1937 Constitution, and should be rejected by all those concerned with human rights in the Republic, and the unity of our people in the whole of Ireland.'

The Anti-Amendment Campaign argued that the dominance of the Catholic Church in the Twenty-six Counties alienates Northern Protestants and thus postpones Irish unity. The anti-abortion amendment, they argue only convinces Unionists that 'Rome still rules in the Republic'.

Religion is certainly a problem for the Irish working class. It is a particular problem for Irish women. But to identify the Catholic church as the 'main obstacle to social progress in Ireland lets the main enemy of Irish women off the hook. The virulence of Catholic ideology springs from its usefulness to British imperialism. Its sanctification of the family plays a vital role in defending the status quo and underpinning social stability. The Catholic hierarchy helps to make Ireland safe for imperialism — it is only the drum major of reaction, it doesn't call the shots. The 'anti-obscurantism' of the anti-amendment lobby coincides with some of the arguments of British imperialists themselves. Women in the North are constantly warned that if they break with Britain they will be subjected to domination by Roman Catholic bigots.

All women regard abortion as an evil. But for working class women it is a necessary evil. The right to free abortion on demand is a basic need if Irish women are to break out of their isolation in the family and play a full role in political and social life. The 'pro-abortion' lobby in the Twenty-six Counties have wasted twelve months not campaigning for abortion rights. The only way to defeat the amendment is to take up the fight for free abortion on demand. To try to avoid the question as the Anti-Amendment Campaign has done concedes the central argument to the reactionaries. Focusing on Catholicism only nourishes the illusion that Britain can play a progressive role in any part of Ireland. It feeds the pro-imperialist tendencies amongst British feminists; people who are always ready to denounce clerical reaction in Dublin — but never to challenge its sponsors in London. The only way that people in Britain can contribute to the liberation of Irish women is to commit themselves to uncompromising opposition to British rule in Ireland.

Socialist austerity and communist decay

Throughout Western Europe the working class faces a concerted drive against the way of life it has established over the last 30 years. In Britain this offensive is led by the direct representatives of capitalism in the Conservative Party, but in many parts of Europe socialist parties take the lead in imposing the needs of the capitalist class on society. Left-wing parties were elected to government in France and Greece in 1981, in Sweden and Spain in 1982, and in Portugal a few months ago.

In most cases the socialist parties have advanced as the Stalinist communist parties have disintegrated. The only exception to this



rule is Italy where the Communist Party held its position in the June general election, while the ruling Christian Democrats ground and the socialists remained marginal. However, as Sabena Norton argues below, the Italian CP has succeeded by adopting policies of austerity socialism and a subservience to the demands of capital that closely parallel the strategies of the European socialist parties. On pages 12 and 13 Pat Roberts examines the record of socialist governments in Europe. On page 14 James Wood looks at the racial divisions and conflicts that have been intensified by the Socialist-Stalinist regime in France.

The Italian road

As we go to press negotiations for the formation of Italy's 43rd post-war coalition are under way. The shock result of the June election, in which the ruling Christian Democrats (DC) won only a wafer-thin majority over the Communist Party (PCI) means that the government will be more unstable than ever.

WHILE OTHER West European communist parties have been virtually wiped out by the rising socialist parties, the PCI has easily held off the challenge from Bettino Craxi's Socialist Party. Craxi precipitated the election hoping it would enhance his party's fortunes, but the poll merely confirmed the Socialists' position as a minority party.

The political stance of the PCI means that there is little scope for a 'democratic socialist' party in Italy. Even by the standards of Stalinism its opportunism appears excessive; its support for austerity, its witchhunting of 'anarchists' and 'extremists', and its calls for the state to smash the Red Brigades are the best known examples of its position.

Through a long period of assimilation into the Italian establishment the PCI has come to wield much greater power than its European sister parties. Its intimate relationship with the state has allowed it to develop a considerable degree of independence from its working class base. And its role as the pillar of class consensus in the 'seventies and 'eighties has put it in a position to play a similar role to the socialist parties in other European countries.

Historic compromise

The PCI has survived through its capacity to adapt to *Democrazia Christiana*. Since the early 'seventies the bourgeoisie have



Socialist Party chief Craxi

ruled Italy through a rapid succession of fragile coalition governments. This has been made possible by the tacit support of the PCI. In 1970, two years before Berlinguer declared the programme of the 'Historic compromise', the PCI's formal renunciation of anti-capitalist struggle, the party gave its support to the moribund Colombo administration. Since the beginning of the recession communist support for anti-crisis measures has become a vital lifeline for the ruling class.

In the 1976 general election the PCI experienced a significant increase in its electoral support. The leadership hoped to transform this into a role in government. At its 1977 conference the PCI put forward a programme of austerity. Its economic research institute called for deflation 'even if it meant unemployment', for a cut in the *scala mobile* (automatic, index-linked wage increases) and for cuts in industrial subsidies. In the summer of 1977 the Stalinist-controlled union federation CGIL joined with the other main union federations in an agreement with the government to 'cut labour costs'. When the month-long strike by metal workers brought the country to a standstill in December 1977 the PCI's ambition to lend a hand in government was fulfilled. As the major external supporter of the 'government of national emergency', its contribution was to deploy Stalinist union boss Lucio Lama in a strike-breaking campaign.

Without ever sharing government, the PCI has succeeded in betraying the working class. In 1980, when FIAT workers struck against 10 000 redundancies, and the bosses laid off 23 000 workers and organised 'back to work' marches of scabs, PCI leader Giorgio Amendola demanded curbs on the right to strike. In January this year CGIL signed an agreement with the DC government to cut the *scala mobile* by 15 per cent, obliterating one of the most significant gains of workers' militancy in the early 'seventies.

What's left?

The extent of PCI class collaboration means that the usual concepts of left and right cannot be applied to Italy's two main parties. The remarkable political convergence of the PCI with DC was exposed most clearly in the election campaign. Christian Democrat leader Ciriaco De Mita, determined to offset his party's notoriously corrupt and inefficient image, promised to spend less dishing out favours to his party's supporters and more on 'effective management of the economy'. The Socialists' leader Craxi promised to introduce 'responsibility and cost efficiency' into the management of public services and industry. Enrico Berlinguer, PCI leader, went even further: he proposed that all services should become 'self-reliant'



Berlinguer at the table with the Christian Democrats

and subsidies to industries except railways and transport be scrapped.

The PCI stood out as the party clamouring most loudly for law and order. Berlinguer declared that a vote for the communists would 'inspire and mobilise all those forces for renewal and cleansing of society and of the state, and is a vote which affirms moral values'.

Since the late 'seventies law and order has been one of the PCI's favourite subjects. Having closed the debate on class questions, the party's propaganda has become preoccupied with issues such as corruption, the mafia, drug addiction and the Seveso industrial pollution scandal. The PCI's obsession with 'cleansing Italy' has stimulated the spread of backward ideas and bourgeois moralism among Italian workers. The rout of the Red Brigades in 1981 meant that the PCI was unable to accuse DC of laxity in the 'struggle against terrorism'. Since then it has found in the masonic 'P2' association and the Neapolitan mafia, Camorra, new targets by means of which it can distinguish itself from the Christian Democrats as the more zealous defender of the nation's purity.

The dead hand of Stalinism

The Italian working class has paid a bitter price for the PCI's betrayals. The Italian ruling class may not be much stronger today than it was ten years ago. But with the assistance of the PCI it has scored significant ideological and political victories over the proletariat. This has had an impact on the consciousness of workers. Trade union membership has declined

substantially. According to the latest figures it has fallen from its peak of 50 per cent of the working class in the mid 'seventies to just over 20 per cent today.

The PCI is not indifferent to the erosion of its working class base. It knows that many workers, particularly the youth, are fed up with the PCI. In Turin, formerly the party's main industrial stronghold, the turnout in the general election was down 12 per cent. The decline in working class organisation and the turning away of some workers from the PCI are symptoms of the political fragmentation of active workers.

By now the PCI is adept at manipulation and tactical manoeuvre. It has responded to these developments by launching yet another strategy — the democratic alternative. The PCI hopes that its proposals of a new government alliance, including socialists and 'left-wing' christian democrats will give the communists a sorely needed left-wing facelift. As it crawls into the ante-chambers of the new coalition government it exhorts its supporters to wait for yet another general election that will give it a place in power.

The PCI has got away with all this because it has never been exposed to any serious challenge from class-conscious workers. The Italian left has yet to undertake a systematic critique of the PCI and to fight for an independent working class alternative. All too often it has allowed the influence of petit-bourgeois anti-communism to divert it. The deepening recession and the increasing political instability in Italy provide vital opportunities to rebuild the working class movement. They must not be wasted.

Democratic socialism the way to



THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENTS of Europe have acted with remarkable consistency. They were all elected promising a better life for all — and once in government they have all proceeded to turn the screws on the working class.

Austerity socialism

It is customary for newly-elected socialist governments to make a few token gestures of goodwill before getting on with the job of economic rationalisation. The newly-formed socialist government of Portugal didn't even observe these decencies. As soon as he was elected prime minister Mario Soares announced that hard times were unavoidable. He called for a 'social contract' which was a euphemism for a wage cut. On 21 June the *escudo* was devalued and prices for essentials like bread, sugar, milk, cereals and cooking oil rose by between 15 and 40 per cent. Unemployment, which stands at 15 per cent, is expected to rise steadily.

Neighbouring Spain has enjoyed austerity socialism since October 1982. Prime minister Felipe Gonzales has been particularly successful in curbing the unions. He has presided over the negotiation of a wages agreement between the unions and the employers in the public and private sectors. The agreement limits wage rises to between 9.5 and 12 per cent and ensures that wage rises fall behind inflation. But even Spanish socialists must be full of envy of the success of the Swedish socialist government. The pay agreement signed in April by Swedish unions and the employers federation limits rises in the basic wage to 1.9 per cent and wage drift is guaranteed to stay under 1.3 per cent. These paltry increases mean that the Swedish working class will see a decline in its real wages for the second year in succession.

Greek workers have experienced an all-out offensive from their socialist government. In December 1982, prime minister Andreas Papandreu introduced a wages and salaries freeze. A month later the *drachma* was devalued and prices shot up. A scheme of indexation designed to keep wages roughly in line with inflation was modified by government action in the interests of keeping inflation down. In June the government also moved against the trade union movement. The Greek parliament passed a bill which stated that a strike call in the public sector had to have the support of the absolute majority of all union members. This measure and a number of additional restrictions mean that it is now virtually illegal to strike in the public sector.

The rude awakening

The French socialist government has been the most consistent guardian of the capitalist economy. Backed by his junior coalition partner, the French Communist Party, President Francois Mitterand has embarked on a full-scale campaign of austerity and deflation. In June 1982, Mitterand introduced a four month long wage freeze. At the same time he took steps to cut down on state spending and social services. These policies were so severe that by the spring even bourgeois economists were beginning to wonder whether Mitterand was going too fast and too far. Mitterand has no such qualms. The draft budget in June promised to limit government spending to a 7 per cent increase in money terms — that means a reduction of state spending in real terms. The immediate consequence of the budget is to raise train fares and postal, telephone and electricity charges. The long term consequence is a sharp decline in living standards and social services.

Socialist politicians are full of

The European parties that call for the interests of the working class are full of professionals and technocrats who find

excuses for their policies; but the common evolution of austerity socialism throughout Europe indicates that there is a basic dynamic at work. Every government has to make a choice between the welfare of the capitalist system and the welfare of the working class. Since the scope of government action is limited by the level of capital accumulation the first priority of every government is to safeguard profits and investment. That is why none of the socialist governments has had the slightest hesitation in carrying out measures which are associated in Britain with the name of Margaret Thatcher and in the United States with Ronald Reagan.

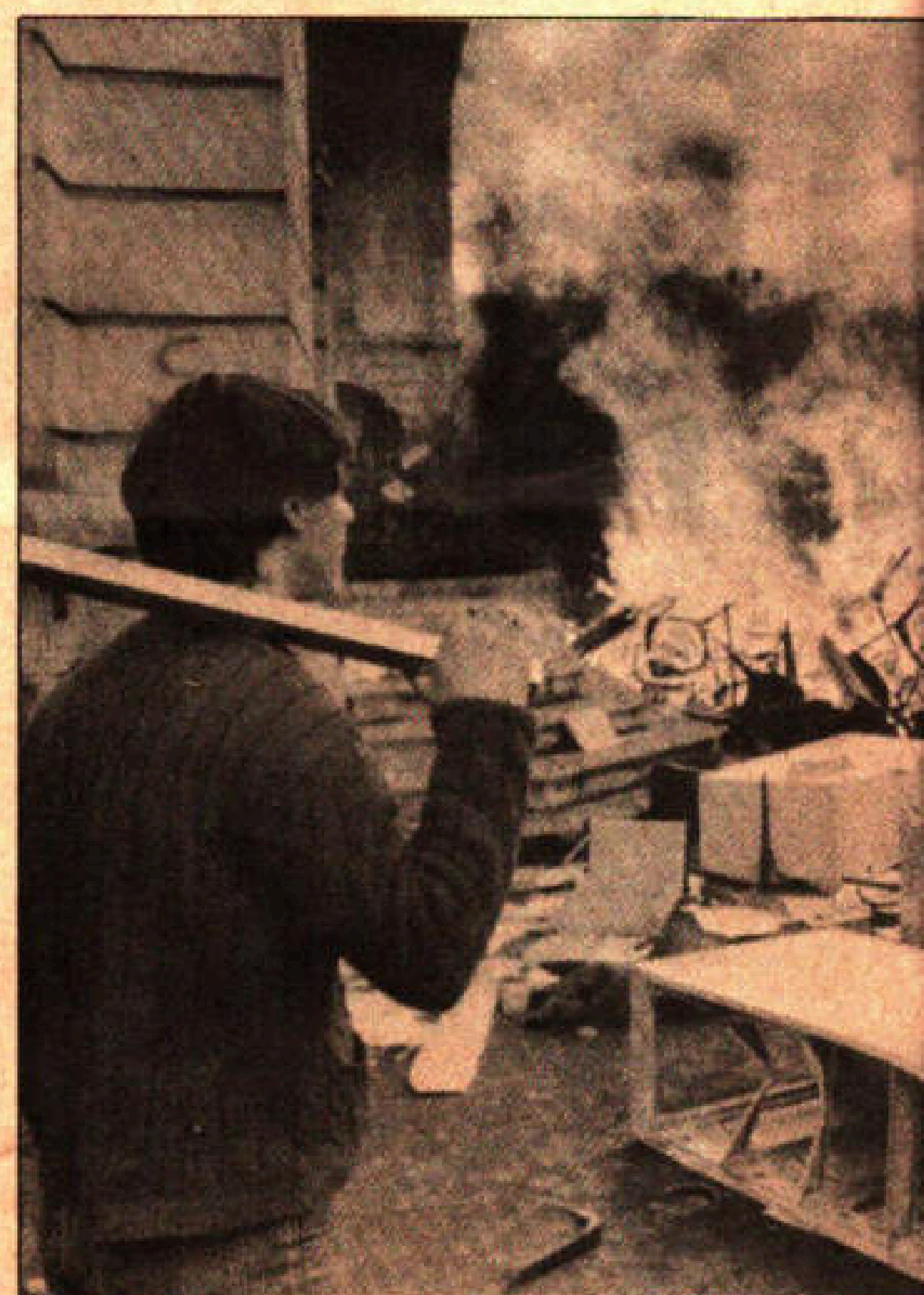
European socialism now accepts that austerity is unavoidable. There is no longer any pretence that workers' rights and living standards can be maintained. Instead the socialist politicians argue that with the right policies austerity could be made to work for the proletariat. Some cynical ideologues have even argued that austerity provides a spiritual antidote to consumer-orientated materialism. European workers are now discovering that austerity socialism is the bitter reward for putting their trust in parties that called themselves socialist.

Take Greece. For a long time the socialist PASOK Government has promised to introduce public ownership in industry. The socialist party promoted a policy of nationalisation as a solution to the problems facing the working class. For a while PASOK stalled, and then it revealed that its grandiose plans would only effect a few bankrupt firms. A 'socialist industries board' was established to take over the management of the Larymna nickel concern Larco, and of Pyrkal SA, a powder and cartridges factory. Pyrkal owed Dr3150 million to the National Bank of Greece and as much again in tax arrears. 'Socialisation' meant that the debts were written off and a new board of directors including trade union delegates was appointed. The workers were told to double productivity or else. Since then a sausage-packing firm and a company producing nuts and bolts have also been 'socialised'. Greek workers can be forgiven for failing to see the advantages of the 'socialist industries board'. Like the old National Enterprise Board in Britain it is a public relations exercise designed to contain working class discontent.

The socialist governments are different from the Tories and the Christian Democrats in only one respect. They are able to take advantage of their connection with the working class to get a measure of voluntary or at least passive support for the regime of austerity. Of course this only works in the short run. In the long run the socialists foster demoralisation



Mitterand — socialist poseur



France's socialist government has attacked the working class —

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vour capitalist solutions to the crisis



nd stoked the fires of reaction

and despair and — as in France and in Greece — strengthen the credibility of right-wing parties.

Bourgeois workers' parties

The European parties that call themselves socialist are, without exception, capitalist institutions. Many no longer call themselves working class parties, while others never had roots in the proletariat. The Swedish socialist party grew up in the working class more than a hundred years ago. But over the decades it has become the main governing party; it has close links to capital and is run by middle class technocrats and intellectuals.

Mitterand's French Socialist Party is more typical. Over the post-war years the predecessor of this party lost all support amongst the French proletariat. When a new-look party was formed in 1971 it was primarily a party of teachers and civil servants. A survey of the party's membership in 1973 showed that only 19 per cent were workers. Since that time the party has grown amongst all classes — but its expansion was mainly attributable to the decline of the French Communist Party, the traditional party of the working class.

The Greek, Spanish and Portuguese parties are all creations of the 'seventies. The Greek party PASOK was originally based among the petit-bourgeoisie and peasantry. It's an all-class party that draws electoral support from all classes. The Spanish PSOE was revamped in the 'seventies to rid itself of its left-wing image. In September 1979 party leaders called an emergency conference with the specific aim of purging the party of its old associations with Marxism. The Portuguese party is the direct creation of imperialism. It was founded in 1973 in Bonn with the assistance of the Friedrich Ebert foundation. The West German connection was to prove fruitful after the Portuguese revolution. West German imperialism insisted that before loans could be extended to Portugal the socialists must be given their rightful place in government.

It is important to appreciate the class basis of the European socialist movement. These parties can no longer be considered reformist in the sense in which the term came into use to characterise the mass working class parties in Europe before the First World War. Today's socialist parties are all-class liberal parties that are run by middle class technocrats closely allied to the state. They have managed to establish a base of support among the proletariat — but with the exception of Sweden this has been due to the decline of the Stalinist Communist Parties. In general these parties call themselves 'democratic socialist' which is the modern term for liberalism.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the socialist parties is their close link



Greek workers voted for socialism — now they pay the price for capitalist rationalisation



Papandreou — hail austerity

with the capitalist state and those who administer its diverse apparatuses. They are socially connected to this layer and see state intervention in social and economic problems as a central component of their strategy. Mitterand has been the consummate practitioner of this approach. He has mobilised the radical intelligentsia behind his party and has integrated them into the state machinery. A Ministry of Women's Rights finances feminist organisations while many activists in the ecology movement have found posts in the state agency for energy control. Like the radical professionals who run community and local government quangos in Britain this layer has become the activist core of the French Socialist Party. The GLC's Ken Livingstone and Sheffield's David Blunkett could learn a lot from their French colleagues about how to consolidate a socialist party among the radical petit-bourgeoisie.

Future prospects

Papandreou, Soares and Gonzales personify liberal technocracy. Their job is to modernise a backward capitalist social structure through establishing the framework for economic rationalisation. As Papandreou told an interviewer from the *Financial Times*; 'what we are doing at this phase is democratising and modernising the country' (24 February 1982). Unlike the reformist parties of the past the socialist parties are not interested simply in controlling the proletariat. They want to neutralise the working class and destroy its potential as an independent political force. The political labels are confusing, especially for the British reader. But it is well to keep in mind that the European socialist parties have considerable affinities with the British Social Democratic Party and the right wing of the Labour Party. It is also worth noting that by any standard the British Labour left is the most left-wing section of the European socialist movement.

The rise of the socialist parties is a temporary phenomenon. In Portugal, Spain, Greece and France the strength of the socialists is directly proportional to the disintegration of the Stalinists. These countries have experienced considerable

social upheaval whilst lacking the mechanisms that exist in Northern Europe for integrating the proletariat. The socialist parties were admirably suited for mediating class tensions and for establishing state institutions for collective bargaining and other forms of class collaboration. Their historic role is to prepare the way for more direct attacks on the working class.

The socialist parties are already becoming victims of their own policies. Austerity socialism is unlikely to enthuse the masses and most of these parties suffer from a crisis of political identity. Party intellectuals have attempted to fill the gap — but their ramblings about a 'third road' between social democracy and communism lack plausibility. It is difficult to create a coherent philosophy that can hold together conflicting classes and most party leaders have looked for stop-gap measures. Papandreou has opted for crude nationalism. He has successfully mobilised popular opinion behind his periodic outbursts against the EEC, NATO and Turkey. There are limits however to orchestrated demonstrations against American military bases and Papandreou is acutely aware of his urgent need to solve his image problem.

It is in France where most of the ideological discussions are taking place. Hundreds of articles have been written agonising over the lost youth of French socialism in a mixture of self-indulgence and despair. A new generation of Left Bank intellectuals asks 'can socialism today be anything more than a broad vague concern for reducing inequality?'

The real problem that these parties face is not one of ideology. Their problem is that they are primarily electoral machines that have been installed into government to do a specific job. Now that they have given the bourgeoisie a breathing space they have become dispensable.

It is important that when these parties are dismissed it is the proletariat and not the bosses who do the dismissing. To do this, new working class parties are needed. British workers could set a useful example by settling scores with their own Labour Party at home.

Racism in France: powder keg

SINCE THE Socialist Party/Communist Party (PS/PCF) government of France took office in May 1981, racism has emerged as the most important issue facing the working class movement. There are a number of reasons for this — the reactionary and divisive policies of the socialist government, the militant response of immigrant factory workers against management attacks and the domestic consequences of France's foreign policy.

Under Francois Mitterand, the French government has embarked on a fiercely anti-working class programme. To enable feeble French capitalism to meet the challenge of the world recession the government has set about rationalising French industry and forcing down working class living standards. However the effects of its deflationary policies have also hit the middle classes hard, provoking a wave of petit-bourgeois reaction. Travel agents, small businessmen, farmers, doctors, dentists, university teachers, policemen — all blame their troubles on the 'socialist' government. Right-wing reaction also receives some support in a working class that has become deeply divided as a result of the recession and government policies. Divisions have intensified between the employed and the unemployed, between white-collar and technical workers in the more secure modern industries and blue-collar workers in the declining manufacturing sectors. The most dangerous split is between white French workers and the immigrants from Southern Europe, the Caribbean and particularly from North Africa who make up a substantial section of France's factory workforce. Immigrant workers have become the scapegoat for all France's economic problems, and are now the target of vicious regulations and state policies and violent attacks from fascist gangs. The organised labour movement declares anti-racist principles while going all the way with racist prejudice and its divisive consequences.

The French car industry exemplifies the plight of French capitalism. It is being ravaged by German and Belgian competition — and most of its manual workforce is made up of immigrants. Here the bosses' productivity drive is most ferocious and the racism of the company and foremen's scab unions most violent. Yet in recent years France's immigrant motor workers have made it clear to the government, the employers and the yellow unions that they are not going to pay an even higher price than they already pay to keep French capitalism competitive. The record is impressive:

● **31 March 1982:** hundreds of body plant workers at the *Renault-Flins* plant, west of Paris, halt production of the Renault 5. One of their key demands is longer holidays, so that they can return to their families back home for longer breaks. A lock-out follows, but the strike spreads and is largely won.

● **22 April 1982:** thousands of foreign workers at the *Citroen Aulnay-sans-Bois* factory, Paris, strike against the CSL (a company union staffed by ex-Legionnaires, among others) and rigged workplace ballots. There are battles with fire extinguishers, hospitalisations, victimisations, management-financed counter-demonstrations. Again the strike is largely won.

● **June 1982:** 16 000 foreign workers at *Peugeot Poissy*, Paris. Output of Talbot cars ceases. Again management makes concessions.

● **February 1983:** Arab workers in the principal *Renault* and *Citroen* plants in the Paris region embark on a series of industrial action and mass marches. Their militancy forces the Government to try to condemn them as 'the long arm of Ayatollah Khomeini'.

This last incident highlights the final reason why racism has become such an explosive affair. Much more even than in Britain or West Germany, racism in France has a direct connection with the inter-

national manoeuvres of the imperialist state.

'Socialist' France is up to its neck in intrigues in the Middle East and North Africa. Some 60 per cent of France's booming export trade in arms goes to Iraq for its war against Iran. French troops are in Beirut. More than 12 000 French soldiers rub shoulders with nearly half a million French civilians in the French African Community (CFA), a 13-nation customs union stretching from Senegal on the Atlantic to the Central African Republic. PCF transport minister Charles Fiterman has just been doing business deals in Tunisia; PS foreign aid minister and 'Third Worldist' Christian Nucci has just been in Chad, saying that he will help it fight Colonel Gaddafi.

Xenophobia

French imperialism is in trouble abroad because the French economy is nearing collapse at home. Put these two factors together, and the slightest unrest among immigrants becomes an occasion for official hysteria. Moreover, there are not just outcries against 'greasy drug dealers' and 'Arab terrorists'. There are more subtle attempts to moderate state offensives against immigrants from countries France is anxious to stay in with. Late last year,

for the first 10 years, the right to political association, to publish 'subversive' newspapers or to represent their workmates.

By 1966 Algerians in France were building houses for their former colonial rulers, the *pieds noirs*, but were still living under corrugated iron. Under the country's first major immigration controls, Algerians were only allowed to enter at the rate of 35 000 a year. Over the next decade, restrictions on all immigrants were tightened. Some moves were made to give a civilised facade to the oppression of foreign workers. In 1972 a law against discrimination was passed. Foreigners were allowed to hold trade union office and a programme of rehousing was begun. But union positions were made open only to those who could 'express themselves in French', and the new homes were little better than the old ones.

In 1974 a total clampdown on immigration came. From 1977 the state offered sums of £1000 to induce immigrants to return home, and in 1980 it made expulsion the penalty for being caught without a permit.

Foreign workers fought back. They protested against the Algerian war, participated in the general strike of May 1968, demonstrated in their thousands against racial attacks, squatted abandoned

to other union federations — and it has lost even more since. It has welcomed the extra dues and the extra bargaining power that immigrant workers have brought to the CGT. At the same time it has used its influence to coax the immigrants to end strikes, often using house-trained immigrant officials to do the dirty work. Thus an immigrant CGT official led the return to work at Aulnay last year with the slogan 'Citroen to stay within the law — that's enough'. But the law was never enough to prevent Moroccan CGT members from being beaten up in their Citroen-owned dormitories by company thugs.

It is not enough to accuse the Stalinists of being cynical. The PCF's line on immigration follows in a long tradition of French socialism — that of mixing anti-racist rhetoric with racist actions. In the run-up to Mitterand's election, the PCF sent bulldozers into Mali workers' hostels in the Paris suburb of Vitry, arguing that this was a communist, planned approach to the problems of high geographical concentrations of ethnic workers. A major piece of PCF theory explained the party's position two years earlier:

'In defending immigrants, the communists at the same time defend the interests of all workers, the national interest and the enhancement of France's position in the world... Internationalism cannot be separated from the defence of national interests... The defence of these (immigrant) workers does not at all mean that we favour the arrival of new immigrants in France.' ('Immigration — a line adapted to the strategy of capital and the state', *Cahiers de Communisme*, February 1979).

In other words 'we are not racists, we just want to keep immigrants out in the national interest', a position common to reformists in all imperialist countries.

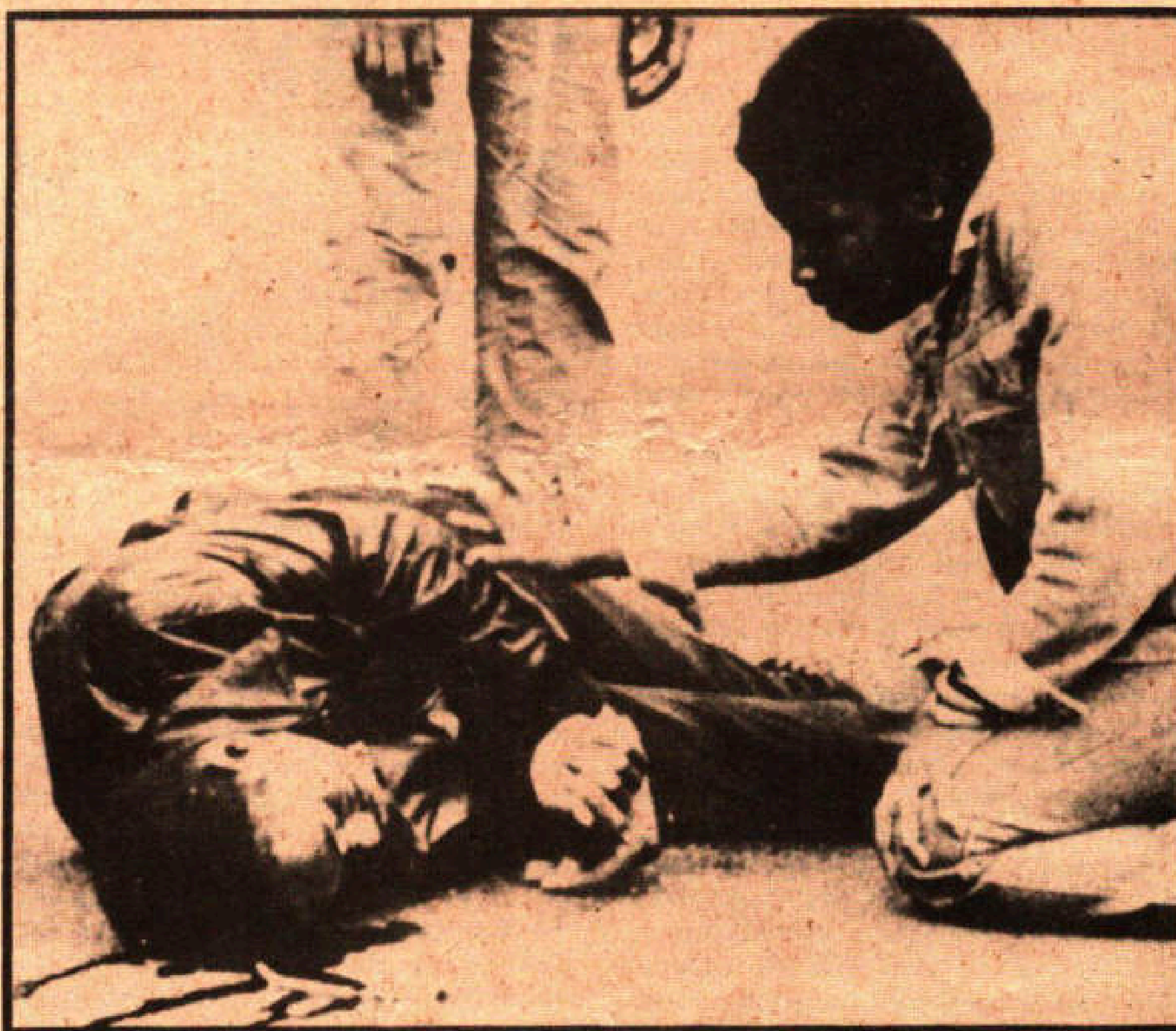
With the PS it is the same story. On the one hand it turns a blind eye when riot police evict black squatters in Paris's 19th *arrondissement* (*Le Figaro*, 29 June). On the other it puts out two million leaflets explaining how wonderful it is to 'live together, with immigrants among us' (*Le Monde*, 20-21 March). And, while the riot police and the fascists shoot foreign workers dead in ghettos, the PS is busy locking foreign workers leaders into quangos — complete with French labour bureaucrats:

'French municipalities increasingly are experimenting with various forms of foreign worker participation and representation... These range from parliaments (as in Tourcoing and Chambery) to "extra-municipal commissions" (composed of the mayor's social affairs assistant, councillors, social workers and delegates from foreign worker associations) to periodic public meetings to which foreign workers are invited. There also are departmental and regional commissions on foreign workers which include trade union representatives and some appointed foreign workers representatives. Several national level advisory organs concerned with foreign worker policy, such as the advisory boards to the Fonds d'Action Sociale and to the Office National d'Immigration, include trade unionists who are seen as representative of foreign worker interests'. (*International Migration Review*, Spring 1982)

Settling accounts

At present Mitterand hopes that propaganda against the right-wing mobilisations will divert the gaze of the working class from his own reactionary policies. But the more he pursues those policies the more he emboldens the right. Internationally France's position is becoming more dangerous by the day.

France is a racial powder keg. Yet France's labour movement parties can do nothing to stop it blowing up. It is time the French working class dealt with the racists in their midst. The crisis in France demands a pitiless exposure of Mitterand and all his accomplices — otherwise the pogroms will begin again.



Racist violence claims more victims every week

premier Pierre Mauroy made the entry of immigrants conditional on French mayors guaranteeing that they would not be housed in 'insalubrious' quarters. Special dispensation was made for the Maghreb. Henceforth, Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan workers wanting to enter France will have their arrangements checked... by their own governments!

Throughout the post-war years France has pursued its bloody colonial wars while drawing in immigrant labour from the colonies to man the factories at home. Between 1946 and 1955, France recruited half a million foreign workers, including 155 000 Algerians. In government, socialists and communists presided over massacres and war abroad and an atmosphere of acute xenophobia at home. While PCF deputies attacked the Algerian riots of May 1946 as 'a fascist conspiracy', Algerians found their effort to get jobs thwarted by Stalinist union officials.

As minister for Algeria and North Africa in 1952, Mitterand had hundreds of Moroccan trade unionists shot in Casablanca. As minister of the Interior he escalated the Algerian war. Yet Algerians still came to France — nearly 70 000 entered during the war years of 1954-62. They lived in *bidonvilles* (shanty towns), were denied permanent residence rights

buildings, fought police and bailiffs and organised massive rent strikes. Since Mitterand's assumption of power migrants have had to fight even harder.

The fightback starts now!

Immigrant workers in France have had to fight alone because the official labour movement organisations are firmly on the side of the French state against them. The political programme of the current administration is based on 'national solidarity', all good Frenchmen pulling together to get their country out of recession — and all standing together against immigrant workers.

The role of the CGT, the Stalinist union federation, in the recent immigrant car workers' strike confirms the reactionary line of the organised labour movement. At first sight it appears that the CGT has taken a more progressive stand than in the past. It has declared support for the strikers and, for the first time, recruited them to the union. However it has made these gestures to strengthen its own position and to contain the threat to the stability of the whole structure of class collaboration in industry from the immigrants' combativity.

Between 1975 and 1980 the CGT lost 500 000 members to the dole queues and

The council and the police in Brixton

A change in the weather?

Fresh disturbances in Brixton on 4 June triggered speculation that the 'honeymoon period' between the police and young blacks in the area was at an end. As Farekh Afzal reports, the 'honeymoon period' never began in the first place.

BRITISH CAPITALISM in crisis has nothing to offer young blacks in an area like Brixton. In Manchester Mosside, Bristol St Pauls, Liverpool 8 and Brixton black youth face the same prospect: no jobs, no houses, no social facilities and no future. Railton Road, the scene of major riots in 1981 and 1982 has become the 'Front Line' in the state's offensive against black youth and a symbol of black resistance.

'Lambeth, We Care'

Since the early 'sixties the London Borough of Lambeth, the local council, has been promoting plans to redevelop Brixton town centre, improve its image and attract investment. Every scheme has come to nothing. As the better-off residents moved out in pursuit of jobs and better housing elsewhere, blacks moved into the increasingly ramshackle houses they left behind. Brixton now has a high concentration of young unemployed blacks either homeless or living in some of the worst housing in the country. Unemployment among blacks under 25 runs at 80 per cent in Brixton.

Lambeth council is the biggest employer in the area. It boasts that it is an 'equal-opportunities' borough. Jobs are advertised in the black press, and the council has taken advantage of the 1966 Local Government Act to create jobs in race-relations and community liaison. The council can provide jobs for a few middle-class blacks while the Government foots 75 per cent of the bill. For working class black youth it has nothing to offer.

In 1982 the council employed 799 blacks out of a total staff of 4798. More than half these were in Housing and Social Services. Both departments depend on a high number of low-grade clerical workers. Blacks are stuck in low-grade clerical jobs, often earning less than £70 a week, and on contracts that are renewable week-by-week. They have little prospect of permanent work and even less of promotion. Above clerical grades the proportion of black staff falls below 10 per cent.

All this goes on with the active connivance of Labour councillors and the main council union, NALGO. Last year the union and management congratulated themselves on a one per cent increase in the proportion of black staff. This has been achieved by shedding more than 1200 jobs between 1981 and 1982. The council cannot provide jobs for black youth nor can it provide decent housing.

Homes for bulldozing

Mayall and Railton Roads are a prime target of the council's housing officers. The area is the only major council development in Brixton. Black squatters have been evicted and houses bulldozed to be replaced by a wilderness of adventure playgrounds. The object of the development is not to build new and better houses for the residents; it is to drive young blacks off the Front Line. Earlier this year police congratulated themselves on the relaxation of tension in Brixton — no wonder, courtesy of Lambeth council two thirds of Railton Road no longer exists.

The aim of the police and the council is to keep young blacks off the streets. Lambeth has the longest council house waiting list of any London borough. Its building programme has ground to a halt and the waiting list grows longer every day. Young, single blacks have low priority and stand no chance of being rehoused. They are forced to live with their families



No jobs, no housing, no future for blacks on the Front Line

in overcrowded flats on run-down estates. All that the council offers any of its tenants is a drive to recover the massive arrears of rent and eviction for those who cannot pay. More than 30 000 of Lambeth's 47 500 families in council accommodation now owe £8.2 million in back rent. The council now carries out evictions at the rate of more than 20 a week.

Even before the council sanctioned the assault on Railton Road last November there was considerable day-to-day contact between the local police and council housing officers. The police frequently seek information about current and former tenants and enquire about empty flats they can use for surveillance. In November 1982, for example, they were granted the use of a flat on Landsdowne Green Estate from which they could spy on the black-run mini-cab company on Wandsworth Road. Community policemen from Brixton's L Division often call in at the housing offices for a chat with the staff.

Oppression by consent

In response to the 1981 riots Lambeth council, local MPs and self-appointed black 'community leaders' came together in a police/community consultative group. The group continued to meet during the Tory interregnum last year when a defection to the SDP temporarily robbed the Labour group of overall control of the council. Today local shopkeepers, Labour MPs and councillors, including well-known left-wing council leader Ted Knight, community workers and senior police officers meet regularly to discuss the problems of policing Lambeth. Their attention is focused on the Front Line.

The consultative group formalises operational contacts between police and council officials. The aim is to foster a consensus in the area that makes a scapegoat of young black 'muggers', 'criminals' and 'vandals' and sanctions the joint council/police attack on the Front Line. The council's eviction and demolition of three houses on Railton Road last November called for a massive police back up. In the aftermath of the riot and the police 'mopping-up' operation, L Division Commander Brian Fairburn announced that Brixton would be policed with 'an iron fist inside a velvet glove'.

Before the dust had settled on Railton Road Fairburn presented the consultative committee with his strategy for dealing with black youth. His report, *Policing Problems in Lambeth* recognised the success of the eviction operation and proposed the introduction of 'neighbourhood policing' — round-the-clock foot patrols, backed by district support units. Fairburn did not rule out further outbreaks of resistance from the black community:

'It must be realised in advance that some youths will show resistance...sufficient police reserves must be on hand to give protection and ensure the enforcement of the law.'

The resumption of foot patrols in Railton Road was welcomed by Labour members of the consultative group who are enthusiastic supporters of intensive 'community policing'. They readily accepted Fairburn's invitation to monitor the progress of his strategy and contribute ideas.

When Fairburn was promoted in January, his replacement Commander Alex Marnoch promised to maintain the partnership of the police and the consultative group. He submitted his report to the group in mid-February. In all its essentials it continued Fairburn's strategy. It closely followed the blueprint for a 'social contract between the police and the people' laid down by Metropolitan Police Commander Kenneth Newman. In Lambeth the consultative group was to be the 'vehicle for directing the overall strategy'.

The consultative committee endorsed the multi-agency approach advocated by Newman, Fairburn and Marnoch. Council agencies, dole offices, the probation service and community groups all liaise to provide the police with intelligence and assistance in tracking down the 'criminals'. Knight is up to his neck in collaboration with the police, promoting community support for the police and helping to isolate black youth.

In the early months of 1983, the new-style policing scheme appeared to be paying off. The police reported a 33 per cent reduction in robberies and violent thefts in Brixton, and 'crimes of violence' down 17 per cent in Lambeth as a whole. Lambeth CID Chief Gerry Plowman claimed the greater police presence on the Front Line and improved targetting and

surveillance of criminals had brought crime levels down. The consultative group's faith in the joint police/council strategy was vindicated. But Brixton youth remained unbowed.

By the end of May resistance to the police occupation of the Front Line was mounting. The police produced yet another report, *Railton Road — recent policing problems*. Its simple point was to warn those 'who now congregate in Railton Road merely to stand in the sun' that they might be safer indoors. This warning marked a renewed police offensive on the Front Line which sparked off the confrontation in June. One policeman was stabbed and a police car overturned and burned out. The police blamed the weather for this eruption of resistance. But the real provocation came from the police and their colleagues on the council.

At the next meeting of the consultative group 100 angry black residents from the area disrupted proceedings. Knight tried to distance himself from the police attacks. As the minutes of the meeting make clear, he was only concerned at the tactical ineptitude of the police, not with their objective:

'Councillor Knight argued that it would be counter-productive if the council and the community were induced to take panic action by the police. The council had, over a period of time and without trouble, reclaimed a number of properties and rehoused their occupants. The council intended to proceed with that policy and would not be provoked by the police. Precipitous action would raise the social temperature unnecessarily and would jeopardise the council's development strategy for the area.'

The servility of the consultative group to the local police over the last two years has rendered it almost redundant as an instrument for defusing social tension. In a transparent attempt to distance itself from the consultative group the Labour group proposes setting up a police committee along the lines laid out by the Greater London Council. The leader of the Tory group recognised that this would make little difference in practice:

'The police committee will be a duplication of the consultative group with the exception that it is campaigning for police accountability.' (*Evening Standard*, 29 June 1983)

The Labour left plays a key role in the isolation and criminalisation of young blacks. It concurs with the state in identifying black youth as the problem. 'Policing by consent' is the euphemism it uses for fostering divisions between the working class and young blacks. It agrees that 'black muggers and drug-dealers' are a threat to the whole community. The working class still has scores to settle with those who try to manage the consequences of the recession in the inner cities. It is time active workers stood alongside Brixton's black youth and took on the police and their left-wing apologists.

Ten-year battle for decent housing

Dorothy Bennett and her five children are facing eviction by Lambeth council. From 1973-1982 they had six offers to move out of their damp, constantly flooded



and cramped GLC flat on Springfield Estate — all worse than the flat they were living in. Tired of waiting for a decent offer, Dorothy squatted a house in Clapham in April 1982. Despite being a 'priority need' the Bennetts have had only one transfer offer from Lambeth council in the past year. The family now face harassment from the police. Workers Against Racism is determined to challenge the policies that have consigned the Bennett family to 10 years of misery.

Police and council in Hackney

Harmony for some

At the end of June, Metropolitan police commander Kenneth Newman devoted a major part of his first annual report to an attack on 'far left' agitators who were disrupting harmonious relations between the police and the black community. As Joan Phillips reports, there is little harmony on the streets of Hackney.

MORE THAN six months after Colin Roach's death in Stoke Newington police station, the inquest jury returned a verdict of suicide. In more ways than one the verdict is irrelevant. The question of how and why Colin Roach died has consumed the energies and imaginations of thousands. The demonstrations, pickets, arrests and the mass agitation that followed his death have confounded bourgeois commentators. *The Economist* 'could make neither head nor tail of it' (2 July). The press could not understand how, what was to them so obviously a straightforward case of suicide, could have provoked such widespread unrest and violence. As they searched for an explanation they were forced to pin the blame on outside agitators who exploited the grief of the dead man's family and whipped up an unjustified agitation against the police. But neither this, nor the extraordinary circumstances in which Colin Roach died, can explain the angry and spontaneous response of the black community. Only the systematic brutalisation of the black community — particularly black youth — in Hackney and Stoke Newington can provide an answer. And while Colin Roach is dead, that offensive continues.

Colin Roach has become a nationally-known figure because his name has come to symbolise the experience of a whole generation of black youth. While his death may remain a mystery, his life story was all too familiar. Colin left school and got a job, worked hard and enjoyed a busy social life with his family and friends. Then he joined most black youth in East London on the dole, drifted into conflict with the police and ended up serving three weeks for a minor offence in Pentonville prison over Christmas 1982. Weeks after his release, 21-year-old Colin was found dead, shot through the head, in the entrance to Stoke Newington police station.

Catalogue of terror

Coroner Douglas Chambers who presided over the Colin Roach inquest provides a link in the continuity of oppression suffered by the black community in East London. In 1971 he also officiated in the case of Aseta Simms, a middle-aged black woman who died after receiving multiple injuries to the head while in custody of the police in Stoke Newington police station. Despite conclusive medical evidence proving that Aseta Simms died as a result of blows administered to her head while in the police station, the coroner returned a verdict of 'death by misadventure'.

In December 1978, 19-year-old Michael Ferreira was stabbed in Stoke Newington High Street. His friends helped him into Stoke Newington police station in an attempt to get immediate assistance. But the police were more interested in questioning him and his friends than in getting him to hospital. While he lay bleeding, the police continued their interrogation. He died in the ambulance on the way to hospital.

In summer 1982, the case of the Richards family deepened the anger of black people in Hackney. Norma Richards and her two daughters aged nine and seven, were brutally murdered in their home on Kingsland estate, Dalston. A National

Front slogan was painted on the bedroom wall saying: 'This is what we're going to do with all niggers'. The police claimed that the slogan was bogus and removed the wallpaper. They insisted that the murderer was somebody close to the family; nobody has yet been charged.

But deaths in police custody and police inaction in response to attacks on blacks are only one side of the story. The cases of Nellie Knight and David and Lucille White illustrate the everyday harassment and brutality that black people have come to expect from the police in Hackney.

In November 1981, Nellie Knight and her daughter Jennifer made the mistake of calling the police to deal with a dispute with their neighbours. They ended up being arrested, severely beaten and racially abused by Stoke Newington police. Nellie Knight was so badly hurt that she had to receive hospital treatment. The Knights were charged with grievous bodily harm and assault on the police.

Last year two elderly black people, David and Lucille White, were awarded £50 000 damages after an encounter with Stoke Newington police. One night, 17 police officers arrived at the Whites' house on the pretext of looking for stolen goods. Once inside the door, they proceeded to beat the Whites' son Dennis with their truncheons. Then the parents too were set upon. The Whites were dragged barefoot to a police car with their unconscious son and taken to Stoke Newington police station, where they were charged with 11 offences including assault. Most charges were so flimsy that they were dismissed — but Dennis was convicted of attempting to wound a policeman and damaging his tunic.

Containment

Given this history, what is surprising is that Hackney didn't explode when Colin Roach died. The question remains: why have the police been able to get away with their reign of terror for so long, and why have there not been more riots against the police? The answer can only be found, on the one hand, in the strategy of collaboration and consultation pursued by Hackney Labour council and the official labour movement, and on the other hand, in the politics that have dominated most campaigns against the police. The contemporary example of the Colin Roach campaign provides a good illustration of this.

When Colin Roach died on 12 January, young blacks as well as whites assembled spontaneously outside Stoke Newington police station and met with a response that was only to be expected: police violence and eight arrests. At the second demonstration at the police station on 17

January, 22 people were arrested. The same evening, at a public meeting organised by Hackney Black People's Association, the Roach Family Support Committee was set up to campaign for an independent public inquiry.

The anger of black youth and the militancy of their protests forced the Labour council to respond. Labour realised that without a radical-sounding intervention on its part, things could well get out of hand.

At the first available opportunity it passed an emergency resolution at the 26 January Hackney council meeting demanding a public inquiry into the death of Colin Roach. Meanwhile, Hackney councillor and Police Committee chair Brynley Heaven, had written to the Greater London Council requesting an initial grant of £1500 for the Roach Family Support Committee.

The council demanded an investigation into policing in Hackney and offered facilities at the town hall for the inquest. At the same time, it was careful not to jeopardise its relations with the police. Police Committee chair Brynley Heaven was quick to rush to their defence and point out the advantages of a public inquiry as a means of neutralising unrest:

'If we had a head-banging, bone-crunching blimp at Scotland Yard we wouldn't expect anything different. It is precisely because we've got a good man like Sir Kenneth Newman that we expect something better. The police themselves have a lot to gain from an inquiry.' (*The Guardian*, 18 April)

The council's biggest gesture to the Colin Roach campaign was its vote to withhold the payment of the police precept of £4 million at its meeting of 23 February. But after the merest threat of legal action it reversed this decision at its policy committee meeting on 9 March. The Labour council was simply posturing to placate the militancy of black youth. Brynley Heaven and his Labour colleagues hoped to use the Colin Roach issue to promote a broader objective:

'The other point concerns our own little problem as a borough council; we're very frustrated at our inability to get a police liaison committee off the ground and we've found that all the initiatives that we've made...have been ignored by the authorities which has left us feeling very bitter.' (*What the papers say*, 15 March)

Throughout the Colin Roach campaign, the council has tried to obscure the extent of its long-standing collaboration with the police. But it has only succeeded in confirming its commitment to maintaining good relations with them. As *The Economist* put it, before Colin Roach's death in January, 'police-public consultations went on in the old, almost surrep-

titious way'. In 1982 the council decided to cooperate with Scotland Yard and assigned four senior council officers to join seven members of the Bramshill Police College senior staff command course in a week-long look at policing in the inner city. When the course ended, the Hackney officers presented a paper on 'inter-agency cooperation with an emphasis on the police and the council' (Council officer contacts with the police', March 1983).

Ever since then, the council has worked hard at developing its 'interactions' and 'interfaces' with the police in all departments. The report cited above gives a detailed breakdown of the nature and frequency of council contact and co-operation with police. As one officer put it, the police 'meet people in our office who wouldn't want to be seen with them in public'. In the housing offices, the police are regular visitors. One officer stated bluntly that 'the normal reason for contact is that the police require information' — names, addresses and forwarding addresses. Council premises are regularly used for surveillance purposes, photographing, observing local squats and 'investigation of possible IRA activities'.

Throughout the long months of the Colin Roach campaign the council has struggled to take the steam out of the situation by pestering the Home Office to agree to establish a police liaison committee in Hackney.

Rather than respond to police brutality against blacks by fighting with them, the council prefers to set up agencies to defuse tension. The police can get away with their brutality because the Labour Party subordinates the defence of the black community to its own dream of making the police accountable. As long as this objective prevails, blacks will continue to end up on their backs in Stoke Newington police station.

Narrowing the issue

An inquiry into the details of Colin Roach's death may help relieve the grief of his immediate family and friends. But in itself it is no answer to the brutalisation of black people in Hackney. The real issue at stake is how we to fight the oppression of the black community of which Colin Roach was a victim?

Instead of providing a focus for organising resistance to police repression, the various campaigns around the death of Colin Roach have been turned into appendages of the Labour Party. They have taken up the call for the police to be made accountable to the community and have thus helped to defuse resistance. As *The Economist* pointed out:

'Without the organised channel for protest that the GLC-financed support group provided, it could well have broken out in far worse public disorder than actually occurred.' (2 July)

The focus of the Hackney and Stoke Newington Defence Campaign (backed by the Revolutionary Communist Group) has been even narrower than that of the Roach Family Support Committee. Its role has been to provide some left cover for Hackney council leader Anthony Kendall and police committee chair Brynley Heaven of whom it has been fulsome in its praise. The RCG refused to support a picket of the council when it refused to break all links with the police, saying that it was 'ultra left' and that the council had done 'quite a lot' for the campaign.

The action we need

Our response to the death of Colin Roach should be to meet police terror with working class action. We must put forward the demand to break all links with the police, to end the collaboration that exists at every level in the council, and to mobilise workers to defend blacks when they are attacked.



Colin Roach is dead — but racism is still rampant in Hackney

In defence of Karl Marx

THE HUNDREDTH anniversary of Karl Marx's death has given many reformists another opportunity to try to bury his ideas. Michele Barrett's article 'Marxist-feminism and the work of Karl Marx' (in *Marx 100 years on*, edited by Betty Mathews) provides a useful summary of the attempts of reformist feminists to discredit revolutionary politics. Barrett's criticisms of Marx fall into two categories — one centring on his personal life and the other on his writings. But first, what was Marx's position on women?

Marx and Engels on women

Marx made an unprecedented contribution to women's liberation by analysing the oppression of women under capitalism. Others, before and since, have described and condemned the subjugation of womankind, but none was able to explain this oppression or how it could be brought to an end.

For Marx the inferiority of women was not the inevitable consequence of their physical or psychological make-up. Nor was it the design of evil men. It arose from capitalist social relations. This provides the basis of a coherent theory of women's oppression and a strategy for women's liberation.

In capitalist society women shoulder the burden of having children, caring for them, bringing them up, doing the housework, looking after men and so on. The effect of women's toil is to make workers regularly available in a fit state for capitalists to exploit. Not only is women's work in the home degrading, isolated slavery, virtually unaffected by technical advances in other areas of the economy, it also conditions women's role in social production. Because of the burden of domestic work, women are in a weaker position than men when they do enter the labour market.

As a result of the restrictions on their availability for work, women's labour-power has less value than men's. Women are driven to dependency on men because their wages are almost always insufficient to provide for themselves and their children. This is why women are second-class citizens in capitalist society. Legal discrimination reinforces their social inferiority which is the reflection of economic inequality.

Both Marx and Engels saw the solution to women's oppression in socialist revolution and communism. Legal reform and wage increases might alleviate the worst aspects of women's oppression; but women would remain inferior until capitalist social relations were overthrown. Under communism, the transformation of domestic tasks into public industries, freeing women to participate fully in social life, will be both possible and necessary. It will be possible because communist society will allocate resources to meet people's needs. It will be necessary because women will be unable to contribute to developing the forces of production as long as they are confined to the private sphere. The massive development of the productive forces is the only solid basis for human freedom.

Marx — male chauvinist?

Marxism is a scientific theory comparable to Darwin's theory of evolution or Freud's exploration of the unconscious. Although Marx, Darwin and Freud were products of the circumstances in which they lived, the scientific basis of their theories means that they are still valuable in explaining reality. None of these theories depends on individual experience — Freud wasn't psychotic, Darwin wasn't a monkey and Marx wasn't a proletarian. Marx's theory is not intended merely as a statement of workers' spontaneous understanding of their situation. As Marx wrote in *Capital*

Karl Marx was no feminist. He did little work around the house and evidently shared many of the puritanical views of his age on sex and marriage. Yet Kate Marshall defends Marx's contribution to the struggle for women's liberation against today's feminist detractors.



Marx, his daughters and Engels — feminists use Marx's family life to discredit his revolutionary theory

'All science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided'. The fact that Marx was not a worker did not prevent him demonstrating that the future of humanity lay with the working class. The fact that he was a man did not stop his theory from showing why women are oppressed under capitalism. Nor did Marxism stop at theory. Marx played a leading role in establishing an international working class organisation through which he anticipated all the oppressed could achieve liberation. As he wrote in his draft statutes for the First International, 'the economical emancipation of the working classes is the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means'.

Marx also involved himself in specific struggles. He gave his support as a propagandist to those workers who took up arms to fight for their freedom, rather than to struggles of a limited, reformist nature. He gave energetic backing to Irish Fenians and French communards rather than English trade unionists; he constantly criticised their limited demands and their legalistic methods. No wonder Marx virtually ignored the bourgeois women's rights movement led by middle class lackeys. To their narrow campaigns against censorship and for equal access to universities and the professions, the *Communist Manifesto* counterposed the call for the abolition of the family through revolution.

Marx died before he completed his work on *Capital*. It is facile to suggest that he could have knocked out a few books on women before he finished his major work; it is ignorant to claim that Marx could have said much more on women than Engels did in his *Origins of the family, private property and the state*; and it is the height of arrogance for contemporary 'marxist-feminists' like Michele Barrett to dismiss Marx's writings as those of a 'sexist' with 'feet of clay'.

Marx apparently persuaded Engels to pretend that his own illegitimate son, Frederick Demuth, was Engels'. Barrett makes a great deal of this fact. 'No wonder' she remarks, 'his critique of the family is so flawed and contradictory.' Marx was no saint and he may not have been a nice guy — but his theory of proletarian revolution and women's liberation cannot be judged on his personal failings. Unlike

the feminist commune dwellers of North London, Marx was not an idealist who dreamed of socialism in one household.

Ramblings on theory

When Barrett moves from the 'personal politics' to Marxist theory she gets into even deeper water. Her separation of the young and the old Marx, Marx and Engels, reform and revolution, ideology and economics, betrays a familiarity with the Marx of academic sociology but not with Marx's writing. She gets off to a bad start:

'In theory, for Marx, both capital and labour are abstract categories and must be assumed to be sexless. In practice, however... labour is historically constituted as the labour of concrete men and women.'

Barrett misses the point of Marx's method of abstraction. 'Capital' and 'labour' are not two sets of people, but social relations of production. There is no such thing as a concrete man or woman. Mr and Ms Concrete are related to the 'notional man' invoked by Barrett's sisters in the trade union bureaucracy to justify higher wages for women. But they are figments of the feminist imagination. 'Historically constituted' capitalists can be male or female. What makes them capitalists is their role in exploiting labour to accumulate capital, irrespective of whether the labourer is black, white, male, female, gay, disabled or illiterate. By definition all labourers are propertyless people who have to sell their labour-power to live. They are no more than agents whose labour-power produces surplus value to augment the capital of others. At this level of analysis it makes no difference whether or not Marx had in mind a 'typical male'. The specific characteristics of the labourer are beside the point.

After this inauspicious start Barrett stumbles on to a consideration of domestic work. She compounds her confusion about basic Marxist categories, bandying terms like 'domestic work', 'domestic labour', 'work in the home' and 'work for wages'. As Engels put it;

'The English language has two different expressions for these two aspects of labour: in the simple labour process, the process of producing use-values, it is *work*; in the process of creation of value it is *labour*'.

The point of drawing a distinction between abstract labour and concrete work is not, as Barrett thinks, because one is theory and the other practice. For Marx and Engels labouring meant working for a capitalist, for a measured working day, in return for a wage. Domestic work on the other hand is carried on outside social production. It is unpaid. It neither produces nor consumes surplus value and is organised according to the wishes of the individual.

For Barrett the difference between wage-labour and domestic work is 'problematic'; for revolutionaries it is vital. In equating 'work in the home' with 'work for wages' Barrett obliterates this distinction and with it the basis of explaining the specific oppression of women. From the standpoint of an individual woman both wage-labour and domestic work involve hard and seemingly endless graft, for which the only thanks is a pittance from her husband or her boss. By conflating the 'two jobs', however, feminists rob the categories of any scientific content. They obscure the particular oppression of isolation from society in the home, as well as the progressive potential of women's involvement in social production when they go out to work. They are reduced to moralistic denunciations of exploitation.

The family wage

Barrett finally allows Marx to speak for himself. She quotes a passage from *Capital* in which Marx shows how men's wages were forced down when women and children were drawn into the labour market. Triumphant Barrett comments, 'A male breadwinner must be assumed for Marx's argument to hold'. Yes, but that was the situation that obtained. 'Marx's view', she asserts, 'naturally supported the argument that the standard of living of the working class is raised by the so-called "family wage" system'. This is nonsense: Marx simply described how capital enslaved the entire working class family in its drive for accumulation. The only position that emerges 'naturally' from his account is that equal pay for women is the only way to raise working class living standards. In Marx's own lifetime even the TUC called for equal pay for women.

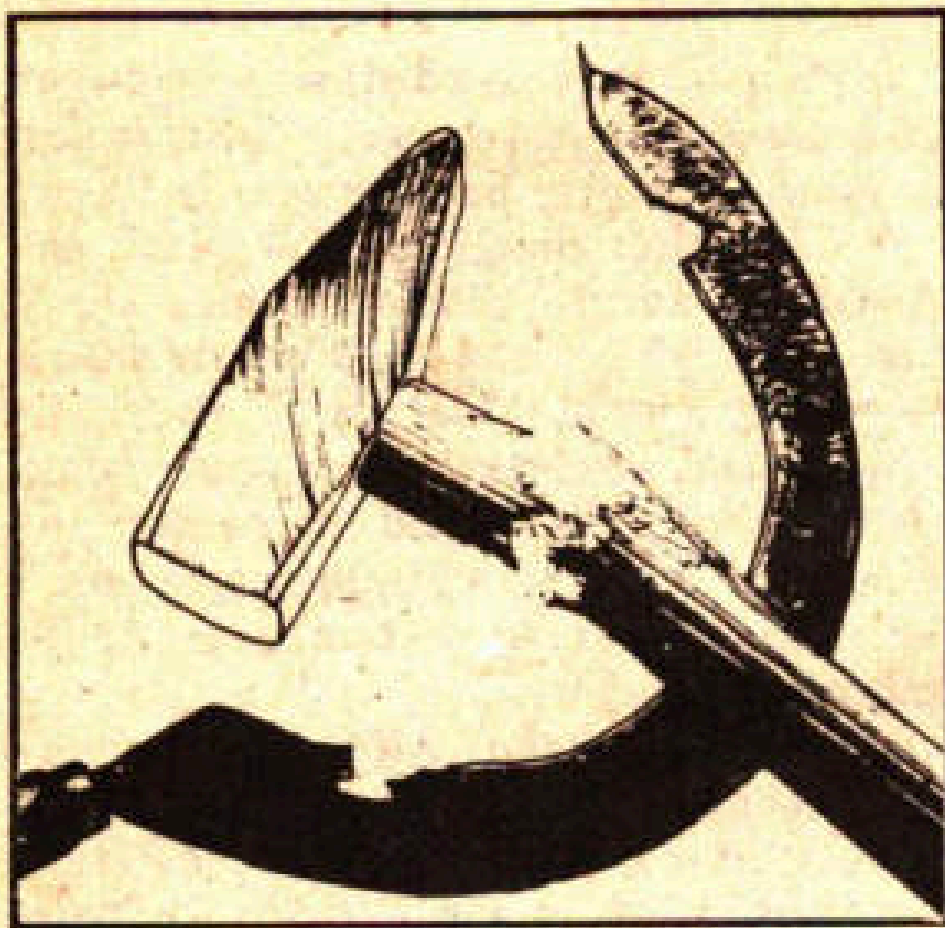
Marx was 'in error', says Barrett, 'in his assumption that women's employment cheapened the value of labour-power'. But it is Barrett who is 'in error'. It is no reproach to women to observe that their inferior position in the labour market increases the exploitation of the whole working class. As Marx explained, the capitalist can exploit two or more workers for the price of one and a bit. A family must survive on less than the male wage multiplied by the total number of family members at work. To say that the capitalists used the introduction of women, children, unskilled labour and immigrants to intensify the exploitation of the working class is simply to expose the reality of capitalism and its ruthless quest for profit.

In the end Barrett jettisons her attempts at a critique and settles for mud-slinging.

'Marx's unreflectively sexist presumptions in regard to women, work and the family have contributed to one of the major divisions within the working class and the organised labour movement.'

In fact Marx's theory provides the only adequate basis for uniting working class men and women in the struggle for communism and women's liberation. The disintegration of the bourgeois radical and reformist women's movement and the emergence of a revolutionary struggle for women's rights confirms the growing recognition of this fact among women in Britain.

Poland - the way forward AFTER THE POPE



with the hierarchy of the Catholic church to solve the problems of Poland's military government.



Is Jaruzelski losing his grip?

MARTIAL LAW and repression have failed to reverse Poland's economic decline. Chaos and fragmentation persist and the bureaucracy lacks the means to regulate key sectors of the economy. Official figures reveal that national income fell by 26 per cent between 1974 and 1982. But these figures tell only part of the story.

Stagnation and decay

According to a recently published official report, 60 per cent of manufacturers do not observe quality norms. Much of existing industrial capacity is ill-designed and remains unused. A deputy director of the Construction Ministry reported that 50 per cent of all equipment in his sector should be classified as scrap and the rest could not be fully used because of shortages. To make matters worse, there are less resources available for industrial investments. Gross investment in the state sector has fallen by more than half in the last three years - leaving some 60 per cent of projects uncompleted. Construction has been in decline and the private sector is now building nearly half as many housing units as the state sector.

The crisis of the Polish economy has had a devastating impact on the working class. Wages increased by 51 per cent last year, but prices more than doubled. According to official figures, food prices increased by a staggering 238 per cent. Prices on their own do not reveal the real situation. Most essentials are in short supply, rationing has become the norm and queues are everywhere. On the black market many essentials cost more than double the official prices.

Since martial law was imposed in December 1981 the bureaucracy has sought to halt the decline by militarising production and attacking living standards. It has had some success. In the first three months of this year industrial production

Millions came out to cheer the Pope's public sermons on freedom, dignity and trade unionism during his recent visit to Poland. Behind the scenes, however, John Paul II was more down to earth. He put Walesa in his place and negotiated a new accord with the bureaucracy. Gareth Evans takes a look at the parlous state of the Polish economy and the growing combativity of Polish workers. He concludes that it will take more than a new deal

with the hierarchy of the Catholic church to solve the problems of Poland's military government.

was up 11 per cent on the previous year and productivity up 13 per cent. But there are limits to the intensification of labour in the absence of any development of the productive forces. This is clear from the experience of coal mining. By a combination of above average wages and penal working conditions the bureaucracy has forced production back to the levels of the 'seventies. But the technology remains scarcely more advanced than in Victorian England - deaths from accidents are running at around 20 per month. Production cannot be increased further and any increase in industrial production would reduce the amount of coal available for export. As there is little else to export that would force a drop in imports which are already at a low level.

Jaruzelski's strategy

Since the introduction of martial law the Polish bureaucracy has tried to get to grips with the economic malaise. In January 1982 the Government introduced an economic reform designed to stimulate managerial initiative and win the co-operation of the workforce. Many of the bureaucratic planning controls were replaced by a system of indirect financial regulation. Previous plan targets were put forward as guidelines to enterprises. The Central Planning Commission was restricted to forecasting. These reforms only existed on paper. In reality the Polish bureaucracy feared the consequences of loosening its grip over industry. The Government continued to exercise day-to-day control over most enterprises through the distribution of raw materials and other inputs. It also appears that the Government has continued to finance enterprises - since hardly any have closed down.

In March this year the Government dropped its pretence of offering economic incentives when it introduced a new three-

year economic plan to control inflation. The plan proposes to improve utilisation of labour and materials, direct scarce resources to areas best able to use them, relate pay rises to productivity and increase the supply of consumer goods. Polish industry is certainly very wasteful: it uses more than twice as much energy per unit of output as French or German industry. It is inconceivable that output could grow twice as fast as energy and raw materials supplies when the plan calls for investment to be cut by half. The fact that 60 per cent of funds are to be invested in food, agriculture and housing shows that the bureaucracy simply wants to hold the line. It hopes to cut wages sufficiently and supply enough consumer goods to allow it to relax rationing without driving prices even higher. It is more likely that rationing will be lifted to the accompaniment of massive price increases as happened when rationing of cigarettes, coffee and petrol was ended in March. That would entail further savage attacks on workers' living standards.

There is a big labour shortage in industry. Light industry has lost 13 per cent of its workforce in the last two years. Many workers have left to go into the private handicraft sector. Through a combination of redundancies and coercion of 'social parasites' and 'notorious work-dodgers' the Government is attempting to restructure industry.

What the regime lacks is the co-operation of the working class. The Government's efforts at 'social consultation' have tried to overcome this problem. There has been a massive publicity campaign to popularise new public organisations with improbable titles such as the Patriotic Movement of National Rebirth (Pron). In March, a National Workers' Conference on the Economy was held to discuss the new plan. The attempt to establish new trade unions has been a resounding failure. Even the bureaucracy finds it hard to believe in them. All that Deputy Premier Barcikowski could think of to commend them was that they would 'play an important role in organising holidays for workers and leisure for children and young people'.

The crisis continues to be reflected in the state bureaucracy and the communist party. Official figures state that 780 000, more than a quarter of the membership, have left the party since August 1980. Last year only 6500 applied to join. In areas of greatest working class militancy the party has virtually collapsed. Fourteen of the 43 members elected to the Wroclaw Voivodship (regional) Party Control Commission in June 1981 were later removed: seven of them were members of the Presidium. The Bielsko-Biala party organisation, which covers the area of the Wujek mine where miners were shot on 16 December 1981, has lost 38 per cent of its worker members. The party has failed even to gain control of the 'self-management' bodies it has set up in enterprises and even party members are boycotting the official unions. The apathy of party members extends to state bureaucrats who have been strongly opposed to all attempts at economic reform. In a national examination organised in January to test bureaucrat's understanding of the reforms more than a third failed or had a 'weak acquaintance' of them.

The party leadership has responded by increasing its control of official party publications. It has clamped down on various organisations, societies and clubs that were 'dissipating the party's strength'. These include clubs such as the Forge, the Cracow club for the party intelligentsia associated with the pro-Solidarity intellectuals such as the film director Andrzej Wajda. The party's Central Committee has assumed direct control of the 207 most important plants and enterprises

and is trying to re-activate party work on the shop floor. The Voivodship Party Control Commissions have been instructed to make it easier for former members to rejoin without loss of face. The party is also in extreme financial difficulty. Many members are unable to increase their payment of dues as fast as money wages rise. It is said that at Central Committee meetings weak tea is now served rather than coffee.

Stalemate continues

The Polish bureaucracy has never been weaker. Its ability to rule depends on the fragmented and diffuse character of the opposition movement. The Solidarity underground enjoys a degree of popular support. However, this movement lacks a strategy and appears preoccupied with its own survival. Solidarity continues to call for non-violence and negotiations and avoids the question of revolution. Its long-term project of setting up an alternative 'underground society' with its own social, political and cultural life is seen by many workers as a refusal to confront the power of the state. The short-term programme it published in January is, in substance, an attempt to claim credit for what workers are already doing. In today's Poland it is scarcely necessary to explain to workers that the economic reform is 'a cover for the old centralised system and for the militarisation of the economy', or to encourage them to boycott the government-sponsored unions.

Solidarity's call for gradual reforms 'which won't disrupt the existing balance of power in Europe' is as reactionary as ever in its subservience to Soviet military power and the Western banks. Walesa's message to the bureaucracy is that it should negotiate with Solidarity about how to pull the country out of the crisis, for 'people are dissatisfied, and with dissatisfied people it is impossible to improve the economy'.

But Solidarity's bargaining power has grown weaker as it has lost influence over workers. The recent demonstrations have been largely spontaneous and outside the control of Solidarity's underground committee. On the thirteenth of each month there are demonstrations to commemorate the imposition of martial law on 13 December 1981. On 13 March, 1500 workers in Gdansk marched to the monument erected in memory of the shipyard workers killed in 1970. Demonstrations frequently take place after church services which provide an opportunity to congregate legally. On 1 May there were demonstrations in at least 20 towns resulting in 1000 arrests. The church has been working hard to fill the gap left by Solidarity. It hopes to harness working class militancy to bolster its own position. In his May Day sermon, Cardinal Glemp affirmed that 'the ideals that were embodied in the great outburst of August 1980 cannot perish'. He had previously refused a request from the Politburo that services be shifted to the late afternoon to reduce the possibility of demonstrations. The credibility of the church was given a further boost on 3 May. Police thugs broke into a Warsaw convent and destroyed the office of a Catholic group aiding the families of political prisoners and detainees.

The influence of the church remains considerable. As the only social force able to operate openly under martial law, it has regained its pre-August 1980 role as the bureaucracy's loyal opposition. In the process many workers have come to see its real relationship to the regime. The last eighteen months of repression have given Polish workers plenty of time for reflection. The Polish working class today is more mature politically than ever before. It will not be long before it strikes another blow at the bureaucracy.

A recipe for social tension and political instability

THE ANDROPOV PLAN



production fast enough' (*Kommunist*, February 1983). Does the bureaucracy have a solution to the crisis in Soviet society? Frank Richards looks at the answers given by Andropov and his colleagues.

THE SOVIET ECONOMY is a shambles. The Soviet bureaucracy cannot plan or even control the economy because it lacks a regulator that can distribute the resources of society efficiently. Only a regime of workers' democracy can provide a framework for a planned economy. And since the working class is excluded from social control and subjugated to bureaucratic domination, the economy remains fragmented and chaotic. In past issues of *the next step* we have argued that the stagnation of the Soviet Union is not a passing phenomenon (See 'Andropov looks to nature', *the next step*, January 1983). The wastage, the production bottlenecks and distribution shortages all reveal the structural crisis of the system.

The Soviet bureaucracy is aware of the gross inefficiency of the economy. Much of its investment is squandered and the return on investments is falling. Last year's rise in industrial output of 2.8 per cent was the lowest officially recorded since the war. The 2.1 per cent growth in labour productivity was about 50 per cent below the planned target. And many sectors of industry — including the all important metal sector — suffer disruption from lack of planning.

Looking for answers

During the past two decades the bureaucracy has sought to overcome its problems by implementing various schemes of reform. None of the reforms work because the central bureaucracy lacks the information it needs to monitor what is going on. Factory managers and directors can evade instructions and do what they feel like. Factory managers can meet targets set by the central bureaucracy and still undermine the coherence of the plan. Products are often shoddy and defective but they still count as units of output for the purposes of the plan. Thus physical output often bears little relationship to the plan target.

During the past five years the central bureaucracy has been preoccupied with finding an index of production that would give a more realistic indication of production. In 1979 a new plan index, *normative net output* was introduced. Under this index success is measured by newly-created values internally generated in the factory. Soviet planners believed that this index would eliminate the problems associated with the old gross output targets. Under the old targets success could be achieved through physical output even though the output was defective or was not in demand.

The NNO index has not brought the desired results. Factory managers have simply shifted towards labour-intensive production lines or inefficiently produced their own inputs to meet the NNO target. This has led to a situation where the All-Union Chemical Machinery Industry has fulfilled its 1982 plan according to the criteria of NNO — but has produced less

In his first major theoretical statement since becoming General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Yuri Andropov asked: 'Why have we not been as successful as we need to be in improving the efficiency of production and of the economy as a whole? Why are we not getting the proper return on our enormous capital investments, and why are scientific and technological achievements not being incorporated in

than the year before. According to one report the *Staraya Russa Chemical Machinery Plant* decreased its output by 6.2 per cent in 1982 — during the same time NNO rose by 6.2 per cent. What happened was that the factory shifted to producing labour-intensive rotary devices and reduced production of miniature reactors. Why? Because to produce reactors would mean a lower NNO and hence it was not profitable.

The failure of the NNO index shows that the Soviet Union is immune to reform. A crisis which arises out of the existing social relations cannot be solved through technical solutions. Planning in its Marxist sense is not a technique — but a qualitatively new social relationship where the proletariat is actively committed to and involved in the running of the economy. But this truth is precisely what the bureaucracy cannot face. The privileged position of the bureaucracy depends on maintaining the status quo and excluding the working class from the levers of power.

Andropov's answer

Andropov's answer to his question is predictable. 'The main reason' for economic failure 'is that our efforts to improve and restructure the economic mechanism and the forms and methods of management have been lagging behind the demands posed by the present level of Soviet society's development'. In other words, the problem is lack of effort.

As the representative of the bureaucracy Andropov naturally tends to emphasise subjective failure as the problem. In this way the system is absolved from any blame, and the difficulties that persist can be attributed to individual failure. Since his rise to power Andropov has launched a systematic campaign to increase 'effort'. This isn't surprising, since it is easier to get results by forcing more effort out of people than by trying to make the system work.

Andropov has moved on a number of fronts. In January he launched an anti-corruption drive. A number of lower-level bureaucrats were hauled up before the courts and their activities were given considerable publicity. At the same time, the media began to criticise certain ministers — particularly in the metal industry. The object of these criticisms was to expose the incompetence of the bureaucrats concerned. This populist campaign had a clear purpose to it; to demonstrate that the system's all right — the problem is incompetent and crooked personnel.

The anti-corruption campaign was closely connected with a well-publicised drive for greater factory discipline. Led by Andropov, the Soviet media launched a systematic campaign against the working class. Absenteeism, drunkenness and shoddy work were portrayed as the major social ills. In January the Prosecutor-General initiated a law and order drive, threatening stiffer penalties and new legis-



lation against parasites (*Pravda*, 9 January). In several towns people were rounded up and interrogated as to what they were doing on the streets during working hours.

The theme of individual responsibility is designed to make individuals — particularly in the working class — pay for the crisis created by the bureaucratic system. There can be no greater indictment of the Soviet bureaucracy than its transparent effort to solve social problems by individual effort. In effect, repression becomes the mechanism for economic control.

Obscurantist ideology

The escalation of repression is closely linked to a broad ideological offensive which seeks to bolster social stability. In the West, the most publicised aspect of this offensive has been the crackdown on culture, particularly literature. Feliks Kuznetsov, a spokesman for the official Writers' Organisation in Moscow warned: 'A highly important task for Soviet literature and art is to dethrone the consumer mentality, cultivate in people's hearts an antipathy toward all manifestations of bourgeois psychology' (*Pravda*, 18 February 1983). Kuznetsov's call to toe the line indicates that the bureaucracy is not prepared to accept any questioning of 'socialist' values.

In fact the offensive against writers and artists is insignificant compared to

the obscurantist ideology peddled in other spheres of life. Women have been singled out for special attention. Hundreds of articles have been written celebrating the family and demanding that women assume their traditional role. Scores of sociologists and psychologists have suddenly 'discovered' that 'pushy women' have contributed to the breakdown of the family and the erosion of social values. Some experts even link the lack of discipline on the shop floor to the high divorce rate.

Chauvinist outbursts against women have been complemented by a systematic nationalist and anti-semitic onslaught. It appears that the bureaucracy has no inhibitions about its choice of exhortations to increase individual effort.

It is unlikely that the bureaucracy's mystification will have the desired effect. Workers have a long and bitter experience of the system of production and recognise its failure has nothing to do with individual effort. Nor will the bureaucracy's pleadings about the family find a resonance. Bad housing and limited access to nurseries and social services show just how much the system cares about working class women. It is not the ideology, but the veiled threats of repression that worry workers. The prospect of bitter struggle between workers and the bureaucracy looms on the horizon. Andropov's plan is a recipe for social tension and political instability.



Anti-corruption drives cannot solve the problems of the Soviet economy

Debates on workers' control

Neil Harding ed, *Marxism in Russia: key documents 1879-1906*, Cambridge University Press 1983, pp 414, hbk £27.50

S A Smith, *Red Petrograd: revolution in the factories 1917-1918*, Cambridge University Press 1983, pp 347, hbk £25.00

THESE TWO BOOKS published by Cambridge University Press provide a lot of useful material for the student of the Russian Revolution and for revolutionary communists.

Marxism in Russia contains a selection of key documents from the Russian revolutionary movement during its formative years from 1879-1906. Many of the documents have not been translated before and throw considerable light on the debates of the period. This text should be read primarily by those who are already acquainted with the history of the period, but everyone will find the last two sections interesting. Much of the debate contained in these documents – differences on tactics, class consciousness, the party and the role of the proletariat in the revolution – have been much discussed in the existing literature. But the striking feature of the documents when studied first-hand is the richness and high standard of debate.

All the participants in the debates, from the Bolsheviks to the right-wing of the labour movement, were responding to the immediate problems of the class struggle. As a result, the arguments are clear and their consequences are coherently expressed. With such a high standard of debate it is not surprising that the Bolsheviks were able to formulate a sophisticated system of strategy and tactics.

The revisionist trend

Most of the discussion anticipates the present-day debate between reformists and revolutionaries. The peculiarities of Tsarist Russia and the period notwithstanding, the debates around the turn of the century do have contemporary relevance. Today the radical left intelligentsia is much given to agonising about the 'crisis of Marxism'. This theme was already succinctly presented in 1889 in the famous document by the reformist Kuskova. Ironically, whereas today's revisionists complain about the Russian influence on European Marxism, Kuskova bemoaned the prevalence of Western Marxism in Russia. Kuskova observed: 'Talk of an independent workers' political party is nothing but the result of transplanting alien aims and alien achievements on to our soil'. Today's Western Marxists will be quite shocked by the reversal in roles.

Kuskova's liberal critique of Marxism has a familiar modern ring to it. 'Intolerant Marxism, negative Marxism, primitive Marxism (which holds to too schematic a concept of class divisions of society) will give way to democratic Marxism'. Today, 'democratic Marxism' is all the rage on the British left – but the arguments are decisively refuted in the Leninist documents contained in this collection. Editor Neil Harding observes that Russian Marxism at the time 'was thought to be hopelessly schismatic'. It is true that the Russian workers' movement experienced considerable splits and divisions. But divisions are only negative if their causes are ignored and if, as in Britain, differences remain undeveloped and inconclusive. Fortunately, the philosophy of 'unity at any price' was alien to the Russian tradition, and debate – often heated, bitter and decidedly un-British – played a positive role in raising the ideological level of the workers' movement. It is not an exaggeration to state that the discussions reviewed in *Marxism in Russia* were instrumental in creating the ideological climate necessary for the October revolution.

Towards workers' control

Red Petrograd focuses on the crucial development of the movement for workers' control during the years 1917-18. Although the author is far from sympathetic to the Bolshevik cause he does not let his liberal prejudices mar the presentation of the material. In fact the discussion on the rise of the movement for workers' control is excellent and is by far the best available in the English language. Smith shows how the movement arose spontaneously through the factory committees in response to industrial collapse. Like other parties, the Bolsheviks were surprised by this development. However,

Lenin in particular was able to grasp the revolutionary content of this movement and elaborate a strategy that linked the struggle for workers' control to the seizure of state power.

Most of the discussion falsely counterposes workers' control of production to state control. Lenin posed the problem in a different manner: 'What kind of state should coordinate control of the economy: a bourgeois state or a workers' state?' Lenin noted that workers' control of production was critical for tapping the creative powers of the proletariat but that real control presupposed the existence of a workers' state. As Smith argues: 'Lenin saw absolutely no contradiction between centralised control and the creative initiatives of workers in the factories; indeed, he never tired of insisting that local initiatives were the bedrock of centralised control'.

In line with conventional wisdom Smith criticises Lenin for the degeneration of workers' control after the revolution:

'Nevertheless it cannot be said that Lenin satisfactorily theorised the relationship between grass-roots workers' control of production and state-wide regulation of the economy. After October the Bolsheviks were to learn through bitter experience how difficult it was to reconcile the two in practice.'

Smith reduces the problem of revolution to 'theorisation'. The decline of workers' control was not a problem of theory. Smith himself graphically shows how economic catastrophe and the civil war led to the near total disintegration of the working class. By April 1918 Petrograd's factory workforce had shrunk to 40 per cent of its January 1917 level. Even a theoretician of Smith's calibre would find it impossible to 'theorise' about workers' control when the proletariat had just disappeared.

Readers of the next step should make a serious effort to consult *Red Petrograd*. It contains material which the present discussion on revolutionary strategy cannot afford to ignore.

Frank Richards

The British Leyland story

Michael Edwardes, *Back from the brink*, Collins, pp 307, hbk £9.95

Back from the brink perpetuates the myth that BL super-boss Michael Edwardes single handedly took on a militant, highly organised workforce and won. This myth is accepted by management and unions alike. The truth is that shop-floor organisation had been effectively destroyed before Edwardes entered the boardroom in 1977.

Edwardes begins his account with the first day of his own chairmanship, alluding only briefly to the reign at BL of his predecessor Lord Ryder. He presents the period of the Ryder Plan from 1975 to 1977 as a time of planning failures and the growth of shop-floor militancy – the brink from which it was his job to return BL. His tribute to the politicians who presided over his survival plan and made it work is fulsome. Of the Labour government he says, 'I appreciated its very real management qualities'. He notes that 'they' were at least as tough (as the Tories) about providing funds.

The Labour government and trade union leaders recognised just as clearly as Edwardes that shop-floor independence was a barrier to restructuring British industry. It was Labour's political strategy, summed up in the 1975 Ryder Plan for BL that was decisive in destroying the potential for shop-floor resistance to the rationalisation and redundancies that followed Edwardes' later appointment.

Participation

'Participation' was part of the deal through which the Industry minister Tony Benn sanctioned a programme of investment to rescue the bankrupt car firm in 1975. The Confederation

of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions blamed Leyland's collapse on bad management and asked for a programme of investment and rationalisation of the product range. The Ryder Plan accepted this but also called for a system of formal union participation in the implementation of the strategy for recovery. The Labour government made the unions' agreement to the participation element a condition of its acceptance of Ryder's proposals. Though there were reservations the unions accepted unconditionally.

Edwardes identifies 'participation' as a major problem at BL – the usurpation by shop stewards of management's 'right to manage'. In fact it represented the destruction of any potential for shop-floor power. The shop stewards' independent role was destroyed through their integration into management structures, their isolation from the rank and file and their identification of workers' interests with the viability of the industry. The gains for management far outweighed concessions. 'Participation' shifted the base of stewards' power away from the shop floor and towards management. While union collaboration with management was not new, it became institutionalised. The illusory nature of stewards' power became clear as soon as increased pressure from competitors forced a revision of management plans.

When Edwardes was appointed BL was on the brink. As the Longbridge convenor he victimised, Derek Robinson, is the first to point out, this was not because of union militancy. The union had made every effort to ensure shop-floor harmony and the smooth running of the plan. Through the consultation procedures the union had been to the fore in proposing measures for improving BL's competitiveness and the survival of the industry. BL was on the brink, not because of shop-floor power, but because BL's corporate strategy had been overtaken by the recession.

When he took over, even Edwardes did not realise the scale of the attack he would have to mount on the workforce. There was no master plan, rather a stage by stage scramble for survival. Edwardes summoned a full meeting of shop stewards at Kenilworth in February 1978 to outline his grim survival plans: they voted to back rationalisation. Only later, when the level of redundancies skyrocketed, did Robinson and fellow members of the stewards combine attempt to 'dissociate themselves from the company's plans. They produced an alternative plan – the pamphlet which provided the pretext for Robinson's dismissal.

Robinson's 'alternative strategy' was not an

unequivocal stand in defence of jobs and conditions, but another survival plan for BL. Robinson did not renounce the bosses' priorities; he could only draw back from the consequences. The uselessness of the stewards' alternative plan as a way of defending jobs was obvious to every worker. Collaboration with the bosses had weakened their links with the shop floor and the stage was set for Edwardes to sweep them aside. Having outlived his usefulness to the bosses, Robinson found himself without support on the shop floor. The top union bureaucrats wasted no time ditching him. Robinson's colleagues in the Communist Party treasured their links with the trade union leaders too much to carry on fighting on his behalf. To save their face they gave him a job on the *Morning Star*.

BL management followed up this success with the unilateral imposition of far-reaching alterations in work-practices. The abolition of washing-up time at Cowley is only the latest in a long line of setbacks inflicted on BL workers.

Lacking leadership

It was not that all the shop stewards were unwilling to fight, or that workers preferred Edwardes to the unions. It was simply that there was no coherent leadership that could show the way.

Today the politics of collaboration still dominate the labour movement. The complaint of the bureaucracy now is not that collaboration has led to massive setbacks for the working class, but that the bosses aren't interested in collaboration as much as they used to be.

Robinson's successor as convenor at Longbridge, Jack Adams, has learned nothing. His perseverance in offering advice to management about company strategy has earned him the nickname 'volume car Jack'.

A second myth that Edwardes props up is that BL is a success story. BL has been subsidised to the tune of £2.4 billion over the decade. It has squeezed workers mercilessly, introduced a new model range – but in 1983 it barely broke even. Far from breaking into the big league of volume car producers it remains dwarfed by its rivals.

The parlous state of BL means that there is worse to come. If the battles of the future are going to be won then the old leadership and the old ways must be rooted out. This is not just a matter of reorganisation. In BL today many workers have no time for the stewards. The stewards themselves recognise that while once they could say yes or no to industrial action, today they cannot rely on workers to back them. The stewards see this as an expression of the weakness of the workers' movement, and can only talk about plugging away to rebuild confidence. But confidence can only be restored on the basis of politics that can win. The potential to fight and win is there. The stoppages at Cowley demonstrated that. Only a break with the collaborative politics of Labourism can release that potential.

Glynn Cohen



Michael Edwardes gets the glory, but he only delivered the final blow at BL

Veiled reaction in Khomeini's Iran

Azar Tabari & Nahid Yaganeh. *In the shadow of Islam: the women's movement in Iran*, Zed Press 1982, pp 239, pbk £6.50

WOMEN have played a major part in the struggles against oppression and imperialist domination in Iran. The question which Tabari and Yaganeh seek to answer is: how were the women who participated in the anti-imperialist demonstrations that brought down the Shah driven back into the home and the subservient role dictated by Islam?

Although the social position of women improved under the Shah, this was restricted to a limited stratum of people who benefitted from the expansion of employment in services and administration. The rate of literacy amongst urban working women increased from 30 to 50 per cent between 1966-1976. These women were also better able to hire domestic servants. Nurseries were rare and only available in public sector employment. For the mass of women in industrial employment, however, there were no benefits. Despite minimum wage legislation, women received less than half the wages of male workers. They had no choice but to bring their children to the factory to look after them.

Forward to reaction

The situation of women in rural areas was even worse. In the fields they were confined to the most labour-intensive work: weeding, cotton-picking, fruit-picking, rice-planting and pistachio-peeling.

The most prominent ideologue of the various Islamic reformers who came to the fore in the 'seventies was Ali Shariati. He played a leading role in shaping Bani Sadr's and Mujaheddin's brand of Islamic socialism. Shariati saw the main aim of the Shi'ite struggle as the attainment of a 'classless divine society'. This would require struggle against 'reaction' and 'imperialism'. No feminist could disagree with his critique of a woman's position under capitalism: she is a 'sex object', a 'one dimensional being', a 'Western doll' reduced to a 'washing machine and a breeding machine'. In her place he substitutes the Islamic woman styled after prophet Mohammed's daughter Fatima: ideal daughter, wife, mother, living a pure, simple life and playing an active political role in the spread and enrichment of Islam.

Unlike Khomeini and the rest of the clergy, Shariati did not share the obsessive preoccupation with the regulation of female sexuality and fertility (which is where the Islamic family and clothing codes originate). However, he went along with the need for the hejab (the veil garment covering the whole body), merely

implying that it had an anti-imperialist character because it operated against the interests of the 'consumer sex-obsessed society'.

These sentiments were popular among the masses who rebelled against the Shah. It was a symbol of resistance for women who came on the demonstrations to wear the hejab. But these women were swept off the streets very soon after Khomeini returned from Paris in February 1979.

The Family Protection Law was suspended, women were forbidden to be judges and told to wear the veil at all times. Co-education was banned and women were excluded from high schools. July saw the first executions of women on charges of prostitution and corruption. New legislation was pushed through giving husbands the exclusive right of divorce and child custody and the right to forbid wives from taking up employment. The new Islamic code permitted polygamy and temporary wives and lowered the official marriage age for women from 18 to 13. Thousands of women lost their jobs, segregation was enforced in all areas of social life, and public flogging and stoning of women became commonplace.

The attack on women, forcing them into a slave existence in the home, was one of the most important weapons of the regime in establishing social cohesion and control. Motherhood was exalted as the Iraqi war took its toll. The authors argue that many women welcomed the role defined by Islam as an alternative to their exploitation and insecure social position under the Shah. This seems implausible, but even if it were so, the one thing that hasn't changed - except for the worse - is the condition of working women. Khomeini's Islamic brand of capitalist restoration has nothing to offer those women working in textile factories, public sector offices or in the fields.

The authors blame the left for the degradation of women under Khomeini. Sections of the left - the Fedai (Minority) and the Organisation of Communist Unity - opposed Khomeini and attempted to expose the class nature of his regime. But they were slow to oppose Islamic legislation against women. More often than not the left dismissed women's protests because most women involved in them were bourgeois. The rest of the left, in the Fedai (Majority) and the Stalinist Tudeh Party, either vacillated or slavishly supported the regime. They argued that the demonstrations were counter-revolutionary, weakened the revolution and strengthened the hand of imperialism.

Out of the shadow

The authors' main criticism of the left is that the Marxist organisations tried to use the women's issue to recruit. Like Western femin-

ists they advocate an 'autonomous' movement. However, the experience of Iranian women shows that the women's movement cannot be politically autonomous. Without proletarian politics, it falls prey to Islamic petit-bourgeois utopianism. The lessons of the Iranian experience for the left are that the fight against Islamic legislation, and its denial of women's rights, must be central.

Inez Landa

The national question bites the dust

Paul Bew and Henry Patterson, *Sean Lemass and the making of modern Ireland 1945-66*, Gill and Macmillan 1982, pp 224, hbk £15

FOR Bew and Patterson the bourgeois state is characterised by its 'relatively autonomous political process'. For Marxists it is the institution which enforces the rule of the capitalist class and guarantees the reproduction of capitalist social relations. Representing the interests of the capitalist class as a whole, the state can modify but cannot escape the laws that govern social production under capitalism.

The authors set out to prove that the distinctive post-war economic policies implemented in the Twenty-six Counties were dictated by the need to reconstruct the ideological hegemony of the traditional nationalist party Fianna Fail. In reality, they were an attempt to reconstruct the stagnant Irish economy. Not, as Bew and Patterson argue, an attempt to 'put politics in command' or 'relegitimise' the state for the Irish working class.

Bew and Patterson explain Fianna Fail's crisis of legitimacy by arguing that Partition had resolved the national question and thus removed its reason for existence. Hence the problem for the party was to pursue policies which could restore its legitimacy as a party of government. However, even the extensive material which the authors use to back up their thesis makes it difficult to sustain.

Post-war expansion

Bew and Patterson chart the development of post-war economic policy through the words and actions of Sean Lemass, who started as Fianna Fail Minister for Industry and Commerce and ended up as Taoiseach.

Throughout the inter-war period the traditional policies of protectionism and economic

nationalism pursued by Fianna Fail proved incapable of developing an economy dominated by British imperialism. By the mid 'forties the Irish bourgeoisie began to look for an alternative strategy to promote capitalist development.

It was the world-wide post-war boom, to which the authors make little reference, which provided the basis for capitalist expansion. Economic expansion also necessitated the reorganisation of the state apparatus over which Lemass presided. Throughout the 'fifties Fianna Fail gradually replaced its policy of economic self-sufficiency with a more outward-looking policy designed to attract foreign capital through state subsidies and the expansion of exports. In 1960 the Twenty-six Counties signed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and a year later applied to join the Common Market.

Economic growth took off at an unprecedented rate. From 1961-68 total output grew by 30 per cent. This development was not unique to Ireland. A number of other backward capitalist countries - Brazil, South Korea and Indonesia - made similar changes in state policy to take advantage of the boom and achieve high economic growth rates.

Towards reconstitution

The authors, however, persist in their view that these changes were a response to the imminent dissolution of Fianna Fail's traditional base of support:

'One of the central reasons for the political success of the new policies on foreign capital and the associated move towards free trade was the role they could play in reconstituting Fianna Fail's ideological domination of the masses.'

To support this, they make much of Lemass' inconsistencies. In 1953 Lemass welcomed foreign capital with open arms. In 1956, when out of government, Lemass joined in Fianna Fail's chorus of opposition to the coalition government's pursuit of foreign capital. In 1957, when back in office, Lemass took the really decisive step in opening up the economy to foreign capital by amending the 1932-4 Control of Manufacturers Acts.

Lemass himself explained these changes in policy:

'It was not until our second period of opposition that we really got down to thinking in a serious way about the post-war economic problems of the country, and preparing our minds for a comprehensive approach to them.'

The text shows clearly the process by which this new bourgeois consensus was established. For Bew and Patterson, however, the overriding concern of the government was not to lay the framework for capitalist development, but to 'find a unifying theme for the Fianna Fail party'.

Goodbye to imperialism!

In fact the authors' novel interpretation of post-war economic policies serves only one purpose - it justifies their assertion that the national question was obsolete. Lemass and Fianna Fail embarked on their quest to 'reconstitute Fianna Fail's ideological domination over the masses' because Fianna Fail's traditional popular appeal as the nationalist party could no longer be sustained. The break with the policies of economic nationalism is presented in terms of Fianna Fail reconciling itself to an Ireland in which the national question was no more, and in which the old-fashioned theories of British imperialist oppression were no longer relevant.

To perfect this theory the authors have to explain away Lemass' and his party's 'frequently made declarations' on the Six Counties and their appeals to nationalist aspirations. These are dismissed as anachronisms, inconsistencies and 'mere verbal republicanism'. The nationalist pronouncements of Lemass in the 'fifties and 'sixties or of Haughey today are certainly mere postures, but they play a vital role in sustaining Fianna Fail's claim to be the true inheritor of the republican tradition and hence the natural party of government.

No matter how much Bew and Patterson may attempt to wish away the national question it still remains at the centre of Irish politics. It will stay there as long as British domination continues. Academic Marxists like Bew and Patterson acquiesce to imperialist oppression by denying that it exists. Socialists in Britain should reject their utopian schemes for reforming the Six- and Twenty-six County states and take sides with those fighting against British imperialism.

Phil Murphy



Women in Iran face increasing reaction under Khomeini

Policing Hammersmith

On 21 June Metropolitan Police Commander Kenneth Newman's policing strategy entered a new phase. Elections took place in Fulham Town Hall for the Borough Police Liaison Committee. The Committee will consist of 12 members of the community, 5 policemen and 5 councillors, and will have no power. Workers Against Racism held a lively picket of the election dressed in police helmets and carrying truncheons.



WAR pickets the police liaison committee

The election of the police committee plays a valuable role in winning public support for the police while the Police Bill arms them to deal with social unrest. Newman has expressed his interest in the Detroit 'neighbourhood watch' scheme which brings together representatives of the police and groups of local residents prepared to snoop on their neighbours. On White City estate the police are trying to set up a 'neighbourhood police station' and have been visiting local residents to ask if they will become involved in a watch committee. Labour councillor Ivor Gibbons has already voiced his support for the scheme. He wants to see more policemen patrolling 'the stairways, balconies and landings' of estates. On the night of the election itself Hammersmith police with dogs attacked the West Indian Mangrove Club in Notting Hill.

Hammersmith police commander Mitchell said he found WAR's picket of the election 'extremely offensive'. But the response of local people showed that they were not persuaded by police attempts to make themselves look accountable. West London WAR intends to continue the fight to get the police off our streets no matter who it offends.

Geoff Kendall
West London WAR

Defend Basil Gwatidzo



Basil Gwatidzo facing deportation

In late June Leeds University student Zimbabwean Basil Gwatidzo received an order from the Home Office to leave Britain. For the last year Basil has been under constant government pressure. His home has been raided by immigration police, he has been denied Social Security, his wife has had to return to Zimbabwe and his children have been split up and scattered around Yorkshire.

letters

Last January Workers Against Racism put pressure on Sheffield's Labour-controlled Education Committee to give Basil a discretionary grant, his only possible source of income. When the Home Office told Basil to get out of Britain they also instructed the local authority to cut off Basil's grant, effectively starving him out. The Education Committee complied immediately. It hoped that nobody would find out about this attack carried out behind closed doors. On 29 June, to its dismay, 40 anti-racists alerted by WAR, descended on the meeting of the committee to rubber-stamp the withdrawal of Basil's grant. We challenged committee chairman and Labour councillor Mike Bower, to explain why Labour refused to fight the deportation of a black worker from Sheffield's 'Apartheid-Free Zone'. Local radio were there to record his reply that if Basil is still here in October then his grant will be continued.

Starvation tactics

WAR supporters pointed out that unless the labour movement is prepared to fight for Basil he will not be here in October. The hollowness of Labour's anti-racist rhetoric has been shown up yet again. Its unquestioning execution of Home Office orders amounts to collaboration in Basil's deportation.

For the Labour Party Basil's right to stay in this country and finish his studies is left to the discretion of the Home Office. For WAR fighting Basil's deportation is an urgent task for the labour movement. Labour cannot defend this black brother from Tory attack. His fellow workers must.

Cathy Barrett
Sheffield WAR

Aire Valley Yarns

Events in the strike at Aire Valley Yarns near Bradford have moved fast since the report in the last issue of *the next step* (July). On 30 June the Transport and General Workers Union issued a press statement saying that all official

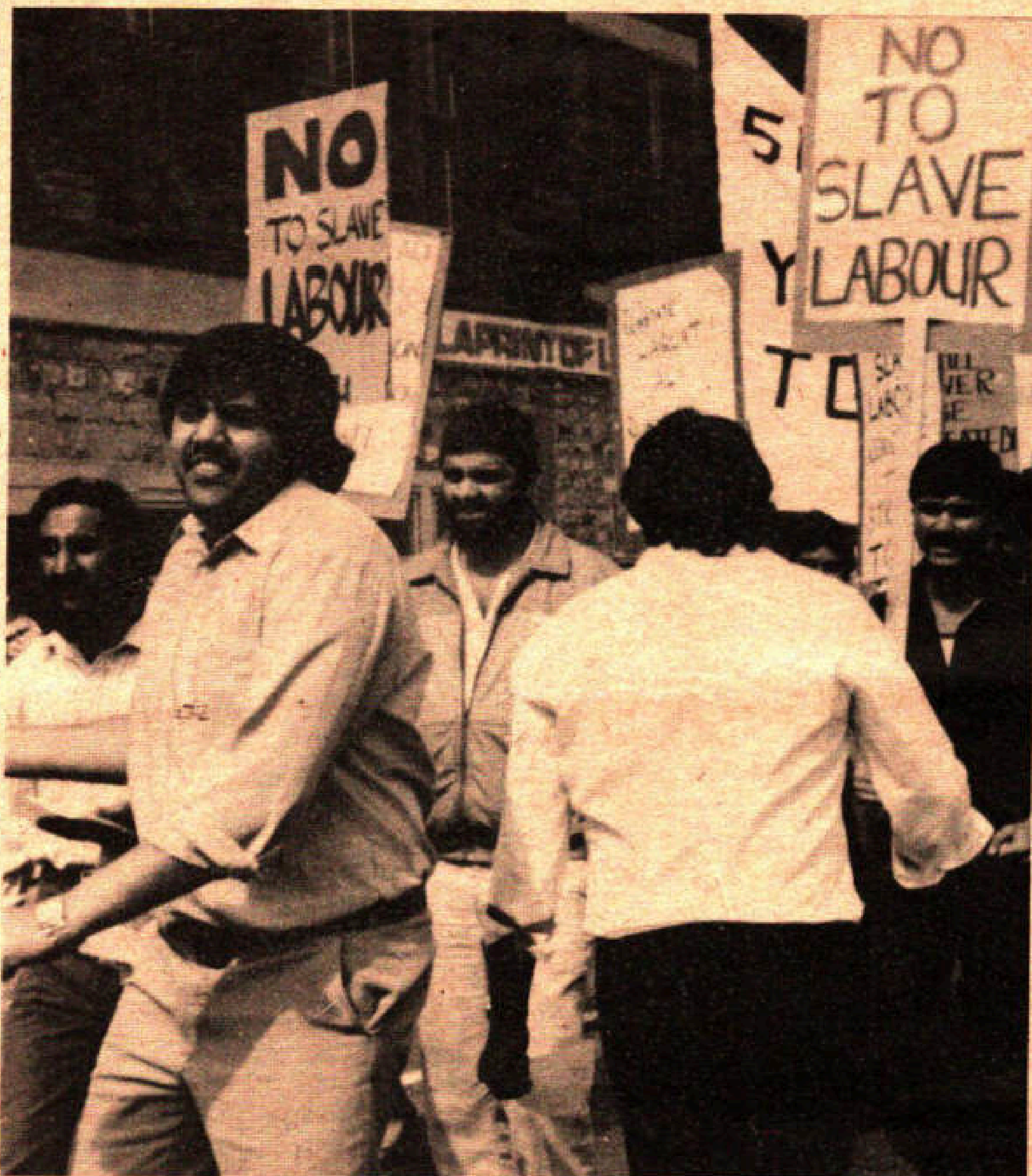
action at Aire Valley Yarns would cease. After fifteen weeks of action in support of shop steward Liaquat Ali who was sacked for trying to organise a union at the sweatshop the strike was called off. But Liaquat and two other union activists at the mill - Malik and Suliman - have not been reinstated. Liaquat's case is to be put to an industrial tribunal.

The workers at Aire Valley Yarns have fought with one hand tied behind their backs. TGWU Textile Group organiser Peter Booth has called the shots and the union has made no attempt to organise effective blacking. Such action would immediately confront the anti-union laws and TGWU officials are not prepared to countenance this. When management took out injunctions against the blacking of supplies organised by workers at Charles Busfield, Booth was quick to disclaim his and the union's responsibility. A demonstration in solidarity with the strikers on 18 June was given union backing only two days beforehand. The outlook of union full-timers has meant that widespread support among workers in West Yorkshire generated by the long and bitter dispute has not been tapped.

Fight continues

On 30 June, at a meeting organised by Leeds branch of the RCP, stewards and delegates from union branches in Leeds who had supported the strikers heard Liaquat Ali's account of the dispute and agreed to set up a Leeds support committee. The committee resolved to 'support the continued fight to reinstate Liaquat Ali... and to immediately fight for the maintenance of official TGWU support for the continuing dispute and to organise our movement to black supplies to AVY bosses through secondary action if necessary.'

The TGWU leadership is satisfied with recognition from the management but if elected shop stewards and union activists can be victimised in this way then union recognition means only a few extra dues-paying members for the TGWU. While the union observes its three-month no-strike agreement with management readers of *the next step* should mobilise support for the workers at Aire Valley Yarns. Donations and messages of support should be sent to Liaquat Ali, 34 Dirkhill Street, Bradford. David Osgood
Leeds



Aire Valley Yarns strikers sold out by the bureaucrats

ELWAR hits back!

On Sunday 3 July two young Asian men, Emran Uddin and Abdul Rajack, were viciously attacked by a gang of 25 white racists. The attack happened as Emran and Abdul left the ABC Cinema at Mile End Gate in Whitechapel, East London. Emran received a six-inch stab wound in his back and needed nearly 50 stitches. Abdul was kicked and beaten about the head until he was unconscious.

In April, another Asian man was set upon by two skinheads outside an East London underground station and kicked in the head with spiked boots. He lost one of his eyes as a result. In June, Abdul Hasim was brutally assaulted on East India Dock Road by white thugs.

Meanwhile, white racist tenants on Tarling Estate near Watney Market have been organising meetings to lobby Tower Hamlets Labour council to get the blacks out of 'their' estate. This estate has been the scene of persistent racist attacks and many Asian families have already been forced to move out after harassment and intimidation by racist neighbours. Local Labour councillors, one of whom lives on the estate, have done nothing to confront the problem.

These examples tell only part of the story. Every day in East London, Asian women are spat on as they do their shopping and Asian children are abused and assaulted at school. The police turn a blind eye to the attacks that happen every day. They are more concerned to ascertain the victims' immigration status than they are to catch the assailants.

While organisations like Tower Hamlets Association for Racial Justice and the Community Alliance for Police Accountability are happy to 'monitor' these attacks, East London Workers Against Racism organises workers' defence to combat them. Only the direct action of the local labour movement and working class people can defend black people against this racist offensive.

Pranesh Das
East London Workers Against Racism

Tameside at Blackpool

At the May meeting of the Executive of Blackpool Trades Council, members voted on whether an item of correspondence should be put to the full council or merely noted in the minutes of the executive. The item in question was a resolution in support of Tameside Trades Council and their right to discuss the war in Ireland.

The issue was forced to a vote by delegates who thought that the issue of labour movement democracy ought to be fully debated. It was defeated by 15 votes to 9. Those who voted against feared disaffiliation and thought that this issue was too political.

It is obvious that some kinds of politics are acceptable to the executive committee. Shortly before the General Election the president urged delegates to impress upon their members the importance of voting Labour. Politics that stand firm against the suppression of debate on Ireland, and in particular against committing the labour movement to the side of the British state in the Irish War, provoke a rather different response.

D Kelly
SCPS delegate to Blackpool Trades Council

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Reclaiming our unions

As an active trade unionist and an AUEW shop steward with a West London council I want to express my agreement with your article 'The unions we need' (*the next step*, May 1983).

It sharply reminded me of the present position of our union within the council and the problems we have making it fight for our interests.

We are faced with bureaucratic procedures and a whole hierarchy of union and management personnel from foremen through to transport manager, depot manager and personnel department. Settlement of grievances depends on a full sitting of a panel of councillors who can delay a resolution for six months or even a year.

For shop-floor workers this means control of our immediate concerns passing out of our hands to be dealt with behind closed doors. Workers' business should be discussed promptly and in the open.

There are other ways we lose our independence. A union/management negotiated productivity deal means a large portion of our wages is paid as a bonus. Cutbacks in services threaten our weekly wages, not to mention the undercutting of union rates by the council through deals with private contractors.

letters

The council and union leadership have tried to introduce the check-off system for payment of union (and Labour Party) dues which will stop workers having control over their own contributions. We need to fight to retain our right to collect and control our own dues no matter how inconvenient it may be for the employers and union central office.

We need unity if we are going to defend our wages and living standards. There is already good cooperation at shop-floor level between members of different unions working for the council. This is not matched by the union leadership. We need to recognise how union representation can be thrown up as an artificial barrier to shop-floor action. It is up to the rank and file to take the initiative and to close ranks against those who seek to divide us.

I hope all trade unionists will use your article and programme as a guide for the struggles that lie ahead.

Steve M (AUEW)
Hammersmith

Hindle Gears strike

For the last 16 weeks shop-floor workers at Hindle Gears in Bradford have been on strike. This is the first such action in the 50-year history of the firm. The firm is part of Hindle Engineering Enterprises which has large orders from Massey Ferguson as well as arms deals worth over three quarters of a million with the Soviet Union and Iraq.

The strike is in response to Hindle's offer of a five per cent pay rise. After fourteen years on short time and wage rises below the rate of inflation the workers have had enough. Workers take home £78 a week or less, they have to work in dangerous conditions with machinery that dates back to the war. In 1979 the company made 80 workers redundant - more than half the workforce. Hindle's reply to

industrial action in March was to call for 35 more lay-offs.

AUEW District Official Henry Wilkinson, who claimed he could 'close Hindle's down with three phone calls', has done his best to ensure that the workers' action stays within legal limits. He persuaded the men to leave their occupation of Hindle's office in June when management obtained a court order. The AUEW-organised half-day token stoppage in Bradford on 22 June was only a gesture. Even with a mass picket on the gate AUEW policing ensured that no lorries were prevented from going in.

Gestures of support like that organised by the union won't win the strike. While the strikers are ready to 'turn the trucks over', the AUEW officials are just trying to keep the lid on the situation. The strikers have become so frustrated that they and their wives have written to Terry Duffy protesting about the union's inaction (see letter reprinted below). They realise that the only way to win this strike is to build practical support through blacking by other workers.

Dave Burrows
Leeds RCP

Dear Mr Duffy

We are writing to complain about the way in which our husbands, the strikers at Hindle Gears Bradford have been treated by the union executive committee.

Many of these men have subscribed to the AUEW all their working lives and they have never had a strike at Hindle's before, except one called by the national executive which received total support. When this strike began the men needed financial support from you immediately - not seven weeks later. This delay in the payment of strike pay was possibly the deciding factor in 14 men returning to work which obviously weakened the strikers' position. One family, George and Carol Clarke are now in severe rent arrears because Carol and her 14-year-old son are only getting £13.35 from Social Security, so when George got his holiday pay from Hindle's he did not declare it on his Social Security form and has now been threatened with court action. If he is indeed taken to court we think your executive should pay any costs he is liable for.

There was again a delay in payment of the district levy and although the men were promised that this would be back-dated it has not been and it has only been paid out once a fortnight. We would all be interested to know where the interest from the strike pay and levy is going.

It seems that there is a lot of support from the grass roots but no practical backing at all from the full-time officials. Our men are fighting two battles - one against the bosses and the other against the national executive. Just whose side are you on?

Yours sincerely,
The disillusioned wives of the disillusioned Hindle's strikers



RCP supporters join the wives of the Hindle Gears strikers on the picket line

the next step

No 25 November 1982

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Unemployment and the labour movement

BRITAIN ISN'T WORKING

LABOUR ISN'T FIGHTING

Inside: Bernadette tells truth with Labour 65
Country needs communists 64
Question pick-up round the outside 66

As unemployment goes over the four million mark, *the next step* ORGANISES DIRECT ACTION TO DEFEND THE UNEMPLOYED

the next step

No 30 December 1982

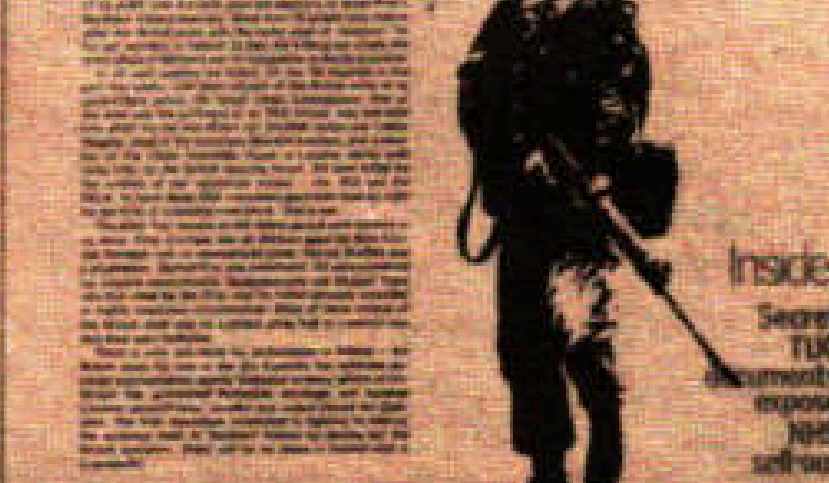
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Fighting the Irish war



Liverpool Irish Freedom Movement lobby the council demanding a PTA-free zone

SINN FEIN'S General Election success (see page 9) confirms the nationalist people's rejection of any more British-imposed political 'solutions'. More than 100 000 people voted their approval for the struggle against all forms of British rule in Ireland.

No surrender

The British Government is getting the message. Last October it responded to the election of five Sinn Fein representatives to its sham Assembly by launching a series of shoot-to-kill attacks on the nationalist community. Britain has no answers to nationalist resistance except brute force. This was *The Times'* comment on the General Election results:

'The province, which has only just been made the subject of one constitutional "initiative" in a lengthening line of total or partial failures is not about to receive another. Nor is there to be a break with the inconclusive but even-handed policy of Direct Rule. (13 June 1983)

Direct Rule means only one thing – military rule. The outcome of the General Election means that Britain will continue to wage its bloody war in Ireland. It means too that it will carry on its offensive against anybody in Britain, especially anybody Irish, who opposes its rule of terror in the Six Counties. The new Tory

Government has published a Prevention of Terrorism Bill to replace and extend the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the British face of the Irish War. They can expect the complicity of the Labour Party whose Irish spokesman recommended alternative 'anti-terrorist' legislation during the General Election campaign. Meanwhile the authorities are making full use of the existing Irish-hunting legislation.

Fighting the PTA

At least seven people have been detained in Liverpool under the Prevention of Terrorism Act over the past few weeks. Some were Irish activists – two were returning home from the annual Sinn Fein commemoration at Wolfe Tone's grave at Bodestown. Others were just Irish people visiting friends or relations in Britain. In all cases the state's objective was the same – to intimidate Irish people sympathetic to the cause of Irish freedom.

On each occasion the Irish Freedom Movement in Liverpool publicised the harassment of Irish people and organised pickets at Bridewell police station. Our agitation against the use of the PTA in Liverpool has helped to speed up the release of the detainees. At the same time Liverpool IFM has taken the campaign to Liverpool's city council.

On 29 June IFM supporters held a successful lobby of the council meeting. We presented a petition calling on the council to declare Liverpool a PTA-free zone. The petition was signed by hundreds of people, including Garston MP Eddie Loyden, Merseyside county council leader Kevin Coombes and 20 Labour councillors. Abercrombie councillor Jimmy Rutledge, who was himself detained under the PTA in 1976, also signed the petition. An attempt by local Loyalists to disrupt the lobby failed.

PTA-free zones

So far the council has made no official response. Liverpool IFM will be keeping up the pressure for the council to declare itself prepared to cut off funds to the police authority if the police continue to terrorise the Irish community. The council could also take practical steps to publicise harassment under the PTA and defend its victims. The campaign in Liverpool – and in other areas where IFM branches are campaigning for Labour councils to turn their party's conference policy against the PTA into practical measures that could make it inoperable – will be continuing throughout the summer. For details of IFM activities, or for assistance against the PTA, phone 01-274 3951 (24 hours).

TUC police move in

Resolutions of support for Tameside Trades Council continue to flow in from trade union branches and trades councils around the country. Tameside Trades Council in Greater Manchester is threatened with disaffiliation by the TUC because it showed the Irish Freedom Movement video 'No British Solution' at its December 1982 meeting. This is not the first time the Trades Council has run into problems with the TUC because of its support for the Irish cause. In 1980 it was disaffiliated for calling a conference on the Irish War to which republican speakers were invited. Even though the trades council won back its affiliation a year later, the TUC is trying again to censor and silence expressions of support, and even discussion on the fight for Irish freedom.

At its March meeting the TUC Trades Council Joint Consultative Committee decided that Tameside's application for annual reaffiliation will be referred to the Committee itself for consideration. After further correspondence the minutes of the 19 May Joint Consultative Committee reveal the TUC's next move. A special committee has been set up to pursue the witchhunt against Tameside. Months later Tameside has received no formal notification of this, but the new grouping will be attending 'a meeting of Tameside Trades Council to discuss its activities and also its lack of involvement in the work of the County Association'. The latter point relates to Tameside's refusal to participate in many local state bodies despite TUC directives. Tameside's view is that it prefers to fight to defend the interests of the local labour movement, rather than sit on state bodies discussing how to ease through state attacks on the working class.

Tameside Trades Council needs your support to prevent the TUC putting its disaffiliation plans into practice. Pass this resolution at your trade union branch or trades council:

'We protest against the TUC's attempts to stifle and discourage debate at Tameside Trades Council and support its right to decide its own policy on Ireland or any other issue free from outside interference'.

Send letters of protest to:

Mr J Monks
Trades Council Joint Consultative Committee
TUC
Congress House
Great Russell St
London WC1B 3LS

Send messages of support to:

Dave Hallsworth
Secretary Tameside Trades Council
c/o AUEW Offices
Margaret Street South
Ashton-under-Lyne
Manchester

For further information contact Phil Murphy on 01-274 3951

Trade union bodies which have passed the resolution so far include:

MANCHESTER AREA

FTAT (Schreiber), Tameside NALGO, TGWU Denton, GMWU Hyde No 2, ASTMS Hyde General, ASTMS ICL Hyde, TGWU Walls 6/133, AUEW Ashton No 2, TGWU 6/749, AUEW-TASS Ashton

LEEDS AREA

Halifax Trades Council, Cleveland County Association of Trades Councils

SHEFFIELD AREA

AUEW No 2, AUEW No 9, AUEW No 34, Sheffield University Students Union

LIVERPOOL AREA

TGWU 6/522, TGWU 6/612, Nuneaton Trades Council

LONDON/SOUTH EAST AREA

Camden Trades Council, Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council, TGWU ACTSS SW London 1/1148, TGWU ACTSS 1/524, UCATT UG 211, NATFHE (City and East London College), CPSA Crown Agents, CPSA DHSS London North Central, NALGO Kent County, ACTT Hemel Hempstead.

Make the Prevention of Terrorism Act unworkable!

NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST SATURDAY 13 AUGUST
FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BRITISH INVASION OF IRELAND
STREET MEETINGS, PICKETS, STREET THEATRE

MANCHESTER

11.30am
Old Town Hall steps
Ashton Market
Ashton-under-Lyne

SHEFFIELD

11 am
Peace Gardens
Town Hall
City Centre

LEEDS

11am
Dortmund Square
City Centre

COVENTRY

12 noon
General Post Office
Hertford Street
City Centre

BIRMINGHAM

11am
Chamberlain Square
City Centre

LONDON

11am
Hammersmith tube
Camden Town tube
Kilburn Square
Brixton tube